



The Reformation
Messenger 

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WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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Excellence of Character

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.” Romans 12:17

“The religion of Christ enjoins upon men to carry the pure principles of truth into their daily life, in buying and selling, in the transaction of all business, with as true a sense of religious obligation as that with which they offer to God their supplications. Business must not divert the soul from God. You should by your example demonstrate to the world that the truth of God sanctifies the receiver and produces industry, frugality, and perseverance, while it extirpates avarice, overreaching, and every species of dishonesty. . . .

“Nothing is worth so much to a young man just starting out in life as a reputation for unbending integrity.

“Every business transaction is to be such as can be endorsed by Heaven, else it will bear the unsavory odor of Satan's influence. Every action is to represent the science of Heaven's principles.

“Truthfulness and frankness should be ever cherished by all who claim to be followers of Christ. God and the right should be the motto. Deal honestly and righteously in this present evil world. Some will be honest when they see that honesty will not endanger their worldly interests; but all who act from this principle will have their names blotted out of the book of life.

“Strict honesty must be cultivated. We can go through the world but once; we cannot come back to rectify any mistakes; therefore every move made should be with godly fear and careful consideration. Honesty and policy will not harmonize; either policy will be subdued, and truth and honesty hold the lines of control, or policy will take the lines, and honesty cease to direct. Both cannot act together; they can never be in agreement. When God makes up His jewels, the true, the frank, the honest, will be His chosen ones, His treasures. Angels are preparing crowns for such, and light from the throne of God will be reflected in its splendor from these star-gemmed diadems.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 226

“All heaven is interested in the plan of salvation, and its power is waiting our demand. We may choose wisely, and through Christ become more precious in the sight of God than the golden wedge of Ophir, or we may become as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; but if we do choose to degenerate, we shall become wholly worthless, and lose heaven with all its riches.

“Character cannot be bought with gold; it does not come to us by accident. Character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be urged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected, unreformed.

“If the character is left to be molded as chance may direct, it will become deformed and unlovely. There are in every one weak points that need to be strengthened; for Satan will take advantage of every unguarded spot. The question to be settled is, Will you follow the light God has given? If you would do so, close the door against your own suggestions, desires, and doubts. Temptations will thicken about your pathway; but the Lord will be nigh to you if you call upon Him in sincerity. Stand fast in the strength of Jesus. Swerve not from the right to gain any one's friendship or to avoid difficulty. Christians can afford to be straight-forward, and firm as a rock to principle. All the excellence of character we attain will be gained in moving in this straight line. Be kind and considerate to others; but at the same time be frank and sincere; for the Lord despises dissembling. Never allow the gold of character to be dimmed with the dross of earthly, corruptible metal. The standard of the world is not the criterion for the Christian. Reputation, property, everything earthly, may be sacrificed; for this will not lessen our value in the heavenly records; but principle must be preserved.” — *The Review and Herald*, December 29, 1896

Ellen G. White





Get Ready! Get Ready!

Eternity is closing on us. A few more days, and the time of probation will be at an end. Heaven is all astir; the angels of God are hurrying and preparing for the final events of this doomed world. Also, Satan and his angels have never been so active as now, trying to make God's people sleep a little longer and to neglect their preparation, until it is too late for their salvation.

Suddenly, one day, without warning, the time of mercy will end; and he that is unjust will remain unjust, and he that is filthy will remain filthy. Then there will be a great awakening. The wise and foolish virgins will awake, and many will realize that their lamps have gone out; they are in darkness. Not even one ray of light is shining on their way, and they separate from the wise, whose lamps are burning.

Now the people who were not willing to sacrifice to God's cause throw their silver and gold on the streets, and the sins that have never been confessed before or repented of, now are confessed publicly to the world. Now the bitter tears of anguish are shed, but all too late, forever too late.

When William Miller realized that there was only 13 years left before the judgment, he was in a panic, "I must do something. I must get ready, I must prepare myself. I must warn the world." He realized that eternity was upon them. But today we may not have 13 years any more. The coming of Jesus may be nearer than we realize. Where will then be the world-loving Christians, to whom television was more important than Bible reading? Or a Christian who spent more time in selfish pursuits, rather than in missionary work? What hap-

pens to those who short-changed God in tithes and offerings?

The most dangerous enemies that God has are traitors in the camp. They are in the church, and their example and influence cause others to esteem lightly the church order and authority. Criticizers and fault finders are destroyers and enemies of God.

If we would have, in the city where we live, three men like Noah, Moses, and Elijah, they would set this city on fire. "When divine power is combined with human effort the work will spread like fire in the stubble." —*The Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885. But if there are Achans in the camp, the curse of God will be upon us, and our best efforts will produce very little.

A church with ten dedicated and faithful members is more powerful and mightier than a church with one hundred half-converted religionists.

