

# EXODUS EXPERIENCE

*The Snyman family story*



**NINA SNYMAN**

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## THE SNYMAN FAMILY STORY

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## **Background**

We are a South African family. My husband, Bester, and I are both from traditional Afrikaans families. We got married in 1993 and raised our three children, Marié, Fransonet and Dawid, within the tranquil surroundings of a sugarcane farm on the east coast of South Africa, in a valley called Nkwaleni, a small farming community. We lived in a house full of natural light, situated in a lush green spacious garden for the children to play. However, a land claim, and the resultant post land claim management, forced us as a family to leave this farm and its surroundings behind. The event of the land claim management gave my husband the time and opportunity to study the principles of prophecies in the Bible, which led him to the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church. He made his choice for the truth of the Sabbath, and he led the family out of the small charismatic church which we attended for 17 years, and joined the SDA church at the end of 2009. We served within the Adventist church for seven years.

We became Adventists just as the post land claim management of the farm became unsuccessful. Bester (and his family) had to leave this farm to find a new income. I, Nina, was not convinced of the Sabbath teachings. At that stage he was offered a farm management position by friends within our charismatic church, people whom I trusted and with whom I was willing to go to war. However, Bester turned down the offer due to the fact that they would expect him to work on a Sabbath... I was devastated by his decision, but took on the challenge to test God on this so-called Sabbath principle. Will He provide for us as a family if we make the decision to follow His ways as Bester found it in the Bible? Bester's choice to keep the Sabbath brought us to the point where I had to earn the main income for the household for a period of one year. May I add: an income much smaller than Bester's income, when he is farming.

Yes, God graciously provided for us as a family. One year later Bester was offered a farm management position on a farm in the same vicinity where we used to live, in the Nkwalen Valley. Today he is still a farm manager in this area. Along with this opportunity to farm, he can also keep the Sabbath, which is an absolute wonder in our eyes. God provided this opportunity for him to farm and keep the sabbath. We never expected this to happen.

Sometime during the uncertain years of the family farm's land claim (before we became Adventists), I had the experience that God showed me our family is as a ship outside a harbour. The ship had to go into the harbour, but needed help from inside the harbour to go through a narrow section in the river, along which the ship could easily end up on either the sand banks or on the rocks along the way. I realised that God would have to provide the direction for this move in order to reach the harbour in safety. During the challenging years after the land claim, I often wondered when we as a family would be able to berth within the new harbour with safety.

This is a story of a family's spiritual journey. It is about events rather not mentioned, because of the possibility to encourage conflict when a topic like the disfellowship from a church is raised. Yet, these things brought us as a family closer together and closer to real relationships, and into a deeper understanding of the unselfish AGAPE love of God.

Luke 1:1-4 Since many took in hand to draw up an account concerning the matters which have been borne out among us, ... becoming eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, it seemed good to me also, ... to write... so that you might know the certainty of those things in which you have been instructed.

## **Bester's studies**

During 2014 and 2015 Bester investigated the concepts of the Godhead and of the trinity in detail for a period of 9 months, and came to the conclusion in May 2015 that the Father and His Son teaching is a Biblical concept, and that the trinity is unbiblical. Having given up SO MUCH for the sake of following

the biblical beliefs, (including the belief of Sabbath-keeping) he had no option but to follow his conviction.

In Aug 2015, while Bester was still the leader of the SDA Empangeni Klein Groepie (Small Group), he called me one day to his laptop to show me an email. The email contained the normal monthly minutes of meeting for the committee running the Empangeni Small Group. There was a new topic on the agenda: "Error on the Holy Spirit within the leadership." (Loosely translated from Afrikaans.) It also indicated that the meeting will be chaired by the local pastor, and not by Bester. Bester's reaction to me: "This refers to us." My reaction: "No, it cannot, because we do not have a problem with the Holy Spirit, we have a problem with the Godhead and the trinity." It turned out it did refer to us. Despite three distinct attempts (during three follow-up monthly meetings) to change this topic to "Error on the Godhead and the trinity within the leadership," our request for this change was plainly ignored. I am still in the dark about the reason for this.

After this meeting in Aug 2015, Bester's spiritual responsibilities were all removed from his shoulders, except the Wednesday night bible study, which was continued by Bester, because this bible study involved newcomers who came into the church during a public outreach effort held in July 2014. The leadership of the Small Group decided on meetings with Bester, myself, and the local pastor, in order to discuss the matter of Bester's views on the Godhead, around points 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Fundamental Beliefs of the SDA Church.

I went into these studies with open eyes, because I had not studied any of the material about this topic at that stage. The meetings were conducted in an orderly manner and with respect for each other's viewpoints. The meetings were held every 2-3 weeks. There were four Bible studies held in total, each more than two hours. Meals were enjoyed together before or after meetings. During the meetings I tried to stick to the bible study methods that the SDA's taught me: the Bible must explain itself.

When the pastor announced that the fourth meeting would be the final meeting, I was surprised and mentioned that there are a number of issues on which I needed clarity. At this final meeting it was arranged that the discussions could be continued over email, in order to clarify anything that still needs to be clarified. I drew up a rather lengthy email to our pastor, with three distinct questions on different issues of the church viewpoint on the trinity, with Bible verses and EGW quotes. I only received feedback on one of these questions, in which it was indicated that the church is divided on the interpretation of those Bible verses and the EGW quotes.... I was hoping to find answers to my questions through my pastor, whom I hoped would respond with support from the entire SDA church structure. This hope failed me. The other two questions are still unanswered.

