



**TY GIBSON**  
co-director

## GOD'S SECRET

**APPARENTLY GOD HAS A** secret to tell us. And it's the best secret imaginable. If we lean in close to Him through Bible study and prayer, we'll hear Him whispering the confidential mystery into our hearts. Be still and listen:

"The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant" (Psalm 25:14).

Did you catch that? The secret of the Lord is "His covenant." That's the thing He's so eager to "show" us. But what is it? Does Scripture wrap language around the idea so we can grasp what it's all about? Yes, it does. Through the prophet Isaiah, God defines His covenant like this:

"I will make an everlasting covenant with you, My faithful love promised to David" (Isaiah 55:3, NIV).

So the essence of God's "everlasting covenant" is His "faithful love." This is the thing—the big thing—God wants you and me to know most deeply, most clearly, most intelligently. This is the

secret He's constantly whispering for any and all to hear. He is eager for us to understand His love, and something particularly special about it: specifically, that His love is "faithful"—constant, reliable, unstoppable, trustworthy. He is filled with a quality of love for us that nothing can change or repress.

But where's the proof? How can we know God's love is, in fact, faithful?

One word: Jesus! God's covenantal love took on flesh in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. "I will . . . give You as a covenant to the people" (Isaiah 42:6), the Father said to His Son before the incarnation. Jesus is God's covenant personified. Paul explains how God's faithful love played out in Christ when he said, "He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death" (Hebrews 9:15). Jesus proved that God's love is faithful "by means of death." By the supreme act of self-sacrifice! His death is the embodiment of God's

covenant because it demonstrates beyond any questionable doubt that God's love is so faithful that He will stop at nothing to save us.

One more question: Why is God's faithful love called a "secret"?

Certainly it's not because He's deliberately keeping it from us. Rather, it's because we don't tend to get it. The wall is in us, not in Him. God's love is only unknown

**"THE MIND OPENS OR CLOSES TO GOD'S WHISPER IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT HIM."**

to us to the degree that we believe things about Him that block our perception. As long as we believe ill of Him our hearts can't see what He is so eager to show us. Insightfully, Ellen White wrote:

"The whole spiritual life is molded by our conception of Him, and if we cherish erroneous views of His character, our souls will sustain injury!" (*Review and Herald*, January 14, 1890).

The mind opens or closes to God's whisper in accordance with

*continued on page 4...*



**JAMES RAFFERTY**  
co-director

# JESUS ONLY CONVOCATION REPORT

## THE 2013 LIGHT BEARERS

Convocation is over, but the ripple effects are just beginning. The event was a huge blessing thanks in part to the hard work of various staff and volunteers behind the scenes and primarily to God for the outpouring of His Spirit. *Jesus Only* was this year's theme.

Like last year, Ty, David, Jeffrey and I studied one book in particular—the book of Acts, gleaning powerful, practical insights into church life and Christian experience. The Spirit led each of us to powerful pictures of Jesus, while our varied personalities, talents, insight and perspective ministered to a variety of eager listeners, young and old.

Rise Rafferty (my wife of 24 years) spoke on health. Whatever the guys lacked in details, and it wasn't much, Rise brought in bulk. Her powerful point-by-point insights into how our bodies and brains function definitely kept our attention.

The youth meetings were some of the best ever with Christian Martin, senior pastor in Grants Pass, Oregon, leading the young adults. Leading out in the 5-8 year olds and 9-12 year olds were the Katsmas and Hovanskis—two of the best husband/wife teams this side of eternity. "These classes are the best my kids have been to," one mother said, "and I've been to a lot of camp meetings and speaking events."

There was one extraordinary way God personally blessed me at this year's convocation. We four preachers were assigned various chapters/sections covering the entire book of

**"A YOUNG BOY SHE WAS PLAYING WITH IN THE PARK, THREW A ROCK STRIKING HER IN THE FOREHEAD."**

Acts. Most of my presentations were ready, but I was having difficulty with my last section of Acts chapter 21. While twenty-nine years of speaking experience prohibited me from feeling overly anxious, I was a tad uneasy as the convocation kicked off Tuesday night.

Then, on the first full day of the Convocation, one of the attendees, an MD named Pat, began telling

## CONSTANT DEPENDENCE

"We want our sins blotted out, and our names written in the Lamb's book of life. We must be joined to Christ, grow up in him, and become like him in character and spirit. If we are thus united to Christ, we shall feel our constant dependence upon him."

