

A man in a blue athletic shirt and black shorts is running uphill on a grassy trail. He is looking forward with a determined expression. The background features rolling green hills and mountains under a clear sky. The foreground is filled with dry grass and some green plants.

# *The Upward Way*

*Glenn Coopman*



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This testimony is given in memory of my father  
and mother who loved, and only ever wanted the best, for their son.



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## INTRODUCTION

I read in Wikipedia that in 1948 several events and discoveries were of particular interest to the then population of approx 2.4 billion people. Major news stories include the first Porsche being sold, technology advances such as Random Access Storage Devices, Long Playing Vinyl Records, Velcro and Transistor Radio, Apartheid begins in South Africa, and Israel is declared as an independent State.

Despite the fact that my birth in that same year didn't rate a mention, I nonetheless now consider my life, some 70 years later, as one in which my Creator had a particular interest! Doesn't He number the very hairs on every head, including mine? (Matthew 10:30). Am I not considered so valuable to Him that He was willing to offer up His only begotten Son that I may have eternal life? (John 3:16). Hasn't He loved ME with an everlasting love? (Jeremiah 31:3)

Sadly, and to my shame, it has taken many of those 70 years to answer the above questions in the affirmative. My story contains much darkness, but I recognise and publicly declare, that God has most definitely called me "out of darkness into His marvellous light." I would like to "show forth His praises" by sharing this brief testimony and I pray that it will be of encouragement to you.

*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. — 1 Peter 2:9*

*I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. — Exodus 20:2*

## PRIMARY YEARS

It was 2 years after my birth that my father, mother and myself emigrated from South Africa to Adelaide, South Australia. Both my father and I were born in Johannesburg, whilst my mother was an Italian war bride (my father had met her when he was stationed in Italy in WW2). Apartheid was in full swing and one's personal safety was being

threatened, so it made sense that my father decided that we make a new future for ourselves somewhere else.

Prior to our arrival in South Australia in 1950, Dad had ensured that we had a home to live in (albeit a 4 room asbestos home on a quarter acre some 30km from Adelaide) and a job. He was a survey draftsman, and he managed to hold down that job with the Electricity Trust of South Australia for his entire working career.

We only had the basics of life but I do remember that we were happy. I can still remember the ice-delivery man (we had no refrigerator). Mum with her washing board (we had no washing machine) and how we would take turns in the one bath tub to wash ourselves. But we were happy. Mum and Dad were, according to worldly standards, good people. They soon found a little Congregational Church and we worshiped there as a family every Sunday. We always said grace at the dinner table, but I do remember Dad giving me a little glass – no bigger than a thimble – of beer at the evening meal. Fortunately, that only lasted for a few years!

And so my earliest memories were of a normal, happy life. I was well liked at school and in the main achieved good grades. I loved to run home from school at lunch times, have a quick bite to eat, and then run flat out back to school. It was the highlight of my day! However, and I only realised this years later, it was terribly stressful for me to present my parents with my end of the year report card. I so wanted my father to be impressed with my year's achievements.

As I progressed from year to year, it became apparent to me that for seemingly no reason at all I would have, what some might describe colloquially, a brain fade. Occasionally I would perform quite poorly in a test. Oh, how painful it was for me to endure the handing out of marked assignments in descending order of scores attained. I waited and waited for my name to be called! I would at recess time or lunch time find a secluded part of the playing field far away from everybody and cry my eyes out. I felt utterly alone. How was it possible to be happy one moment and then quite suddenly and unexpectedly feel so totally alone? I believed that there was no one who knew, or who could possibly know, what mental torture I was going through! For me, it was that big a deal. One I didn't cope with very well. At these times I often wanted the earth to just

open up and swallow me! All this mental anguish because I knew I had to somehow explain my poor performance to my father. To hear a sigh of disappointment from him or see a look of disbelief in his face was extremely difficult for me to bear. *“Dear God, I wish I were dead!”*

Amazing to think that some 7 years later I would be screaming out to God, *“Dear God, save me! I’m too young to die!!”*

Once a month the Church Pastor would visit our home for a friendly chat and it didn’t tax one’s powers of observation unduly to realize that he left our home on these occasions very much the merrier. After a few years of this my father had had enough. He eventually announced that it was too expensive for him to keep filling up the Pastor’s sherry glass every time he visited. We began worshipping at the local Baptist Church soon after! And how I loved their once a month working bee’s, when we as a Church would help out someone in the community going through hard times and needing a helping hand. Yes, even at a very young age, I loved the “atmosphere” at such gatherings.

