

Spreading the Word: Tony Milekic's Testimony



Spreading the Word

The Testimony of Tony Milekic

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Note on cover: Near Tony's parents' home
around the base of Mt. Buffalo

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My Parents and My Childhood

I was born in 1961 into a divided home. Mum was a devoted SDA and Dad was more of a communist and an atheist. Dad's family was of strong Serbian Orthodox faith. Dad managed to ascend to the top of the Air Force academy despite coming from a very poor home.

At a certain stage he became very disillusioned by the government's ideology, especially when it involved the command to kill civilians. This tipped him over and he plotted his escape to go across the Adriatic Sea to Ancona air base in Italy, using one of his military planes. He had to fly the twin prop under the radar low enough to escape detection, and I recall him saying he got to within 10 meters of sea level and one engine stopped as a result. He had the courage and daring to question mainstream thinking, which later proved to be a blessing.

Soon after he met my mother, who also was on a journey risking her life to flee the country via the steepest Alps in the 3-way border of Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria. They met in a refugee camp in Italy. My mother together with her mother and three younger brothers, through providential circumstances, managed to flee the former Socialist Yugoslavia. It was a very risky, trying and miraculous escape, done all whilst being watched like a hawk by the communist undercover secret service.

As Dad began taking a serious interest in my mother, he decided to have Bible studies, resulting in a hasty "obligatory" baptism in the SDA church in Rome.

My grandmother, at the age of 58, through reliance on God's guidance and protection, was in charge of this escape venture. She had an unswerving faith, as years before Communism came to rule the country she bravely stood for Adventism whilst working as a literature evangelist in Dalmatia, along the Adriatic coast. She providentially escaped boiling water being poured

over her whilst canvassing Adventist books in the narrow streets of Dubrovnik (now Croatia). Her stories of our Heavenly Father's protection in Grandmother's experiences during her canvassing work buoyed my Mum's spirit her whole life.

After arriving in Australia by ship, my Dad, sadly, because of pressures from his family relatives, renounced his open interest in Adventism.

For a while I lived in a home where there were at least 6-8 or more family members and children all living under the same roof due to refugee hardships. Here I witnessed my Mother's pain as she endured much family hostility due to her faith. There was constant animosity and provocation towards my mother. My Dad grew cynical and cold towards my Mother. I mocked my mum as well, and as a young boy I naturally gravitated toward my Dad and his ideological leanings. The carnal nature despised the spiritual nature of my Mother.

By God's providence, there was an SDA elderly couple who picked Mum and me up every Sabbath to drive us to church. Their sweet, caring and supportive attitude stayed with me for years. Regardless, at about 15 years of age I declared I didn't wish to go to church with Mum anymore. The "freedom" I wanted didn't bring me any freedom at all. In rebellion, my perception was that everyone was trying to control me. However, my heavenly Father knew that I had to go through the "school of hard knocks" to appreciate the gospel. "Where sin abounds, Grace does much more abound..." (Romans 5:20)

All during the next few rebellious years I was to see the hand of God thwarting my attempts to destroy my life. I'll share a statement that describes this perfectly:

Yet do not therefore conclude that the upward path is the hard and the downward road the easy way. All along the road that leads to death there are pains and penalties, there are sorrows and disappointments, there are warnings not

to go on. God's love has made it hard for the heedless and headstrong to destroy themselves. It is true that Satan's path is made to appear attractive, but it is all a deception; in the way of evil there are bitter remorse and cankering care. We may think it pleasant to follow pride and worldly ambition, but the end is pain and sorrow. Selfish plans may present flattering promises and hold out the hope of enjoyment, but we shall find that our happiness is poisoned and our life embittered by hopes that centre in self. In the downward road the gateway may be bright with flowers, but thorns are in the path. (MB 139)

I went to Naturopathic college where an SDA many years later told me that, despite my “loose” lifestyle, I often defended “the Creator” in the biology lessons. Seeds sown by my mother never died!

An elderly lady in class sensed my beliefs and invited me to meet her son, 3 years older than me, who introduced me to the “Young Liberal Party.” He also had many religious and conservative perspectives. Here were shared ideas about the NWO, later to take hold on me. His mother was a World Wide Church of God believer. She sensed some Sabbath upbringing in my home. The influence of her son helped keep me sober during those years where girlfriends, fast cars and bikes could have ended my life quickly. As I look back, loving and caring Christians were always close by to keep the conscience alive and active. Father’s checks and balances, much appreciated, were working behind the scenes.

Christmas 1993 – my best friend, Michael, and I were planning to travel together interstate, but didn’t. He had an accident while driving with his girlfriend, and died in a fatal head on car collision on Christmas Eve.

After losing Michael I was shattered. I dealt with the aftermath of identifying his body (trying to spare his mother from the pain). Because of this, my self-centredness and worldliness took a small turn and I sobered up.

We both loved motorbikes, and I remember during these years starting to capitalise on my abilities. I recall taking my new off-road bike some 400 kms east of Melbourne to the personal mechanic of the Kawasaki race team. He kindly offered for me to stay the night due to the long distance I travelled. At dinner time he kindly reminded me that “we pray over our food.” I felt the conscience being pricked. Then he told me he was an SDA! I was blown away but still ignored the Lord’s call to “come home.”

Michael and I both had SDA Mums, and we both “rebelled.” Looking back I feel we pulled each other completely away from God. To this day I wonder if in God’s plans for me to return to Him it was necessary to “part” this way. I still feel guilty at times over his death. I thank Father He doesn’t condemn us for our failings and faults. Sometimes I still feel pain regarding the choices we made together.

I’ll get back to this but my next real divine intervention and near-death experience came when I was at the age of 23 or 24.

The Awakening

I loved fast bikes and was well known for frequenting the famous Kew Boulevard in Melbourne for weekend “street scraps and boy racing.”

One day coming home from the gym after a heavy workout, I stopped at an entrance ramp intersection of a large freeway. My road was the overpass road. As the lights turned green, I accelerated away between the two cars going my direction heading towards the next intersection, awaiting the opposing

set of lights on the next exit lane to turn green. I knew the traffic cycle well. As I was about 20 meters from the traffic lights, my eye caught a car exiting the freeway [on my left] late in their Amber/red cycle, attempting to turn right. That is right across my path! Whether I was early or he was running the light I'll never know, but I heard a distinct voice to "let go!!"

I hit the car in the rear passenger door so hard it flung the car around and I went over the car through the air 90 meters, witnesses and police say. I barely, if at all, hit the brakes. The hit was so hard I broke the ribs of the kid sitting in the back seat. My latest model bike was now only worth the wreck price: \$500.

If I braced myself I probably would have gone "through" and not over. Instant death. The speed of impact was estimated at around 80-100 kph.

Miraculously I regained consciousness and a passerby, who was a riding acquaintance who happened to recognise my bike, came to my aid. I managed to get a few words out pleading him to go home and tell my folks I was ok! Then I collapsed back into unconsciousness. Needless to say when he arrived at my home carrying my damaged helmet in his arms, my parents melted. I drifted in and out of consciousness in the ambulance, and I remember the ceilings of the hospital whizzing past.

