**My Journey to the Seventh-day Adventist Church**
*by Andy Gregory*

I was born in May 1970 and raised until the age of 10 in the Welsh town of Pontypool. My mother and father were both secondary school teachers and committed Christians in the Methodist Church, where my father was also a lay preacher. I had a brother, Richard, who was four years my senior, and we attended Sunday School every week.

I nearly died when I was three due to a swelling in my windpipe caused by an infection. I had to be rushed into hospital for an emergency tracheotomy operation late one night in 1973. Relieved doctors and medics said that if I had fallen asleep that night, I almost certainly would not have woken up again. Fifteen years later, at my 18th birthday party, my father made a short speech and said he felt that God had saved me for a reason.

When I was seven, my parents took the family to hear the evangelist Luis Palau at Cardiff Castle. A certain Cliff Richard was also performing. At the end of the evening, I heeded Luis Palau’s appeal and became a Christian myself.

When I was eight, my father had a calling into the Methodist Ministry. After his two years of ministerial training at Trinity College, Bristol, we moved to Morriston, Swansea, for his first placement within a local circuit of churches. My mother became a lay preacher and gave up work in order to assist my father, so the family went down to one wage, and we had to tighten our belts as a result. We weren’t to know it at the time, but the years that followed would see the family under constant demonic attack.

During our first year in Swansea, I was in the top year of Ynystawe Primary School and was happy enough, other than some settling-in problems that often come part and parcel with moving area and school. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the following year when I made the transition to secondary school. I joined my brother, who was now a fifth-former at Bishop Vaughan Roman Catholic Secondary School (also known locally as BVS – “B\*\*\*\*y Violent School”!). The “rough and tumble” environment at the school was not ideal, to say the least, and within a few weeks I was being violently sick prior to attending every morning. There were bullies in my class, and gang warfare frequently took place on-site against a visiting gang from the local Protestant school.

There was also a fellow pupil who was becoming interested in the occult and voodoo – he said he wanted to put a voodoo spell on a female teacher who refused to teach him. Her decision to exclude him was because he was giving her pupils nightmares by going into graphic details about the occult films he often watched. The voodoo spell, which involved sticking pins into the head of a doll made to resemble the teacher, was designed to give her a brain haemorrhage—and a few weeks later, word got around that the teacher was in hospital with that very condition.

If this wasn’t bad enough, even worse for me at BVS was the fact that the art teacher who taught my class frequently left us unsupervised for long periods of time. A foul-mouthed female pupil, who told me she was “Anti-Christ” and who was very big and strong for her age in comparison to her peers, decided it would be a good chance to engage in inappropriate sexual language and inappropriate physical touching with two of the quieter members of the class. Unfortunately, I was one of her two victims, and perhaps this may have been the crux of my reluctance to attend school—and could go some way to explaining why I was so frigid when it came to relationships with the opposite sex later on in my teenage years.

During my time in Swansea, I became very interested in rock and heavy metal music and had begun learning to play the drums and the guitar. Looking back, this had become my own form of escapism—where I could shut myself off from the outside world.

At the end of that academic year, my father received a phone call asking if he’d be interested in taking up a new position in the beautiful market town of Abergavenny and, given all that had happened, I was not too sorry to say goodbye to Swansea.

I’d like to say that things were much better in Abergavenny, but sadly they were equally as challenging. I attended King Henry VIII Comprehensive School, where it soon became known that I was a church minister’s son. Nicknames such as “Jesus” and “Priest” were soon thrown at me, but then the thought was generated in the minds of my peers that, being a minister’s son, I must also be gay. A daily barrage of homophobic bullying followed that lasted for months. Eventually, my father went to see the Head of Lower School, who called the perpetrators into his office for a little chat. The name-calling stopped from that day forward, but the underlying attitude from certain individuals remained throughout my tenure there, and my schoolwork suffered.

The worst incident happened during the summer holidays of 1984. I had my first girlfriend that year and had arranged to meet her in the local park in Abergavenny—Bailey Park. When I walked through the park gates that day, a gang of nine lads (some of whom attended King Henry School) recognised me, chased me down, and beat me up, leaving me bleeding from the nose and mouth. This was a huge dent in my already fragile confidence, and I did not venture out of the house for weeks.