## **Pressure increases**

In November 2015 a new leadership committee of the Small Group was chosen and Bester was removed from his position as chairman of the committee. I did not serve on the leadership committee again. The regular Wednesday night Bible study was kept in place on the request of the people attending it. However, the time of this bible study was moved from Wednesday night to Sabbath afternoon at 2pm. And the responsibility of these new Sabbath afternoon studies was moved from Bester's shoulders to mine, because previously I was responsible for the sabbath afternoon spiritual programs. We continued with the topic under discussion, only during the new weekly time period, i.e. on Sabbath afternoons. I led these discussions, with fear in my heart. The sabbath afternoon programs that I was running in 2015 were far from the difficult subjects tackled during our Wednesday night studies, which Bester was quite fit to handle. I never tried to enter the new sabbath afternoon program without Bester also in attendance, to give his input. I also made sure that our local pastor attended our sabbath afternoon Bible studies as often as his loaded schedule allowed him to.

These sabbath afternoon programs proved both a blessing and a trial. Due to the issues of a possible disfellowship, all programs of the Empangeni Small Group were moved to the official gathering place of our Small Group, that is, our “workshop.” None were allowed to be held in private homes. That was fair enough given the circumstances, but this did not keep in mind the tropical heat of our hometown during the summer months of Jan, Feb and March, when the temperatures in our little gathering place on a normal summer day rises to at least 40 degrees Celsius (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit). Despite these severe circumstances, the Bible study was attended from Jan 2016 by more people, people who could not attend the Wednesday night meetings due to the danger of travels by night. I forwarded my pleas towards the new committee to (1) attend the Bible studies they requested from me on a sabbath afternoon and (2) move the place of meeting due to severe heat, but my pleas fell on deaf ears. Only the committee leader attended these meetings.

In April 2016 the lectures of the topic under discussion during the sabbath afternoon Bible studies came to an end, and a new topic had to be chosen. We brought this in faith to God, because of the tension in our Small Group on so many issues. The new topic chosen was a set of lectures by well-known SDA evangelist prof. Walter Veith, called “Total Transformation.” This turned out to be the material which we were in great need of. I thank God for His provision of valuable information within these lectures during this time of trial.

My emotional journey during the first half of 2016 can only be understood by someone who has travelled the road. I am ever thankful for all the bits and pieces of support provided by God Himself along the way, using His human instruments. As the mother in our home, I banned all arrogance from our household during this time period. My words to our children, then aged 15, 17 turning 18 and 20: Arrogant reaction was not allowed inside the house underneath the roof; it was to be taken outside the house to the area around



the pool. ☺ (I will one day in heaven see the full impact of this household rule...)

On one occasion my emotional pot boiled over. It happened after a sermon of a visiting preacher, during which an uninformed lash-out was made on our precious new-found faith in our loving Father and His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ. Some lies were put forward as truth on the slideshows accompanying the sermon. After the sermon our family travelled home to fetch our meal and to leave immediately to the place of gathering for the combined lunch. During the brief stop at home, I lashed out my honest opinion to the rest of the family, violating my own rule on arrogance... Bester had to calm me down... As we travelled to the venue of the combined lunch, one of the children started to sing a hymn, with such a firm voice that we all sang together in the car on the way there. (*"Give me that old time religion... it's good enough for me..."*) On arrival we could easily greet everyone and chat in a relaxed atmosphere. I am thankful for the Lord's provision on that day.

## **Business meetings**

In April 2016 a business meeting for the Richards Bay congregation was scheduled. Because our local pastor has not been ordained at that time, he could not chair this specific meeting, which involved our disciplinary hearing. A pastor from Durban travelled to Richards Bay to chair the meeting. We met him, pastor K, on Friday night when he and our pastor opened Sabbath with us in our home. We knew pastor K from his Holy Spirit inspired sermons at camp meetings. We had supper together and an informal discussion about the issue. Pastor K asked the church board to postpone the business meeting for another 2 months to allow further studies on our side. He provided study material to convince us of the trinity doctrine. He made a set of booklets available to us in order to state the case of the SDA church conviction on the trinity. I read two of the three. From these I learnt that the concept of the trinity was only developed in the first few centuries after Christ. That meant

that no Bible author supported (or knew about) the trinity concept... How disappointing to learn that our precious virgin church fell from the road of Sola Scriptura. We had to take the decision: Which is higher in authority: the church or the Bible? We chose the inspired Word of God.

Pastor K made the suggestion that we resign our SDA membership to make things easier for ourselves and for our family. Bester did not choose this option. He believes the truth which states that the Godhead belief forms part of the SDA fundamental principles, as published in 1872, 1889 and 1914. The church changed its views on the Godhead in the 1900s and the trinity doctrine was voted in in 1980. Therefore, Bester could defend his position, based on pioneer views of scriptural interpretation of the Father and the Son and based on the fundamental principles of the SDA church.

On this visit of pastor K to our congregation, he had the privilege to preach. Before the main service started at 11:00am, our dear friend Rae arrived at church with a set of theatrical clothes which made everyone's heads turn. He dressed as a man from the middle-ages, in sympathy with our situation of having to attend a business meeting during which we will be disfellowshipped, according to Rae. His main argument: History is repeating itself. Bester will be burnt at the stake, as the people of old who believed in the Bible and did not act according to the prescriptions of the Roman Catholic Church. I think this event had the pastors thinking. The business meeting scheduled for that evening was postponed for a further two months.