I recall Father and Mother's distressed faces peering over me. This broke my heart as Dad was a "tough cookie" and never showed emotions. Mum's painful look pierced my soul as well; it was enough to remind me of her inner pain – flashbacks of seeing Mum on her knees in tears praying out aloud by her bed side for me, and there was a God looking over me! It used to pull on my heart sometimes coming home finding her in prayer, but I resisted her prayers and love. But this sobering experience caused my spiritual ears to begin to be more receptive.

Unbelievably, I was discharged with only a hair line fracture to the scapula and a body badly bruised and scraped.

And he said, ‘Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’ (Act 9:5)

There was a special reason I was a gym junkie. I once got caught shoplifting with my best friend Michael before he died. Dad bailed me out, assuring the Policeman I was an honest kid and that he would take the discipline in hand. As police recognised “old school” discipline coming, they issued me with a written warning.

Now dad’s character shone as he contemplated how to best handle my “consequences.” In a few following days he said my “punishment” was to join a gym; we would go together and bond more. What a gesture of Rom 2:4. I was gobsmacked. “I delight in mercy, says the Lord.” (Micah 7:18) This proved to build a bond and lifelong benefit for years to come. These seeds of kindness would spring up later in life in my understanding of theology. Though dad sounded tough in his heart, I saw attributes of God’s unconditional love and forgiveness.

I left university in my restlessness. Being unemployed and dissatisfied with where I was at, I voiced my frustration at an SDA friend’s wedding. The conversation was overheard by an SDA who offered me to work with him. It was heavy labour (water tank building job). Our friendship grew, even though I was not a churchgoer. He helped me through my grief. He knew my friend Michael, which helped a lot in gaining my trust. He would bring spirituality into our personal discussions at times when I was receptive enough.

Around this time my sister, who is ten years younger than me and was very close to me, started to go through teenage “turbulence” around the age of 14. Later on my father and mother were to split up for a short while and my sister went to live with my mother. This was about 3000kms north of

Melbourne. She had many “runaway” attempts and sadly even an attempted suicide. Our family friend who was a Naturopath managed to get to her “overdose” in time.

(This naturopath’s husband Dusan, who I would meet many years later, was providential in encouraging me to look into the subject of God never using violence to solve the earth’s problems.)

During these hard years, dad asked me to “do what it takes to get her [my sister] on the right track.” I got a glimpse of the difficulties in dealing with a “wayward will” and the frustration of not having the “tools.” This was a valuable insight that would help me later in my theological struggles about the “methods” Father above uses to win over hearts from sin.

One weekend, an off-duty policeman who was watching my racing on Kew Boulevard, Melbourne for several weeks, finally pulled me aside and identified himself. He respected my abilities on the bitumen. Instead of getting the book thrown at me, he quietly suggested I convert my “energies” and get some direction in life by joining the police force. “I can see you are an honest and good fella!” he said.

The seed was sown. I was rocked and again heard the “call” to “settle down,” and had another “close call” which ended in mercy being shown.

I was on my way back from the gym and took the Boulevard way to home. I met a fellow friend who had a new bike and he thought to push me a little. I lost the rear end of the bike in a spectacular slide down the road at high speed and slowly landed in the gutter down the road. I only had leather jacket on top and throw on cheap jeans. The bitumen went through my wallet and into my butt and legs, causing terribly deep abrasions.

My old World Wide Church of God friend from naturopathic school lived around the corner (she was a nurse), so I managed

to “bandage” the bike and drag myself in pain to their place. Here I received treatment. Her few words of “don’t press your luck” hit home. Foolish but super determined me, I tried going to work the next day for my tank construction job. The pain and infection grew so much I was admitted to hospital by my SDA boss. How our iniquities and choices affect everyone around us!

I was reticent to pursue the advice of the policeman, as a riding buddy and neighbour was a policeman that was fatally shot through the head whilst on duty on his motor bike. But my life had no direction or meaning, and it was peppered with grief and restlessness, so I decided to apply.

After the first attempt to join the Police force was rejected because of my “traffic record,” through much prayer by Mum on my behalf I was asked to come back and get re-interviewed. Later I was told by one of the members of the Police panel that I presented myself so well in my interview that they thought they would give me another chance to prove myself!

They actually tore up my paper record. Does this sound familiar to the honest Christian? Wow!! So, mercy shows its hand again! This translated to me being known to be fair and honest later in my traffic duties, with the least complaints from the public in my Traffic Department.

My mother was deeply concerned for my sister and prayed earnestly for her and even sought counsel by taking my sister to visit Pastor Glenn Coon. Mum and sis were living way up in the north of Australia and Mum wanted to bring my sister down to big camp at Avondale for the youth meetings, feeling that interaction with spiritual youth would help her.

I was not much in contact with Mum during this time, so she took me by surprise by inviting me to visit with them at the Australian Avondale camp meetings. She hoped I would be able to help my sister as well.

I visited a respected uncle in QLD who simply and bluntly told me to “get my life sorted and find God.” He saw I was directionless. During my upbringing this uncle took a lot of interest in me and played with me; I never forgot this and therefore had respect for his words. I decided to go meet my mum and sister at Avondale.

I rode as fast as possible to arrive at Avondale. Something drove me to “save” my sister and be a support to Mum. Yet the unbearable part was that I had to go near Adventist folk.

Finally, late on Sunday afternoon I did arrive but the meetings were over and all the people had left! My mother and sister were the only ones there, except for the kitchen staff. On arriving, a disagreement almost caused me to immediately turn around and head back to Brisbane! My mum rushed to the kitchen staff, asking them to kindly prepare a “large plate” of my favourite food, which simmered me down. “The path to a man’s heart...”

I went for a long walk with my sister to see what bothered her, and what “big brother” could say or do to steer her in the right direction. While the two of us were gone, Mum was left alone. Some of Mum’s friends had come down to visit relatives who lived close by to the Avondale Campgrounds, and they were impressed to come at that very time for a walk. Mum was so pleased to see them and kept praying that I would return in time to meet them before they left, which happened.

In my desperation to “save my sister” I engaged in conversation with these friends. They sensed that I was in a lost state and we talked long into the night. In retrospect I kind of felt like Nicodemus seeking answers and direction. They invited us to go with them next day to Woy Woy to visit their friends. To this day I have never forgotten his chat with me and his kind tone helped me in my discourses with sis.

It was at Woy Woy that I later met Blair Andrews (friends of the above couple) and his ministry team in a private home, who later were to be a huge influence on my life. His brother John

welcomed us in for lunch while awaiting Blair's return from Sydney. I was confronted with the "vegan" health reform message. *Wow nothing to eat*, I thought, as each time I mentioned my favourite food John reminded me what it had in it. Any health understanding that I had from my gym junkie days and training with the Australian Canoe team was cut to shreds.

Yup, a full blown, can't eat anything, vegan lunch. Every time I opened my mouth about my understanding of good food and nutrition, I was given information to try and convince me of the error of my ways.