God has permitted false churches to rise up to provide a place for self-righteous, offended, and lukewarm people to go, those whose eyes are blinded that they cannot see the difference between light and darkness, and between the human and divine.

Sometimes even the very church of God has fallen into sin, and what is the result? "Their joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned! For this our heart is faint; for these things our eyes are dim." Lamentations 5:15–17

After falling into sin comes the harvest. No one can escape the harvest of their sowing; it will surely come.

In the time of Joshua this happened. One man, Achan, had committed sin, and it became a sin for all Israel. God said to them, "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you." Joshua 7:11–12



The same thing will happen today if we permit sin to continue among us. To purify the church, God has brought shakings among them; sometimes the majority of the members have fallen into a careless, lukewarm condition, and the faithful remnant have been separated from the rest of the church. When Nadab and Abihu brought strange fire into the temple, fire came from God and slew them. When the children of Israel committed immorality with the daughters of Moab, a plague came from the Lord upon them and slew 23,000. God has not changed; sin is as evil to Him today as it was in ancient times. Only the punishment is not always immediate.

A little carelessness can destroy the whole city. The city of Chicago was burned down from the careless handling of a lantern. Satan's rebellion started from a feel-

ing of jealousy toward Christ. He started to speak to the angels against God and Christ. One-third of the angels joined with him, and almost the whole world became his followers. Now with 6,000 years of practice, he has become very skillful in deceiving people.

It takes only one dissatisfied member in the church to cause the downfall of many. When we lose the sight of the objective of the church, (which is saving ourselves and others) then petty grievances fill our minds, and we start wondering what the church is doing for us rather than what we can do for the church. Then many will become discouraged.

But we must stop halting between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow Him (1 Kings 18:21). A lukewarm, half-hearted service will not benefit us. There is much to do for everyone, and we must use every talent that we have. Wasted hours and days are sacrifices for Satan on his altar. We must give all to God, all to Jesus, and all to His church; not one moment, or one penny to the enemy.

We are nearing the borders of the Promised Land. In clear language God is revealing it to us. The calamities, disasters in the land, air, and sea, earthquakes, tornados, and wars, are the voice of God telling us, to "get ready, get ready," for we are almost home. God is merciful, gracious, and slow to anger. Let us fall on the Rock, Jesus Christ and be broken, before it falls on us and grinds us to powder.

Soon our names will be called in the judgment in heaven. May the Lord help us that we may belong to those to whom Jesus will say: "Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34. Amen.

Timo Martin

"Even though you may not feel able to speak a word to those who are working on wrong principles, leave them. Your withdrawal and silence may do more than words. Nehemiah refused to associate with those who were untrue to principle, and he would not permit his workmen to associate with them. The love and fear of God were his safeguard. He lived and worked as in view of the unseen world. And David said, 'I have set the Lord always before me.'

"Dare to be a Daniel. Dare to stand alone. Thus, as did Moses, you will endure the seeing of Him who is invisible. But a cowardly and silent reserve before evil associates, while you listen to their devices, makes you one with them. 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' 2 Corinthians 6:17–18

"Have courage to do right. The Lord's promise is more valuable than gold and silver to all who are doers of His Word. Let all regard it as a great honor to be acknowledged by God as His children." –The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p. 1155



Is it Yours? Part 1

Why do we ask this question? What is the meaning of this question? We are to be wise and vigilant when handling something that does not belong to us, something which is not our property. Often someone cannot carelessly use or misuse somebody else's property without some sort of retribution. "Is it yours?" Time, wealth, our body, and many other gifts we have are not ours . . . we are only stewards of the real owner. "God has made us stewards, and it is expected of a steward that he be found faithful." — *The Upward Look*, p. 175. If we are not faithful, we will be held accountable, and the price we will have to pay is the loss of eternal life.

"Life is a gift of God. Our bodies have been given us to use in God's service, and He desires that we shall care for and appreciate them. We are possessed of physical as well as mental faculties. Our impulses and passions have their seat in the body, and therefore we must do nothing that would defile this entrusted possession. Our bodies must be kept in the best possible condition physically, and under the most spiritual influences, in order that we may make the best use of our talents. 'Know ye not,' asks Paul, 'that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'"—*The Review and Herald*, December 1, 1896 (emphasis mine)

"YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN"—YOUR BODY IS THE LORD'S!