Earlier that year (Easter time), I had attended a Christian retreat week at Prestatyn Sands in North Wales with my parents and brother. Other than questioning my inability to participate in what appeared to be very over-the-top charismatic musical worship sessions, the week passed without any major negative events. Spring Harvest the following year, however, was a different story. My mother and father were there again, and I had my girlfriend Susie and a school friend, John, with me. Others from my father’s main church in Abergavenny had decided to go for the week, as well as my brother and his girlfriend.

Soon, I found myself again in huge youth worship sessions, surrounded by hundreds of youngsters dancing and raising their hands in the air (including Susie and John), while I wondered why I did not feel any urge to do the same. This led to a negative feeling of inadequacy in myself as a Christian.

Worse was to come that week at Spring Harvest. One evening, the programme for the youth was a seminar on the dangers of the occult, such as playing with Ouija boards, etc. At the end of the seminar, the main speaker announced that if anyone had been affected by the issues raised, there were stewards waiting at the back of the hall who would be more than happy to talk, listen, and minister to them. A short time of musical worship followed as a way to draw proceedings to a close.

During this, we were suddenly aware of a loud commotion at the back of the venue. I turned around to see a young girl in her late teens being literally thrown around the floor and screaming “Satan!” at the top of her voice. She had demonic possession, and the stewards were in the process of casting the demon out of her. It was happening in a manner just as described in the gospels. Most of the young people went out into the dark extremely frightened.

Once I had had a chance to reflect, it did make me realise that spiritual warfare couldn’t be more real—and that it’s happening in the days we live in, just as it did in the days of our Lord Jesus. However, I did mention to my parents that I would not be interested in attending Spring Harvest for a while.

Back in Abergavenny, an occult shop opened on the Brecon Road just outside the town. It offered clairvoyant fortune telling, tarot readings, and the like. Somehow word got through to the local churches that their plan was to bring down Christianity in Abergavenny by placing demonic incantations on the children of the ministers, that they might create mayhem within the ministerial homes.

If true, it certainly worked in our case. It would not be appropriate (particularly to my brother) to document all that took place over the next two years or so, but suffice it to say, our family was thrown into a state of spiritual turmoil. This unsettled home environment only served to cause my escapism in rock music to deepen, and soon I was regularly playing drums or guitar in local rock bands and writing rock songs myself. I had an awareness of certain bands that were considered Satanic and tried to avoid them, but little did I know at the time that the Satanic influence in this area was very deeply rooted in ways often not detectable to the untrained eye or ear.

Many people I knew developed an interest in Satanism as a result of listening to heavy metal. One friend and bandmate, a brash Canadian lad, loved the band Mötley Crüe, and before long he had an upside-down pentagram on the wall of his bedroom and had bought a set of tarot cards which he used to predict the futures of his friends—whether they wanted to hear it or not.

In 1994, I had married Susie, undertaken a Religious Studies degree at Cardiff University, and was moving on to an M.Phil. in the Psychology and Theology of Church Music. Susie and I lived in a flat in Abergavenny owned by my parents, who were now ministering in Kent. After completing my M.Phil., I worked for three years as a peripatetic music teacher for a Local Authority-funded organisation called Gwent Music Support Service. I enjoyed this, but decided that the way to progress would be to undertake a Secondary PGCE course. This I undertook in Bristol, and my subject was Religious Education, as my degree subjects were mainly in this area of academia.

Things seemed to be going reasonably well for me overall. I played music in church regularly, I was still playing in rock bands, and at this juncture I was writing and recording songs with my old university friend Gareth, who had just come out of the Buddhist tradition he had belonged to for several years due to an inner dispute with its members.

Before I started my PGCE, my parents had relocated to Bradley Stoke, Bristol, for another ministerial placement. This was handy, as it meant I could stay with them on certain nights during the week, as and when needed for my PGCE, then head back home to my wife on the weekends. Sadly, it was during this academic year (1998–99) that we learned both my father and mother had terminal cancer.