The next date for the business meeting of the Richards Bay congregation was set for 28 May 2016. Hein de Wit contacted us in the week before this meeting. His words: "You know that you will be disfellowshipped on Saturday night, don't you?" Our answer: "Not necessarily – we are part of a God-fearing congregation and we are trusting God for a God-given outcome to the vote." Hein forwarded a letter telling the details of a similar disfellowship in America. We read the account of those events, and decided that these unfair things will not happen to us. Great was my surprise when these events re-

occurred one by one in amazing similarity during our own business meeting held on 28 May 2016. We were disfellowshipped. The votes were 4 to 19. I am ever grateful for the kind warning issued by Hein in that report from other people who had walked the road ahead of us.

As we drove from the parking lot after the meeting, it was quiet in the car. I felt as if we had just attended our funeral. Our funeral? Because of the solemnness of the meeting... everyone there greeted us personally and said good bye without wishing us well for the future...

### **Disfellowshipped... what now?**

I am ever thankful for all the people who contacted us in the morning of Sunday 29 May 2016. I do not recall the details of the conversations, but the heartfelt compassion in the voices over the phone remains forever in my memories... I am ever grateful that our children were involved in a school outing on Sunday 29 May 2016. I dropped them at 4am at school and only fetched them again at 5pm. They were spared the woes of seeing their parents weep on the day after we were disfellowshipped.

I am ever thankful for our local pastor's ever-present smile during all the months of the trial. His heartfelt warm welcome every time our family arrived at church made such a positive difference in our experience...

After we were disfellowshipped, we continued to attend the Sabbath morning program of the Empangeni Small Group. (After all, where else could we go?) On the first sabbath when we walked in, we realised that our attendance was causing discomfort to everyone present there, including ourselves. The weekly programs were unannounced so that our family was left in the dark about times and venues of the mid-week programs. Luckily the youth had a strong group and continued as normal. Our children attended these. A new hymn was introduced at the start of each main service, which sang the praise of the trinity. We decided as a family that we cannot support this new section of the program, and simply sat down during this song, keeping silent (seating

ourselves at the back of the church). This caused a whole lot of consternation and within a few months we were summoned to a meeting with our local pastor. Due to a busy family schedule this meeting was postponed a few times. During this time our children received a text message on their phones indicating that the Youth programs of the Empangeni Small Group were all halted with immediate effect. This arrangement included the Sabbath morning lesson study for the youth. The children were surprised and somewhat shocked, and contacted the person responsible for the youth program to find out why. He was at that time unaware of this arrangement. A week or so later we received an email from the local pastor, informing us that we were not welcome to attend the Sabbath morning program of the Empangeni Small Group any more, because of our disruptive behaviour. I cried...

As I said to our dear friend who loved us into the SDA church (who is still a faithful SDA church member): the ship of Acts 27 and Acts 28 has stranded on the Isle of Malta; the ship (which I interpret to be the SDA church) is being smashed apart and the violence of the storm has thrown us as a family off the ship. But we hope to see the guys remaining on the ship again on the beach of Malta isle. In the meantime, the storms are causing cold winds and rain and heart-breaking circumstances – may God protect us from the dangers of warming ourselves at strange fires...

I am ever thankful that the email banning us from the Empangeni SDA church meetings were received after we attended the Feast of Tabernacles organized by Hein de Wit in Pietermaritzburg, in October 2016. This Tabernacles weekend was filled with memory making moments: meeting people of similar faith to our own, people with respect for each other's differences; hearing others with similar sad stories to our own. I was ever grateful that we were not left alone and on our own any more.

As a family we continued to hold our Sabbath morning program in the privacy of our home. We shared the responsibilities of the sabbath school lesson

study, the mission story and the choice of the electronic sermon. We continued to take an offering and to send it to a worthy cause. We continued to pay tithes to organizations and individuals wherever we felt called to support. We continued to prepare for the sabbath afternoon program, which continued in our home after we were disfellowshipped. It was attended by ±5 people from outside our family. We continued to serve the Lord and trust Him that we can help other people find the truth as plainly laid out in the Bible.

## **Translations**

In 2016 we still did not keep the feasts, because we had no light on it. During a camp meeting in October 2016, Pietermaritzburg, organized by Hein de Wit, he raised a request for those present to help with translations of English books into the Afrikaans language (our home language). I put my hand up to help with proof reading of these translated works, and looked around for the others who will be doing the translations – I was the only one with my hand in the air... Hein took up my offer for translation, and I tried it out on the booklet called *Original Love*, by Adrian Ebens. At that time I had not read any of Adrian's books. This translation opened my mind to a new understanding of the Agape love of God – a love where there is NO eros (selfish) love. Little did I know that this translation was the beginning of a spiritual journey.

I went on to translate another book called *Holy History*, by late elder John Vandenberg. This translation was done after our Bible study group finished a study on the book *The Cross and its Shadow*, by pioneer S.N. Haskell. The information from these two books gave me a plain understanding of the teaching on the Old Testament truths and its applicability to our daily faith. The fact that the law of Moses was never done away on the cross caught me completely by surprise, and yet, within the contents of passages like Ps.119, it made perfect sense. I gathered up our Bible study group and explained with excitement, "Hey guys, the Old Testament laws were never done away with! Look again!"

The group asked a few questions, which I could not answer; they shook their heads and brushed the issue aside. I shrank up inside myself, and cried out in my closet to the Lord, “Why this negative reaction?” I could not comprehend why I could see the most beautiful truths coming forth from the pages of the Bible, while they questioned my views and interpreted the verses in a different way. Little did I realize that I was communicating beautiful truths in a boastful manner, which did not fit these truths at all, hence the rejection from people who would otherwise show interest and study the matter.