The Conversion

On another day, Blair suggested I watch some videos while he went out to do something. I still remember the video - "Inroads to Spiritualism" by Jim Arrabito. As I was really into Heavy Metal and Rock music of all sorts, I listened intently to what was heart penetrating conviction. Jim's infectious and powerful pleas got my attention. Something twiggled.

I asked Blair what was in this house and he showed me a room with a large printing press. Here I saw many magazines called "The Morning Star" and lots of tracts, all on health and current end time issues. I asked how he financed all this and he exclaimed seriously but kindly, "The Lord provides." At this point he opened a mail envelope and a large money order was in it and he said "there you go!!"

This blew me away. Real faith! I was invited to come and spend New Year's Eve together. I did, expecting some sort of party or something. Well there was a group of 15-20 young folk all gathered around singing scripture songs!! What! But there was a spirit there that touched me.

Chris, one of his fellow printers, gave me a series of tapes on Christian character development called "From Glory to Glory" by Pastor Stephen Wallace. This further riveted me, together with reading all Blair and his brother John's articles in their Morning Star magazine. They invited me to help out with the printing and proof work. I would take time off to travel 1000 kms interstate to help their ministry from there on. I became convicted. At this time in my restlessness I had been a member of the Police force [which I enjoyed immensely] since the age of 25. I was nearing 27 at this point.

Eventually I returned home; mum had come back to live with dad and now my convictions hit a crisis. I was much closer to dad than mum. This was my first test of faith and standing for truth.

Dad sensed I was going with mum to church and asked me why I didn't come to discuss with him my convictions. I briefly shared with him that the NWO was coming and the typical SDA end time scenario. He was disappointed he couldn't persuade me to "let this fanaticism go."

My father was vocal about me picking up a "fanatical religion" and was not impressed in the least with my new found faith. He would often try to inject doubts into my understanding of the Bible. He confronted me with a statement which was to rock my belief structure and lead to my discovering the "Character of God" understanding:

"Well son you believe in Christ, then turn the other cheek.
I believe in 'God' who said "eye for an eye tooth for tooth."

I joined a prayer group on Wednesday nights and eventually got invited into positions where I would lead out. Here one of the group facilitators, Pastor Bruce Price's daughter, introduced me to my wife, Narelle.

She enjoyed the way I was answering biblical questions; I recall a few times her exclaiming "are you for real?" I was very much on

fire, dedicated and serious about my faith in God, consuming many books in my efforts to learn and understand God. I used to also go street witnessing in Melbourne which sharpened my understanding on many Bible topics. There's nothing better than being questioned about your faith and understanding.

Now another huge battle loomed on how to conduct the wedding! Sadly, my father's side of the family despised Adventism, due to Sabbath keeping having a bad name in the Socialist Yugoslavia!

We worked hard to make them proud of us. Finally, after all these years, I "brought honour to the family" due to my career choice. So we settled for a large wedding at the huge Police Academy chapel. It was an old Catholic monastery and church complex which could easily seat 500+. It was impressive and grand. I thought this would present itself as more appealing and suitable. I tried to make it a testimony time, with many special talents singing gospel songs and strict vegetarian fare made up as creatively as we could. The vegetarian food was a mistake in hindsight! Many relatives wanted to smuggle alcohol and meat in and some refused to eat a thing out of spite! It was a very tense time.

My Dad was so angry during the preparations due to all the "embarrassment of religion" etc. He even threatened not to come. But God was now first on my mind. I had my conversion experience and there was no renouncing my faith. This made some impressions on my fellow police colleagues who respected me enough to attend the ceremony at the Academy. This later helped to witness to them.

During this time, I worked night shift in the Police Force in order to accumulate "days off in lieu" of leave. After three weeks I could take 6 days straight leave. This enabled me to go to the Morning Star ministry in Woy Woy NSW. I spent every cent I had to go there and support the work.

At one time Jim Arrabito, an independent minister, did public outreach sessions (of which I helped to organise in Melbourne). I was driving up to support him. About 35 kms south of Sydney on the large Hume Hwy, I briefly feel asleep at the wheel and went into the centre of the road with bushes and trees. I was awoken by a small tree heavily striking the side of my car. I managed to drive out of the centre area and stopped on the side of the road to reflect. It was a close call! Miraculously I could still keep driving. I couldn't open the door though!

The church's reaction to independent ministries started to disillusion me to the point where I nearly left and gave up. Thankfully Blair introduced me to some great gospel materials from Pastor Robert Weiland and then more insights from the 1888 Message Study Committee. These and the passionate heart sermons of others like Pastor Jack Lehman, Lewis Walton and Jack Sequeira gave me hope that within the church there was still those that love and teach real Adventism and the works of the pioneers, particularly the 1888 message.

I began to attend a larger church where I used to share and preach much on the 1888 message. I was also the church librarian and shared much of my convictions, research and studies through this channel. I contacted people overseas in the same message, movement and also in the 1888 message who supplied some tracts and booklets on the same topic. I imported caseloads of books and tracts.

So What's so Special about the 1888 Message?

Waggoner explained it in this way:

The first three sentences that E.J. Waggoner published in book form soon after the 1888 Conference summarise in miniature their "most precious message."

In the first verse of the third chapter of Hebrews we have an exhortation which comprehends all the injunctions given to the Christian. It is this: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." To do this as the Bible enjoins, to consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for "by beholding we become changed."(Christ our Righteousness, pg. 5)

In brief this is how I understand its 4 main pillars:

1. Agape love –Four unique forms of love are found in Scripture. They are communicated through four Greek words (*Eros*, *Storge*, *Philia*, and *Agape*) and are characterised by romantic love, family love, brotherly love, and God's divine unconditional love. The 1888 message "lifted the bar" on true biblical love.

Christ's love is active, not merely passive. As the Good Shepherd, He is continually seeking the lost sheep. Salvation does not depend on our seeking Him but on our believing that He is seeking us. Our service to Him is our believing response to His seeking us. He has taken the initiative. Those who are lost in the end have resisted and despised the drawing of His love. This is what unbelief means.

2. The Nearness of our Saviour – The golden link in all these themes. It means if we don't have a "friend in high places," one who "is tempted in all points like we are," we don't have a Saviour from sin. We need an elder brother who understands our human frailties and battles before he can be the one to correct us. I often reasoned that the fine line between one who "convicts of righteousness" and the one who just tells me my sins, is in

that He first must be seen and understood as my comforter, otherwise correction from “sin” would be destructive and crush me. The law’s “a ministration of death” (2 Cor 3:7) is done to our old man so that then we can then be born again.

Satan accuses to destroy, but Christ, my elder brother, points out to heal, giving us newness of life in our flesh if we let Him.

In seeking lost mankind, Christ came all the way, taking upon Himself and assuming the fallen, sinful nature of man after the fall. This He did that He might be tempted in all points like as we are, yet demonstrate perfect righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh." [Romans 8:3-4] The 1888 message accepts "likeness" to mean what it says, not *unlikeness*. Righteousness is a word never applied to Adam in his unfallen state, nor to sinless angels. It can only connote a holiness that has come into conflict with sin in *fallen human flesh* and triumphed over it. (Robert Wieland, Preface to 1888 Re-Examined)

A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner saw that the teaching that Christ took only the sinless nature of Adam before the fall is a legacy of Romanism, the insignia of the mystery of iniquity which keeps Him “afar off” and not “nigh at hand.”

