



**The Long and Narrow  
Way to our Father**

**Evelyn Ebens**



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## Preface

As I wander back through my 80 years, I hope you will meet some of the beautiful Christians that helped me along the way.

Our Father God leads us in such simple ways I find, if your mind is open to His Presence. If we reflect back on those moments when He has “touched our lives”, those very moments will spring to life, just as if it were yesterday.

When we ultimately arrive in Heaven, I will be looking for those dear saints who unwittingly were guiding me and revealing our Saviour.

## Dedication

I dedicate these reminiscing's to my husband Abel who has remained steady and true to our mutual Saviour. His cheerful personality has buoyed me up and his firm fathering has ultimately endeared him to his grateful children.

## Bessie's Discovery ... 1940-45

Bessie Naomi Gibbons had always sought for her Saviour, and in her teenage years, she found Him in the old Methodist church of Euroa, in a southern town of Australia.

She nurtured her newly found faith, by studying her treasured Bible but she was looking for truths that she yet did not comprehend.

One night, during the 1940-1945 war, she was listening to the radio, as everyone did in those days. While Hitler terrorized the European countries, the Japanese armies were moving through Asia and south through New Guinea to Australia. Expecting to hear more bad news, Bessie then heard a new program "Voices of the Pacific". The speaker, Pr. Cyril Pascoe and his wife Marie had been stationed on New Guinea, P.N.G. as it's called, when the Australian office called all missionaries to come home. Although in terrible danger, those P.N.G. "fuzzy wuzzy angels" took the boats and tractor apart and hid all those precious pieces, only to rebuild some years later. Pr. Cyril was speaking on a Melbourne radio station and our family are so thankful he did!

Bessie listened to his Bible studies week after week, becoming more and more sure, this was what she was searching for. She sent in a request for more Bible studies, only to receive a call that Cyril and Marie were coming to Euroa to meet her! It was a long trip, about 100 miles to central Victoria, but they did it!

She had been married to Frederick George Smith now for about 5 years. He was away serving in the Australian Army. I was now 3 years of age and loved the little poultry farm belonging to my grandparents.

I remember this visit, and how happy my mother was. At the conclusion of that Bible study, Pr. Cyril took me up on his knee and then taught me how to pray on my knees. He placed me down on the floor gently, and we heard the most beautiful prayer. Why do I remember that experience so vividly, as if it were

yesterday? The presence of God was there, blessing this new venture into faith.

Mother Bessie would continue her studies for 7 years. First, a local colporteur Ms. Sawyer, then when after the war, we moved to a property outside Melbourne, where the President Pr. Forest Hollingsworth continued. She tried to out-smart them, and kept them on their toes to the extent she earned the nickname “Batchelor of Science.” Finally, she did relent.

Meanwhile we were attending the tiny Methodist Church one hour north-east of the city. Our father did attend a few times, but it wasn’t “his cuppa tea” as they say. That minister was such a bright cheery soul. We enjoyed all sorts of special Sundays! I particularly remember the Harvest Festival when the members brought their home-grown fruit and vegetables and jars of jam and pickles. Oh and the baked goodies. These were given to the needy. They celebrated this annual festival, by thanking God for all the bounties and care from their Heavenly Father.

My young brother Milton was now 3-4 years old, and he also loved the special children’s books Bessie bought from Koorong (a Christian Book company). We had the Book Fairs way back then!

Some years earlier she had studied “Elocution” and public speaking, having an interest in Politics. The Methodist Minister, needing assistance, asked her to preach at other churches around.

One Sunday however, at Cottles Bridge, she stunned her congregation, by concluding with the text John 14:15. “If you love Me, keep My commandments” and briefly referring to the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment in Exodus chapter 20 – she bravely told them “and that my friends is what I intend to do – keep the 4<sup>th</sup> along with other nine. I shall not be able to return, as we will be keeping the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath that God sanctified.” Genesis 2:1 and 2.

We children were sitting outside with our father, in the car, when she arrived with her face beaming in triumph. Our father suddenly drove the car very fast, and we wondered what this seventh-day Sabbath was! Keeping Sabbath meant

that our mother was not going to attend all the cricket and football matches anymore. Our father was good at sport, a great bowler and catcher.

It can be quite frightening to other family members when one decides to make Saturday a day of rest, and to spend it with God in fellowship and Bible study. Our poor old grandmother also was confused. At that time, now 1956, television arrived in Australia. When we excitedly told her about it, Granny asked "What on earth is TV? If it has anything to do with the Sabbath, I hate it."

Our father though a builder, was caring for his parent's apple orchard. It took time to build up a business after the war, but eventually he became too busy to plough the orchard. An SDA man, Mr Ellis, was hired and in due course, he discovered our mother was having Bible studies and was not baptized or attending a church. She was afraid of our father's reaction, so she sent me! At 11 years of age I rode my bike down to Hurstbridge station and caught the train to Greensborough church. The Ellis family including 11 children, asked us over to lunch one Sunday which was wonderful. Mr Ellis was a talented engineer really, and had created a mini train, and merry-go-round. Our father was fascinated by the electric gates and loved the vegetarian meal and home-made bread! Their oldest daughter Beverley impressed me tremendously by her sweet Christian demeanour. None of the girls at my school were like this at all. So I say to you, never underestimate your Godly personality. You will be such a contrast to the unkindness found in schools and universities.

My experience in school, was not pleasant, as I was constantly resented for achieving top marks, and quickly learned that "winners are not grinners". Competition is rampant in educational institutions, which can crush students who can't keep up, for various reasons. Everyone has a different type of intelligence, and we all know that the clever originator of Virgin airlines was not a good student. We all have talents and when God reveals to us His plan, you will be amazed at what He can create with you!

In sport particularly, where a competitor finally wins that "big golden cup" he only may hold that position for a very short time. In this world it seems, as in



those dreadful lottieries, the “winner” takes all and no one recognizes the rest of the players. The Son of God can set us free from that slavery to win at all costs, the desire to be admired and respected. To be free from the exhilaration of pride will give us a tremendous victory, and the blissful peace we all crave!

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Lets go back to Bessie on the orchard, who was also gifted with a very pretty soprano voice. She had been singing Irish ballads till now, but on a beautiful clear sunny morning, she began to sing “His eye is on the sparrow and I know He watches me. I sing because I’m happy.” Then there is the line where the melody ascends to the highest note: “I sing because I’m free...” and her voice literally echoed over the surrounding hills! Hallelujah. I could sense the freedom, but it would be some years yet before I would fully realise what this meant.

