The thou shalt not's

Jun 24, 2015 12:19 pm | Thandi Nkomo

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Coveting Forbidden Fruit

Jun 22, 2015 09:36 am | Ron Woolsey

In other words, sinful behavior is first preceded by sinful thought, in this case, coveting and lust. Paul said, “…I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7).
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The thou shalt not's

Thandi Nkomo

June 24, 2015

There are so many ‘sects’ amongst the churches that it’s almost like living in Bible times. Though all are either labelling themselves or labelling others, almost every group is tarring the other with the proverbial feather. (However, thankfully not all!)

The one group I want to focus on today is the don’t group, or what I call the thou shalt not's. As their name suggests, these people occupy themselves with what we should not do. Unfortunately, they are very busy pointing their fingers at others, bashing what others are doing, and proclaiming what they believe should not be done. Therefore, they forget to personally live what they should be doing. In other words, they are so full of self and what they believe is right and wrong, that they forget the many requirements God Himself has set for us. Sadly, they tend to focus only on the Ten Commandments with its prohibitions, and forget the positive commands found in both the Old and New Testaments.

For example, they’ll shout till kingdom come, “Thou shalt not covet,” in a bid to show that loving your neighbor means not wanting what they have. However, they won’t remind you that loving your neighbor also means caring for him, washing him if he’s helpless, feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. They are so busy looking at what others are wearing that is wrong, that many of them forget to look in their own closets to find items to clothe the naked and destitute.

Others criticize the rich man accusing him of being proud because he drives the latest sedan model, not knowing that he’s been singlehandedly supporting a hungry family for the past two years, while his accusers fail to give bread to a single hungry refugee. It’s all relative. (Maybe the rich man could afford even a more expensive car but he chooses not to.) When we look at life using “self” as the standard, we forget that God looks at the heart.

HEARERS TURN EVEN FURTHER AWAY

The bottom line is that when we are judgmental and focus on the negative, we are wretched and miserable. By neglecting to talk of God’s love, or to show our love for our fellow man, our words do not bring reconciliation, but in fact turn people even further away the idea of uniting with believers.

God recognizes a difference between the confused, but earnestly seeking soul and those who are purposefully disobedient and stiff-necked. We could also discern the difference, if we would have the mind of Christ, instead of using our own eyes to see. Instead, so many Christians, Adventist included, choose to lambaste others in public forums, often speaking harsh words while pointing their finger at them.

The problem with the thou shalt not's is that they actually undo the work of Christ. Though it is true that Christ did proclaim “Thou shalt not”, He didn’t stop there, but rather, He taught us what we “shall” do to actively show His love.

The sad result of critical negativity is that when Christ’s servants try to teach, “Thou shalt not,” many of those hearing the message lump the good with the bad together, assuming they’re cut from the same cloth. They close their eyes to the truth because the truth was made odious to them. They cannot see Christ made poor that we might become rich. Often they see only someone trying to gain popularity. They do not see that the reason Christ says, “Thou shalt not” is so that they might find joy in a heaven where sin does not exist. Therefore, they do not see Christ. Instead, when truth is preached they see a Pharisee. Good is then called evil.

And once again Christ will be whipped and crucified in the person of His faithful servants who are only trying to live His life and share His word. All because someone came along before them and taught the law without living and
teaching grace and mercy.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE THOU SHALT NOT'S

The problem with the thou shalt not's is that they give those who don't love the truth an excuse not to seek for it as for hidden treasure. It gives them an excuse to label everyone who opens his mouth with a “Thou shalt not” as a troublemaker. In reality if they sought for Christ, He would show them that indeed, they are doing wrong. However, both groups are wrong. God's people should not be negative and judgmental, speaking only negative words. Just as wrong are those who refuse to listen because self has risen up and they are tired of the constant rebukes.

ALL ARE HUMAN AND SUBJECT TO ERR

As hearers, there is no excuse because by God's grace and under the impressions of the Holy Spirit we may deeply love the truth, no matter who speaks it or how. Knowing that we too are human and subject to err just like those to whom we speak, we must speak the entire truth with love as well as conviction. Truth must consist of mercy, love and acts of kindness mingled with the awful grandeur of the law.

May God help us to love truth so much that when we teach it, we do it. All of it. Christ showed the truth through His acts of love, even as He uttered that He wants us to keep every single jot of the law without compromise. A real Christian will do the same. We will be so empty of self that Christ will reign within and remind us: “Thou shalt not break the law, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”
Coveting Forbidden Fruit

Ron Woolsey

When considering the fall of Adam and Eve, our first thought is usually that the sin of Eve was in eating the forbidden fruit. However, Jesus said “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (KJV, Matthew 5:28).

SIN IS CONCEIVED IN THE MIND

In other words, sinful behavior is first preceded by sinful thought, in this case, coveting and lust. Paul said, “I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Romans 7:7). Let us consider several definitions:

To covet is 1) to desire wrongfully or without due regard for the rights of others, as to covet another’s property; 2) to eagerly wish for, as in coveting the prize; or 3) to have an inordinate or wrongful desire.

To lust is also to have a yearning or desire, to have a strong or excessive craving for, or after something.