The main trick question that my husband, Bester, asked, was “WHY do we have to keep the feasts?” I could not answer satisfactorily. I had no depth of knowledge and I was not humble enough to acknowledge this. The feast keeping issue became contentious within the Bible study group, and I committed it to prayer. I tried my best to keep arguments out of the conversations.

The next book which I translated, was “Divine Pattern” by Adrian Ebens. It explained the events within the church leading up to a line of members being disfellowshipped from the SDA church. These disfellowships occurred in different countries of the world, all within the SDA church. The book explained the parallel between Old Testament stories and current events, including those that happened around our disfellowship one year before. It made suggestions about means and ways to handle these situations. In hindsight I saw how God had protected us to a large extent from developing a mean spirit of resistance against the authority of our church during the process of our disfellowship.

## **Dawid’s dedication to God**

During the first half of 2017 it happened one Sabbath afternoon that I noticed our son, Dawid, then 16 years old, was not doing anything particularly useful within the special Sabbath hours. I encouraged him to pick a book by Ellen White off the shelf and read it on Sabbath afternoons. He picked the book *Counsels on Diet and Foods*. A while later, (possibly a month

of two), Dawid announced that he is changing his diet to the vegan diet – he is going vegan. Our family had by then migrated from heavy meat eaters to a vegetarian diet. Still, Dawid’s announcement came as a surprise (to put it mildly). However, he never forced his vegan diet on me (as the cook of the house), but quietly asked about the ingredients of every dish, and filled up on the vegan options. I prayed about this. I finally found a vegan cheese recipe which worked for our family, and in no time the family turned to follow a vegan diet.

In July 2017 Dawid attended a 3-week camp organized by an independent youth ministry of the SDA church, called Abundant Life, situated at Dundee, South Africa. The main mission of the camp, called “No Guts No Glory”, is to ground the youth in the Bible and in SDA beliefs. He returned from the camp a changed young man. Of the twelve youth attending the camp, he was the only one who was familiar with the vegan lifestyle which was followed there. At camp he received a copy of the book *The History of Redemption*, along with a set of highlighters. After he returned back home from camp, he kept up the camp routine to get up at 5am every morning for personal worship, studying long passages from this book, along with his Bible. He wrote out Bible verses with his own hand writing and pasted these on his clothing cupboard in his room. These Bible verses were written in big letters, to be readable on the cupboard from his bed.

## **Organization of camp meeting 2017**

At the beginning of 2017 Hein de Wit asked me to help with the organisation of a camp meeting for people who (for different reasons) did not attend the SDA church any more. However, my human talents did not allow me to organize such an event. I plainly laid that before Hein, but he insisted that I consider to help with camp meeting. He gave me an ultimatum at the end of March 2017 (I had to consider it for two weeks before giving him an answer). After many discussions with my husband, Bester, I agreed to help with the organizing of the camp meeting. I felt a strong inner impression to do this

work. Bester was not keen about my involvement in this camp meeting, but reluctantly gave me his blessings on it.

The guest speaker of the camp meeting was pastor Adrian Ebens, who was disfellowshipped from the SDA church five years before. Adrian contacted my husband, Bester, on the morning after we were disfellowshipped in May 2016. What he said on that morning, I cannot recall, but the sympathy and encouragement that came from the Skype screen made a lasting impression on me. Adrian's book *The Return of Elijah* was a guiding light to me through the dark tunnel of the disfellowship.

From the end of April 2017, Hein and I worked relentlessly to make a success of Tabernacles 2017 in Pietermaritzburg. Many times I dropped my head on the yellow file containing the details of the arrangements and prayed for wisdom. I was amazed how some of the arrangements simply fell in place.

## **Disunity**

In the months leading up to camp meeting, my husband, Bester, asked many questions to find a reason for keeping the feasts of the Old Testament. I could not give appropriate answers. He gave me freedom of choice to continue studying and keeping the feasts, but he could not see any valid reason for himself to be keeping the biblical feasts. I certainly could not explain it to him. My mind was full of criticism and this influenced our discussions about feast keeping and caused me to react in an accusational manner to Bester's questions. However, I never saw my mistakes and sins during that time. I simply stood amazed that he was not interested in studying the materials.

One sabbath morning, our study group watched two electronic sermons explaining the priesthood of Christ. The teaching on these electronic sermons explained the dispensational view of the covenants, the view that most Protestant churches support, i.e., the Old Covenant, with its laws, rites and symbols, is meant for the times of the Old Testament, and once Christ



ministered on earth, the New Covenant was ushered in, which is the age of grace and of faith, as explained in the New Testament. In the light of the material on the feasts that I studied, I could not follow the reasoning of the teaching and I asked questions, which slowed down the progress of watching the sermons. It came to the point that Bester asked me to stop asking questions in order to finish watching the sermons. The answers that the group supplied simply did not match up in my mind with other passages in the Bible. I was startled, because these things seemed quite important to understand the essence of the gospel. The spirit of criticism that I carried, with which I stated my questions, was still overbearing, and I still did not realise it.

At the end of our sabbath program, we parted. I suspect most of the group members carried some concern about a possible disunity in our precious group, which were perfectly united in our belief in the Father and his Son. After everyone left that sabbath afternoon, I fell to my knees to pray about the different things that were running through my head. The cry of my heart: "Is THIS what it boils down to when you get disfellowshipped from the SDA church?" We had no overseeing body where we could find answers... we needed a spiritual roof over our heads. I fervently prayed for our group, for each member, for myself and my husband, for the upcoming visit of pastor Adrian Ebens to our home, for unity within our group, and for clarity on the matter of feast keeping. I sobbed out my heart in prayer before God, until it became time for sabbath closing - almost two hours later. This is not my usual time frame of prayers – I usually need to walk around and work with lists and verses and inspiration if I pray that long.