It was that very week we celebrated our very first Sabbath. Mother Bess planned that we retreat to the back of our property which was thick bushland. She read to us the first chapter of the Bible about that first week of this earth. I believe our angels were with us that day, as she explained the 7-day creation to us, and the 7<sup>th</sup> was set apart as a day to spend with God. We learned to look for His special little creatures in the wild. To recognize birds by their appearance and songs, to observe their habitats and the funny ways of our Australian marsupials and other animals. We found a massive rabbit warren within a tree stump and numerous burrows all emerging from down deep in the ground. To my delight, I found a jewel beetle and its beauty impressed me that only a mighty Creator could design these wonderful things for our amusement.

Most folks have not been shown how fascinating Nature is! If children learnt this, we would have a more peaceful world! My brothers and their sons have become ardent nature lovers. They hike for miles and capture their discoveries with huge telescopic lenses on marvelous cameras! Never underestimate what our forests, lakes, mountains, rivers and marshes can teach us about our Heavenly Father!

## (Sad Bad Days) Our New Walk and Persecution

June 1953 found the Smith family of five (as baby Russell had arrived in 1949) moving to the new home which our clever father built in the suburbs of Melbourne. He was now employed by the new Box Hill hospital and our mother decided to attend the Mont Albert Church, a mile or so up the hill.

We had to walk it as father did not allow us the car. I'm so thankful for our experiences there and being able to learn from those dear people. One lady, Mrs Coombes, has just recently celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Being advanced in piano now, I was asked to play for the Kindergarten Sabbath School where Mum had found her niche. After one particularly interesting story, a cute 4-year-old boy stood up and exclaimed "I love Jesus". Sitting at the piano, my heart leapt with a new kind of hope, which is still with me today. I enjoyed the sermons too, sitting at the church organ. Musicians have front row seats, don't they?

In those days, we enjoyed a Sabbath afternoon program especially designed for the youth, called Missionary Volunteers. The juniors attended JMV's or Junior Missionary Volunteers. We recited a Pledge of Honour and repeated memory verses we had learnt during the week. Our Conference leader often visited and taught us new songs and talked about witnessing to others. We sang jolly tunes from "Elim Choruses" (there were many) such as...

I have the joy joy joy joy down in my heart (3x), Down in my heart to stay

I have the love of Jesus, love of Jesus down in my heart

I have the peace that passeth understanding. (Where?) down in my heart.

Or...

O friend do you love Jesus?

O Yes I love Jesus!

Are you sure you love Jesus?  
I'm sure I love Jesus!  
Then why do you love Jesus?  
Here's why I love Jesus  
Because He first loved me!  
Oh how I love Jesus (3x)  
Because He first loved me!

As you can imagine we nearly lifted the roof with our enthusiastic joyful voices. Those meetings helped our faith tremendously.

Every January, Victorian SDAs would congregate at the Nunnawading Camp Ground, for BIG CAMP. Hundreds of tents in rows housed those who stayed the 10 days and towering over all was the massive BIG TENT. There were special large tents for every age group, and special meetings had been designed to their spiritual enjoyment. Bus trips and social activities occupied the young, while the adults settled into Bible study and news of the missionary efforts on the Pacific Islands. We were so blessed to have Pr Mead and his assistant Bro Martin, who organized the 'Best Saturday Night in Town'. We all drove in cars to enjoy these great occasions. Bro Martin was our choir leader and Pr Mead, being an artist, often drew pictures to music. How blessed we were. They called for us to give our hearts to Jesus, which I did. After the Bible studies required, my brother Milton and I were baptized.

Our home was far from being a happy one, and for some reason I became a prime target. When I was quite young, eight perhaps, I had taken apples from a box in the shed. My father picked up the horse harness and belted me all over with it. He was obviously cranky about my mother. Covered with red welts I hysterically climbed a tree, slipped and fell on my chest on the way down and though lying there screaming for help, no help came. A child does not forget mistreatment, and I probably "wore" a rebellious face after that, for quite often a boiling hot cup of tea was thrown in my face. I was attacked quite a few times and one Sabbath, after we had hiked up the hill to church, his car drove up behind. This aggravated parent clambered out quickly and proceeded to bash me about the head; then shouting something unmentionable, drove

off at speed. Groggily, I made my way to the church entrance where two of my favourite elderly SDA pastors were standing to welcome us. Their lovely smiles and kindness made such a difference and worth the while for being beaten. They were angels in disguise and to a 14-year-old who was often miserable, those loving smiles were what I craved for. Our Saviour needs us all to be welcoming angels, comforting the sad, calling them by name and blessing them with words of encouragement. This is a great work for seniors to do!

## Career Pathways

My parents needed me to earn, so at 16 I went to work at the Note Issue Branch of the Commonwealth Bank. It was very boring: typing down the numbers of old torn paper money. Once recorded the notes were burnt and replaced by new printed ones. The armed security guard walked behind us as we counted the new notes, which were still on a large sheet. I wondered how they imagined we could stuff a large sheet of 100 pound notes into our pockets? Needless to say, I didn't remain there long. Being determined to study Primary Teaching at Avondale College, I discovered that the Weetbix Sanitarium Health Foods Co. (SHF) provided financial assistance to many young hopefuls. I chose to work then, at the SHF Health Café at Camberwell in Melbourne, which was not too far from home. SHF would put part of my wages aside into a special account, and add more money as well.

During the next eighteen months I passed yet another grade in piano, and completed grade eleven. Now that was an undertaking as they say! There were 5 subjects to pass, but thankfully Music Theory and Practical were part of that. English, Biology and Geography were fun, and I studied those by correspondence. Nowadays, students' study "online". My studies arrived in a parcel by mail, and I posted my tests by the same means. My mother enjoyed helping me, and we stayed up late most nights discussing anything from Genetics, to the poetry of Keats and Milton, much of those she already knew.