Sin has been exposed as a self-destructive agent, a virus, and God wishes us to allow His heart surgery to remove this virus before it removes us. Christ and His Father are desperately trying to save us from self-destruction! The wages of sin is death, not some divine being inflicting arbitrary punishments because I don't play by His rules. His ten rules are actually ten design laws with built in consequences. Ten promises awaiting the new covenant experience with them.

3. Universal Justification – It follows that it is difficult to be lost and it is easy to be saved if one understands and believes how good the Good News is. Christ has already taken the whole

human race upon Himself. Christ's sacrifice on the cross is not merely provisional but effective for the whole world. The cross did actually do something for the whole world even before I grasped it and had a change of heart.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

Did ALL mean actually or provisionally?

Did the cross effect something even before I "accepted"?

Thus Christ's sacrifice has justified [acquitted] "every man," and has literally saved the world from premature destruction. All men owe even their physical life to Him, whether or not they believe. Every loaf of bread is stamped with His cross (DA 660). When the sinner hears the pure gospel and he allows the Spirit of Jesus to come into his soul to enable him to believe, he is justified by faith. Like Esau who threw his inheritance away, the lost deliberately negate the justification Christ has effected for them. They do this in many ways, whether it be a refusal to allow the law to show their sins or refusing to know more about Jesus - but it all manifests from a misunderstanding of God due to Satan's misrepresentation of Him that stops reconciliation from happening.

In the 1888 understanding we simply open our heart to receive the faith of Christ that believes and appreciates the truth. For those who have "sinned much" this is tear-shedding good news and produces a heart which loves much. Through understanding the goodness of God they enter into the New Covenant, with praise to God on their countenance bearing the fruit of the spirit to all they come in contact with.

4. The unique and revolutionary understanding of the covenants. The commonly held idea before 1888 was that the covenants were based on time: There were two different methods of salvation, one before and the other after the cross.

This teaching was fraught with confusion and bad news. It's a spin-off from Augustine's understanding called "dispensationalism." It is essentially an oppositional system where the New Testament "dispenses" with the old. But the Old is two-thirds of the Bible! Did Father above waste His ink? Or was there spiritual depth and meaning lost through man's responses and approaches to divine requests and admonitions?

Essentially the 1888 view taught that the two dispensations – Old and New Covenant – were not based on time periods, but two different "experiences." Hence there was only one method of salvation available both in the Old and the New Testament eras – that was through faith in Christ, an experience called the New Covenant. Abraham believed God, and entered into the New Covenant. The Old Covenant continued to manifest in Abraham alongside the New Covenant. When Abraham failed to trust God, the Old Covenant was shown to still exist in Abraham. When He repented, he walked more deeply into the New Covenant. Interestingly both methods {women} "live concurrently". We choose which one we wish to live by. Sarah and Hagar lived concurrently as well and this showed the falsehood of dispensationalism in my mind as well.

The Old Covenant is essentially man's promise to be faithful and the New Covenant is believing God's promise that He will work in us to make us faithful. The Old Covenant is man entering into what he thought was a two-way contract based on his idea that he actually can do what God wrought out with His finger on the tables of stone. In the New Covenant experience Father wants to write them, with our permission, not on tables of stone but upon the heart of the believer so obedience is loved. Like Abraham, his children move between these two covenants, the Old Covenant revealing our sinfulness and the New Covenant giving us mercy, grace and strength to change.

This provides a new motivation which transcends fear of being lost or hope of reward. (Either of those motivations is what Paul means by his phrase, being "under the law.")

People could enter the New Covenant at any time in human history if they believed God; the famous expression “the just shall live by faith” (Habakkuk 2:4) was written and its understanding available in the time before Christ’s incarnation. Inversely, many today live under the Old Covenant because self-centred concern is their motivation. Their walk with God becomes a duty they perform to satisfy God, making the Christian life one of works and “bookkeeping.”

Salvation comes by believing God’s promise to us to be faithful, not by our making promises to Him to be faithful.

Jer 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

All these above points laid the foundation and growth toward the pinnacle of all truths.

I read Robert Weiland’s 46 points of comparison between SDA, 1888 and evangelical gospels. This paper was submitted to the highest authority in the SDA church for review and consideration, The Bible Research Institute. Of particular interest was point # 8.

“God destroys no man, everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed themselves.” (COL 84)

WOW! I ran it by an elderly friend (the naturopath I mentioned earlier) who gave this a “thumbs up.” His endorsement sent me down a journey of great excitement and hardship. I read F.T. Wright’s book “Behold Your God” and felt this was a God I needed to know more about.

Then I was offered for appraisal *Light on the Dark Side of God* by M. M. Campbell and remember distinctly rolling over in bed exclaiming to my wife next to me: “this is it!!” I fell in love with the message.

So the next battle was looming on the horizon. Does God destroy? Yes or no? My answer was “yes, but how?”

My convictions had to go public. Those who know me know I love the truth and am not afraid of sharing it wherever I felt led. Eventually the minister asked me to present my “case” to the entire church. The church had an attendance of over 180 people. Some friends tried to shut down my presentation on the grounds that “Tony is not fit to teach as Sabbath School superintendent or take sermons.”

The meeting lasted about 25 mins before the “cross fire” from the floor erupted. It was chaos!!

“I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mould of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible. Those who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God’s cause.” 1888 Materials 534.3

A short time later I was asked to evaluate Peggy Boyd’s book called *The Wonderous Love of God*. Then after watching some other videos, I remember saying “this all makes sense” and started to share it far and wide. This was the beginning of the Father and Son message, then called “anti-Trinitarianism.”

I was so passionate about the above two messages that I took a few afternoons from work to visit with the guest literature evangelist team sent to evangelise my church neighbourhood. It felt weird trying to “sell” my books to the then Victorian Conference literature team. As a result, at least 4 from the team are Father-Son believers and love the Character of God message.

Paul from Tasmania still hands out books on these topics and does some part-time literature door to door work. He shared his studies with a fair few down there including two ministers and one has accepted the message publicly now.

During this time, as an Elder, Sabbath school leader, church librarian and the sermon roster organiser, I had plenty of opportunities to share both the 1888 message, that God doesn't kill those who disagree with Him, is non-violent, and will not use force or fear. (See fatheroflove.info)

The Power of God unto Salvation

For me witnessing became easy. There were three pillars true Christianity stood on:

1-The identity of God - was Father the true God and "Great Source of All" and did He actually have a literal Son to give? Or was it all just role playing, an act? Who was to dwell in me? The very Life presence and character of Christ through His Spirit? Or some mysterious God the Holy Spirit idea which was so confusing to me.

2. -The character of God - was based on a few new but powerful keys of interpretation. God had a perfect will and a permitted will. Quoting the incorrect one to use as an example of true Christian living would only amplify the kingdom of darkness' methods and spirit.