*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. — Prov 17:22*

Before I conclude this period of my life, I must make mention of the neighbours we had living on one side of our home. My father had taken great delight in buying a puppy for me shortly after we had arrived in Australia, but when one day our neighbours complained of the occasional barking, Dad reluctantly, and without much protestation, had the dog destroyed. Whilst this episode did not affect me, I did begin to notice that my father’s contempt for the neighbours grew and he took great delight in me out-running their son on our school’s sport’s day. Even though the neighbour’s son and I went to the same school, we became “enemies”. My dear mother couldn’t work out why her clothes pegs kept disappearing; little did she know her son was firing them as projectiles over the neighbour’s fence with a launching contraption that would have made Leonardo Da Vinci proud!

Little did I know that in these few short years of my life that the Enemy of Souls had seen to it that seeds were sown that would soon germinate and manifest as severe depression and a (very) near death experience.....

*He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth, but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. — Job 14:21*

*Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. — Prov 17:6*

## MY SECONDARY YEARS

I commenced my secondary years at Willunga High School, a 30 minute bus ride from where we lived. It was painfully obvious to me that my academic grades began to immediately drop. The transition from Primary school was quite a jump for me. No longer did I have many friends, and strangely I noticed that my father became more impatient and less loving towards me as my academic performance began a downward slide, or at least that is how it appeared to me.

I did have some time out which I enjoyed, however. The highlight of each day was running home from the bus stop after school to watch the Three Stooges on black and white television. Fifteen minutes for me of comic relief from having to perform and achieve. If I can use a running analogy, I would say that primary school could be likened to a reasonably pleasant jog, taking in the scenery, enjoying new trails to explore. On the other hand, high school, for some like me, can be likened to a sprint, having had insufficient time to stretch and warm up! If one throws into the mix a “coach”, my proud father, with stopwatch in hand yelling, “*Faster, faster!*” you can have a recipe for failure. Fail I did, in more ways than one, but let me say here that I know that my father (and mother!) loved me dearly. I never went without. In some ways they were proud of me, but that love was never better displayed than when I achieved a good grade, at school or with my piano practice, or excelled in sport. All that may be fine, but it was my father’s coolness when I did not achieve that proved my undoing, leading to my gradual descent into depression.

If I felt “alone” at Willunga High; I felt even more alone when the family moved to a suburb nearer to Adelaide and I attended Unley High School. For some reason I found myself being placed in the bottom class and I quickly concluded (forgive me) that my teachers were bottom class as well. Even the sports equipment was bottom class! Unley High School boasted of the highest number of honours students graduating each year,



but the administrators were never too outspoken about the many, many students like myself who passed with less than flying colours. I failed 3<sup>rd</sup> year, and upon repeating the year I only then achieved 4 B's and 3 C's in the final exams. Let's just say my father wasn't impressed. But I did go on to successfully complete 4<sup>th</sup> year. Oh, the wave of relief that swept over me!

I just wonder how many lives have been seriously harmed (many permanently) because of expectations placed upon them to achieve excellence, and nothing short of excellence, in whatever field. It sounds cruel to say but nevertheless true, that on occasions I could almost hear my father say, "*This is my beloved son, in whom I am well proud.*" This, when I played the piano for guests, when I scored over 50 in cricket, you get the picture. He himself had excelled in rugby, boxing, cricket, tennis, you name it. But what wasn't seen by guests was the resulting aftermath when I had "performed" badly. Dad would sulk like a child for days. These moods would, of course, poison the very air we breathed in our home. I myself would then become moody and withdrawn and would do whatever I could to make life even more unbearable for my father. My way of rebelling, I suppose. I would "go off" my food, even though I might have been very hungry, knowing that this would upset Dad even more. The more Dad sulked, the more I would fast, or deny myself some "treat" or activity that my mother knew I would normally enjoy. In quiet moments together, I tried valiantly to elicit sympathy from my mother, but bless her, she would just say things like, "*Well, Dad is Dad.*" She remained ever loving, non-judgmental of both husband and son! I think she was also saying to me, "Continue to respect your father. He might have a funny way of showing it but he really loves you!!"

I must have been 16 or 17 years old when I was invited by a friend to go camping with him over a long weekend. I had never camped in a tent and so I welcomed the opportunity. Besides, it would mean 3 days away from home. I liked that.

My friend had been to the camp site before so he knew all the good spots to go exploring and swimming, not that I could swim, though. He had chosen a secluded spot on the bank of the River Murray, only meters away from the Blanchtown bridge which spanned the river. I mention the bridge because it played a pivotal part in the drama that was soon to unfold.



It was on the Sunday, just after we had something to eat, that my friend issued a challenge to me, and boys being boys, I foolishly accepted. He dared me to swim across the river, some 60 metres wide, knowing I could not swim. I promptly came up with a plan; I would swim from one bridge pylon to the next, regain my strength and then swim to the next and so on until I crossed. Surely I could do that at least and save face.

My plan worked wonderfully, well until the middle of the river at least, when I realised that the bridge pylon was coated with, what proved to be, very slippery moss. I was breathless at this stage and to my horror I could find nothing to cling to. Forget free-style swimming, I couldn't even "dog paddle" and my attempts to temporarily attach myself to the concrete pylon became more and more frantic.