Those were long stretched-out days, working 35 hours a week, studies and piano practice: scales at 5.30am and pieces at 10pm! The piano was installed in a far away room and the soft pedal was pressed down hard. It was heavenly to work along side the staff at this Café. They were SDA Christians, and lived out their beliefs. George Ray, our manager, and in charge of the health products side, held morning worship and prayer for witnessing to our customers. A cheerful woman, who insisted on being called “Rowley”, took our worship one amazing day. She talked about the healing power of Jesus, and gave us biblical examples. Now I had been nursing an incredible amount of pain, so I crept upstairs to suffer alone. Our manager George rang Mr Lane, the Melbourne manager, to come and drive me home in his nice car! Oh dear – this fuss was all so embarrassing, and I didn’t want to go home! So, lying still, I prayed to our loving Father in Heaven, holding up my hand to reach for His healing touch. “Lord help me I cried.” He saw me there, for I was blinded by a bright light, and a minute or so later, I realized the pain had vanished. Normally the womens’ pain would last all day! The boss had already sent for a replacement though, and Mr Lane still had to drive me home in his nice car! My mother and I rejoiced, that our God had taken the time to come near, and relieve me of my pain. Hallelujah.

After this reassurance from Heaven, my faith was on fire. A young teenager was added to the staff, and I invited her home. Father had built a caravan, and we slept in that. Naturally, we talked for hours into the night, and she revealed to me the horror she had experienced in her own home. When she told me she had been sexually abused by her father and 2 brothers, I could not sleep. It’s times like these your mind grasps desperately for something comforting to say. It is vital too, to accept them and aid them into a hopeful recovery. As I finally sank into a fitful sleep, I dreamt of many unfortunate young people falling into a bottomless pit. I was frantically, reaching over to drag them back out. I have spoken to many, but thankfully our son has taken on that responsibility.

The following year, 1959, I finally made it to Avondale. It was very exciting to meet not only students from all over Australia, but from Ethiopia, China,

Germany, New Zealand, India, New Guinea and France. With six subjects to pass and a 30-hour workload, it was a case of heads down and work hard.

By now, unfortunately, the atmosphere in our family home, had left me somewhat resentful. My life was plagued with comparisons, eg “they” were rich or “they” came from a “respected” family. Somewhere deep down, I felt the old class system which plagued England. Our ancestors came from the “old country”, where there were Lords and Ladies, the working class and the “no hopers.” I had no self confidence in who I was, not realizing, we are actually sons and daughter of the King of Heaven!

Because I did not feel “good enough” or adequate, I created the latest fashion for my wardrobe, and acted in a “hoity toity” (posh) way, in order to impress people. Sarcasm and bad temper, moodiness and impatience were going to ruin my relationship with my new room-mate. She was a very sweet girl too! When she talked about her very loving “dad”, I reacted quite rudely, scoffing at her, until she had to complain to the Dean of Women. This came to the attention of the senior girls who held weekly prayer meetings. One night, I was standing up on the top of the building and as I was miserable, a dear young woman named Glenda, came and spoke very kindly to me. What was making me so moody and resentful? They would pray for me, and I would be moved into a room with another girl who had also been mistreated. We talked long into the nights and on one special night, a lightning storm arrived. It filled the sky with brilliant flashing lights, which created patterns from behind the illuminated clouds. We were transfixed! As we watched, we shared our miserable past, but agreeing that our Creator of this beautiful storm, could also create something beautiful out of our lives.

Twelve months later, and now practicing teaching in Melbourne, Mr Gilson, our Education Director, urgently required me to spend some time at a tiny school in Geelong. It just so happened that two evangelists were preaching in that area. They needed a musician for choir and Pr J.B. Conley’s mission in Colac. Weekends were very busy, but the buffeting winds down south rocked the caravan and me to resounding sleep!

During the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's public evangelism was the method used for soul winning. A public hall would be hired, advertising for the forth coming program appeared on prominent bill boards displaying fearsome visions from Daniel 2 and 7. Church members placed advertising leaflets in every letterbox and the church choir practiced fervently. Curious people, interested in the future of the world would plan to come. As the musician to one program in southern Victoria, I found the method of preaching quite fearsome. At the age of 20, I preferred a loving message. The gracious God I had read about in the book Steps to Christ and Desire of Ages was much more appealing. Thankfully not all evangelists were so aggressive.

After one term, the Conference President drove me all the way up north to the Sunraysia district, where I would be teaching. Oh what a wonderful relief, to see those blue skies and feel warm sunshine, even in May. Mildura the inland town, is the centre of a marvelous fruit growing and dried grapes industry. The Chaffe Brothers from California, USA, saw what a productive place this would be, as the mighty Murray River wound its way past, and a network of irrigation channels were constructed. Pumps pushed the river water out through quite a few hundred farms. The red soil was very productive, and this attracted a few thousand Italian growers as well. This was promising to be a great adventure and I soon learned to ride my bike to school at sunrise, chop wood and build a fire in the school room. Frosts reduced the temperature down to below zero (Celsius) overnight but, by 10am I had to pour water on that fire, as the days warmed up so beautifully.

There was, back then, a Mallee (region) lifestyle which was the opposite to the more dignified Melbournian one! On the first Friday night, I was asked to take part in a Youth Fellowship meeting. My young driver thought he would frighten me to death with his newly acquired driving skills! (reckless) Driving around corners on 3 wheels, speeding along the highway and squealing the brakes, we crossed the Murray river to Gol Gol. Did that prepare this 20-year-old for what was to come? After being introduced to the youth, one lad sitting next to me whispered something and gently handed me a handful of what looked like large worms. The Youth leader quickly retrieved them, and put them in a very

safe place, for they were in fact baby snakes. Even 2-day old Browns or Tigers can inflict a nasty bite. By now this “hoity toity” school ma’am was shattered. That same lad, brought a baby possum to school, and his teacher did not need such an interruption to her class. So, I confiscated it, and buried the little fellow inside my jumper. It was quite tricky trying to concentrate on teaching, but fortunately possums are nocturnal and he slept all day.

The second year of teaching at the Adventist school was even busier, but exciting. An evangelist with a bright and sunny disposition came to run a mission in the Mildura Town Hall. The head teacher who was musically gifted in trumpet and conducting, created an angel choir, by using our schoolchildren. That was delightful and there were good results.

