Dear Lexie,

We Apologize for the broken links in the last eWeekend. Here is a revised version, we hope that all missing links have been fixed. Have a blessed Sabbath!

**Examine Yourselves**

One of the things that I dread most is going to see the doctor. Now, mind you, it has nothing to do with my doctor because I happen to be blessed with extremely competent medical professionals that oversee my care. However, trust me when I say my reluctance to visit a doctor has a lot to do with who I am as a man. I recently came across some data that startled me. Statistically, men of all ages and ethnicities are much less likely than women to visit the doctor. One survey revealed that when it comes to our health, we men are truly the “weaker” sex. Something tells me that all the women reading this just let out a collective “Amen!”

One study revealed that men don't get checkups as often as women, are hospitalized more often with preventable illnesses, and they die younger. According to surveys by the federal Agency for Healthcare, Research and Quality (AHRQ), about 57% of men have visited the doctor within the last year, compared to approximately 74% of our their female counterparts. Believe it or not, the most popular excuse that men sight for not visiting the doctor is that when the examination takes place, he or she might find something wrong.

Read more>>

**Proof of the Supernatural... I Think**

by Jamie Jean Schneider

Something truly amazing has occurred to me: I think. Have you ever considered the implications of what it means to be conscious of self? Not only are we aware, but we realize that we are aware and can ponder the meaning of consciousness. Science cannot explain this uniquely, human phenomena...

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**Simply Jesus**

On Following Him by Barry Casey

One of the advantages for theologians is the endless material at hand written about the Christ. But now, all these centuries later, the Jesus business is an immense industry.

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“Examine Yourselves”

Melinda

Proof of the Supernatural, I Think… DAT Feature: We Have This Hope!!

One of the things that I dread most is going to see the doctor. Now, mind you, it has nothing to do with my doctor because I happen to be blessed with extremely competent medical professionals that oversee my care. However, trust me when I say my reluctance to visit a doctor has a lot to do with who I am as a man. I recently came across some data that startled me. Statistically, men of all ages and ethnicities are much less likely than women to visit the doctor. One survey revealed that when it comes to our health, we men are truly the “weaker” sex. Something tells me that all the women reading this just let out a collective “Amen!” One study revealed that men don’t get checkups as often as women, are hospitalized more often with preventable illnesses, and they die younger. According to surveys by the federal Agency for Healthcare, Research and Quality (AHRQ), about 57% of men have visited the doctor within the last year, compared to approximately 74% of our female counterparts. Believe it or not, the most popular excuse that men sight for not visiting the doctor is that when the examination takes place, he or she might find something wrong.

Self-examinations of any type can be tough because we may not like what we might find. The medical field has successfully shown the benefits of early detection and prevention of disease. So before our spiritual condition becomes even more contaminated by the sin virus, let’s just pause for a moment and conduct a self-examination to see if we can detect anything that might appear to be out of sorts. And when we do so, let us not compare our condition with the conditions of others but instead, may we always use the Word of God as our standard.

by Pr. Charles A. Tapp

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Why I came…and why I stay

In July of 1976 my best friend called me unexpectedly on a Sabbath morning. Her good friend John was in town. Why not come with us to church and join us for lunch and the afternoon. It would be fun! So I decided to come to Sligo. It was just this once, I told myself. I mean, Seventh Day Adventist are nice people and all, but this is just a visit—not something I’d ever take seriously.

But that Sabbath Jim Londis preached. I wish that I could tell you what he preached about—I cannot. I wish that I could tell you that by the end of that summer I was baptized—I cannot. But I will tell you that by the end of the summer I was taking the bus every Saturday morning from downtown Silver Spring over to Sligo. I would sit in the balcony sometimes taking notes, hanging on to every word. A Methodist by upbringing, I knew the Bible—but now it began to have new meaning. It would be a couple of years before I would begin in a small study group—with Pastor Londis. My conversion would be slow, thoughtful and deliberate. I was baptized in 1982—and on the day he baptized me, Jim said he’d never had someone ask so many questions!

That was over thirty years ago. So much has changed in my life—as well as Sligo’s that it would be difficult to recount all of the changes. My career been very fulfilling albeit demanding! I met, fell in love with, and married Ed—who I cannot imagine life without! And I think I’ve grown spiritually —learning from those in my Sabbath school class, Believers and Doubters.

And Sligo has changed too! Several Pastors have come and gone, each leaving their own unique mark on our congregation. Our physical plant has changed from a somewhat drab auditorium into a splendid place of worship with light and color! But the ethos of Sligo remains the same. We are a congregation deeply committed to diversity—melding several different ethnic communities into a single cohesive congregation. And we are stronger than we know: we were able to pull together and pay off a hefty debt in record time! Finally, we play a unique role in both the Washington area as well as the broader Christian community as we seek to be Christ’s hands and feet in a broken world.

Why do I stay at Sligo? I could give a thousand answers! I could talk about the richness of our fellowship. I could highlight the depth of the worship experiences that we offer. But the real reason I stay at Sligo is this: this is where I am nurtured, loved, and accepted. This is where I belong!
Therefore, we should have a clearer picture of what the historical Jesus was actually like. I think that this is a yearning which, had it been granted, might have proved illusory.” — A. N. Wilson, Jesus: A Life.