I was in trouble. Serious trouble. Panic quickly set in. Down I sank, but I somehow managed to surface and take in as much air as I could before, this time, sinking even deeper. The water was a muddy brown and I could barely see daylight above me, but again, I somehow managed to get to the surface, desperately trying to purchase a finger-hold on the concrete, before sinking for the third time, this time so deep, I lost all orientation. I did not know in which direction the surface was! Everything was muddy brown. My lungs were bursting. I was moments away from drowning. It was then I uttered my second prayer, the exact opposite of my first-ever prayer; "*Dear God. Please save me! I'm too young to die!*" I remember thinking, or was it in my prayer, "*this is ridiculous! It was only 10 minutes ago that I had lunch, and now I am dying?*"

The Lord, praise His name, heard and answered my prayer! I was drowning, but a peace that passes all understanding came over me. I shifted from panic to cruise mode. I was totally spent and my lungs were bursting, but I was somehow strangely relaxed and at peace. It was then that "my whole life flashed before my eyes," with my life's happy moments being recalled in chronological order. Playing cricket with my father in the back yard, running home from school at lunchtime to devour my cheese sandwiches that mother had waiting for me, kicking the "footy" with my one good friend; all these snapshots being replayed one by one, almost in slow motion! They were oh, so real and comforting.

The next thing I knew was me "coming to my senses" on the river bank,

coughing up water. My friend, witnessing this drama unfold from the vantage point of the bridge, had seen that I was in trouble when I disappeared into the murky depths of the river for the proverbial third time, and so rushed down to the river bank, perhaps with the idea of saving me somehow, only to find that I had beaten him there! How can one explain this?

There was a swift current flowing in the river at the time, but it was flowing downstream not across stream towards the shore. I was all but dead, not able to swim, dog paddle or float, yet I beat my friend to the river bank! To my shame I never gave this whole experience any more thought. I neither thanked and praised God nor my guardian angel He had assigned to watch over me, until years later when I began to question the meaning of life.....

## MY TERTIARY YEARS AND BEYOND.

One day over the dinner table Dad said, ‘What do you intend to study at uni?’ This came as a huge shock. I thought I had finished school, studying and exams. I hated it all. But no, Dad wanted me to further my studies and I had a week to decide what I was going to do. I had not the slightest idea of what course of study to pursue. Talk about taking a stab in the dark!! Well, it so happened that this was at the time of the Apollo moon mission. Man was going to the moon. I must admit I found the whole subject of great interest. How did telemetry work? How was it possible to communicate with the space module? How could things be controlled by engineers on the ground?

So I enrolled in a Bachelor of Technology degree in Electronic Engineering. At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> year after sitting for exams in 6 subjects, I remember scanning the morning newspaper at the breakfast table the day the exam results were published, and to my great relief and delight I found that I had passed in 5 subjects and that meant I automatically qualified for a supplementary exam for the subject I failed. With screams of delight, and tears of joy shed by my mother, I shared this with Dad who had just come down to breakfast. His reaction?... I remember his words clearly... *“Wouldn’t it be lovely to have a son who got credits and distinctions.”*

And so the 3 year course became 5 years. I passed some subjects and I failed in some. At the end of each year, when Mum and Dad were not

home, I would take all my copious notes as well as expensive text books down to an incinerator we had in our back yard and I would place “all on the altar”, page by page. I cannot describe for you the sense of relief this afforded me!! I hated exams intensely and so the passing of a subject for me was a big deal. In fact after I eventually graduated I suffered recurring nightmares of me having 15 minutes, then 10, then 5 in which to complete an assignment (which I hadn’t even started!), and if I didn’t complete it in time I would be denied my degree. After such a night my pyjamas would be drenched in sweat. Again, what relief swept over me when I finally realised it was all just a horrible nightmare and the truth was that I HAD graduated!

Before I close this chapter of my story, I must make mention of one uni colleague of mine who had volunteered to help me from time to time with assignments I had to complete. I would sometimes go to his house, and it was there that I met his sister. It was “love” at first sight. I was about 22 and she was 16 going on 17. And so we began dating. In the meantime I attended an interview on campus with The Commonwealth Department of the Navy and was offered a position as a class 1 Engineer in Canberra. Of course this got the tick of approval by my father. A big tick. My son, the Engineer! But what didn’t get a tick was the announcement of my engagement to Bev and that I would go to Canberra with her. I can only say that things got nasty. And so I couldn’t wait to load up my VW Beetle and head off to begin a new chapter of my life, to be later joined by Bev.