I was still reading my Bible and *Desire of Ages* at this stage, but business soon changed that necessary habit. The spiritual life can easily be lost, as educational and occupational pursuits crowd out our time with our Father in Heaven. Those 3 years were long busy days: teaching, running Friday night meetings, Assistant Youth Leader, playing the organ and hosting a Sabbath School class. We also had Sunday pea and bean picking to help raise money for the school, and as someone dryly remarked, to pay my wages. What? Oh well it was all fun anyway. On term ends, rather than catch the 12-hour train journey back to Melbourne and home, I caught rides with an SDA vegetable growing family. They drove, 3 times per week, a truckload of watermelons and vegetables to the Melbourne markets. We would Land at the markets at 3am in the morning, and after that I would catch a taxi out to Box Hill.

My poor mother was now being physically attacked by my father, to the extent that when the door creaked, her hair literally stood on end. I contacted a lawyer who enabled me to have her removed and live in a safe place. My young brother Russell came to Mildura to live with me, and the school Principal Mr Cozens and his family made him very welcome. Prior to this he had suffered dreadful bronchitis, but in the dry warmer climate he flourished. My father, however, did not live very long after that. We were told that he had accidentally shot himself trying to climb through a wire fence. Surprisingly, I literally fell to pieces after that. Was it “burn out” complicated by remorse and self-



condemnation? My lack of forgiveness to him festered until finally I collapsed and didn't wake for 2 days. Then the doctor told me I was suffering from temporary blindness. All those headaches were part of an awful depression. "Go away and get happy" doc said. Get happy – but how does one just get happy?

One of the Ellis family, Evelyn, took me in for about 3 weeks. What utter kindness. The blindness had sufficiently eased, enabling me to make it back to Euroa where my mother was now living. After walking home from church, Pr Joseph called in and immediately noticed my condition and began asking questions. He took the Doctor's prescription to get happy and "ran with it". He rang Sanitarium to arrange finance and rang Avondale College to take me on. He also rang my old friends, the Richardsons.

## Hope!

Yes... I could return to Avondale for advanced piano exam and 2<sup>nd</sup> year teaching. The Psychology Professor gave me free sessions and SHF paid for it all! My long-suffering, ever-cheerful roommate Kay, was an absolute marvel. Still not being able to see very well, studies were quite difficult, and my concentration lacked inspiration. The piano lessons though were having a marvelous effect on the happiness scale. Four hours daily practice just flew, as I learned the music my wise teacher Ailsa Vetter gave me. Although the same age, she was an accomplished pianist and I thought she was a great teacher. I passed the next exam with Honours.

About four months later on a very gloomy Sabbath afternoon I was trying to sum up the courage to join the Mission Team downstairs – in the face of impending rain. Then there was a knock on the door! Miss Tutty asked me to escort a couple of men up to the rooftop to look out. Grrr! I felt quite suspicious of the older man, and as soon as we arrived, he told me he was looking for a wife and that I was the right age! Suddenly my legs seemed to know where they were going and I took off and I arrived to join the others for mission work even though it poured with rain. Beneath our umbrella I was introduced to a tall handsome young Dutchman called Abel Ebens. After

arriving at a nearby town, we all paired off, leaving Abel and I to deliver *Signs of the Times*, while splashing through many puddles. I suddenly discovered the sense of humour I never knew I had, and Abel certainly was a jovial fellow. We clicked – hallelujah! Not only was he a Sabbath-keeping Christian, he had a lovely singing voice and personality as well. He was ridiculously funny and I soon forgot my past. We were married in Stanmore, Sydney on a fine hot February day in the Australian summer of 1965. It was a very jolly wedding, as Abel is the oldest of twelve children. Their parents had brought them out in 1956 from the Netherlands. We had all their Dutch friends and friends from Avondale as well, attend our wedding. There's nothing compared to happiness that our Heavenly Father designs for us. As we drove away from the church, we realized copper pennies had been placed in the wheel hub caps. Every time we took off at traffic lights, the rattling of those coins attracted attention and the other car drivers all honked their horns and cheered. Of course "Just Married" was written on the back of the car!

## New Horizons

Once we were married, there were bills to pay and Abel was now an apprentice Chef at the "SAN" as the SDA hospital was then called. So once again, our spiritual life was crowded out. We went to Wahroonga church, but that was the limit of our Bible study and prayer really. On the weekends 3 brothers arrived to stay in our flat. They were looking for girlfriends and we certainly loved their company. We drove south to Wollongong to visit Abel's parents and there I felt part of this loud loving Dutch family. When Mother Ebens called their names it was one long word: AbelSiaJohnNettieLienHylkieEddieIrma-MarcelMaryElleOlga! Life was never dull or sad anymore!

About 2 years later, our baby son arrived, and we were told we must call him Adrian, as names are passed on from generation to generation. After moving seven times during Abel's apprenticeship, he finally graduated and we were sent to Warburton, Victoria where Abel worked as a Chef at the Warburton Adventist Hospital. It was a beautiful valley town by the Yarra River, surrounded by mountains which were white with snow in those cold winters.

While my husband was busy cooking meals for the guests at the Health Resort and tiny Hospital, I began teaching part time at the school and also music lessons. A little sister, Karyn Michelle, arrived 4 years later, and our family was complete.

The Warburton church had the best Sabbath Schools for Kindys and Primary. I enjoyed them as much as the children. The Church in Warburton was directly opposite the Signs Publishing House. On either side of the Publishing house was the Sanitarium health food factory and the school. Pr Hector Kingston “dedicated” Adrian and Karyn in 1972. I was studying the Sabbath School Lesson again, which was a great improvement.

All of you parents know how important it is to teach our children about God. We told them Bible stories and had a great selection of Sabbath songs. The Warburton church had tremendous Sabbath programs. Adrian developed a very loud voice – we heard him one day telling our favourite neighbour “You can’t chop wood like my Dad can!” Now that head elder told that story in church the next week, and how we all laughed.

A sweet Christian lady, Susie May Johansen, who lived 2 doors down from us, “boy sat” for me one time. Apparently, as they were walking up the hill, our small lad grabbed her hand and pulled her along. “He’s going to be a leader one day” she informed us and we wondered.

Thanks to my mother’s interest in nature, I would take my children up Mt Donna Buang which towered over the small town of Warburton. There was a little stream that flowed down the mountain side called Cement creek. I would take Adrian and Karen there to sit in the cool mountain water on Sabbath afternoons as there was no such thing as air conditioning back then except for those small evaporative coolers. I wanted to give my children a love for nature and the outdoors and to keep them occupied during the Sabbath hours with the things that God has created.