The Principle: *God sees and describes Himself as **doing** what He **does not prevent**.*

God takes the blame for those evil events done in the realm of His universe even though He doesn't actually author them.

Because love must allow freedom to choose and allow consequences.

Then there was another Biblical formulae often found within a single text itself:

The FORMULA

[Because sin is chosen] *Trouble Results*

God withdraws (allowing the consequences of our actions) = which is His wrath

A classic text to show this in its entirety:

"My /anger/ shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will **forsake** them, and I will **hide My face** from them, and they shall be *devoured*. And many *evils and troubles* shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these *evils* come upon us because our **God is not among us?**' And I will surely **hide My face** in that day because of all the [evil] which they have done, in that [they have turned to other gods]" (Deuteronomy 31:17, 18).

This all then leads to a fork in the road with our understanding of God. Either we see his laws as arbitrary with subjective punishments attached: or laws built into His creation (design laws) with inbuilt consequences.

James says the wages of sin is death. Sin pays its own wages. We are born with a virus of selfishness that, if not dealt with by the master Physician, will take us over a cliff. God actively tries to save us from destroying ourselves. My famous one liner to my unbelieving friends is: don't fear God causing all these evils around us, fear human nature being in charge and hovering over the red button which says "deploy weapons of mass destruction!!"

3.- The Gospel of God- Who takes the initiative? A God who chases after us sinners? What came first, forgiveness or repentance? This would often lead me to know exactly which Gospel framework a person's belief structure was under. A God who has already forgiven us BEFORE we accepted it? Too good to be true? The story of the prodigal son strongly suggests this idea. See how the Father had always been waiting, ready to receive his son with open arms. Pardon is a birthright and an inheritance.

The good news is better than you think! The idea that the Goodness of God leads to repentance is revolutionary to most. Many say fear or hope of reward is how it works but when John 17.3 is correctly understood together with Rom 2.4, our heart melts or hardens in response.

So here is a revised definition of true faith:

Faith is such a heart appreciation of God's goodness towards us that it constrains us to no longer live for ourselves but for Him that only thinks goodness towards us.

After a while most of our church congregation embraced these understandings and our church was recognised by the Conference president as having a "great spirit." In fact he publicly made comments about enjoying my Sabbath School (in the previous church as well) and I personally gave him a copy of *Light on the Dark Side of God*. Even my original church, where the character of God message was first publicly expressed, had many of my sermons and sabbath school classes based on these 1888 principles of understanding. In the afternoons we often used to pull out the old pioneer sermons to bring a revival within our church. This message brought some heavy resistance from some in the church. I was monitored and watched every time I tried to share my faith. Still, as a result many to this day stay in touch and I still unofficially minister to them as a teacher.

In the next church I attended, I shared aspects of my newly discovered faith. Many were interested but there was also a spirit of resistance. A meeting was called in which I was asked to present my case.

I was given 2 days to prepare a 1 hour (to the minute) presentation to “present my case.” This short notice was extremely stressful as I didn’t know where to start in this huge topic. It was in the days of overhead projectors and transparencies. I gave it my best prayerful shot.

As I was used to lecturing to police personnel, the task of presenting wasn't the challenging part. But to do this in a kind and Christian manner under horrible pressures was my test and responsibility, while also cramming enough questions and history so the onlookers were informed accurately. I felt the whole of heaven watching this meeting and how the leadership would respond. The membership was disappointed at the quality of information given to rebut the truth we were sharing.

Thank God for prayers and help in all this crisis to bring glory to His message and identity. Fortunately, it went well, as later the votes swung heavily in our favour. I had it taped and later was demanded to produce the tapes, which I didn’t to this day. They wanted the tapes destroyed, but the hand of God worked on the heart of one of members [a fence sitter] to record them regardless of what they said. Then the head of Theology at Avondale (Dr Steve Thompson) publicly acknowledged the “good spirit” in the presentation and that “Tony's view is not too dissimilar to the church’s position” and that “nobody should be disfellowshipped for this view.”

After he finished his “summary,” I stood up and told the congregation that “at this very hour at least 4 members from the Logan Reserve church, were being disfellowshipped.” One being brother Blair Andrew (and his wife Carolyn), who was instrumental in mentoring me through gospel studies and the 1888 message. He had been studying it at the same time I was,

and we finally agreed it was truth. The other was Morrie, a friend who played his trumpet at my wedding ceremony. Boy did that trumpet echo in the large monastery Chapel being a fantastic witness to my unbelieving attendees.

I felt I had to stand for them and say something in their defence. This trait of mine to stand for something unjust and unfair has often landed me in hot water.

My God got me through this all in the end!! One person many years later and apologised.

During the meeting my church pastor pulled me aside and said that if the voting process doesn't fall the church's way they, will "shut the church down." Here I got another taste of bureaucracy and the wrath of a system out of step with the truth. The minister then uttered these words where I felt it was time to move on: "Tony, it would be better for you to resign than the whole church perish!"

During the closing stages of the meeting, the discipline process saw every church office stripped and within minutes replaced by newer members and side liners. We, as a board, had tried for years to fill positions and couldn't!! The former folk in church office were known for their years of effort and dedication. Sadly, it all flew out the window in minutes. Every person in teaching and leadership position removed!

A senior member on the local conference executive committee, who was newly attending the church, became vocal to shut any expressions down our side offered. It was pointed towards me primarily, "the troubler of Israel." Incidentally many years later he called me one Sabbath morning to apologise and verify back to me that, "the message was all truth" and that he was in the wrong. He was also the nephew of one of the church's senior historians and theologians who was also brought in to these meetings. I was moved by his call because I no longer was attending that church and felt overwhelmed and spent by it all.

Many years had passed and most of those who held the Pioneers' views of the identity of the Father and His Son left, some out of the church and some to the church I was to frequent for the rest of my time in Victoria.

Over time I stuck mostly with the Character of God message and the 1888 message so that I didn't cause controversy. It was easier to relate this to the heart. There was a warmth and practicality to this message that drew people.

I was able to preach in a number of churches. A few churches around Melbourne overruled these attempts and I still managed to take the pulpit. But the gates of opportunity were closing fast.

Most churches I attended in Melbourne threatened me not to spread "heresy." "Tony you are being watched," was told in front of my whole family, and old "friends" even worked behind the scenes to stop me from sharing or taking sermons. At this stage it was affecting my family and children in that "dad was "dividing churches." We struggled to go to churches any more without being told "we want to know your motive is for being here."

It was ironic because we brought many new visitors with us each Sabbath (as you'll see below).

Over the years, our little farm (5 acres with a large organic veggie patch and about 70 fruit trees) hosted over 310 WOOFERS. This stands for "Willing Workers on Organic Farms", a system where international backpackers can stay with you indefinitely and work about 4 to 6 hours a day for free food and accommodation.

I often extended the invitation to our guests to come to church with us on Sabbath. Many after work discussions saw materials and biblical understandings shared and probably about a third, if not a half, of our guests took up the offer to attend church

with us. Many attended our family worship time. Some even came on long holidays with us even if we travelled interstate.