My new wife had no difficulty finding a good job. I was earning a good salary and so it wasn’t long before we bought a lovely house. We were off and running, seemingly. But it was not long before I found myself pondering the great questions of life. Is life just work, eat and sleep and more work just to pay off a mortgage? I became bored with my work. I seemed to be missing out on life. Whilst I wasn’t aware of it at the time, everything I did, or decided to do, outside of working hours, needed my father’s approbation. Alas, 1158.889 km wasn’t far enough away from home to eliminate the need to hear “Well done, son.” I was only aware many years after how much that need dominated my life.

I remember one trip driving back to visit my parents on a long weekend. I had made the trip back to Adelaide several times in my ever reliable Beetle, always at night, so that I could arrive at breakfast time. However

on this one occasion I fell asleep at the wheel, travelling at maximum speed for the little VW, 112km/hr.

Subsequent forensic evidence that I was able to piece together to explain what then happened revealed that in falling asleep the two wheels on the passenger side of the vehicle I had managed to drive off the road. In doing so I was then aiming the car directly towards an enormous gum tree alongside the road. I vaguely remember my head being jerked back (remember that I was asleep), my hands quickly turning the steering wheel a quarter turn to the right (to avoid the tree) and then immediately turning a quarter turn to the left (to straighten the car back to the intended direction). Considerably shaken by this, I managed to somehow regain composure and slow the vehicle to a stop. It was then that I exited my car, into the blackness of the night with torch in hand, to find what I could to explain what happened. To ensure I would not fall asleep again, I performed some sprints up and down the highway, all the time shaking my head in disbelief at what had just transpired.

I wasn't awake to jerk my head back, I wasn't awake to turn the steering wheel, first this way, then that. I trembled at the realisation that I had come close to dying again and that I had another encounter with an angel. *But why bother with ME, Lord?*

Gradually my young wife grew in maturity and she one day told me that she wanted to separate. She had had enough of me always trying to please my father in every decision I made, regarding my house, my work, everything. Strangely there was no attempt on my part or my wife's to reconcile. We just agreed to go our separate ways. It was about this time that I was asked to go to the Williamstown dockyards and work there for 6 months to become more familiar with ship refits and upgrading of electronic equipment. Half way through my stay there I was summoned to the office of a senior Engineer to find out how much I had learned, or in my case, hadn't learned or remembered, since graduating from university. Question after question was fired at me and my mind simply went blank. I don't think I could have even told this man what day of the week it was, let alone how to calculate the number of turns of wire to generate a certain inductance value, given the diameter and length of the wire!!

I was instantly taken back to the times that I fled to a corner of the school oval to cry my eyes out. *What's Dad going to say? I failed my test!!* Somehow I managed to see out my 6 months and miraculously I was promoted to a class 2 engineer when I returned to Canberra! But as it turned out, it was a promotion that was very short lived.

Upon returning home to visit my parents one Christmas, I received a rather cool greeting from my father. My dismal experience at the dockyards, my questioning the meaning of life, my separation from my wife, the ever-present quest to perform and please, all converged when I overdosed one night on a hand-full of pills, medication for Dad's blood pressure. He was taking about 12 different tablets a day. I made sure I took several of each.

The guilt resulting from my actions was, at first, difficult to bear. I saw how my break-down affected both my parents. It can't be easy to collect a son or daughter from hospital after they have had their stomach pumped. It can't be easy to have your child psychiatrically assessed at a mental institution. Not once, however, did my father speak of his disappointment in me! That meant a lot to me. My mother was right. Dad loved me, like most dads love their children. He just expressed his love the wrong ways at times!

The department for which I worked had graciously given me time to "heal" but I never did return to my office desk. I eventually found work in Adelaide, albeit drifting from job to job. I took up playing squash, eventually 7 days a week which proved to be both a blessing - and a curse...

Still searching for meaning and fighting bouts of depression, I met a woman, who in 1985, became my second wife. A year or two later she gave birth to our one and only child, a beautiful daughter, who today is a practising psychologist. We bought a house in the Adelaide hills with the intention of renovating it. I must say that between fixing up the house and playing my squash, life in the main was becoming more enjoyable.

I vividly remember one incident which occurred when I was working on the ceiling of our kitchen. I was straddling a step ladder "fiddling" with the very old wiring supplying power to the kitchen light. Unfortunately, the old metal conduit housing the wiring was rusted, and with me pushing

and pulling it cut into the active 240v wire. The next few seconds seemed like an eternity for me because suddenly 240v surged through my body, through one arm, across my chest, out through the other arm. My body convulsed and my hands, now clenched fists, were unable to let go of the wires. Providentially, I had forgotten to tie the metal safety chain that one is supposed to attach to the two legs of the ladder and with all of my shaking the ladder collapsed under me, providing a means for me pull the wiring adrift and break the circuit. I would say I spent the next half an hour on the floor, on my back, with my chest and arms still trembling. Only two weeks later, a friend of mine who I played squash with died whilst drilling through a loose sheet of iron on his roof. He was electrocuted.