Ellen White  
*Signs of the Times*, July 20, 1888

## THINGS GOD FORGETS

"In the parable there is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, 'I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; Isaiah 44:22.'"

Ellen White  
*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 204

## NOW IS THE TIME

"It is high time you were thoroughly converted, that your sins may go beforehand, and be blotted out now in probationary time, lest it shall be forever too late for wrongs to be righted."

Ellen White  
*1888 Materials*, p. 1300

me how excited he was about my meetings in particular. Intrigued by the enthusiasm written all over his face I asked him why.

“Because,” he replied, “you get to speak on Acts 6, 7 *and* 21.”

“Tell me more,” I responded, as I

### “IS YOUR NAME DAVID?’ SHE ASKED, ‘AND DID YOU LIVE IN MINNESOTA WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE?’”

frankly confessed that I had nothing substantial for the presentation on Acts 21.

“Oh,” he said, “Acts 21 is a powerful chapter on forgiveness and closely connected with chapters 6 & 7. That’s where Philip the evangelist, ‘one of the seven’ deacons and likely a close friend of Stephen’s, brings Paul, the very man consenting to Stephen’s death, into his home for ‘many days.’”

I had never made that connection and as I began to study Acts 21 from this perspective, a powerful message developed (thanks Pat).

The next day, another attendee, Tamara, also a physician, approached me with an earnest look in her eyes.

“I have a testimony of

forgiveness,” she offered, “but I’m not sure if you or any of the speakers would like to share it.”

Tamara then began to share with me an amazing story about how, at eight years of age, a young boy she was playing with in the park threw

a rock striking her in the forehead.

There was blood, an ER visit and

stitches. The wound even became infected leaving a scar, but there was no reconciliation.

Tamara and her family heard nothing from the boy or his parents (likely because he didn’t tell them). That summer Tamara’s family moved from Minnesota. Tamara eventually ended up in Medford, Oregon. It was there, in 2006 (some 30 years later), that God impressed Tamara to begin studying the subject of forgiveness from the Bible. As Tamara read various Bible verses, she simultaneously remembered incidents in her life that offered her practical opportunities to forgive. She realized, for example, that she had never really forgiven this young boy.

The “NEXT DAY,” she was working in the emergency room at her local hospital with a couple involved in a car accident. A sheriff was there to investigate and Tamara looked at his name badge.

“Is your name David?” she asked, “and did you live in Minnesota when you were little?”

He affirmed.

Then she asked if he remembered hitting a girl in the head with a rock when he was eight years old.

He said, “Was that you? I have felt bad about that my whole life!”

Then he said, “I’m sorry.”

Tamara responded, “I forgive you!”

This was the message of Acts in a nutshell—forgiveness and the blotting out of sin. The disciples of Christ came together to pray and be of one mind—the mind of Christ. They prayed for the spirit and the heart of Jesus only. For many of the attendees, *Jesus Only* was not just the theme of Light Bearers 2013 Convocation—it was a reality. Amen.

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2013 LIGHT BEARERS CONVOCATION

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Ty Gibson

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Fall Creek Seventh-day Adventist Church  
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James Rafferty

## OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 3

AMEN Conference  
Airport Marriott, Orlando, FL  
barnhurst@amensda.org  
James Rafferty



## ... GOD'S SECRET *(continued from page 1)*

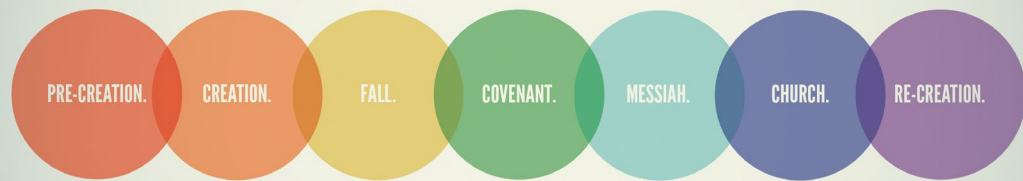
what we believe about Him. David indicates that only those who are in a particular posture of heart can know the secret of God's covenantal love: it is only discernable by those who "fear Him"—that is, those who know God with reverential

adoration. Those who are awestruck at the beauty of God's character will be prepared to hear and understand His secret.

Are you listening for the secret of the Lord?

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