Spiritually, this was very difficult to comprehend, as here were two people who had served God all their lives. Hundreds of Christians all over the country were praying for their healing, and we never gave up hope that the miracle would come — but tragically, this was not to be the case. I secured a teaching post at a secondary school in Bristol, but within five weeks of taking up the position, my father died peacefully with myself, my mother and my brother at his bedside on 8th October 1999. Minutes after his passing, I remember my mother sobbing and saying she would like “Preacher of the Gospel” to be written on his gravestone.

Sadly, my mother couldn’t recover from his loss (I cannot remember seeing her smile — or cry, for that matter — ever again), and she too fell asleep in Christ on 7th December of the same year. My brother and I were devastated, and eventually ordered a joint headstone to mark their final resting place in New Inn Cemetery, Pontypool. We decided it should read “Preachers of the Gospel.” I couldn’t be more proud of my late parents for this fact.

In the wake of this double tragedy, I found myself going completely off the rails. My life went on a seven-year downward spiral. Fast forward to March 2006, and I was now living alone in a small rented flat in Kingswood, Bristol. Unable to cope with the effects of the grief — and despite months of bereavement counselling — I had lost my teaching job during its third year, I had lost the job I secured following that, I had lost my marriage and, as a consequence, my home and many of my possessions.

My Christian faith, whilst not dead, was a very faint flicker of what it might have been had events turned out differently. The lowest point I remember was sitting on my bed with a knife pressed against my wrist, debating whether to end it all. It was this that made me realise I needed to start rebuilding my life — or it could mean just that.

The first positive decision I made was to start attending a church. It was Kingswood Methodist Church, only a stone’s throw from my flat. I was also beginning to carve out a new career for myself as a driving instructor. The minister and his wife at the church were very welcoming and took me under their wing, regularly inviting me to Sunday lunch where we had long talks about Christianity and life in general.

My friend Gareth came to visit me one weekend and set me up with a profile on Yahoo Personals. As a result, I met my future wife, Hannah, who was 24 years old at the time and originally from China. Eventually, in 2008, we decided to get married and bought a house in Keynsham.

Hannah encouraged me to begin using my teaching qualifications again in order to make a more settled income, and in January 2009, I secured a job as an Education Worker for an anti-racism organisation in Bristol city centre called SARI. There, it was my job to undertake case work for young victims of racism, as well as to go into schools at all age levels in Bristol and the surrounding areas to deliver racial equality sessions such as assemblies, class workshops and staff training. I took to this like a duck to water, and it helped me regain my confidence in terms of standing up in front of people and creating interactive, age-appropriate interventions.

After 18 months at SARI, I was promoted to Principal Education Worker, and I finally began to believe that my life and career were getting firmly back on track — and positive developments were about to transpire in my Christian life as well.

There were a number of Christians working in the SARI team, and two of them in particular would have a big influence on my recovering spiritual life. The first was a caseworker in his 20s who invited me to the church he attended in Brislington. It was a large, well-attended evangelical church with a big stage, full rock band, lights, and screens either side of the stage. I remember I was “buzzing” with excitement after attending my first service there. There was certainly a spiritual presence about the place.

The second was a fellow education worker called Web, in his 40s, who attended a local Seventh Day Adventist Church. We had long conversations in the car, driving to and from schools, and I was always very impressed by his Biblical knowledge — especially when it came to prophecy and what the Bible tells us will happen in the world during the last days.

The theory of evolution had always been a bit of a bugbear for me. Obviously, if the Bible is true, then on some level or other evolution had to be false, but I was not sure where to start in terms of researching this. Web appeared to have much knowledge around so many faith-related topics that one day I asked him straight out, “What do you think about evolution then?”

“It’s a load of baloney!” came the more than assured response.

At this point, my mouth fell so far open a whole swarm of bees could have comfortably flown in without touching the sides!

The following morning at SARI, Web handed me a piece of paper on which he had written:
**“Walter Veith: The Genesis Conflict, amazingdiscoveries.tv – Proves evolution is fake!”**

I decided to check this out when I got home.