Curiously, much like the times I ran home from the school bus stop to watch the Three Stooges, I began to do likewise after playing squash on a Sunday morning, this time to watch Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power* television program. His messages were based on the power of positive thinking. I remember my wife sharing with me that she saw that Mitsubishi Motors in Adelaide was advertising vacancies for electronic engineers. My initial reaction was negative, but my wife kept insisting that I had nothing to lose by applying. It certainly would put to the test positive thinking! Could I do it? Was it THE opportunity for this rider to get back on the horse?

And so, come the day of my interview I wasn't nervous in the least when I was summoned before an interview panel. After all (I kept reminding myself) I had nothing to lose. Just think positively. Well, the fact that I was eventually offered a position was nothing less than a miracle. Bluff and bravado can go a long way, I thought. After this success I even briefly thought of taking up an acting career as a side line but that never eventuated!

After about 5 years into our marriage I suspected my wife to be having an affair. I was doing shift work in the computer department at Mitsubishi at the time, and I could not cope with working at night battling with my suspicions. In due course my worst fears were confirmed. Regrettably my wife was not interested in making a go of our marriage and so we began divorce proceedings. We sold our home which we were having built, and which was only 80% completed, at a huge loss. For a second time I

packed my car with my possessions and wondered what I was going to do. I bought a caravan at a beach camping site and lived there for 2 years, deeply depressed and having walked out of another job (I resigned from Mitsubishi). I became quite suicidal, wondering just how I was going to end my life. I remember harbouring a lot of anger too, anger that was aroused every time I drove my daughter back to her mother's place having spent the weekend with her. It was so hard doing this. My heart almost broke!

One day, which was another day filled with self-loathing, despair and anger, I was constrained to kneel and pray. I had never done this. I asked that God give me a forgiving heart towards my wife for any part she played in our divorce. I asked that He take away the anger I harboured towards her. And I asked God to forgive me for not only the part I played in the breakdown of my marriage but for the times I failed to recognise, and thank Him for, His protective arms around me in the past. I began to weep uncontrollably, but they were tears of peace and assurance. My anger towards my wife was suddenly replaced with thoughts of love and kindness (they remain to this day). My suicidal thoughts were relegated to the past, my despair replaced with hope.

Upon thanking the Lord and rising from my knees, I was impressed to open a small cupboard directly in front of me at eye level. When doing so I found a Bible which was given to me by my final-year university lecturer as a wedding gift. I had obviously kept the gift but I had never read it! That marked Day One of my study of the Bible.

I had for a short time been receiving and reading the Plain Truth magazine – Herbert W. Armstrong – Worldwide Church of God. I decided to investigate this church and see if there was a local congregation. There was, and so I started worshipping with them. I studied for baptism for 12 months, after which time I asked when baptism would ever take place. I was told I wasn't ready to be baptised so I decided to do what, I think, many would do – I stopped attending church! However I did continue to read their magazine and study their doctrines and became convicted on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day being the biblical Sabbath. They also did not go along with the teaching of the Trinity.

My next spiritual encounter involved a squash mate of mine. He visited



me one day and invited me to his church (a Sunday keeping, Pentecostal Church). He had recently become a Christian. I agreed that he pick me up one Sunday morning. On the way there he asked me what was wrong with my eyes; they were red and sore from my constant rubbing of them to try and alleviate the irritation caused by pterygium (a growth of pink, fleshy tissue on the conjunctiva) in both eyes. These growths needed to be surgically removed and I had yet to arrange a time for this to be done. I can't tell you much about the sermon I heard presented that Sunday morning, but I was intrigued to find so many people coming up to me asking if I had received the Holy Spirit and whether I spoke in tongues.

The same played out the following week when my friend and I again attended. This time an appeal was made from the front for any who would like to be baptised to come forward. I nervously made my way forward and was duly ushered into a changing room where I donned a baptismal gown. Two others candidates were with me. As I awaited my turn I offered a silent prayer to the Lord. I recall saying that I wasn't sure in my mind that I had chosen the right church, but that I so much wanted to publicly declare my decision to accept Jesus Christ into my life. I finished the prayer by asking if He could in some way acknowledge that He had heard my prayer. It was a decision to commit my life to Christ, and not to this church necessarily. When my turn came, I clearly remember being fully immersed in the font and when being assisted up from under the water immediately wanting to clear the water from my eyes. I hesitated because I did not want to touch my eyes, red and sore as they were. But wait. My eyes felt different somehow. I blinked once and then again. They weren't sore any more. The irritation in both eyes was gone. My eyes had been healed!

I never attended that church again. The Elder's vain attempts following my baptism to coach me in the art of speaking in tongues certainly had something to do with this! Green as I was as a Christian, I knew that this was not scriptural. In due time I became more and more convicted on the Sabbath truth, and I decided to give up my Saturday squash. Even though I lived and breathed squash, more so on Saturdays, this decision was easier than I thought it would be. Not only that, if I couldn't or wouldn't play on Saturdays, I might as well give up the sport entirely! The god of sport had to endure an insulting backhander the day I collected all my

medals and trophies that I had accumulated over the years and tossed them all into the recycle bin. I sought a crown that wouldn't tarnish!

