

MY BIRTH CERTIFICATE

This subject has recently become apparent to me, and I wish to share it with my readers. I am not sure upon my beginning just how much will be developed during the course of writing, but you should be blessed along the way.

When I was born in the flesh, February 23, 1946, my parents received a birth certificate for me from *St. Mary's Hospital* in Knoxville, Tennessee. I have not seen this document for several years, but I do recall that all of my relevant particulars at birth were recorded. Important to the records were the names of both my natural father and mother, along with my "given name." For the sake of our present discussion, those three names will suffice as most applicable.

Some years ago, I presented a series of sermons on "Church Membership: Is It Important? Is It Biblical?" Soon after completing the series, Brother David Aguilar transcribed the seven presentations and typed out an edited version that he titled "A Sure Covenant." I searched online at Google and found the book which is beneficial reading at <http://www.thefourthangel.net/Binary/books/ASC/asca.html>.

The conclusion of the above study is that church membership is *both* important and Biblical. What has occurred to me recently is that the long-held Seventh Day Adventist doctrine called "the state of the dead" can be applied in a few interesting and relevant ways. Let us review before continuing.

Adventists have always taught what is called "soul sleep." That is, when a person dies, the body decays, and the spirit "returns to God who gave it." The *soul* then "sleeps" or is virtually non-existent in terms of being "alive" or conscious. In other words, the *spirit* of man cannot "live" apart from a body. This is a very significant doctrine, and it is helpful in understanding the very nature of the Godhead as well.

Trinitarians boast a divinity of "three in one." Those espousing this doctrine may give several diverse explanations of how this *theos* exists, but in simplistic terms, it is like three individual "persons" that make up one God. The early Adventist pioneers could not and would not accept this notion and were generally regarded to be non-Trinitarian.

Creation Seventh Day Adventists have chosen to believe the early Adventist pioneers' arguments from the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, and common reason. We find a simple explanation when going back to the creation story in Genesis. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" [...] "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." [Gen. 1:26, 27] The Bible record indicates two separate, but very intimately connected, individuals were formed and named Adam and Eve. The inspired commentary says, "After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now **God says to his Son**, 'Let us make man in our image.'" [*The Spirit of Prophecy Volume One*, pages 24, 25; bolded font supplied]

The Holy Spirit is not mentioned in either the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy as being an "individual" or "person" involved in the creation. Man was created "in His own image" and after the likeness of God. What a simple illustration the Almighty has given to us and to the angels! The truth of this doctrine is so simple that very young children can understand it. There was never a spirit of God or man that lived without a form or body. Trinitarians, advocating a god-spirit that lives as a separate person and without a body, are teaching "spiritualism" in fact.

So far, we have pointed out that man does not live without a body. And in addition, the Almighty Himself exists in some form because we see in the creation of man the very image and likeness of God illustrated. This sums up the doctrine of the "state of the dead" and the "nature of the Godhead" as understood by Creation Seventh Day Adventists.

You might be wondering by now, how all of this relates to "My Birth Certificate." Then, let us proceed with an even deeper application of the principles previously set forth.

The Savior said, "Ye must be born again." Of course, we understand that no one enters their mother's womb again. As non-Trinitarian Adventists, we know that this "birth" is "spiritual" in nature and also requires a "body" to "live." "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." [Romans 12:5]

When we are born in the flesh, we receive a "birth certificate," as I mentioned at the top. It certifies our physical existence, giving all of our particulars, including the names of our biological father and mother. As "Seventh Day Adventists," we know that those who are "born of the Spirit" also receive a "birth certificate." That document is our baptismal vow which gives the relevant particulars regarding our spiritual birth. Interestingly, it includes our spiritual Father's name, along with "the mother of us all."

One might argue that many have been "saved" without any such "spiritual birth certificate." However, the light given to the "remnant messenger" presents a sound case to indicate Heaven's requirements for a "sealed covenant" or "spiritual birth certificate" when applied to the 144,000. Let me cite a few inspired comments as follows:

"Those who are truly converted are called to do a work that requires money and consecration. **The obligation that binds us to place our names on the church roll holds us responsible to work for God to the utmost of our ability.** He calls for undivided service, for the entire devotion of heart, soul, mind, and strength. Christ has brought us into church capacity that He may engage and engross all our capabilities in devoted service for the salvation of souls. Anything short of this is opposition to the work." [*Testimonies for the Church Volume Six*, pages 447, 448; bolded font supplied]

"**The lives of professing Christians** who do not live the Christ life are a mockery to religion. **Every one whose name is registered on the church roll** is under obligation to represent Christ by revealing the inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit. They are to be His witnesses, making known the advantages of walking and working as Christ has given them example." [*Testimonies for the Church Volume Nine*, page 22; bolded font supplied]

"A man may be **baptized, and his name be placed on the church roll**, and yet his heart be unchanged. Hereditary and cultivated tendencies may still work evil in his character." [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Sept. 18, 1900; bolded font supplied]

"The religion that consists in professions merely is but a pretence. Those whose **union with Christ ends with the writing of their names on the church roll** are not channels of light." [*The Southern Watchman*, December 25, 1902; bolded font supplied]