 I typed “Walter Veith The Genesis Conflict” into YouTube and found the lecture. I was immediately struck by Dr. Veith’s logical style of delivery and his South African accent, which somehow helped me concentrate! But more than anything, I was amazed by the sheer weight of evidence he presented in favour of a literal Creation — the kind described in the book of Genesis — and his methodical dismantling of the theory of evolution, which I had simply accepted up to that point because I thought there was no alternative.

His scientific background made me sit up and listen. Here was someone with serious credentials who was not afraid to stand up and say that Darwinism was not only flawed but also dangerous in its moral implications. I quickly realised I was hearing things I had *never* heard in church or school — and suddenly, many of my own misgivings about evolutionary theory started to make sense.

I became hooked. Night after night, I watched Walter Veith lectures on creation, prophecy, health, Catholicism, the occult, secret societies — the list went on. My understanding of Scripture, and of the great cosmic battle between good and evil, deepened with each new episode. It was as if a fog had started to lift from my mind, and I began to see the world more clearly, as it really was. I shared the videos with Hannah, and we began discussing faith more seriously at home.

I also started reading my Bible with a new level of focus and reverence. Verses that had once seemed obscure or symbolic now leapt off the page with meaning and relevance. For the first time in my life, I felt like I was beginning to understand what the Bible was *really* saying — and what God was really like.

Over time, I became more and more drawn to the Sabbath truth. I was convicted that the Fourth Commandment — “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” — had never been abolished, and that the seventh-day Sabbath was still binding for Christians today. The historical evidence Dr. Veith and others presented on how the change to Sunday had been brought about by the Roman Catholic Church — not by Christ or the apostles — was irrefutable. This was not a side issue; it was about *obedience* to God and His law.

I began attending the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Speedwell, Bristol. I received a warm welcome, and I was impressed by the in-depth Bible studies and the church’s emphasis on prophecy, health, and practical Christian living. This was not a feel-good entertainment-based experience — it was solid spiritual food. My faith grew, my prayer life deepened, and I felt a real sense of peace and purpose for the first time in years.

I became active in the church, giving public talks on topics like creation versus evolution and the occult symbolism in popular music — a subject I had long been fascinated by. It was a strange kind of full circle: from playing in rock bands and writing lyrics inspired by my own existential angst, to warning others about the spiritual dangers lurking in the very music I once idolised.

In 2016, I was baptised into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was a deeply emotional moment — not just a public declaration of faith, but a resurrection of a life that had been broken and nearly lost. God had brought me through darkness, through despair, through failure and grief, and had set my feet on solid ground. My mind was clearer, my marriage was stronger, and I was finally living in harmony with the beliefs I had always longed to understand.

Looking back, I can clearly see God’s hand guiding me, even in the times when I thought I was completely alone. The darkest valleys — the heartbreak, the loss of faith, the disillusionment — were not wasted. They were the very places where God was patiently working, gently pulling me toward the truth. He didn’t give up on me, even when I had all but given up on Him.

I often think of the words in Romans 8:28: *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* That verse has become a cornerstone in my life. It reminds me that nothing is beyond redemption — not a broken dream, not a crisis of faith, not even the worst decisions I’ve made. In His hands, even the messiest parts of our stories can be transformed into something meaningful.

Today, I still have questions — I still wrestle with things, as anyone does — but my foundation is firm. I trust God now in a way I never could before. My faith is no longer based on feelings or tradition; it’s rooted in Scripture and shaped by real experience. I’ve come to know Jesus not just as a distant figure from history, but as a living Saviour, personally involved in my life.

If there’s one message I could share with anyone reading this, it would be: don’t stop searching. God sees your questions. He hears your doubts. And if you ask Him sincerely for truth, He *will* lead you to it — maybe not all at once, maybe not in the way you expect, but always in love, and always in His perfect time.

My journey isn’t over — far from it. But now I walk it with confidence, hand in hand with the One who called me out of darkness and into His marvellous light.