My search for a church continued. Why not consult the Yellow Pages, I thought. A for Anglican. No. B, Baptist. No. And so it went until I saw S, Seventh Day Adventist. Mmm. Seventh Day. Now that sounds good. Could be a cult, but I have to start somewhere! I'll never forget the surprise (and shock) in the Pastor's voice when I rang the number listed in the phone book. He could not believe it when I shared with him that I wanted the address of his church so that I could attend the following Sabbath. I probably saved the Conference a few thousand hand delivered fliers!

I started attending the nearest SDA church with my daughter. I was accepted as a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church on confession of faith. My daughter was baptised when she was 12 (but, sadly, she is no longer in the faith).

In 1996 I remarried (number three, if you are counting). I had prayed and prayed that I would find a God-fearing woman!

In 1998 we met up with Jonathan Gray, a Bible archaeologist and author, and he asked us to work with him in his ministry. This we did for about 8 years, during which time we came to an understanding of the Father and His Son, through the presentations of such men as Pr David Clayton, Pr Allan Stump, Fred Allaback and others.

In the year 2000 I went to the Middle East to verify, as best I could, the veracity of the discoveries of Noah's ark, the Red Sea crossing, Jesus' tomb, and Sodom and Gomorrah. I can appreciate the controversy that still surrounds the Ark of the Covenant discovery, but regarding this claim only time will tell - one way or the other.

It was about this time, and with a heavy heart, that I withdrew my membership from the SDA church. In hindsight certainly not the wisest choice, but my wife and I found it hard to ignore the lowering of standards regarding worship, dress and health reform, and the preaching of the idea that we will continue sinning until Jesus comes. Our Christian experience was suffering. Oh, how easy it is to become judgmental of others! Nevertheless, this is how our small Home Church began.

In 2005 I went to Kenya. I went to investigate for myself whether financial aid that was being sent there was being received by the nominated recipient/s. Jonathan had gone there a couple of years earlier to share the discoveries and now there were many pastors and lay preachers asking for financial help. True, I had come to an understanding of the Father and the Son truth but I went (supposedly with the understanding) that I was not called to preach or teach. My Kenyan host had other ideas when I arrived; all I did was preach the wonderful truth of our heavenly Father and His only begotten, literal Son! It was such a blessing to have captive audiences everywhere my host took me. It wasn't until I arrived back home in Australia that I learned that Jonathan's wife, Josephine, had come to hear about me preaching on the Godhead. Let's just say that for the last 15 years I haven't been her closest friend.

These same 15 years, whilst I have lost a lot of friends in the Church, have been the most rewarding in my life. The truths about the Father and the Son, the Channel of Blessing, Headship and Submission, the Covenants, The Statutes and the Judgments, the Feast Days, The Character of God, they all dovetail together beautifully! When it comes to the character of God, I have learned so much from people like Fred Wright, Graham Maxwell, Greg Boyd, Timothy Jennings, Robert Weiland, and of course Pastor Adrian Ebens. The trinity, Feast Days and the Character of God were subjects I had studied before I came across Pastor Adrian's web site, Maranathamedia.com. However, I have learned so much from this dear man that sometimes my head spins! My wife must get tired of me shouting out, when we listen to Pr Adrian's presentations, "*Preach it, Brother!*" I am glad to know that he does not tire each time I text him the same three words!

I praise our heavenly Father for the spiritual insight and understanding of Scripture that he has given to Pastor Adrian. He has authored many books, all of which I have voraciously read, and they have blessed me greatly. For example, his book *The Return of Elijah* revealed to me just how much performance-based thinking can distort a correct understanding of Bible doctrine. It helped me that God's love is unchanging and forever pure towards us; it's not what we should do or not do that "wins" God's favour:

*"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his*

*riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. Jer' 9:23,24*

Most of my life I have gained value based on performance! How precious and liberating to know that it's not about my works or lack of, but rather it's all about me accepting God's invitation to have a relationship with Him and His only begotten Son!

Another book, *Divine Pattern*, illustrates beautifully how God intended that all of creation, including man, follow a divine pattern of source and channel. Those in authority are in a position to bless those who are submissive to them, but sadly in this modern world submission is thought of as a weakness. But when we see Jesus in perfect submission to His Father, we see that it is perfect strength! Of course, I'm not talking about situations where authority is abused.

*Agape* is another of Pr Adrian's books which goes a very long way towards helping me better understand many of the very difficult passages found in the Old Testament, in the sense that we find it hard to accept a God who commands the death of men, women and children as a loving, merciful God. Fred Wright, another Seventh-Day Adventist, was the man who, some 20 years ago, first caught my attention regarding the character of God message, but he openly admitted that many scriptures in the OT were beyond his level of understanding to reconcile with the picture of gentle Jesus, meek and mild, found in the NT.