In light of these definitions, let us now consider the fall of Eve. After finding herself alone near the tree with its forbidden fruit, she listened to the deceitful and enticing words of Satan speaking through the serpent, and “she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat…” (Genesis 3:6).

Notice the succession of fatal errors in Eve's experience:

1. She saw the tree was good for food, even though her loving Creator had forbidden them to eat it, and warned that death would follow disobedience. (Genesis 2:17)
2. She was attracted to the fruit, and lingered with admiration because it was pleasant to her eyes, and apparently delectable.
3. She then “coveted” the forbidden fruit. She coveted that which belonged to God and though she had an unlimited supply of wonderful options that met with God’s blessing and approval, she desired what was off limits.
4. The final step in Eve’s fall was overt. “…She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat…” (Genesis 3:6).

TO SIN IS TO LOOK, DESIRE AND THEN ACT

Eve looked, lingered, desired, and then acted. And thus we see the danger of coveting. The thoughts and desires of the heart lead to overt behavior -- in Eve’s case, to disobedience of God’s clearly expressed ordained plan. This is one reason Paul counsels us to bring into captivity “every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF COVETING

The Bible is replete with warnings against coveting as well as examples of God’s dealings with this sin. Following are some examples we might not normally associate with coveting:

Coveting Tithe

God warns against robbing His tithe. God says, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein
have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings" (Malachi 3:8).

When withholding tithe, one must first covet that which God clearly claims as His own, the ten percent of all increase. This coveting is then followed by the overt behavior of withholding and using the tithe for one's own desires. God labels such behavior as robbery, a violation of the 8th commandment.

The same is true when one steals from one's neighbor. The desire to have what rightfully belongs to another gives birth to the overt behavior of taking.

**Coveting 24 hours**

Another example of coveting is described in Hebrews 4 when we disregard God's weekly 24-hour period, He calls "My rest". Breaking the Sabbath is always preceded by the sin of coveting for personal use what belongs to God. In other words, the coveter ignores God's invitation to spend God's Sabbath with Him.

**Coveting intimacy that is not ours**

Let us consider the issue of adultery. "...Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). From this text we learn that the desire to have someone else's husband or wife is first conceived in the mind. Also included is the desire to own what does not yet belong to us, intimacy declared by God to be off limits, just like the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, coveting also leads to the overt behavior of adultery. Though it is true, that God is love, He nevertheless hates this sin and calls it an abomination (Ezekiel 22:11).

On that note, consider also the sin of homosexuality. According to God's original plan, man was created to be sexually compatible with woman, and woman to be sexually compatible with man for the purpose and pleasure of procreation. God ordained the institution of marriage to accommodate this special relationship. Homosexual behavior is preceded by coveting, or lusting after that which God created for someone else. For a man to desire an intimate, sexual relationship with another man is to covet that which God designed to be exclusively for a woman, and which He explicitly states is off-limits. Likewise, for a woman to desire an intimate, sexual relationship with another woman is to covet that which God has created to be for a man.

Following through with this coveting leads to the overt behavior of homosexuality, which our God of love also hates and calls an abomination (Leviticus 18 & 20 and see also Romans 1:24, 26-28).

**ARE ALL SINS OF EQUAL MAGNITUDE?**

At this point I would like to pause and consider a word of counsel from inspiration, addressing God’s estimation of coveting.

God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation, as well as in that of man… Man's judgment is partial, imperfect, but God estimates all things as they really are. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven; while pride, selfishness, and covetousness too often go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God…. (Ellen White, Steps to Christ, 30)

Actually, these sins of the mind, not easily discerned in others, were those first indulged by Lucifer. Covetousness eventually made a devil out of a covering cherub. No wonder that covetousness is especially offensive to God!

**Coveting a forbidden role**

Now let's take this issue, this sin of coveting, a step further. Let's go to a very delicate and controversial place. What about the sin of Miriam? Why did God strike her with leprosy? "And they [Miriam and Aaron] said, Hath the Lord
indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?” (Numbers 12:2a). Even though Aaron, the high priest, was complicit with Miriam in her sin, “the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed…and, behold, Miriam became leprous white as snow” (Numbers 12:10).

It mattered not that the High Priest himself encouraged Miriam in her covetous rebellion, nor that Miriam was a prophetess. God was highly offended and therefore strongly rebuked her covetous desire for a role for which she was neither called nor allowed to be ordained. Neither was she ever called to be a priestess, to serve with her brother the high priest and her nephews, the priests. Though there are several instances in the Bible where God has ordained women as prophets and other important roles within His church, we do not find any example in the Bible where He ever ordained a woman to be a patriarch, a priest, a king, an apostle, an elder or a bishop. In fact, we find God lamenting that “As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths” (Isaiah 3:12).

**IS THERE A WARNING FOR US TODAY?**

In conclusion, we must recognize that the issue of coveting ordained roles within the church is by no means gender exclusive as seen clearly in the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

They “gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?” (Numbers 16:3).