During those two hours I meditated on the bizarre situation: The Lord had led Bester and I through the experience of disfellowship like He led Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea, and now we came to the waters of Marah – the spiritual waters was too bitter for me to drink – I could not have it. The group based their beliefs on the teachings of a dispensational view of the

covenants, and I could not understand it in the light of what I had learned about the law, that the law portrays the everlasting gospel.

I could clearly see that the gospel was preached through the different rites and symbols of the Old Testament laws, and that Christ must have been the Mediator during the Old Testament times in the same way that He is my Mediator when I approach my heavenly Father. In my mind no earthly priest can do the work of Christ, the Son of the living God, when God cleanses the heart of a human being.

Yet, long questions went through my mind, which I could not all answer. I did not know which way was the right way. I knew the road forked, and I pleaded with the Lord for a voice behind me, to indicate the way forward.

While all this was going through my mind, I also knew I could not run the risk of murmuring against my spiritual authority, Bester. I had to submit to Bester's ideas. Yet I had already tasted the beauty of an everlasting gospel, which indicated a living gospel present in both the people who lived in the Old Testament times as well as the New Testament times. Tears ran down my face as I pleaded the Lord to convince Bester to put a (spiritual) piece of wood into the (spiritual) water to make it sweet.

**Exo 15:25-26** And he cried to Jehovah. And Jehovah showed him a tree. And when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a decree and a law for them, and there He tested them. (26) And he said, If you will carefully listen to the voice of Jehovah your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His Laws, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I *am* Jehovah who heals you.

And yet I still did not recognize my own need of healing from a wrong spirit of criticism...

That evening I got in bed with a book by pastor Adrian Ebens, with the title “Sabbath Fountain.” The invitation to receive the Holy Spirit in large measures during the appointed times of the Lord echoed in my heart. The difference between the dispensational view of the covenants and the view of the covenants explained by Adrian Ebens bothered me. Which view was the Biblical view? I had no idea. As far as I could see, both views could be substantiated from different Bible verses.

During the following week I prayed about the sermons we watched as a group on the priesthood of Christ, and I went through my sermon notes again. It still did not quite come together.

It became clear to me that the law was written on the hearts of the people in the Old Testament times, in the same way it is written on our hearts in the current dispensation. I suspected that no part of the law was ever nailed to the cross, and I started to gather up evidence of this. The evidence pointed to the heart of our heavenly Father who wants to save us from our sins and build in us a new heart and character, and I found evidence of this in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

**Deut 30:5 – 6** And Jehovah your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. And He will do you good, and multiply you above your fathers. (6) And Jehovah your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, *to love Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.* [italics added]

The everlasting gospel (and the everlasting law) sounded like a gospel that was clearly understood by the Jews who lived in the dispensation long before the earthly ministration of Jesus. It provided the reason why a person like Nathanael (a disciple of Jesus) could clearly see and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, as the Son of God, right at the start of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

**John 1:48 – 49** Nathanael said to Him, From where do You know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called

you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. Nathanael answered and said to Him, Rabbi, **You are the Son of God.** You are the King of Israel! [bold added]

A few days later I took up the book *Living Bread from Heaven*, also written by pastor Adrian, to read it once again, and I found some alarming statements I had previously overlooked. Adrian used a lengthy quote from the pen of A.T. Jones, to explain the priesthood of Christ. This reasoning did not correspond to the view of a dispensational view of the covenants, which in turn indicated that a dispensational view of the covenants did not correspond with the 1888 messages. My heart sank as I realized that there were divisions within the ranks of the One-True-God movement, and that some do not accept (or fully understand) the precious messages given us during the 1888 General Conference of the SDA church, especially when it comes to the view of the covenants. I prayerfully laid this information before Bester, and together we decided to embark on a study of the 1888 messages which our church had rejected. We read through the 1888 material that Bester downloaded from the internet.

## **The Most Precious Messages from 1888**

My first encounter with the 1888 messages was shortly after we became Adventist. I was at that stage still operating within a trinitarian mindset. The booklet *The Gospel in Galatians*, by E.J. Waggoner, made no sense to me at all. But now, with the understanding of the Father and His Son, as I looked through articles by Jones and Waggoner rays of beautiful spiritual lights came down from heaven into my heart. Beautiful truths about the righteousness in Christ, as testified by the law, started opening in my dull mind.

**Rom 3:21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being *witnessed by the law and the prophets*; [italics added]

**Rom 5:20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. *But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* [italics added]

I asked the Lord to show me what had been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). Different preachers seemed to explain their different views, each as convincing as the other. I had no idea which of these views was the version supported by my Father in heaven. I received an answer:

Gal 2:20 – “*I have been crucified with Christ* and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” [italics added]

For the first time in my life the possibility of a life which is completely saved from sin started to open up in my mind, all possible through the righteousness of Christ, making us accepted by the Father in the Beloved, Christ (Eph. 1:6). These truths, even though I was looking through a darkened glass, were MOST PRECIOUS to me. ☺ The following words sang in my heart:

Ps 119:165 Great peace *is to* those who love Your Law.