The last book of Pastor Adrian's that I wish to single out (there are so many!) is *My Beloved*. Perhaps I'll just quote the last paragraph of that book to convey what sort of blessing becomes mine when I shift my gaze from ME and MY performances and failings to Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith:

“So, in Jesus Christ, my joy is complete. As I behold my mighty Prince and see Him clothed in His Father's agape love, I am overcome with delight. I am finding rest for my soul and indeed found His yoke easy and His burden light.” (*My Beloved*, p 138)

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS.

Before I leave you, dear Reader, with quotes from the Bible and the inspired writings of Sr White that have had an impact upon me in my journey, I will share some thoughts as I reflect on my life as a whole.

Whilst many years of my life were spent in the depths of depression, I consider myself a blessed man. Yes, there were times that I wondered whether a gun, a train or another go with pills (more suited for the job than last time) would be the chosen method to end it all. I certainly do not consider myself mighty, wise or rich, so I cannot glory in these, but I do glory in understanding and knowing my heavenly Father and His Son enough to realise that They do not judge or condemn me for my failures in life.

Given this reality, I still have scars from the past. For example, I still find it daunting to pray in public. Whenever I am in a group setting I succumb to self-consciousness. I rarely go for a jog just to enjoy the experience – I can't resist the temptation to beat my previous time for the distance. All very much performance based I must confess! I still am prone to depression from time to time, although I am able, to a degree, to camouflage it.

That said, I rejoice in still being alive at this time of earth's history. I want, by God's grace, to allow the Spirit of Christ to "worketh in me, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" and to enable me to be the husband, father and disciple of Jesus He wants me to be. "THAT will be glory, be glory for me!"

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*"The convocations of the church...are God's appointed opportunities for giving the early and the latter rain."  
— RH 1897- 03- 02*

*"The closing words of Malachi are a prophecy regarding the work that should be done preparatory to the...second advent of Christ. This prophecy is introduced with the admission, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb*

*for all Israel with the statutes and judgments.” — Southern Watchman 21/3/1905*

*“In these last days there is a call from heaven inviting you to keep the statutes and ordinances of the Lord.” — ST 2/3/1888*

*“Christ gave to Moses religious precepts which were to govern the everyday life. These statutes were explicitly to guard the 10 commandments. They were not shadowy types to pass away with the death of Christ. They were binding upon man in every age as long as time should last. These commands were enforced by the power of the moral law and they clearly and definitely explained that law.” — RH 5/6/1875*

*“Deut 4:8. How many pass over these words of Moses as though they were meaningless, and continue to heap reproach and derision on divine institutions. How many trample on the divine law, the righteous judgments and statutes which were committed to God’s ancient people?” — ST 1887 25/8*

*“Let all who possibly can attend these yearly gatherings. God requires no less from His people in these last days. Come brethren and sisters to these **sacred** convocation meetings to find Jesus. He will come up to the feast. He will be present and will do for you that which most need to have...these meetings are of importance.” — 2T 573-576*

*“Anciently the Lord instructed His people to assemble 3 times a year for His worship....In the days of Christ these feasts were attended by vast multitudes...The Lord saw that these gatherings were necessary for the spiritual life of His people. If the children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy blessings, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict.” — 6T 39,40*

*“The great Creator assembled the heavenly host, that He might in the presence of all the angels confer special honour upon His Son... The Father then made known that it was ordained by Himself that Christ, His Son, should be equal to Himself.” — 1 SOP 17*

*“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate, a co-worker... Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God was one with the eternal Father – one in nature, character, purpose, the only Being in the universe that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God.” — PP 34*

*But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. — 1 Corinth 8:6*

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. — John 17:3*

*“We want the holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ. If we commune with God we shall have strength and grace and efficiency”.  
— Lt 66 1894*

*And because ye are my son, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father. — Gal 4:6*

*“A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character.” — MH 409*

*“The law is the root. The gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.” — COL 128*

*“Almost but not wholly saved means to be not almost but wholly lost.” — COL 118*

*“He who has not sufficient faith in Christ to believe that He can keep him from sinning has not the faith that will gain him an*



*entrance to the kingdom of God.” — Lt 21 19/12/1897*

*“When we reach the standard that the Lord would have us reach, worldlings will regard SDA’s as odd, singular, straight laced extremists. — RH 9/1/1894*

*“Holiness is within reach of all who reach for it by faith.”  
— MS 113 1902*

*“The truly converted man has no inclination to think or talk of the faults of others.” — RH 24/11/1904*

*“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. Into the darkness of this world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth....the last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.” — COL 415*