Here is just one example of its outreach power. Michiel P. came from overseas to my farm, if I recall a few times, on his Australian visits, and I took him to some SDA meetings. We had some long chats together. I shared with him both the Father-Son message and some Character of God studies. He then passed these onto Bernhard who shared them with Danutasn Brown who [in response to this along with another who shared with him] took hold of this message with both arms. Danny now works editing for Maranatha Media which is exponentially growing both in the messages' understanding and clarity. The growth in interest around the world is amazing. He will even proof read this. Bless you bro for your work and dedication.

Faith at the next level and its consequences

During my time in the Police force of 15 years, about 9 years I served as an instructor rather than doing regular shift work in the general or traffic duties areas. My nick name in the police force was "Veggie."

There was a huge struggle when I made the decision to honour the Sabbath Commandment, regardless of all the arguments to "be SDA Christian within the Police Force." I felt that to be faithful I had to move from this level of Christianity to a higher understanding of the commitment. I was about to resign when I received a backlash from my non-believing side of the family who were holding me in high esteem, especially after receiving an honorary medal for 10 years of diligent and ethical service.

God came to my rescue. Just when I was ready to resign due to my faith, I was offered a position where I could have a job working Monday to Friday as an advanced police driving instructor. This provided many opportunities, for the next 9 years, to share my faith. As I had two students for the whole week of a two-week course, we got to know each other and often got into deep discussion, even sharing materials and videos.

However, the devil wasn't asleep. I faced a number of challenges from a superior in the police force. He tried every way possible to make my life difficult. I started to find this situation stressful and felt like resigning almost every week.

One day I was called into the office by my Senior Sergeant, and I was told: "Veggie if you want to preach go and ask your own church for a job. While I pay your wages, you will 'preach' what I want you to 'preach.'"

So, in November 1999 I resigned. We had just purchased this farm prior to my resignation. During this time some of my students over the years became fellow workmates and some became SDAs, with one ending up currently as an SDA school Principal in Northern NSW.

Just last month I reconnected with one of them still in the Police Force and shared my journey for truth since "those days" by encouraging him through my new spiritual and theological understandings. He was elated with our 2 to 3 hour discussions on the Character of God, the covenants etc. and felt he was understanding more despite still being in a conservative Sunday keeping church. He promised to watch the Agape video series by Adrian Ebens. This link I think I must have shared and circulated with well over 200 people personally and just as many times on mainstream secular Facebook groups. This, along with Gary Hullquist's professional presentation called *The Loving Wrath of God* and the *Theos* series on YouTube, were what I felt impressed to share to introduce people to our new understanding. Much of these insights were gleaned and

expanded from Pastor Adrian's *Father of Love* Facebook Group and his many livestream bible studies.

My cousin Sasha began to show an interest, and after some lovely chats, private studies and talks with my mum, he listened to Adrian's *Pentagon of Lies* series and it finally convinced him all this was the truth. My cousin began sharing these concepts. The message gave him the right spirit to gain favour with his congregation despite his adherence to the Pioneers' beliefs.

In the time after my resignation from the police, my family and I were attending the SDA Reform Church, especially for the sake my two children who were still at home. I wanted them to have fellowship and enjoy the music and afternoon programs that were very active and nicely planned. Many there respected me when I shared during Sabbath School. But after a year or two, I also got pulled aside and told not to hand out anything nor speak to their children because "I'll confuse them." I wrote a long letter to their then elder explaining ours and the pioneers' position. No reply. They even brought in one of their main leaders to take a presentation designed to diminish my position and that of the pioneers.

It's a small world! This leader had fond memories of my mother when they met in the refugee camp in Italy back in 1960. He spoke of her as a woman of noble character and missionary minded.

He tried to reason away that Christ was only a Son by "declaration" and not by "birth." Indeed, the forgotten Begotten Son of God. Watching my Saviour's identity being dismantled was sad to endure. After all these years of rebuttal to the "begotten son" message, if I had one basic question I would ask: "Was He a literal Son or not?"

The sermon started with Psalm 2:7. I and my family decided it best to silently leave.

Later after the “sermon” he tried to approach me and apologised; I gave him a few DVDS as he said he was open. I later wrote to him personally, but he never replied as he promised he would. Some Sabbaths we would visit another Yugoslav Church as I still had many friends there even before my conversion experience. I was asked to take the lesson there as well, till someone made sure I didn’t preach or teach because of my “heretical beliefs.” I found this very distressing as I knew these people well and now they were trying to shut me down.

Still with heartbreak was some success, such as with my close friend Igor, who took to many of these truths heartily. He still had some sway with the youth leadership and managed for me to take a sermon called ‘5 fatal steps Pilate took in the crucifixion of Christ.’ This sobered the large church youth meeting and left me still to this day in good report.

During these years, I lost a daughter from our home and the faith due to “teenage turbulence,” amongst other issues. Satan was keen to break my home down as well as “payback” for all the activities both online and in literature. It was a stressful and painful time. I was so crushed in spirit to experience this from my own. Fortunately, many later saw what was happening behind the scenes.

I clung to the following verses during these times.

Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD.

Then a sad part of a complete family breakdown occurred.... I was now alone in the very home I envisioned being a sanctuary for end time hardships and living. It was a soul-searching time with a deeper experience with God following.

Reflecting back, I see how Old Covenant thinking on my part, along with the theories only coming into my head, not my heart, all combined to take its toll. I take the blame. I'm reminded to this day of many failings and sometimes the conscience can get overwhelmed. But thankfully my Father doesn't condemn me and the consequences were painful enough. Also the Spirit of opposition was prevalent in too much of my personal ministries work and this brought much resentment.

John 5. 22 "My Father judges [condemns] no man"

Romans 8:1 "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..."

After 6 months of being alone, more disaster struck as I had a high-speed motor bike crash in a freak accident. I hit a fallen tree across an off-road four-wheel drive track and it sent me over the bars for about 60 meters. I landed at the base of the tree in a clump of soil instead of the tree. Wow! This could have been a dead end for me!! If one doesn't believe in angels then one hasn't had a near-death experience. Here I severed a (the Auxillary) nerve which supplies the entire shoulder muscle and the sensory nerves down the side of the arm. Essentially the arm was completely palsied.

After an expensive neuro surgery effort, Melbourne's top surgeon took a nerve from my triceps and "attached" it to make the triceps nerve activate the Auxiliary shoulder nerve. After two major shoulder reconstruction surgeries and a chance that only a few nerve fibres would "take," with much prayer vigils the outcome was fairly successful.

The next year was punctuated with many sleepless months of pain, regrowth and extensive mind-altering exercises to try to retrain the brain how to operate in a new dimension. The mental effort [twice a week rehab and 3x a week water therapy] often crushed me to tears, but there were other motivations springing up to spur me on.

The time off work allowed me to bury myself in more evangelism and study via the internet. In fact the surgeon and the nerve rehab specialist stated my recovery was in the top 3 percent of their rehab patients. I was anointed by a pastor and many folk were praying both for my recovery and for family reconciliation.

There were many other personal family disasters and spiritual warfare experiences where I saw the hand of God work miracles. I also made changes to my perceptions, approaches and understandings as all this was another life changing event. Applying the theory of the character of God message in a more relational way brought many changes. It could certainly fill another book...