It appears here that the argument of “the priesthood of all believers” was being put into play even in the early days of Israel as a church/nation. Interestingly, it was argued that any member of the church (of Israel), male or female, “every one of them,” was entitled to the roles of leadership ordained by God Himself for Moses and the sons of Aaron.

However, Moses “spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Lord will shew who are his, and who is holy: and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him (Numbers 16:5).

The members of the tribe of Levi were appointed by God to work in a similar manner to our denominational workers today. The other tribes of Israel financially supported them. However, they were not ordained to the same work of Moses or Aaron and his sons. Just as Eve had coveted the forbidden fruit, Korah, Dathan and Abiram coveted a forbidden sacred role, that of priest. God was so displeased with the resulting defiance and rebellion that He not only destroyed these three men, but everyone who shared with them in their rebellion, including 250 unordained men who took up censors as priests.

After reading these stories, should we not approach the subject of ordination with extreme caution and reverence recognizing how the sin of coveting a role to which we are not called, is so offensive to God?

Herein lies my great fear in light of our denomination’s aggressive push to ordain women into a role for which there is no Biblical precedent. As Aaron was complicit with Miriam in her covetous rebellion, today’s church leaders strongly push their agenda. When I hear a denominational leader say, “One way or another we will get women’s ordination approved,” I am alarmed. I believe such statements are flavored with the spirit of defiance and rebellion, as was the sin of Korah. Such a leader lacks humble submission to a consensus by the godly leadership at the head of the church (i.e. the General Conference).

**WHAT ABOUT SAN ANTONIO?**

When I read in our publications, “What about San Antonio?” and then the reply, “Regardless of the outcome, the Adventist Church in North America will continue to see a growing number of women who are deeply convicted of
receiving a call from God to be in gospel ministry and to be a blessing for many,” again I am alarmed at what seems to be a defiant, rebellious spirit.

When I hear an SDA woman theologian calling for repentance for the “deadly sins” of patriarchy and heterosexism within the Adventist church, I fear that she is challenging what God ordained in Eden. What must God think...?! Is this promotional linking of women's ordination with the gay agenda not coveting forbidden fruit?

May God help us to humbly study and learn from the experiences of Eve, Miriam and Korah, and to understand the dangers of coveting what God has forbidden.
The wedding of Laodicea and cultural Adventism

Wes Peppers  June 17, 2015

In the timeless struggle between the church and the world, a growing crisis in the last days promises to leave many church members unprepared for the soon coming of Jesus. While the final Laodicean church suffers a barrage of divisive attacks from the outside world, a more sinister deception and cunning temptation has reared within the church, between those who have genuine Biblical faith and those who mimic this lifestyle through their reliance upon the mere religious culture of Adventism.

TWO TWINS, TWO DIRECTIONS

This division is not a new one, and we need only go back to the Genesis account where we find two twins, Jacob and Esau, who could not be more illustrative of the issue. It should be noted that both were raised in the faith (church) by their parents. In addition, they both knew truth, and had a knowledge of God. It is from this point that the similarities of these twins radically diverge. When Esau sold his birthright for a temporary, earthly indulgence, he quickly cast off the restraints of his religious upbringing and gave in to the temptation of his fleshly nature. Consequently, Esau's decision detrimentally influenced the course of his life. His twin brother Jacob, however, found a life altering power through a new birth experience, from his faith and submission to God at Bethel.

Both started out with the same spiritual foundation, so what made the difference? Though from childhood Esau was immersed in the faith of his father's, but he did not seek transformation of heart and character, preferring rather to embrace the culture of his faith. He sought the blessing of God and the benefits of the culture, simply for earthly gain. As one minister duly noted, "Being born in the truth is not the same as being true." How accurate for many today as well!

Jesus also rebuked this superficial mimicry of true faith. In the gospel of John, we read His words, "...you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life..." (NASB, John 6:26,27). They followed Jesus to have their stomachs filled with bread rather than their heart filled with His Spirit and presence. They ate from His hand but not from His heart. Religious culture wishes to sit at Jesus' feet but only to be fed conveniently in this life without any discomfort of preparation for the next. Biblical faith, however, will seek the spiritual bread even at the expense of earthly bread.

LIVING ABOVE THE WORLD, NOT COMFORTABLY IN IT

Herein lies the heart of the problem for many Adventists today. Those who profess Christ within Adventism, but do not testify by bearing fruit of a changed heart, only admit that they are the product of a nice culture rather than divine grace. They may appear to drink of the water of life, and yet be as destitute as the hills of Gilboa. A life enriched by Adventist culture without living faith cannot live above the world, but only comfortably in it. Therefore, without an entire surrender of the will, they do not experience genuine conversion. And without this, they do not come to Christ or practice self denial to lead others to Him.

The 25th chapter of Matthew prophetically describes the distinct division that exists among God’s people right before He comes. A contemporary view of the parable and its application would describe Adventists who have secluded themselves from the world, understanding truth, yet still enjoying the world’s pleasures and benefits. We call these people cultural Adventists. They want deliverance from evil but not from sin. Consequently, they seek their own kingdom rather than His.
True Adventism, by contrast, seeks not only escape from the consequence of sin, but more importantly through surrender to Jesus, seeks and receives freedom from the very root of sin. As a result, the new heart actively seeks to advance the kingdom of God through sharing its faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This new heart is filled with the power of grace because it is in constant surrender to the leadership of Christ. In addition, true Biblical faith views God's commandments and counsel not merely as church rules but as grace from the heart of Christ for an abundant life. It joyfully accepts the plain, straight truth of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, recognizing that it is out of infinite love and the strong delusion of sin that God gives such straightforward instruction. Anything short of this experience is a sure indicator that one is only culturally Adventist, and not a transformed Adventist.