10 months after our dear little girl was born, I unwittingly had her vaccinated against three childhood diseases. A day after she suffered a febrile convulsion

or fit with a fearful temperature. For a day or 2 she was kept in a cold environment to reduce the dangerous temperature as this can cause brain damage. So many prayers and a skillful Dr Elliot brought her back to health. Hallelujah!

They wanted her to be tested by a brain specialist in Melbourne, one and a half hours away. Adrian suddenly came down with a severe attack of measles. A dear friend, a fully qualified nursing sister, kindly offered to care for him, while we kept the specialist appointment.

Despite the fact our four year old son felt abandoned by our disappearance, he was in the best hands. We felt utter gratitude for her help that day!

As our little ones grew, we taught them the Bible stories, played fun Bible songs and prayed with them. Australia can be a very hot in summer, which could make Sabbath afternoons very trying. No one had airconditioning there, so we retreated to the comfort of a bubbling stream in a shady forest. We would also visit Badger Weir, near Healesville Victoria, is a wonderful place, where magnificent tree ferns stretched their graceful fronds beneath tall mountain ash trees.

During hot summer school holidays, I wheeled little Karen in the stroller down the hill to the Yarra River where Adrian and his mates would throw rocks around splashing happily in the coolness.

Mountains are made for bilycarts; the rider sits in a box with 2 wheels and his feet guide the cart forward by a second set of wheels with a rope. A kind neighbour consented to build Adrian one for his birthday! He and 2 mates who also had acquired bilycarts, thus proceeded to tear down every hill. Even the hospital carpark was invaded by the 5-year-old speedsters!

A friend decided to run a bilycart derby to raise money for Pathfinders. Part of the road down Mt Little Joe was checked for stones and debris and first aid volunteers were stationed at intervals. Spectators were also spread along the way. Country children do have fun! Except for the fact that a logging truck somehow managed to emerge climbing the hill as Adrian and his friends were

hurdlng downwards. Adrian had swerve off the road to avoid the truck coming up the hill! A little too much excitement there.

When Abel had completed renovating our home, we sold it and moved north to guess where? Mildura on the Murray! He secured a job at the hospital and I started teaching music.

We moved everything ourselves with our small car and trailer. Abel did at least 5 trips, each trip taking about 7 hours each way. On the last trip I was driving and it was about 1 am. We were about an hour from our destination just out of a small town called Ouyen in the middle of Mallee desert country. It was raining and the road had soft edges. The car suddenly lurched to the left and we were headed towards a tree. The trees were not large but still would do major damage. I cried out "Lord save us" Suddenly we were back on the road facing back towards the way we had come. I could not explain what had happened. We all thought it must have been an angel that had saved us.

We hopped out in the pouring rain, to observe just how wonderfully the car and trailer were now perfectly straight, only facing the opposite direction! I collapsed in tears of relief and thankfulness, while our now four year old daughter was rubbing my shoulder, and saying "don't cry Mummy, we are all safe now."

We first lived in a 22-foot caravan, which was parked in a Pentecostal Caravan Park. The manager asked me to play the piano with those in the Church band, as the Caravan Park had a large Shed for a Church. I knew these musicians from teaching at the local music shop. On Friday and Saturday nights, they played on the River Boats while people danced and drank alcohol. So, I did not play for their meetings. Also, I noticed that the main solo singer, sang pop songs with religious words. One song was really immoral. We heard them speak in tongues sometimes till all hours, and it was difficult to sleep. One lady spoke to me, pleasantly, but her eyes were glazed.

Eventually we bought land and built a house. The house was on a slight rise overlooking the township of Mildura. Most of the area was quite flat so it only

took a small rise to be able to look down. Abel, meanwhile was trying to survive as a cook at the local hospital. He worked very hard and when he left, they had to find two or three people to replace him.

Meanwhile I was serving meals on wheels for 2 hours from the same hospital kitchen. Then the music shop manager asked me to replace a very ill piano teacher for a school in a wheat silo town called Werrimull. It was 30 miles away from where we lived. On the first day, I had no idea how many piano students there were, or what level they were at. I prayed hard as to how I should handle the timing of each lesson. After notifying the Principal I had arrived, the first student appeared. I was impressed to teach each child what they needed for that week., send them back to fetch the next one. I could not believe it was at 3:30pm. I had just finished teaching the last student as the closing bell rang. They were only charged for the time the lesson took and it worked perfectly. Thank you, Lord!

Later that year I was returning home, and I saw a massive dust cyclone approaching from the west. Even a snake lying on the road didn't stop my speed but flipped itself off the road to the side just in the nick of time.

All our family made it home before this monster Mallee storm hit, a destructive beastly wind whipping tanks and house roofs from their moorings. Trees were snapped like pretzels and strewn along the way. Suddenly everything went black as night and we dropped to our knees. "Oh Father – You are our shelter in the time of storm. Please save us from costly damage. We trust in your protection. In Jesus' name, Amen.

There was absolute silence, then we heard the roof pop as the cyclone tried to suck it up. It held, after the blinding choking dust and wild wind stopped and just as suddenly it was all over.

The cyclonic wind smashed many grape properties in the Barossa Valley and our neighbour's vines in the Mildura area. Trees were uprooted as the monster sped south. Our neighbour's were devastated, as many other grape growers, that their young crop had been blown away. The Government were quick to

provide a compensatory payment fortunately, but these new Christians had been paying tithe. 2 Weeks later as they inspected the badly battered vines, they were astonished to see another crop of baby grapes growing. Praise God for that season, they had extra money coming in, and they could afford to repair the damaged house.

One sad day, I received a Telegram which said “Come quickly, Mum is dangerously ill from complications of influenza. She was in intensive care at the public hospital. It took two plane flights from Mildura to Melbourne, then up to Sydney. I somehow felt she was gone, and sure enough on arriving, I was to learn she had succumbed to blood poisoning. She had just turned 61. It seemed tragic at the time, but on reflection, we are thankful she didn’t see the gradual decline in the church and I know she never would have accepted the Trinity. Years before she had said the Trinity is Catholic. I actually played the organ for her funeral which helped with my grief. My mother loved the old hymn “There’ll be no dark valleys when Jesus comes to gather His loved ones home.” I sang it with energy and sang in my heart knowing for sure Bessie Naomi Gibbons will be there.