One of the advantages for professional Christians, i.e., theologians, is that there is no end to the material at hand written about the Christ. One can specialize, focus, narrow the search, just like any good scientist on the hunt or literary critic looking to tie up the loose ends. A living can be made, a career sustained, research performed and curiosity indulged. All this because—and we can be grateful for this—the subject, Jesus, is elusive in the extreme, slipping in and out of the light, always just out of reach.

By now, all these centuries later, the Jesus business is an immense industry. One can spend a lifetime inside the organizational machine, faithfully tinkering with the gears, rewriting the operating manuals, and offering tours of the plant. Rarely would the occasion arise to question the mission statement or, in the case of some variations on the theme, to ponder the profits won in the name of a first-century Jewish rabbi. There is simply too much at stake, too many events interpreted, innumerable private moments captured, diverted and sluiced through a corporate filter, too much memory and ego involved to ever hit the emergency switch and bring the whole train to a shuddering halt.

Reports of the imminent demise of religion are greatly exaggerated; those who predicted its passing so confidently back in the 60s are now rewriting their scripts to reflect the upsurge in passionate intensity. In America, every serious candidate for the presidency must pledge his or her allegiance to god and country, and find the born-again moment or a good facsimile of it, before being taken seriously for fund-raising and politicking. The fact that this was the first country to honor private belief by separating church and state provokes an equal and opposite reaction that chafes at the very freedom which guarantees its existence.

Where to begin with understanding Jesus? Who to believe? Which side to take in the wars of faith? If we are not to drown in the tide of scholarship or be sucked down in the maelstrom of fundamentalism we need to just... stand still and imagine. The great payoff of all the archeology, the historical and linguistic criticism of the Bible, the socio-political analysis of life as a Galilean peasant under the heel of Roman oppression is that we’ve caught clear glimpses of Jesus’ times. That is of immense value to organization and individual, scholarship and devotion, professional and pilgrim. But all that apparatus may not help to a quite simple end—imagining with the mind’s eye what Jesus must have been like from moment to moment.

Humility is needed, not ignorance. Knowledge in the service of faith, faith seeking understanding—all of that is to our advantage. And yet, for all that we know about Jesus and the Gospels I don’t think we’d feel at home in Jesus’ world. In fact, I’m not so sure we’d be at ease around Jesus. Our modern phrase, “I’m not comfortable with that,” might get us a quizzical look and a shake of the head. He did not come to make it easy on us; after all, he was an offense and a stumbling-block to almost everyone.

Garry Wills, eminent historian, classicist, and Catholic lay theologian, writes in his devotional What Jesus Meant, “He was a mystery in his own home. Other members of his family will be at a similar loss in coping with this disturbing person in their midst.” After all, he shocked and terrified his parents early on by slipping away from their homeland processional to argue and debate the priests in the temple. When Jesus is invoked as an example of love and obedience to parents, it’s usually meant in a restrictive and conformist sense. “But there are many indications,” notes Wills, “that Jesus was more like those restive and resisting children who have all the idealism and absolutism of youth—young people who chafe against the boundaries of the past and are panting to explore new horizons.” Such young people often stir up resentment and anger. In Jesus’ case it was extreme: his own childhood friends and neighbors tried to kill him one Sabbath after synagogue. It gives new meaning to the practice of roasting the pastor at the Sabbath potluck.

But the point here is not to do what Jesus did. He had his life and purpose; we have ours. It would be misguided and wrong, I believe, to examine his actions in order that we might reproduce them in our time and context. In many Christian bookstores you can find bracelets, T-shirts, headbands, license-plate frames, mugs, belts and rings with the acronym WWJD—What Would Jesus Do? As well-intentioned as
the sentiment might be (and I do mean sentiment) it completely misses the point. It reduces the complexity of a human life to a trite recitation of middle-class platitudes. It avoids the hard truth that there are many things that Jesus did that we wouldn’t and couldn’t do because of who he was, where he was, and the urgency of his singular mission in life.

What I am struggling to say is that the kind of radical change that Jesus called people to comes from the inside and works outward. It does not work if it’s imposed from the outside, a mere aping of the motion without the underlying emotion. Behind the emotion lies understanding and motivation, two pillars that may be grasped in a blinding flash (remember Saul’s ‘Damascus road’ experience?), but are built up over time like the growth of coral or the layers of a pearl. We want the shortcut to glory without the small gestures that come from a deepening union with Jesus.

Here is where I’ll stop because the cliches so easily come to mind. That way leads to paralysis. What is needed is the eloquence of simplicity, something truly easier said than done. As for Jesus, well, he is still there, the piece of our puzzle that never fits and in the end remakes us around his own mysterious form.

“There is much else that Jesus did. If it were all to be recorded in detail, I suppose the whole world could not hold the books that would be written.

Barry L. Casey, a long-time Sligo member and a co-leader of the Believers and Doubters Sabbath School class, teaches philosophy and communications at Stevenson University, Trinity University DC, and Washington Adventist University.

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Hope for Today

Looking for an easy and practical way to share faith and hope in your community? Look no further!

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The Homes of Hope initiative is a simple way of sharing the Gospel with friends and neighbors by leading a bible discussion group or offering our homes to host a Bible discussion group.

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