**ADVENTIST CULTURE MUST BE DRIVEN BY TRUE ADVENTIST FAITH**

This distinction being made, it should be noted that there is nothing objectionable about Biblical Adventist culture, as long as it is driven by true Adventist faith. The two can exist together with hope of eternal life, but the former cannot save without the latter and will only result in eternal loss. Adventist culture alone will not meet the requirement in the judgment when we stand before God. We must each seek God personally with all our heart while He is seeking us with all of His. We must be truly born again through living faith in Christ.

**Remedy for the problem of cultural Adventism**

To live each moment saturated with faith, not simply parroting the culture we know so well is the sure remedy for Laodiceanism in Adventism today. It is of paramount importance to revive our first love. Sadly, for many who are baptized members in the church already, there is the need to discover it for the first time.

Are you experiencing true Adventist faith or merely a cultural experience? Are you content to be comfortable in the world or do you want to live above the world? Your answer today is of eternal life and death significance. Choose faith. Choose life. Though we live on the edge of the final prophetic crisis, there is rich hope for any who look to Him today in earnest, heartfelt faith.
Why Women’s Ordination Matters

David Read

June 14, 2015

This is a review of Clinton and Gina Wahlen's book "Women’s Ordination: Does It Matter?"

As the TOSC meetings wore on, and it became clear who stood where on the issue, I was struck by the fact that many among those opposed to women's ordination, particularly the leaders of the opposition, were adult converts to the Adventist faith. Raymond Holmes, Gerard Damsteegt, Clinton Wahlen, Ingo Sorke, John Peters, and Doug Batchelor read and studied their way into our faith. Adult converts to Adventism seem to be more often opposed to female ordination than those born into the church. Those of us fortunate enough to have been raised as Adventists identify more with the subculture (particularly the health habits), the parochial education, and the social network than with the method of Bible study by which our doctrines were arrived at. By contrast, those converted to Adventism by Bible study are more conscious of the damage that erasing gender roles in the church will do to our Adventist hermeneutic.

Clinton Wahlen grew up an atheist. He excelled in science and mathematics, and, as a high school senior, was accepted into the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Clinton planned to work for NASA as a rocket scientist, but God had other plans. After graduating from high school and before heading off to MIT, Clinton spent a summer in Willits, California; there, someone gave him a copy of The Great Controversy and told him to pick a chapter that looked interesting and start reading. Clinton accepted the challenge and began reading the chapter, "The Origin of Evil." As he read, objections would come to his mind, but those objections were always answered within a few paragraphs. He kept reading. After finishing The Great Controversy, he began reading Daniel and the Revelation, and was amazed at the accuracy of Bible prophecy. At the end of the summer, he attended a camp meeting at Pacific Union College; when C.D. Brooks made an altar call, Clinton went forward. He was baptized at the Willits Church.

Clinton wrote to MIT, telling them “thanks, but no thanks,” and enrolled at Pacific Union College. Still loving technology but wanting to read the Bible in the original languages, he took a double major, in theology and computer science. Between his junior and senior year he served as a student missionary to New Zealand. Most importantly, he met Gina, a fourth generation Adventist; they graduated together in June, 1984, and were married that December. Clinton served on the staff of the St. Helena church, and Gina worked as a writer at PUC’s office of public relations. Two years later, the couple moved to Berrien Springs, MI, to attend Andrews University, where Clinton earned his M.Div. and Gina earned a Masters’ degree in interdisciplinary studies.

After a time pastoring in Northern California, the Wahlens, who by then had a son, were called to teach at the newly opened Zaoksky Theological Seminary in Russia. Clinton taught Greek and New Testament, and Gina taught Christian journalism and English. The Wahlens served in Russia from 1992-1998, near the end of which time a daughter was born, and Gina co-authored True Believer, a bestseller that sold over 10,000 copies. The couple then moved from Russia to England, where Clinton earned his Ph.D. from one of the world’s elite universities, Cambridge. After a five year tour teaching at a GC sponsored graduate school in the Philippines, the Wahlens in 2008, were called to the SDA Church’s headquarters in Maryland, where Clinton serves as an associate director of the Biblical Research Institute (BRI), and Gina worked for Adventist Review and Adventist World, and most recently as editor of the Mission quarterlies at the GC’s Office of Adventist Mission.