## **Prior to Adrian Ebens’ arrival in our home**

### **A vivid dream**

Adrian Ebens arrived in Cape Town, South Africa, in September 2017, six weeks before Bester and I were to meet him. After Adrian’s arrival, while he was touring the country, I had a vivid dream about Adrian’s diet and his capability to fall sick if any of these dietary restrictions were violated. I dreamed that Adrian arrived in our town, Empangeni, and within the first 24 hours he fell sick in his stomach. Because we had to cancel a meeting, we all went up to the Bed & Breakfast where he was in bed to pray for him. While we were in prayer, the Lord dropped it in my heart that we should not pray for this pastor’s sickness to be cured – he is sick because we are not prepared for his messages. This startled me so much that I woke up. I decided that this dream was only my imagination running wild due to stress of organizing the camp meeting. Besides, I thought, this is not fair: we should fall sick if we are

in error, not the pastor. I thought that if you sin, you get punished. I thought this dream is not according to God's way – God is a just God of righteousness... but I had not studied the messages on the character of God as yet at that point. I went back to sleep and the dream continued, where we were all standing around the bed of the pastor. I dreamed it was my turn to pray for the pastor. Because I thought it inappropriate to pray for the pastor's healing, I prayed that the Lord would provide an angel at his bed for the night to watch over him and that he would have a good night's rest. In my dream, I rang up the Bed & Breakfast early the next morning to find out how the pastor was doing. The owner assured me that the pastor had a good night's rest, but he was still running a fever and asked if the day's meetings can be cancelled. This thought came so startling to me that I woke up and I did not sleep for the rest of the night. I fervently prayed for every group member in our Bible study group.

### **First few rays of light**

One morning, a while before the October 2017 camp meeting, I woke up in the early hours of the morning with worries, about the camp meeting, the disunity among our Bible study group, amongst other things. There were some pressing questions on my mind, because I studied some of the writings of AT Jones, EJ Waggoner and Adrian Ebens. Details of the teachings did not make sense to me and this troubled me. Here and there I grasped some new insights as I began to understand the priceless messages of the law of God running parallel to the love of God, that the law is an image of the gospel, that it runs parallel to the gospel over all centuries, before and after the cross.

In the quiet night hours, I took up a book from Adrian, called *My Beloved*, and continued reading the book where I had left it the previous night.

When I got to the section on the Father, describing the Father of Love, some more precious rays of new spiritual light came shining out from the pages of the book. WOW! I got up from bed (not to disturb my husband) and went to

the lounge where I sat down to meditate on the new insights that flooded my soul. Is THIS the God that I serve? A God of love and mercy? Is He really willing to betroth me as a sinner – as a daughter of Adam - to His precious Son, so that I can become a child of the Ancient of Days? So that I can take on the characteristics of the Father of Love?

This was too much for my mind to digest. I started pacing the floor. I asked God to rather dim this new light, as this was too much for me – my spiritual eyes were almost “blinded” by the new insights...

The next moment I did not know why I was pacing the lounge floor in the middle of the night. What am I doing here? I could not remember what I read that excited me so much that it caused me to leave the comfort of a warm bed. Slowly the details of the book “My Beloved” came back, as well as my anguish about the new rays of light, and the request made by myself to God that He must please dim the spiritual light.... And I realised that this precious light had GONE OUT! I fell to my knees as I realised that I cannot live without this light. I needed these precious insights into the love of the Father because it contains the life which I need to live by. I pleaded with God to bring the precious understanding of His Love back to my mind... He graciously granted that request, and I could clearly recall the strong impressions of this Love of the Father in a way that I had never seen before. And I rejoiced in it! I basked in a clear ray of light shining from heaven to where I was 😊

An afterthought: Why did the precious light of God’s love go out? Could it possibly be that my lack of faith in a loving and merciful heavenly Father could have caused me to shrink back from this close experience with God? Is it possible that I lacked an understanding about the worth that He places on me? I prayed about this, and I believe God gave me the straight testimony: I reacted with self-love. I wanted God to show me His love in a way that is acceptable to me. If the light is too much for me, it had to be dimmed, and that is self-love. Would God ever withdraw His tender mercies and love from me? No, surely the Bible assures me that God’s love and mercies are forever

and ever. God indicated to me, in His tender mercy, my selfish love for Him... He indicated to me that heaven does not function within any form of self-love. Operating within my selfish love, I will not be at home in heaven. I cannot operate within such a close experience where there is any measure of self-love. I confessed and found beautiful forgiveness.

## **Appeal**

Days went on and it came closer to the time to meet Adrian.

As I prayed about the difference in opinion between my husband and I about feast keeping, I became aware that my way of appeal towards Bester is of utmost importance. I sensed that if Bester did not receive the beautiful truths of the feasts, our family would also not receive it, and it would be a huge recoil in our family's spiritual path, which I would have to walk along with the family. I sensed that if our group did not receive these truths, the group might disintegrate within a few years. I sensed that all of this depends on my appeal towards Bester. Many times I confessed my incapability and pleaded with the Lord for grace.

Still, the penny did not drop. I could not work out that my own spirit of criticism is the main cause of the problems that I was facing. I could not see that I was causing the trouble in which I found myself.

## **Adrian's first visit to our home**

Finally, the day arrived for Adrian Ebens to walk into our home, in October 2017. Bester and I fetched Danny Brown and Adrian from the airport. The car, in which we traveled to the airport, was running an intermittent problem on its air conditioner. I had the car at the specialists, but they could not fix the problem. I expected the aircon to stop working on this hot day as we started the 1½ hours' drive back home into the sun and heat. To my surprise, it kept working all the way home. On this and other occasions, I stood amazed at the blessings and protection that Adrian, Danny and Ben Kramlich enjoyed, often without their full knowledge.