The following year in Mildura, we had a lovely Pastor named Pr Petie. Adrian was baptized by him in 1979. He didn’t take to learning the organ though, so I purchased a lovely Yamaha guitar. He taught himself the basic chords in one weekend.

Our neighbours offered us the opportunity to buy their grape block, which was very tempting indeed. Mildura was still selling dried raisins, sultanas and currants to world markets. So, we prayed about it, and were to sign the contract to purchase the farm the next day. Our Heavenly Father already had another move in mind. As Abel was riding his motorbike to the hospital, a white dove-like bird flew right next to his shoulder and stayed with him. As he turned left the bird headed straight ahead as if heading north. Later that morning, Abel received a phone call from Queensland, asking him to be the chef for the aged care facility at Victoria Point. After the “bird” episode we decided to take this opportunity, and as the years have proved, Queensland was definitely spiritually beneficial for us and our children.

## Queensland

We arrived in Brisbane before our furniture, so it was indeed exciting when the driver Don and his wife Iris eventually arrived. Our neighbours were excited too, as here was this long van with an army duck being towed behind. Don had stopped in Roma to buy that odd looking land-to-water contraption.

When settled, we began attending Springwood Church. Abel insisted we all sit together as a family. The membership was 3 times that of Mildura, and the large church organ needed more practice before playing in church. The children attended a larger church school at Mt Gravatt, which took some getting used to.

Karyn though, was not so happy and I had to moved her to a different school. She also had lost interest in church. "God does not care about us," she had decided. I reminded her of the story Jesus told about the birds, the Father seeing them fall. Then I prayed earnestly for her. Would you believe, the very next Sabbath, when she and other girls were walking to their Sabbath School, they found a baby bird on the ground. They tried asking their mums, "Can I please take it home" but finally it was my turn. I saw the opportunity – Ahh... that's how God takes care of birds – we humans take care of them. Hmmm! We only had sloppy Weetbix to feed the little butcher bird which was a meat eater. On the Monday I bought mincemeat, but Butch only liked it fresh! Tuesday, I put him outside on the balcony as he pooped everywhere. Within a short while a pair of flycatcher birds started to feed him. All day they flew back and forth. Wednesday morning, he was sitting outside and an ugly magpie sat next to him, and fed him a worm. Butch gulped it down gratefully. So, I said to our daughter, "There see, God tells the other birds to feed it." Our Father, however, was not finished yet.

After 2 days of feeding our baby Butch, this magpie with a crooked beak, began to teach him to fly. Gliding took 2 days, then low flying. The next Sabbath this unlikely pair were perched on the spouting of our neighbour's house! The



wonderful conclusion of this fallen bird came a few weeks later. We had wondered what had happened to Mag and Butch. As we climbed out of our car, I heard the butcher bird song, not perfect, not finished, so I looked up, and there were Mag and Butch, perched together still, way up in a gum tree. “Do you know what Karyn, that old bird has adopted Butch. That is what God does for us. He makes us His children, and we call Him Father. He loves us and cares for our every need.” Karen was deeply impressed by this amazing turn of events. It was a confirmation of the loving care of God.

While sitting in church together as a family I heard our 13-year-old son struggling to sing the melody line of the hymns. “Croak. Croak.” His voice had broken, and suddenly he became a bass! Thankfully, I could read and detect the bass, but we sang the melody an octave lower. A choir leader, Myra McCauley, taught him well, also giving him a bass speaking part, which we were delighted to hear at BIG CAMP. A gifted lad at school had a lovely tenor voice, so I suggested to his Mum we start a male quartet. Stephen, though only 17, taught the boys some complex arrangements, and they were asked to sing everywhere. They even made a recording!

Our Karyn had a lovely voice too, and the Bell Choir leader, Mrs Douglas, encouraged her to sing solos. From there Max Dowling organized a group which sang both in church and BIG TENT.

If you encourage your children in music, particularly learning Godly music, it will give them a gift for life. Most of those hymns are testimonies of the writer’s experience with their Saviour. One of my senior students wanted to learn to play her Pentecostal music which had written at the top “Hard Rock”. Don’t criticize but replace is my motto.

## New Opportunities

Adrian, had a remarkable conversion. Although baptised at 12 years, he was eventually caught up in the follies of teen life with school friends. We tried not

to interfere or force him, and gave him “Steps to Christ” to read. Our Father impressed him remarkably and he turned his back on the world.

He met Pr Stocken, the son in law of Susie, May Johansen, who studied with him and rebaptized him. There was a conservative group back then who met in a school room. These folk were in earnest and friends that we made are still with us. David Gilmore was a happy influence which distracted us from the deadness of sermons in churches. By now Adrian had completed his I.T. Business degree, and followed a certain young Lorelle to Sydney. Lorelle worked at the Sydney Adventist hospital as the head of the Hydrotherapy department and Adrian worked for Wesley Mission in the City as their Management Accountant. They attended the busy church in Waitara where Pr Price later asked him to join the ministry team.

In 1995 he commenced the post graduate Theology course at Avondale, which he found difficult at times because of the doubt being introduced in the classes and the undermining of the foundations of the Adventist Message. After completing his degree, Adrian returned to Waitara Adventist Church to serve as the associate pastor there.

## An Unusual Prayer with a Stunning Result

Meanwhile Abel, now 58, and myself now 54, were beginning to feel tired. He had part-time work and I was struggling with my heavy load of students.

Spiritually searching, we all read books such as God’s Smuggler, The Small Woman, The Cross and the Switchblade, Corrie Ten Boom and Tortured for His Faith. They are still inspiring.

In 1994, I happened to come across a book though by Anne Orland, who challenged her readers with “Why are you so tired? Why are you working so hard? What for? Is it worth it?” Get down on your knees and take that burden away. So I did ... adding “But what shall we do for money Lord?”. I was so burnt out and had begun to hate music. “Please Father what shall we do for money?”.

Two days later I was travelling to the doctor and was hit head on by a runaway speedster who was avoiding someone else. This was about 2pm and an ambulance raced my smashed up body to the P.A. hospital emergency centre. A Christian nurse Penny was coming off shift and somehow recognized me from church, and stayed by my side and prayed. Thank you Penny.

An amazing doctor coming off duty took me straight to X-Ray and theatre and worked with a team to stabilise my failing system. They rang Abel at 1am in the morning to let him know I was in a stable but critical condition. Meanwhile, the Wesley Mission where Adrian worked for a while, all went into their chapel to pray.