This is where my journey intersected with Pastor Adrian more personally. As his conviction blossomed in the Father-Son message and then the Character of God understanding, we interacted more. I fell in love with his Identity Wars series he first shared in the Ballarat meetings in 2009. His personal testimonies and insights on a new paradigm challenged me. But there was a drawing power to his relational and not oppositional approach to these “theological insights.”

I clung to Father above and after listening to many of Pastor Glenn Coon’s sermons on prayer and deeper gospel applications, I moved higher in my faith and Christian experience. I learnt we are all “magnets.” Some repel, others attract!

I also learnt I was missing in my understanding that love had to let go, and I reread the book *Identity Wars* to consolidate my deeper beliefs systems to make sure I was really understanding

how my Father above saw me. The book taught me that I was beloved in my true Father's arms and He holds nothing against me for having a human nature and yielding to it. God graciously asks me to survey my choices carefully in light of the Cross and what it cost the heavenly beings to make possible. The idea that Father allowed His Son to come amongst us evil natured human beings and then to satisfy our need for anger, release and "justice" to die at our hands hit home. The thought that I, a partaker of human nature, crucified the son of God still speaks to me every day.

My wife returned back home after about 8 months away for her own reflection time and this encouraged me to "press on." She too went through some difficult challenges and choices. Father above was working on both of us.

I started to revisit my old church where I last took the entire family (I treasured the memories) and was asked again to conduct a few sermons. The same elder who had "told" the conference about my "heretical" views back at the old church also became a member here and took senior office positions again. He reconciled with me in part on my return so I felt less pressure against me. The old members loved to have me back, and the memories of many sabbath school lessons and sermons prompted them to ask me to take them again.

I felt so unworthy after all I had been through; I barely could muster up the "spirit" to do this all again. But the message when understood and digested does things inside of you that you can't hold back - Mathew 5:10 and 2 Tim 3.11 held me. After sharing some deep insights on the controversial character of God message, I was asked by close friend of the family, Karen, who had also left the last church, to take a sermon on this topic. Once again we faced opposition from some who tried to prevent me from speaking.

The minister was torn because of his members' long-standing respect for me vs the politics elsewhere in the Conference

As a trade-off, I promised the sermon would only be on the topic of the character of God. He seems relieved and happy I wouldn't use the pulpit for my own purposes and views. I assured him of that. I was also sharing this with my accountant at the time, so he promised to come and video the presentation. Because I used to be a PowerPoint presenter and conducted many training and lecturing sessions, I channelled my efforts and abilities to create a nice PowerPoint on this controversial subject. At the time there were only a few sermons around on this topic, let alone recorded in a clear way. I called it "The Wrath of God." I thank Kevin Straub and Denise Grant for their help in assembling some further thoughts and PowerPoint slides to make it appealing to the new viewer.

This elder was so moved he came after the sermon to tell me "Tony the Holy Spirit was with you in a powerful way, and this is truth." About 9 months later I did a sermon called "6 Risks God took in the plan of salvation." On both occasions I put my heart and soul into the preparations and was rewarded by the elder both times [once bringing his wife to listen who rarely goes to church anymore] coming to me after the sermon and thanking me. All three had well over 600 hits so put the little Castlemaine church back on the map so to speak. Here is the link to the first one: <https://youtu.be/qXeJ9fNV2wU>

We sold our country acreage and decided to make a fresh start in Queensland, and also to be closer to my in-laws who were in ailing health.

Before that I want to tell one story about how we survived Black Saturday, 2009 at my former property. It was 48 degrees on the day and 70+ km/hour winds caused fires after being surrounded for three weeks of "resurrecting local fires" and extreme temperature conditions. I'd stay up during the night listening to the updates while the children slept, praying often. Two fires missed my home, one by 100 metres and the other 500 meters.

The New House near Gympie

We bought under what we believe to be providential circumstances and against many odds a property about 2 hours north of Brisbane, near Gympie. God also led us through the trials and tribulations of selling our old property and buying the new one – it wasn't easy!

It allowed us to connect with a group who ran a Bible camp (only 45 mins away) during God's appointed times. Now that was a journey of learning and understanding in itself. Did Father have more blessing in understanding to let loose to this hungry truth seeker? You bet, and it was richly rewarding too, but sadly it caused the loss of more friends but also the gaining of others. A few are still coming along the ride with me which is encouraging.

About 5 months later my wife also left her job, through providential leading and arrangements, to finally land a good full-time job again up here.

The sale of our previous Victorian property was stressful with many sale issues developing weekly. A buyer had come three times to "the table" and withdrew from sale only days before. Talk about wrestling with Father in prayer. But something big was going to come together. In the end we purchased a property in QLD before any sale actually was evident. It was stressful running two very high mortgages.

My 4 days a week income was poor at the time as well making it hard to keep up, though my wife was working. Finally while visiting QLD in the process of settling the new purchase, we received a estate agent's phone call while in QLD and offered a 5 week settlement for the property we wanted to sell. Yeek! The rush to get home pack, burn sell, and give away stuff was overwhelming. We did much prayer and had many friends praying for us.

Sadly, the sale price was about \$40000 less than the original price but the unconditional sale went through despite some legal issues along the way that nearly stopped it.

After 5 trips driving everything to QLD via the 4 cars and trailer that needed to be relocated [including my daughters car and horse] we managed with a large removalist company to relocate. Selling and giving away was exponential. I recall the face book market place ads notifications going off sometimes every few minutes for hours on end. Negotiating and dealing like never before.

The amazing part was that the person who bought the place was so tight fisted regarding paying extra for any of the existing chattels that I ended up making nearly \$18,000 in extra cash to cover the sale price losses. The Lord wasn't finished with us yet. Here is where the miracles came in in an amazing way.

So we actually purchased the new home before selling the old. As the property was actually very steep and similar in size to the old, my wife was ready to give up on the idea. We actually wanted to down size. However the house grew on her a lot (actually love at first sight) and the views just were breathtaking. We prayed on the lawn of the property if it was to be God's will, let it all proceed. There was some near derailing efforts but after being only two days on the market and not actually officially listed, we offered the "start" price.

The sudden purchase allowed the owner to offer us plenty of bargain deals. He even left the furnishing within the house so that I could just walk in and live. This was ideal as my wife's job required her to stay behind for many months still and I needed a place to live immediately.

Now it gets interesting and providential. We were down to the last \$2000 of our "savings" including any overdrafts we had. Now we had to move. We were running two mortgages as well on both homes. I thought we were going to fold financially.

The very day the settlement took place there was a severe hail storm. It was the worst our area had seen in years. Everything was dented, peppered or smashed. Fortunately I took out the house insurance policy to start at 4 pm. The storm hit at 6pm. To cut a long story short the damage was assessed by my insurance assessor at about \$64,000. Wow. My first thoughts were “why God?”

I developed over the years an understanding based on this text that the natural actions and thoughts come from within our human nature and if we don’t respond to them first, what comes next is of the Spirit. Just a thought as this seemed to occur here again:

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. (Co 15:46)

I now say, “Why not God!”