Bester and I both found Adrian pleasant, approachable and easy to befriend. I am very thankful for his ministry into our own lives as a family during this week. I am thankful that we as a family could all be home during the week that Adrian ministered in our home. Our three children became aware of the difference in views between mom and dad, and watched carefully what the outcome of the visit would be.

May I add: we as a family had no idea that the Biblical calendar that Adrian was following placed the Feast of Tabernacles right on the week that Adrian ministered in our home.

During his stay with us, I learned the hard lesson not to look to Adrian for a solution to the disunity between Bester and myself about feast keeping. I had to trust my High Priest, Jesus Christ, for the solution. Adrian explained and explained and explained, in session after session after session. I am grateful that on the 17th day of the 7th month (according to the biblical calendar) Bester indicated his willingness to re-evaluate his viewpoints on the feasts and to read his Bible in a different way ... Adrian immediately indicated to him that his ship, his ark, had landed and came to rest.

**Gen 8:4** And the ark [of Noah] rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

It was a moment of moments for myself... *that moment was as if the morning had broken... like the first morning... it was as if...*

...the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy... Job. 38:7.

### **Some incidents**

One of the incidents during Adrian's stay with us, was the tooth paste incident. One week before Adrian arrived in our home, we visited a friend in another province who offered me the gift of tooth paste without fluoride. It was quite valuable, and because our small town did not store those

expensive items, I normally did not use it, and explained this to my friend. I did not accept the gift. One week later, when Adrian arrived, he asked me if I perhaps have some toothpaste for him – he prefers those without the fluoride. And I immediately realised that the angels ministered unto him via my friend, but that I was not giving my cooperation to supply the pastor with his needs.

Another incident occurred that I call the laptop incident. Bester had his plans in place to give Adrian some uphill with arguments about feast keeping. However, the battery of his laptop died just after Adrian arrived. That left Bester without his own laptop, and without his database of his research on feast keeping. After Adrian left, the battery of the laptop needed to be replaced. So Bester left the laptop open and charging overnight to make sure that the battery was not functioning. During the night I woke up and saw a faint light coming from the lounge. I got up to inspect, and found the light came from the screen of the laptop. I logged in and fired up a few programs – the laptop was fully functional! In those precious moments during those small hours of the night, I realised that an angel had put a hand on the laptop battery to keep Bester from using it. I realised that we had angels ministering unto our needs in our homes, and we should honor their presence by being kind and loving towards one another. In the meantime, the laptop went from Bester's hands to our daughter Fransonet's hands. By the time of this writing, she is still making full use of this laptop; the battery was replaced three years after this incident.

The leaking roof incident: During the years prior to Adrian's visit, there was a leak in the roof of our house, in the lounge. But the prevailing drought made it a bit difficult to solve the problem, due to municipal water restrictions. (Oh well, in Africa we reason: if it doesn't rain, the roof doesn't leak; so why fix a working system...) Then one evening during Adrian's stay, the rain poured down quite heavily. One can hear the rain coming down in the recording made of Adrian's ministry that evening. Everyone was thankful for some much needed rain, but I was a bit worried about a leaking roof. At the end of

the evening, as I switched off all the lights to get ready to go to bed, I inspected the spot in the lounge where the water from the roof should have leaked. There was no sign of a leaking roof, and I remember shaking my head and wondering who are these men visiting our house.

## **The woman at the well**

During the months prior to and after the camp meeting in Pietermaritzburg, 2017, I went through an experience which I call the “woman at the well” experience (John 4). I sensed that God was giving me the invitation to ask of Him for living waters:

*“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that say to you, Give me to drink, you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living waters.” Joh 4:10.*

I realised that the five different husbands (gospels) that I served in my life were (1) the protestant traditional faith (2) the charismatic faith (3) the Adventist faith (4) faith in the one God and His only Son and (5) and the feast keeping faith, but this was not the complete gospel that God had for me. I realized that I needed to study the character of God in order to serve the God of Abraham, to have the saving faith of Abraham.

Gary and Carolyn Hullquist also attended this camp meeting. The music written by Gary Hullquist echoed in my soul, especially the songs from John 4, about the woman at the well. At camp meeting, Gary left a number of music books containing his music as a gift to South Africa. What a lovely gift! I was overwhelmed! I quickly gathered up a number of these books to take home. Our entire family still make full use of these books. After this camp meeting I downloaded the backing tracks of these songs and enjoyed hours of personal worship, while playing violin with electronic accompaniment.

After camp meeting in Oct 2017, I learnt about the extra blessings available during the new moons, as indicated by the extra portions of bread (symbolizing Jesus as the Bread of Life) and oil (symbolizing the presence of

the Holy Spirit) which was available in the earthly sanctuary during every new moon. I decided to trust God for extra blessings during these times of the new moon. At that stage our Bible study group was studying the book of Robert Wieland called *The Knocking at the Door*. The section on the unknown sins of the Laodicean congregation (Rev.3:17 – you know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked) impressed on me the reality of my own state of not knowing my sins. I then asked God to show me my sins during these blessed times.

Needless to say, I was shown things that I never dreamt of. Terrible things that are not worth repeating; layer upon layer upon layer during each new moon. I am thankful for every part of my sins that was shown to me, which I could confess, to find sweet, sweet forgiveness. Because of my own carnal nature which battles to find full victory over sin, this section of the story is to be continued...

Luke 15:7 I say to you that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner who repents...