"Another **danger that threatens the church, is individual independence.** There is a manifest disregard of the prayer of Christ, that his brethren should be one, as he and the Father were one. Let the church, to a man, feel its responsibility to preserve harmony of thought and action. Let every member seek to be in accord with the truth, and with the brethren. Let our prayers go forth from unfeigned lips that the union for which our Lord prayed, may be found among his people. **All who are united in church capacity, may be of**

one mind, of one heart, of one judgment, that Satan may not take any fresh advantage of the followers of Christ. We have one faith, one Lord, one God and Father, who is above all, and in you all; then let there be a glorifying of God with one mouth, and one spirit. Where there is union there is strength. **United we stand, divided we fall.** It is the special, declared plan of the enemy of Christ and man, to break up the church into independent factions. He will seek to lead one after another to arise, filled with his own selfish purposes and plans, and each will strive to carry out the suggestions of the adversary, but the hopes of such will certainly be met with disappointment." [*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 10, 1888; bolded font supplied]

Logically, the case is made from the Spirit of Prophecy that "union with Christ" includes being "united in church capacity." "Every one whose name is registered on the church roll" is baptized and receives his or her baptismal certificate. That "spiritual birth certificate" holds important significance. It is documented "evidence" that one has made a "new birth covenant" with YAHWEH, the Father, and His bride. Significantly, whichever "church" officiates in this ordinance of baptism claims its name as "the spiritual mother" of the new life experience. Granted, the baptismal certificate or vow does not necessarily specify that the "church" is the "mother." However, as Seventh Day Adventists, we understand prophetically a woman represents a body of believers in a particular religion. That amounts to "a church," either an apostate body or a pure one. The pure woman gives birth to saints—the sons and daughters of YAH. The synagogue of Satan (or harlot woman) brings forth offspring of wickedness and disobedience. Obviously, not all who are baptized become saints. It is unfortunate that many professed Christians are really serving Satan under the banner of Christ.

Now I wish to make some applications of what has been discussed to this point. First of all, I want to testify to My Birth Certificate of new life. When I was "born of the Spirit," my father became YAHWEH, the Almighty Father. My "new birth" was virtually produced by the doctrines of the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. I became her offspring in the spiritual family of YAH.

Now, we have a birth certificate in the flesh and a birth certificate in the Spirit. Both are of great value. It is interesting that in both documents *names* are required to make the papers "legal." There must be the names of the father, the mother, and the new person's "given name." Can we change the name of our father? How about our mother? Many have chosen to change their own given names for whatever reason. Can we change the name of our Heavenly Father? How about our church name or "spiritual mother?" And, what of our "given spiritual name?" "Christ has made baptism the sign of entrance to His spiritual kingdom. He has made this a positive condition with which all must comply who wish to be acknowledged as under the authority of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Before man can find a home in the church, before passing the threshold of God's spiritual kingdom, he is to receive the impress of the divine name, '[YAH is] our righteousness.' Jer. 23:6."

What names are we at liberty to alter? This is directing us to one of my final treatments of "the state of the dead" and My Birth Certificate.

In good conscience, when I made "a sure covenant" of new life with my Father in Heaven, I knew I could never change that, for it was an eternal decision. "Obedience is the test of discipleship. It is the keeping of the commandments that proves the sincerity of our professions of love. **When the doctrine we accept kills sin in the heart, purifies the soul from defilement, bears fruit unto holiness, we may know that it is the truth of God.**" [*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 146; bolded font supplied] This is the life-giving experience that I achieved under the influence of the *Creation Seventh Day Adventist faith*. Am I at liberty to renounce the name of my faith? God forbid! May it never be.

So, you may rightly conclude that My Birth Certificate is “sealed with blood.” I dare not change my Father’s name, my mother’s name, OR my “given name.” This is eternal. “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith [YAHWEH], so shall your seed and your name remain.” [Isa. 66:22]

Before I close this subject, I intend to make one last application of the principles developed thus far. We have seen how the life of God does not live without form or a body. Humans do not exist without their bodies, just as “faith without works is dead.”

Can we make a similar application to spiritual life in the context of church membership? I am confident that we can. We, Seventh Day Adventists, have some knowledge and experience with a term called “spiritualism,” referred to earlier in this article. *Random House Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary* (computer software) defines “spiritualism” as “the belief or doctrine that the spirits of the dead, surviving after the mortal life, can and do communicate with the living, esp. through a person (a medium) particularly susceptible to their influence.” It also publishes this meaning—“the belief that all reality is spiritual.”

Considering what we know from Adventism, can a person accept Christ as their personal Savior and not follow Him by obedience in baptism? Only in very unusual circumstances would a “born again” person not be baptized. Considering what we have read from the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, is it God’s plan that a newly born Christian, having been baptized, should not join in church capacity? This scenario would be absurd to us.

However, many in this day advocate a “spiritual unity” that is called “unity of the spirit.” They excuse their “independent ministries,” by saying ‘we have unity of the spirit with like-believers, but we do not wish to covenant with or join any particular *body*.’ What does this doctrine amount to? It is a subtle and fatal form of *spiritualism*. YAHWEH does not live in the Spirit without form. Man does not live without a body. And I conclude, dear reader, that a Christian does not exist without a “spiritual mother” and a connection to “the body.” “For as we have many members in **one body**, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are **one body in Christ**, and every one members one of another.” [Romans 12:4, 5; bolded font supplied] Not one member can exist apart from that “one body in Christ.”

No, I cannot—I will not renounce My Birth Certificate, whether it be my fleshly certificate or my baptismal vow. I am committed to “a sure covenant” of eternal life in holy communion with the Father of Lights—YAHWEH. I am bound by a solemn oath, ratified by the sacred blood of YAHSHUA, and motivated by “love unfeigned” to remain in membership with the Creation Seventh Day Adventist Church. “For the Lord [YAHWEH] will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” [Isa. 50:7]

Writing from Africa
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