I had the pleasure of meeting Clinton Wahlen at the TOSC meetings. He is a mild-mannered, soft-spoken scholar and Christian gentleman. Just as you would expect of someone who had planned a career in high technology, Wahlen does not jump to conclusions; he is a careful, logical thinker and speaker.
Although Clinton Wahlen works for the BRI, *Women's Ordination: Does it Matter?* is not a BRI publication, but independently published. A troubling aspect of the debate on women's ordination is that those in favor of female ordination have had access to official periodicals and publishing houses, but those opposed have had to use independent publications (like *ADvindicate*) and independent ministries (like *Amazing Facts* and *Secrets Unsealed*) to air their arguments. At last year's Annual Council, Gina approached the president of Pacific Press and asked him if the Press would be interested in publishing a book presenting “the other side of the ordination issue.” He said “no” because: 1) they had committed to publish a book from the seminary on this topic and, 2) since Pacific Press is now a NAD institution, they needed to print “what the NAD constituency wants.” But the NAD constituency should hear both sides of the ordination debate, even if the NAD leadership does not seem to want both sides heard.

The Wahlens continued to feel impressed to write this book. Its purpose is to present pertinent conclusions of scholarly studies, including those presented at TOSC, in lay-reader-friendly language. The book was peer-reviewed by several Bible scholars, and was also read by pastors and lay members for input before going to press. The Wahlens formed “Bright Shores Publishing” to publish the book; due to the current controversy over this issue, their financial backers wish to remain anonymous. I can well relate to the difficulties attending the Wahlen's project, having formed a publishing company, Clarion Call Books, to publish *Dinosaurs—An Adventist View.* The Wahlens hope that their book will help honest seekers after truth who are carefully considering the women’s ordination question.

Turning to the substance of the book, the Wahlens begin with hermeneutics. Disagreement on a doctrinal issue does not mean that there are not clear biblical answers. The question is, what hermeneutic is being employed? Sunday-keepers use a certain hermeneutic to avoid the conclusion that the Sabbath commandment is binding on Christians: (1) they rely on a few vague, unrelated or tangentially related passages, (2) they ignore or explain away clear passages that do not support their position, and (3) they claim that the lack of a clear command in the New Testament to keep the Sabbath means that God must not require it. Watch for a similar hermeneutic among those who favor female ordination.

In a chapter on the qualifications of the elder/overseer, the Wahlens note that Paul specifies these qualifications—including that the elder must be the husband of one wife (*1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6*)—in letters not to churches but to Timothy and Titus. The instructions were virtually identical, even though Timothy was working in Ephesus, one of the largest cities in the empire, and Titus was working on Crete, a rural island with small towns and villages. Paul's instructions were intended to apply not only in Ephesus and on Crete, but wherever Timothy's and Titus' ministries would take them in later years. Indeed, the appointment of elders was important precisely because Timothy and Titus, like Paul, were itinerant, and would soon move on to the next mission field. Paul's instructions were not bound to a given time and culture, but are timeless, universal guidelines for all Christian Churches, from Timothy's day until the parousia.

The phrase “husband of one wife” is just as clear in Greek as it is in English. Had Paul intended “husband of one wife or wife of one husband,” he could have written that; he used the phrase “wife of one husband” in the same letter in describing the type of widows who were eligible for food aid (*1 Tim. 5:9*), so he knew how to write that phrase. Moreover, the requirement that an elder be the “husband of one wife” was not aimed primarily against polygamy, which was virtually non-existent in Greco-Roman culture; the disapproval of polygamy has always been one of the prominent differences between Western Civilization and the East. By using the term “husband of one wife,” Paul clearly meant to specify a man.

What about the “silence” texts? The Wahlens argue that *1 Cor. 14:34*, where Paul says “Women should remain silent in the churches,” is really about orderly worship, and, unlike the epistles to Timothy and Titus, was addressed to a specific church with a specific problem. The disruptive elements in the Corinthian Church were (1) men who spoke in a foreign tongue without an interpreter (*v. 27-28*), (2) men who began to prophesy while another man was still speaking (*v. 29-33*), and (3) women who kept noisily asking questions during the church service (*v. 34-35*). Paul uses a harsh word for silence, *sigao*, but the point was not that women should never speak, but that they should not
disrupt. By contrast, in 1 Tim. 2:11, where Paul says that “a woman should learn in quietness and full submission,” the word used is not sigao but hesychia, a form of which is used in 1 Tim. 2:2, where Paul urges us to pray for those in authority that we may live “peaceful and quiet lives.” The Wahlens conclude that the Scriptural teaching is not that women must never speak in church, but that they must (1) not disrupt orderly worship and (2) not authoritatively teach a man in the church, meaning to not usurp the authoritative teaching function of the male elder.

In the chapter on male headship in the home and the church, perhaps the most unusual insight is that in Gen. 3:16 (“your desire shall be toward your husband, and he shall rule over you”) the Hebrew word 'el can mean either “for” or “against” depending on context. The Wahlens argue that the word in this context is better translated as “against,” as in: “your desire shall be against your husband, and he shall rule over you.” In other words, sin would bring in disharmony, such that the wife would often want something contrary to what her husband wanted; Eve’s sentence was that, when she and Adam were not in agreement, God gave preference to the man. In the extensive questions and answers section at the end of the book, the Wahlens note that the Hebrew construction in the last clause of Gen. 4:7 (“... sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”) is almost identical to that in the last clause of Gen. 3:16.