A week later I suffered a relapse as the complex head injuries were still not fixed. I started to see beautiful lights and told the nurse, "Don't worry about me...I want to go". He immediately started telling me to hang on, that our daughter was having a baby! (She didn't even know she was pregnant till weeks later!) He then kissed me on the forehead and said "Goodnight". I distinctly heard a voice say "This is a kiss from God" and relaxed.

Three weeks later, when adjusting the nasty wires on my teeth, the doctor remarked "You know, you are very lucky! All of us doctors have been just saying how remarkable your brain recovery has been. Another accident victim with exactly the same head injuries would not be the same again ... and my name now was Mrs 'With it'".

After three long months, the worst was over and eventually the car insurers paid us a comfortable sum.

The Pacific Division needed a manager for their Mission hostel, and as all our families were down there, we packed up and went. What a privilege it was to meet our brave missionaries from all over the Australia Pacific and New Zealand regions.

We heard many of them preach and enjoyed the company of Dwight Nelson and Doug Batchelor.

In the 2000-2003 period, we all returned to Queensland where Adrian soon after began pastoring two churches and we attended a small group at Tamborine. Three of the members were true Godhead believers of which we knew little.

## A Problem with the Trinity

After 3 years Adrian became very sick again and during convalescence, he wrote a book called *The Return of Elijah* which dealt with the subject of the Trinity. He was treated shamefully after that and we were shattered. What was so wrong with believing Jesus was the Son of God? Other Pastors with doctrinal or moral issues were not disciplined, defrocked (Catholic dismissal) and “depastorised”.

Simply, what was the difference between trinity and non-trinity. We still received the Record, an Adventist publication which contained interesting articles from around the world. There was one however, written by a past president, which struck me. He used the word GOD repeatedly without any relational reference. It felt totally empty! That is how I had felt for 20 years since 1980!

Someone also told me they did not believe in the Father Son business Adrian is writing about. On a bus trip in 2012, we were all given a booklet defending the new doctrine of the Trinity. There was no Trinity when Abel and I were baptised. The old Baptismal certificates clearly demonstrate that. Then on reading the booklet we finally realised what was wrong.

They say God consists of three equal personalities. Each one has a role to play (act pretend?). Number 1 takes the role of Father, Number 2 becomes the Son, Number 3 emerges as the Spirit. The writer likens them to three business partners who discuss the work and plan of Salvation. Why, though, was it so vital that the SDA church believe in the Trinity?

In 2012, I googled the Emerging Church and traced back to find it was authorised by the Pope. All religions would unite through the Trinity. So that's where we are in Earth's history. Revelation 16:13.

My ultimate test - to tackle Ephesians Chapter 1 which I never could understand. I marked the reference to Father with F and Son with S. Then read it again. The passage finally made sense. Although we never believed in the Trinity, we still had our minds benumbed to the relationship between Father and Son.

By now, our worship group had been given a friendly Trinitarian Pastor and we kept our minds open. Until one Sabbath, he began to teach us about The Holy Spirit as the Forgotten God. We knew we couldn't return.

Thankfully, dear friends Paul and Di offered the Godhead believers the use of their home for Bible studies and a Dutch friend Hugh Keilman, built us a chapel on his property. Bless him.

## Stepping Into the Feasts

When Adrian mentioned the validity of the Statutes and Feasts however, our group was divided. I had the Feast idea demonstrated to me by a Messianic neighbour. The story of the 10 Virgins was aligned to a Jewish Wedding Betrothal. The engagement being the waiting period, the Bridegroom comes noisily late at night and the wedding feast in Heaven.

We had given up Christmas and Easter as the Editor of our local newspaper had written about the Pagan roots of these festive dates. Surely though, God had His special times which He set aside early in Earth's history? Daniel the prophet did say times and laws would be changed.

In the book Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, I read the Roman church shed those Jewish Feasts and Jewish Sabbath. Punishing decrees were made to compel Christians to give up these Jewish elements.

The decider for me was the greater “spiritual awareness” that around the New Moon awakened my mind to greater understanding of texts and passages previously misunderstood.

Then, when we attended the Passover Camp, I noticed a tremendous peace and love amongst the attendees. Time became irrelevant as we chose truth.

There is no doubt, that the very presence of our Father and His Son comes very near to us and the magnification of His Spirit comes as a “high tide”. Hallelujah.

## Understanding God as a True Loving Father

With a longing to fulfil the Gospel command to go ye into all the world, new believers are indeed reaching out to their close associates. Now 30 countries are coming into a new understand of how loving God is - how much He is still suffering because of Earth’ waywardness.

One can only feel pure joy to see how our members have “morphed” to the extraordinary. Their preaching or teaching is Spirit filled and exciting. There is no doubt that our Father is leading. Probably as a result of my earthly father being wrathful, I interpreted, as millions of others, that is how our God in Heaven is.

We didn’t realise either although we were believers, but I was so sure God the Father had made a mistake in the Old Testament and had change the methods in the New. It was a shock to realise that the Gospel was Everlasting and God in fact does not change. Adrian has used Millers Rules of Bible Study in order to reconcile those “incomprehensible” oddities.

If God is a God of Love, why did he do those things? We learned that the Old Testament experience leads to the new and that the Old Testament should be read through the character of Jesus. It was actually the Son of God representing His Father in the Old Testament. The Spirit of God (the very presence of God) was indeed working on hearts in the Old Testament. Enoch, Nebuchadnezzar and David are examples.

We have all judged God as being “You obey or else”, which has been man’s thinking for 6,000 years. Please forgive us Father. How this world has hidden You and Your true character from us!

The Bible has many layers of understanding of readers. There are gems for the simple child and complex study for the studious minds of university professors. Take the Mirror principle for example. We read the Word through human minds and understanding, not seeing God’s love in His law, and definitely not His statutes. When God said, “Thou shall surely die”, Adam and Eve thought he would kill them, but as we read the Bible through the mind and character of Jesus, we see when God said “You will surely die” this meant not from His hand but of the consequences of our choices.

I keep a diary of prayers to our Saviour - Praise Requests and Gratitude for His blessed help. Now Adrian wrote in his first book, Identity Wars, that God did not create us as beings like wind-up toys having batteries. He winds us up and we keep ticking. No, No , No.