It was during these and follow-up events that I finally acknowledged my sinful attitude towards my husband about feast keeping, especially in the months before Bester was convinced of the feasts. Only much later I acknowledged that my sinful attitude prevented him from studying the issues that surrounds these matters. I could only recognize my errors after I had heard that God does not condemn us in our sins. After I realized that I can face the worst of my sins in the presence of Father God and He still does not condemn me, I could recognize my errors. He grants full forgiveness to all who asks.

John 3:17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.

Adrian walked into our house and not only brought these messages, but also demonstrated it. I am ever thankful that we as a family currently stand united within these truths.

## **The sabbath experience**

After the camp meeting in 2017, as I studied the times of special blessings as indicated in the Old Testament, I had a remarkable revelation of the special blessings available on the sabbath. It happened repeatedly week after week. On a Thursday night I would crawl into bed with an excitement that there was one more sleep before the sabbath arrives on Friday night. On Friday nights I entered the sabbath with much more peace than before. The frantic rush through the house was replaced with music making during the half hour before Sabbath arrived. The family usually has an early night in bed on Fridays, as our bodies need refreshment after the week's work.

But time and again I would be the only one waking up between 2am and 3am (after about five to six hours of sleep), and I simply could not fall back to sleep. I then got up to do Bible studies, to receive the most precious and beautiful truths into my heart and mind during these quiet hours of the night. Sabbath mornings we had our morning program at home. Sabbath afternoon, after lunch, the others normally retired for some much needed sleep. As for me, during those special sabbath hours I could not go to sleep. I continued some more studies and was ready and refreshed to meet sabbath closing when the sun set. After sabbath closing, I could start a new week with a refreshed mind to do translation of books from English to Afrikaans into the night. The next day I did not need to catch up on the hours of lost sleep at all – something which is foreign to my body's need for 8 hours of sleep each night. These special sabbath experiences continued for some months before it receded. I believe I needed it for a time of studying the topic of the atonement, because during that time pastor Adrian Ebens was releasing sermon after sermon with new and challenging information that needed much spiritual digestion. Many of these concepts were hard for me to grasp

due to my own preconceived ideas. During these struggles some songs written by Gary Hullquist rang in my soul:

John 4:10: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that say to you, Give me to drink, you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living waters.”

Ps 61:1 - 4 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.

The song from Psalms 61 was the cry of my heart during these sabbath hours, especially during the small hours of the night, as I was struggling my way through teachings on the character of God that were completely foreign to my thinking patterns. As a family we are still in a process of learning about the beautiful character of AGAPE love of our heavenly Father.

## **Bringing the ship into the harbour**

At the October 2018 Camp Meeting in Pietermaritzburg, during one of the meetings, there was a story shared about a ship outside a harbour, which needs to be brought into the harbour, but help was needed from inside the harbour to berth it, because the details of the harbour are well-known to the locals within the harbour. This story was originally related by the SDA pioneer captain Joseph Bates (who was the captain of a ship) who explained the spiritual parallel to this, that the Bible is our guide to sail from harbour to harbour across the oceans. Then help is provided for us to berth inside the heavenly harbour, which is the Spirit of Prophecy and the foundations of the Adventist faith. With excitement I listened to this story, as it echoed my experience during earlier years. This story explained the role of the Scriptures, the Spirit of Prophecy and the foundations of the Adventist faith in these last days, as we hasten the second coming of Christ.



The Snyman Family (from left to right): Marié, Bester, Dawid holding Jessie, the dog, Nina and Fransonet.



View from the veranda of the farm house, where we lived until Feb 2010.



Around the table for a meal: Adrian, Danny, Bester, Nina and Dawid, Oct 2017



Adrian ministering in our home during his first visit to South Africa, October 2017.





Camp meeting October 2017 (from left to right): Nina, Bester, Carolyn and Gary Hulquist, Ben, Danny and Adrian.



Camp meeting: Oct 2017.

Special item by Nina, Dawid and Brumilda, with Lidia accompanying on the piano.

# **My Baptism: A Song**

**By Penny Kotze**

My heart is so full I can hardly speak,

I have joy and peace, and tears on my cheek.

I have God as my Father, and the love of His Son.

I surrender all to Him, as the battle is won.

I have gone through the waters, and emerged someone new.

God has given me glasses with a totally different view.

No judgement, no condemnation, only mercy and love,

And this flows through the Son, from my Father above.

Thank you my Saviour who keeps evil at bay,

For all of the memories I have made here today.

AMEN

# Baptism Song

Lyrics: Penny Katze  
 Chords: David  
 Music: Nirmai - Oct 2019

(maj) C G Am

My heart is so full I can hardly speak I have  
 joy and peace and tears on my cheek I have  
 God as My Father and the love of His Son I sur-  
 -render to Him as the battle is won

Amin Am An Dm Em Am

I have gone thru the water and re-merged someone new God has  
 given me glasses with a totally different view No  
 judgement no conden-nation only mercy and love and this  
 flows thru the Son from my Father a-bove.

(maj) C F C G

Thank you my Savior who keeps e-vil at bay for  
 all of the memories - I have to-day.

# EXODUS EXPERIENCE

During the years 2010 to 2017 the Lord has guided our family through an Exodus experience: First we discovered the 10 Commandments in Ex. 20, by learning about the amazing teaching within the Adventist Church, which we joined. The undiscovered truths of the Old Testament (Ex. 21 - 24) led us to a changed lifestyle of temperance in, for example, our eating habits. My husband's studies of the Bible led us to the precious truths of the revelation of Jesus Christ, the Son of the only true God, as found in the Sanctuary (Ex. 25 - 31, Joh.17:3), followed by a Golden Calf experience (Ex. 32) which led the way to the wonderful revelation of the character of God Himself in Ex. 33-34.