Gina tells a very poignant personal story to illustrate the benefits of a wife's submission to her husband. Clinton purchased an expensive supplemental cancer policy because their regular insurance would not cover everything related to cancer treatment. Looking at the substantial money deducted from their take-home pay, and noting that they were both very healthy, Gina argued that they should drop the cancer rider. But Clinton was firm, and Gina, thinking specifically of Eph. 5:22-25, submitted to Clinton's decision. A month later, Gina was diagnosed with cancer, which entailed frequent doctor visits, lab tests, major surgery, and radiation treatments, all of which were covered by the supplemental insurance.

In a chapter on Ellen White, the Wahlens note that at the General Conference session of 1881, a resolution was introduced to ordain women to gospel ministry. There was a discussion, then the matter was referred to a committee, which was really just a polite way of defeating the measure. Ellen White never said anything about this measure, and some argue (perhaps having too often seen “A Man for All Seasons”) that her silence means that she consented to it, or even favored it. But is that how we are to read her silence?:

From the light given me by the Lord, I knew that some of the sentiments advocated in [The Living Temple] did not bear the endorsement of God, and that they were a snare that the enemy had prepared for the last days. I thought that this would surely be discerned, and that it would not be necessary for me to say anything about it. Selected Messages, Vol. 1, p. 202.

Ellen White would have remained silent about the errors in Dr. Kellogg's book if the church had seen and rejected them. She was silent where she did not need to speak. She could remain silent on female ordination because the church discerned that error and rejected it. Ellen White did not say anything about it because she did not need to.

Ellen White opposed injustice in the Church; she spoke out strongly in favor of female workers being paid fairly, about the importance of sustentation for older ministers, and against the unfair treatment of black preachers. But she never said anything about ordaining women to gospel ministry, so she must not have viewed it as an issue of justice or fairness.

The Wahlens relate that a woman named Sarepta M.I. Henry, a Methodist activist in the WCTU who had become an Adventist after a stay in the Battle Creek Sanitarium, was Ellen White's ideal woman minister. S.M.I. Henry's burden was to educate women about their irreplaceable, crucial role in raising and educating godly children. Even though she frequently spoke to large crowds, the thrust of her ministry was to be a “teacher of the ideal” (Titus 2:3-4) to younger women, regarding the duties of the wife and mother in a Christian home.

Ultimately, the Wahlens conclude that this issue does matter, because it is a question of faithfulness to Scripture:
If we ever come to the place as a Church where we can interpret “husband of one wife” to mean “wife of one husband” or simply “faithful man or woman,” then we can make any passage of Scripture mean whatever we want it to mean or whatever our culture tells us it should mean. Could it be that, as a Church, we are now being tested as to whether we will continue to maintain the Bible as the authority for our faith and practice so that, having passed this test, we will be prepared for the greater tests just ahead with regard to same-sex marriage and even the Sabbath?

We are no more at liberty to substitute female elders for the male elders specified in Scripture than we are to substitute the first day of the week for the Seventh day. God wants us to be faithful to the order that He created in the beginning and intended to last for all time.
ADvindicate will be at the GC Session, after all

Shane Hilde

June 11, 2015

Update: In less than a day, gifts have flowed in and our request was met and even exceeded! A hearty thank you to those who gave. For those still wanting to give, your funds will be used to cover any unexpected expenses during GC Session and future booths. May the Lord bless your generosity.

General Conference Exhibit Manager Dean Rogers contacted ADvindicate today, asking if we were interested in having a booth at the July 2015 General Conference Session. We said yes! We’re not sure who vetoed the North American Division (NAD) decision to disallow our booth at Session, but we feel God had bigger plans and we just had to wait for Him to work.

Our booth space is B118. Gerry Wagoner, Shane and Mary Hilde, David Read and Monte Fleming will be at the booth, so please stop by and say hello.

As a result of this news, we have an immediate financial need for those willing and able to donate. Since the NAD blocked our booth last August, we had no plans to go to General Conference Session. Now that God has opened the door, we are in need of $5,000 for expenses. You can help ADvindicate by giving your tax-deductable donation today. Our goal is to raise these funds by June 26. Thank you in advance for your generous support. It’s because of your prayers and dedication coupled with divine intervention that you will see our booth in San Antonio next month.
How did you two meet?

AW: Even though Naomi comes from a different church district than I do, we both attended the same Amish school. We were married in 2004. We have been blessed with seven children. We are very happy together.

What does a normal day look like in your family?

AW: I work as a handyman and carpenter. We have a good sized vegetable farm and I also build furniture.

Naomi Weaver (NW): I take care of our children and tend a large garden, with the help of the older children.

Tell us about Amish life.

AW: There are many things that I appreciate about being raised Amish. I'm glad that we don't know everything that is going on in the world. Some people are so consumed by who is president and political things and the television. I like the close families and simplicity that we were raised with. I love horses. Nothing against cars, but given a choice between an auto and my horse, I would prefer the horse [laughs]. I also like the fact we would help each other in the community. We had a lot of fellowship.

NW: I liked the Amish life style. I liked the family community. With all the problems in the world, we kind of created our own world.