*“The condemning power of Satan would lead him to institute a theory of justice inconsistent with mercy. He claims to be officiating as the voice and power of God, claims that his decisions are justice, are pure and without fault. Thus he takes his position on the judgment seat and declares that his counsels are infallible. Here his merciless justice comes in, a counterfeit of justice, abhorrent to God.” — ChTri 11.4*

*“Those who would behold this glory would be drawn to love Jesus and to love the Father whom he represented. Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the **whole purpose of his own mission on earth,— to set men right through the revelation of God.** In Christ was*

*arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, "I have manifested thy name." "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." **When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men.***— ST January 20, 1890, par. 9

*"But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth the great principle which is the law of life for the universe. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life."— DA 21.2*

*"God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy. Justice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love. It had been Satan's purpose to divorce mercy from truth and justice. He sought to prove that the righteousness of God's law is an enemy to peace. But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin*

*could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan's charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love.” — DA 762.4*

*From Sermon 20 of A.T. Jones, 1893: “The Sabbath being the sign of what Christ is to the believer, will the believer know fully what the sabbath is until he knows fully what Christ is? So then, when the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ has absorbed all of the mind itself, then the Sabbath will be also known fully to the mind itself.” THEREFORE IT WILL BE PROCLAIMED MORE FULLY!*

*“But we see that the God of heaven sometimes commissions men to teach that which is regarded as contrary to the established doctrines. Because those who were once the depositaries of truth became unfaithful to their sacred trust, the Lord chose others who would receive the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and would advocate truths that were not in accordance with the ideas of the religious leaders.” — Letter 38, 1896*

*“But as men's minds become narrow, they think they know it all, and set one stake after another in points of truths of which they have only a glimpse. They close their minds as though there were no more for them to learn, and should the Lord attempt to lead them on, they would not take up with the increased light. They cling to the spot where they think they see a glimmer of light, when it is only a link in the living chain of truths and promises to be studied. They know very little of what it means to follow in the footsteps of Christ.” — 16MR 123.2*

*“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.” — FLB 111.2*

*Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.— Jer 9:23-24*

*And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. — Gen 3:12*

*In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. — Isa 63:9*

*And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. — Matt 3:17*

*For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. — John 5:22*

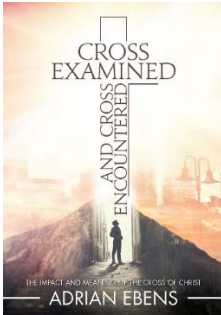
*Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live. — Ezek 20:25*

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. — Romans 12:2*

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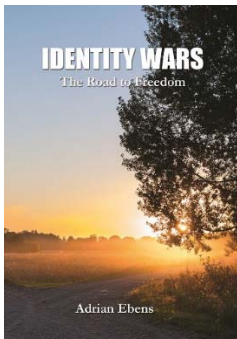
## Suggested Reading from Fatheroflove.info

### Cross Examined and Cross Encountered



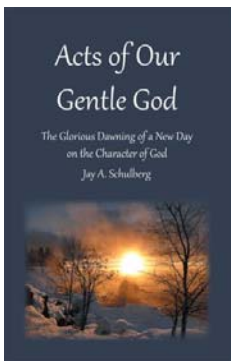
Why was the Cross required and who required it? Why was the Cross necessary for our salvation? Was God's wrath satisfied by the death of His Son? What is God's justice and is it different to our justice? Why did Jesus compare Himself to a bronze serpent on a pole? What does the Israelite Sanctuary tell us about the Cross?

### Identity Wars



Millions upon millions of people struggle with depression every day. The motivation to keep going gets harder and harder and many are looking for a way out. There is nothing that can replace this powerful experience of being told you are loved by someone you respect and admire. Our Father in heaven wants to tell us this every day but Satan has blinded many in the world to look for value in other places and become deaf to that wonderful blessing of the Father - that you are his beloved child.

### Acts of our Gentle God



Acts of Our Gentle God presents compelling evidence from the Bible to exonerate God of the charges that he is uncaring, judgmental, controlling, unfair, bad-tempered, or violent. The book demonstrates that the entire Bible, correctly understood, is in harmony with the definitive statement God is love (1 John 4:8).

# THE UPWARD WAY

The testimony of our dear elder brother Glenn Coopman is living proof that though we had not thought of God, He was always thinking about us, gently leading us on the path towards wisdom. Greatly encouraging is Glenn's account of how God miraculously saved him on one occasion and miraculously healed him on another!

Glenn's father really wanted his son to live up to the standards of this world employing "tough love" to press Glenn to be successful in life. But as we all know, trying to obtain value by performance is a race that never ends. God would show Glenn that this is not what He expects from His children. Through the gentleness of our Father and the living example of His only-begotten Son Jesus, Glenn would find the peace and rest that we all desire, and, most wonderfully, come to see that which was good and pure in the love of His parents, to whom this testimony is dedicated to.