2 months later Cyclone Debbie hit northern Queensland and insurance companies were overwhelmed. I offered the insurance company to manage the contract work myself. I was expecting them to significantly lower the “pay out fee” due to my involvement. They paid out the full assessable amount, and due to some minor trade-offs and negotiation I managed to do all the repairs for nearly half price. Wow. This covered the deficit left by the rushed sale of the first home. It also helped motivate me during discouraging times.

During this time I also receive a small payout for all my challenges and injuries sustained in my bike crash. This then allowed me to alleviate financial pressures and pay off our mortgage.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (Rom 8:28)

One Friday night I was trying to find some more practical non-theological sermons for my wife's viewing and I selected Pastor Adrian's "Sabbath Fountain" sermon thinking it would be a simple discussion on the Sabbath experience. I knew Adrian was "into the Feasts" and I was trying to leave this issue alone. I was also trying to be sensitive to materials to suit her journey at the present. In this sermon a statement took my wife's interest. I also sensed the spirit within me withdrawing because I seemed oppositional towards it, even though a few friends took this message to heart, Igor being one.

Here is the statement that took her interest:

On account of the special honours God conferred upon the seventh day, he required his people to number by sevens lest they should forget their Creator who made the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. III 53.1

I connected with Adrian's sermons due to Blair's influence and because his understanding seemed closer to the 1888 framework. His recent public stance for the Character of God message just elated me. I was torn – but why the Feasts?

We connected more closely to the Father of Love FB group and I began to investigate more fully the doctrines of the Appointed times. I attended a Widgee camp, braving the idea of attending a "Feast" Camp. I was pleasantly surprised and welcomed. I was so excited by what I was learning and experiencing. Then my wife decided to attend with me.

I found Lev 23:2-4 making the Sabbath one of the feasts and Malachi 4:4 to remember the law of Moses pretty clear.

My wife was spiritually fragile and the folk there were a balm for her during her journey. She loved it. We attended nearly every time the camp was on and were blessed with an atmosphere and the Spirit which drew. Well the messages were just something

off this world compared to the hundreds I heard already within Adventism. A breath of fresh air!!

My journey is certainly not over with other family pressures and battles resurrected. I'm still learning not to express things in the typical male information and logic only way, but to express it all into a practical living relational way. This is my challenge to this day. The camp messages and the Spirit of the Father of Love group was based heavily on a relational perspective and all theology had to work in these perspectives.

Sasha reminded me during my job search that the largest driver training complex was actually in Gympie QLD. So I managed to find a similar job as a casual like I held in Victoria, teaching paramedics and school teenagers more advanced lifesaving driving methods. This wasn't without difficulties either, as a former employee was an SDA who felt it acceptable to work on Sabbath doing "educational work." Sadly, the management put a lot of pressure on me, because I wouldn't work on Sabbaths and thinned down my work load as a consequence. However, Father above has plans for me so that I'm not so attached in commitments and workloads.

I featured recently in a news bulletin documentary regarding the school program we run. During a course segment, I shared my life story in regards to the "consequences of crashes," both as an ex-policeman and a non-emergency ambulance officer. I call it the Ripple effect, and often have student shedding tears to my stories of how I was affected in both managing scenes, delivering the "death messages" and the constant ferrying of incapacitated "crash victims" in an ongoing basis.

Sometime after this I took up some Uber driving work which also gave me opportunities to share my faith and engage in conversations. Books were left in the back seats and ready to hand out in the event of discussion in this area. I discretely had conversations and shared materials to the hungry. I also gave

out resources when opportunity arose. This also included links and literature.

I managed to gain the respect of many work mates and two of them I share some resources in light of the CV-19 fiasco. It's also been a great entry wedge into my local community and as a result also share links day and night where ever I can.

I'm now in God's waiting room with some heavy decisions and changes to make. I solicit your ongoing prayers because at times the cross is extremely heavy. I thank God for some humans out there who, like with Jesus, actually step in to help with the cross bearing. But I know have a message that energises my heart again in these difficult and challenging times.

The next chapter awaits....

Blessing to those who read this far. I share books now in Laundromats, Doctor's clinics, and when witnessing in person. I often try to connect with secular groups both on Facebook and even when bike riding, which I do for recreation.

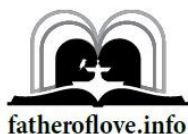
During my conversion years I developed a one-liner to my children and those interested in my faith: "You will spend all your life learning two things: Who God is and who you are"!!

I wrote this to my darling wife in her personal bible she got as a gift on her baptism:

My prayer

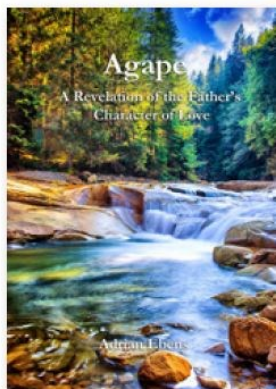
May you love the truth so much that its loveliness shines out so much that those around you will love the truth too.

Blessing in the precious name of the Father and son.



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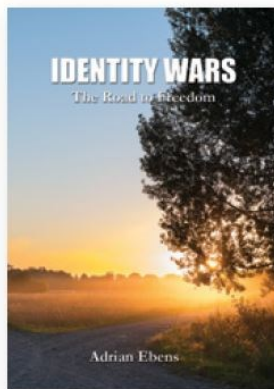
Agape

Take a deeper look at the Bible evidence that the God of the Old Testament is the same as what Jesus revealed in the New Testament. The book is a detailed and systematic examination of the facts that provide a direct way to look at several of the stories of the Bible that have not been previously considered. Just on 300 pages, this is a serious read for those really looking for answers. A great sequel to this booklet you have in your hands.



Original Love

Marriage as an institution is under serious threat. Why do so many people have a bad experience with marriage and relationships in general? *Original Love* looks at the original relationship described in the Bible to see what things we might learn that our own relationships might be enhanced and enriched. 44 pages packed with vital principles for a vibrant marriage.



Identity Wars

Identity Wars is a journey of self-discovery. It is an invitation to learn of your value in a purely relational context. This book reveals the principles that will help you escape the performance-driven mindset of this world and find freedom in your most important relationships.

Spreading the Word

Tony Milekic's Testimony

The Son of Yugoslavian immigrants to Australia, Tony Milekic lived a life in multiple worlds. His mother was strongly religious and his dad was strongly non-religious. He decided to take his own path - riding motorcycles and living on the edge.

But the death of his best friend and his own near-death experiences caused him to reflect more seriously on the emptiness and lack of direction in his life. A chance meeting with some radical young Christians led to conviction and conversion, and he set his mind to walking the narrow way.

A natural evangelist, Tony has passed on what he has learned everywhere he has gone regardless of obstacles. Many of the groundbreaking truths he has shared have been unpopular ones, and his road has been difficult. When the events of life are laid out in heaven, the vast effect of Tony's courageous testimony in the "highways and hedges" will surely be seen.

May the reader be blessed by Tony's journey and the timeless teachings most dear to his heart.