How did you learn about the Adventist message?

AW: We had a neighbor that was an atheist. One day he sold his property and I was helping him clean his barn out. He said that a Seventh-day Adventist had purchased the farm. I didn't know what that was. I was curious to meet them. One day my older brother met these Adventist people. He was pleased to learn that these people believe in the Ten Commandments, and New Testament Communion. They gave him a tract on Daniel and Revelation from Amazing Facts. My brother and I both read the tract and liked it. We compared it with the Bible; there was no question it was true. Later, they gave us a copy of the Desire of Ages. I love to read and had a hard time putting it down at first, but it began to trouble me. I would read the book, and then put it down and go outside and walk around the house. I was thinking.

What were you thinking about?

AW: I was thinking this is going to cost a lot if I accept it. This is so powerful it demands change in my life. I was taught the Ten Commandments as a boy and then I discovered that I was violating one of them. I realized that this
book was going to take us somewhere. So I avoided the book for a while. I feared that change might bring strife to my family.

NW: I was here by his side. We read the book together—sometimes Andy would read it to me. I agreed that it was truth, but I was also fearful what it might mean for us.

**How long did you wrestle with God over the Advent Message?**

AW: About a year. There were times when I wanted to turn back. Thank God He did not let us turn back. I got to the point where I felt trapped. It began to affect my life too. I lost a good bit of weight. I had no peace and was under stress. Naomi was part of my burden; I worried how this might affect her and our marriage.

NW: People thought Andy had a disease. I was fearful for him and our family.

Then what happened?

AW: A year after reading the Desire of Ages I reached a turning point. I was Amish on the outside, but my heart was Adventist. My father and a brother came to visit me. They had watched me carefully for a year. They questioned my loyalty that night. My father tried to talk me out of leaving the Amish community. I made my decision. I decided I was going to leave the Amish church. I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church. Peace filled my life.

Were there any Scriptures that became special to you during this time?

AW: Yes. Mark 7:7, “In vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” And John 12:35 “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.” These verses still mean a lot to me.

**How are your children adjusting to the change in your life?**

AW: I have a funny story. Our children went to Amish school last year. One day while the students were reciting the Ten Commandments, after reciting the 4th commandment, the teacher turned and looked at our children. They were thinking about it in a new way.

**How did the change affect your marriage?**

AW: God protected us. What we went through strengthened our appreciation for each other. It improved our family; made it better. Prayer became real to us. We get in a circle and pray together. We have Bible study together.

NW: I always had hope. I had to rely on God and believe that He will work it out. My faith was weak at times, but God would help us through.

**Have you lost any friends because of your change?**

AW: Many people we thought were friends became enemies. I know circumstances changed--they have to shun us. We have gained new friends--lots of them. I learned that people who you can relate to spiritually become better friends.

**What will you do now?**

AW: We have a burden to reach souls with the Advent Message. We also have a burden for the Anabaptist people. Some Amish are distrustful of their leaders. We want to help them find hope and peace in the Bible. We live in a changing world and Jesus is coming again. I believe the world is starting to shake. I believe it is happening in the
Adventist church too. Some people want the blood of Christ, but not His righteousness. Two groups are emerging in the world. To reach people we are starting a ministry called West Salem Mission in Northern Ohio.

**What needs do you have?**

AW: Number one, prayer for God’s leading. Also that He would open doors for us to share the everlasting gospel to people. Some of this will require transportation. We would like to buy a fifteen passenger van for this.

(A special fund has been set up for those who wish to contribute to the West Salem Mission.)

**The Amish need many things that we have; what can Adventists learn from your life story?**

AW: Each of us can benefit from a wholesome simpler lifestyle. Some Adventists could also benefit from the Amish work ethic, spiritual fellowship, and family. Also helping each other more. An Amish proverb says, “You don’t know a person until you break a sweat with them.”

**It’s been a real pleasure getting to know you both. Do you have any parting words for us?**

AW: Yes. We must preach and live the everlasting gospel. All people are coming to a concrete wall—they are going have to make a decision how to get over the wall. The question is will I follow the Commandments of God or the traditions of men? We want to cast our crowns at Jesus’ feet.

May God help us to learn from our mistakes and other people’s mistakes. My experience taught me a lot about God’s patience. At times I would pull back and then God would draw me to Him with mercy and truth. I’m not a special person—the Lord is. The time is short and people will be safe if their heart is right.
Feasting or fasting?

Lee Folkman

On Oct. 22, 1844, Jesus Christ, our High Priest, entered once into the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. Then began the process of cleansing of the sanctuary, of which every tenth day of every seventh month of every year was a type. The day of atonement was a day of solemnity when all in the camp of Israel were to “afflict [their] souls and do no work at all,” (King James Version, Leviticus 16:29), neither an Israelite nor a sojourner. “For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD” (vs. 30). It was a day when all who were not found afflicting their souls on that day would be separated, or cut off, from among God’s people. This day was also known as “the fast” (Acts 27:9) because it was a day of fasting and prayer in connection with the work of the high priest.