Acts 17:27-28 For in Him we live, and move, and have our being. He is not far from anyone of us, for we are also His offspring.

Finally, John 14:21, 23 If he/she/you love Me, you will be loved by My Father and I will love you and manifest (come into) Myself to you. If anyone loves Me and keeps My Word - We will come and make Our home with you!

Do I believe He can help me in the small and the large things in life. Yes. I have experienced it over and over again.

1 Cor 2:16, Eph 3:16,17 We can have the mind of Christ! Isn’t that incredible. He IS right here with us.

## Has the SDA Church Changed.

It definitely has in my life time. When we first attended in the 1950s, I would say we were very conservative Christians. There were standards for most dress, no jewellery, no tea, coffee or meat, no movies, dancing or competitive sport. We were encouraged to contribute to and run fund raising projects to raise money for the missions.

Our Church services were not entertaining as they are now. They called for repentance, Christian witness and calls were regularly made for us to accept Jesus as our Saviour or to recommit to a previous decision. A report was taken each week of witnessing to contacts, Bible studies given, tracts given out, and good deeds. A negative assumption was that we were a peculiar people, and that we could attract attention by eating nutmeat. And telling folk we went to church on Saturday. I was very sceptical about that idea!

Evangelistic campaigns were very popular and young ministers were trained to project their voice. In all those years both my husband and I never heard the word "Trinity" mentioned. This was amazing to us, the stealthily, it just appeared as a requisite for church membership and we had never heard of it. As mentioned earlier, my mother told me that the Trinity was of Catholic origin.

Within this transition, God the Father was mentioned less and New Covenant believers attributed salvation to Jesus alone. The Old Testament law was losing relevance as in most churches it was done away with or fulfilled at the cross. I was under the strong yet false impression that God must have changed His mind after the Cross. He seemed so cranky in the Old Testament and made a complete change in His approach after Jesus came to this earth.

For years I recited off the 10 Commandments. I asked myself "Had I lied, had I killed, committed adultery? I concluded no. Compared to others I was a saint! I couldn't understand the sacrifice idea and decided that Jesus had lain down His life for His friends.



I do understand now thankfully, that God the Father had permitted “laws that were not good” in order to reach the dense human mind. He introduced them to Israel to reach them at a level they could understand.

After 1980, when the Trinity was slipped into the 27 Fundamentals, I noticed the sermons at church went dead. Perhaps even the 20 years prior, I had lost interest in attending, but the church organ needed me and we had children to rear as Christians. We persevered and eventually Adrian led us to safety.

Gradually, personal witness was never mentioned, nor repentance, or the soon coming of Jesus. Even the large Evangelistic campaigns died out and Revelations seminars discontinued. Talented speakers were placed in large churches and equally talented musicians became a prominent feature. Popular Pentecostal songs from “Hill Song” were song along with a hymn.

Children’s stories and dramas took even more time from the message from the pulpit. Drums and bands were added and everyone seemed happy, including non-believers who felt comfortable as there was no conviction of sin or calls to repentance, “just accept Jesus and stay as you are” seemed to be the new approach. We seemed to be drifting towards being like all the other churches with a weak gospel that didn’t offer a changed Christian life as it once did.

Although my Adventist experience seemed dry at times in my earlier years because of not understanding the gospel that came to our church in 1888 with regard to the covenants, it was still more solid upon the foundations of the Adventist faith then after 1980. There was a firmer conviction about the Bible and the distinctive teachings of the Adventist faith. After 1980 we seemed to become like all the other churches. We didn’t seem to have a reason to exist anymore.

How can the Three Angels Messages of Revelation 14:6-12 be taken to the world if the true foundations are skewed?

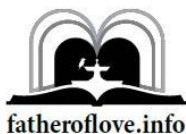
1. When the Everlasting Gospel is replaced by the Pre-cross and post cross gospels making God’s law irrelevant.
2. When God (Yahweh) is not our Father but 3 equal personalities.

3. When the mediating work of the Son of God is confused and distorted
4. When Jesus only is truly glorified.
5. When we say God the Father was guilty of causing the death of millions and had to be appeased by the sacrifice of His Son.
6. When God is said to judge us in a condemning way. Condemned to hell.
7. When the Sabbath is just a day to attend church instead of the opportunity to receive a double portion of the Holy Spirit as promised.

When pressure is applied, many will abandon faith and the Sabbath. We need to pray earnestly for the churches, those still searching for the true Saviour God and for ourselves.

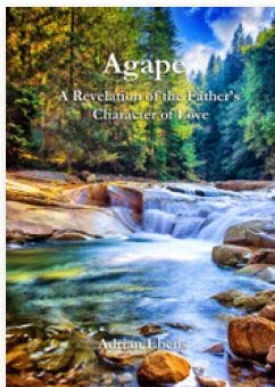
“Cleanse me O God and know my heart  
And see if there be any wicked way in me  
Lead me in the way everlasting.”

Evelyn Ebens



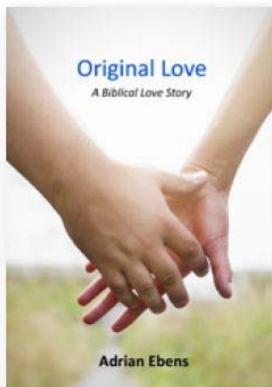
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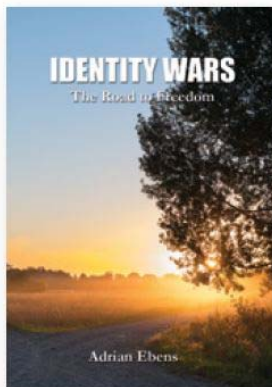
### **Agape**

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.

# **The Long and Narrow Way to Our Father**

When Evelyn's mother determined to attend the Methodist church, conflict erupted in the home. Despite strong persecution, Evelyn followed her mother from Methodism to Adventism. Through a series of miraculous events she grew in her faith in God and to just the right man to keep her laughing when tempted to feel discouraged and down.

She taught her children the Bible stories and would take them into nature on Sabbaths to teach them of the Creator. She was taught as a young Adventist that the Trinity was a Catholic doctrine. Both she and her husband Abel, never heard this term used in the church before 1980.

After a long search the seeds she planted in her children came back to her and she was helped to discover the message of present truth.