During the last few decades, a movement to promote the moral obligation to keep the feast days recorded in Leviticus has been making inroads among reform-minded Seventh-day Adventists. Why so much emphasis on the feasts in the great antitypical day of the fast? Is this new light that needs to be proclaimed before Jesus can return? Or is it a scheme of the enemy of souls to divert sincere followers of Jesus Christ from the true latter rain message?

HOW SHALL WE KNOW?

When studying either the Scriptures or the Spirit of Prophecy, it is important to allow plain statements to guide our understanding of more difficult passages. Regarding her own writings, Ellen White wrote:

“The testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture” (1 Selected Messages, 42).

“...the key to the testimonies is the testimonies themselves... (15 Manuscript Releases, 295).

A key is a simple instrument used to unlock a complicated mechanism. In like manner, simple statements, in context, help us to understand or unlock more difficult passages. When one utilizes complex reasoning to explain a simple passage of scripture or testimony, one is missing the key. Here are some simple passages that help us to understand the feast day question.

THE TWO-FOLD SYSTEM OF LAW

Most Adventists agree that the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy present a two-fold system of law: the ceremonial and the moral. What makes up the ceremonial and the moral laws? Consider the following passages from Ellen White:

“There are two distinct laws brought to view. One is the law of types and shadows, which reached to the time of Christ, and ceased when type met antitype in his death. The other is the law of Jehovah, and is as abiding and changeless as his eternal throne. After the crucifixion, it was a denial of Christ for the Jews to continue to offer the burnt offerings and sacrifices which were typical of his death. It was saying to the world that they looked for a Redeemer to come, and had no faith in Him who had given his life for the sins of the world. Hence the ceremonial law ceased to be of force at the death of Christ” (Signs of the Times, July 29, 1886), emphasis mine.

“While the death of Christ, as we have seen, brought the law of types and shadows, or the ceremonial law, to an end, it did not in the least detract from the dignity of the moral law, or make it void. On the contrary, the very fact that Christ died to satisfy the claims of that law, shows the immutability of its character” (Signs of the Times, July 15, 1880).
"The moral law was never a type or a shadow..." (Review and Herald, April 22, 1902)

These passages, and others like them, clearly point out the difference between the two systems of law. A law that is a type or shadow would fall under the ceremonial law, while the moral law was never a type or shadow, but existed from eternity. One is typical; the other is eternal.

FEASTS – MORAL OR CEREMONIAL?

Because the ceremonial law came to an end by the death of Christ, while the moral continues to this day, any moral obligations we have to God are solely those that fall under the moral law. Under which law do the feast days fall?

"The Passover was to be both commemorative and typical, not only pointing back to the deliverance from Egypt, but forward to the greater deliverance which Christ was to accomplish in freeing His people from the bondage of sin. The sacrificial lamb represents ‘the Lamb of God,’ in whom is our only hope of salvation. Says the apostle, ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.’ 1 Corinthians 5:7..." (Patriarchs and Prophets, 277).

"The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner..." (Ibid, 541).

Paul said, “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7). The sheaf of first-fruits, which at the time of the Passover was waved before the Lord, was typical of the resurrection of Christ.

“Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Corinthians 15:23). Like the wave-sheaf, which was the first ripe grain gathered before the harvest, Christ is the first-fruits of the harvest of redeemed ones when He returns.

Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection, explained in the OT types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but also as to the time.

“In like manner, the types which relate to the second advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service. Under the Mosaic system, the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great Day of Atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month, [Leviticus 16:29-34.] when the high priest, having made an atonement for all Israel, and thus removed their sins from the sanctuary, came forth and blessed the people. So it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless His waiting people with immortality...” (The Great Controversy, 398, 399).

Just as it is clear that there are two systems of law, it is also clear that the feast days fall under the ceremonial law. The moral law, existing from creation, was never a type or shadow. The feasts, on the other hand, were commemorative of events relating to the Hebrew nation and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Both the ceremonies and the appointed times were typical of the life, death, and high priestly ministry of Jesus. This places the feast days under that law which the death of Christ abolished. This is why the apostle Paul plainly stated,

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Colossians 2:16-17).

Indeed, they “are a shadow of things to come.” They taught and continue to teach us the work of Jesus Christ in the heavenly temple, that temple made without hands, which the Lord built and not man. This our pioneers, including the messenger of the Lord, clearly understood, as evidenced by the following quote from Ellen White:

“One day as Elder Corliss stepped out of a train, the guard [conductor] stopped him with the request that he explain Colossians 2:16. They stopped, and as the crowd rushed by, the explanation was given, and from Leviticus 23:37,
38 it was shown that there were sabbaths besides the Sabbath of the Lord…” (Review and Herald, January 7, 1896)

The explanation given is that these sabbaths are shadows and are not the Sabbath of the Lord. It is only recently that a movement has arisen which seeks to complicate that which the Lord had already made plain.

So, are we feasting or fasting? Do we teach the observance of the shadows that pointed forward to the reality, or do we accept the fact that the reality has come in the person of Jesus Christ? Even now He stands in this great antitypical day of fasting, performing a work that will prepare His people to stand before a holy God without an intercessor and to be translated without seeing death. Afflict your souls, dear brothers and sisters, and prepare to meet your God.