"Have I not the right to do as I please with my own body? —No, you have no moral right, because you are violating the laws of life and health which God has given you. You are the Lord's property,—*His by creation and His by redemption*. Every human being is under obligation to preserve the living machinery that is so fearfully and wonderfully made." —*Healthful Living*, p. 10 (emphasis mine)

THE LORD CREATED YOU

In the beginning, at creation, God designed the body, male

and female. Adam's body was formed from the dust of the ground and the Lord breathed life into him (Genesis 2:7). Eve's body was made from a rib, which the Lord took from Adam while he was sleeping (Genesis 2:20–23). The Lord made each gender different, according to His will. As each snowflake differs from every other, God also made each body different and unique. No one can change his body with positive results, but people try to make changes which bring only negative results. "Thou canst not make one hair white or black." Matthew 5:36. "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" Matthew 6:27

The human body is made from trillions of cells. Each cell has a nucleus that contains thousands of genes, which form the Genetic code, or DNA, of each individual person. Each person is unique, having its own features, characteristics and tendencies. The psalmist David described God's wonderful creation in the formation his body by saying, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Psalm 139:14

The Scriptures tell us that man is a three-part being: body, soul, and spirit. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23. The spirit is our inner, self-conscious, conscientious, choosing, and loving part. The body is the physical house of the spirit. It is actuated by the spirit, and its well-being affects the spirit. The soul is the life force which combines the two into a coordinated, functioning person. The body may be our house, but it is also called by our name. I am not a lion, neither a horse nor an insect, but a human being and my body is named Victor Shumbusho. Therefore, let your body praise the designer as did David.

As the Creator, He knows our body's intricate machinery and how it will function to its best capacity. And since He created us, He also expects us to keep our body in the best condition possible, following the instruction manual that He has provided. God's original diet for man did not include animal products. "God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." Genesis 1:29

Although permission was given to eat meat after the flood, as we near the end of this world's history the Lord is asking us to return as much as possible to the original diet. "Among those who are waiting for the coming of the Lord, meat eating will eventually be done away; flesh will cease to form a part of their diet. We should ever keep this end in view, and endeavor to work steadily toward it. I cannot think that in the practice of flesh eating we are in harmony

with the light which God has been pleased to give us.” – *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 380–381

BOUGHT WITH AN INFINITE PRICE

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18–19. Death resulted from Adam’s sin. Sin has had an effect on our physical bodies. Our bodies decay with age and eventually die. Death came to Adam, our first parent, when he was 930 years old (Genesis 5:5). However, Jesus came to destroy the power that sin and death has on our body. By His death we can be made perfect. He died for our complete being (body, soul, and spirit). Without His death there would be no resurrection. Jesus has paid the full penalty for your sin, giving you the opportunity to live eternally with Him. Satan wants to possess your bodies, but “greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” 1 John 4:4. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was sufficient to redeem your entire being. Today, we are waiting for the final phase of salvation when our physical body will be resurrected and glorified and the redeemed will be taken into heaven. Right now, the whole creation is under the enormous weight of sin waiting for the final day (Romans 8:16–25). Our hope is that the time will soon come when all the bodies of the faithful saints in the graves will live again (John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15).

“Our bodies belong to God. He paid the price of redemption for the body as well as the soul.” –*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 147. “All men have been bought with this infinite price. By pouring the whole treasury of heaven into this world, by giving us in Christ all heaven, God has purchased the will, the affections, the mind, the soul, of every human being. Whether believers or unbelievers, all men are the Lord’s property. All are called to do service for Him, and for the manner in which they have met this claim, all will be required to render an account at the great judgment day.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 326

“You should be willing for all to know that you are not your own but His who bought you with an infinite price, and that you are not only bound but are determined to glorify Him in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s. May the love of so great magnitude constrain you to confess Christ not only with the mouth but with the life, to bear fruit to the glory of God.” –*Christ Triumphant*, p. 90

“GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY”

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Corin-

thians 6:20

“Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in His own image. This fact should impress us with the importance of teaching by precept and example the sin of defiling, by the indulgence of appetite or by any other sinful practise, the body which is designed to represent God to the world.” –*Healthful Living*, p. 10

The Apostle Paul wrote an excellent counsel about the body in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20. In these verses he tells us that God does not approve if we use our body as we desire, if it against His counsel. The body we have is God’s. Life is to be considered as a precious gift above all. Unfortunately, many people feel free to kill and abuse the body in such ways as abortion, suicide, carelessness in eating, drinking, dressing, and appearance (outlook). Yes, although you are in the body, is it yours?

Let us consider some areas in our life in which we are expected to glorify the Lord in our bodies:

Abortion: It is true that some countries have legalized abortion to promote family planning. Even though legal in your country, before God it is child murder—one of the most horrible and atrocious crimes. The moment of conception creates a human being; totally unique from his/

her mother, a human is created. God’s law protected both the pregnant women and her unborn baby (Exodus 21:22–25). David speaks of existing in his mother’s womb under God’s care (Psalm 139:13–16; 51:5). Therefore, women do not own their own bodies, let alone the independ-

ent bodies of their unborn children. They do not have the right to do what they wish with their bodies, or to murder their children.

Murder and Suicide: The taking of another life is a horrible sin and will be judged severely by God who is the Creator and Author of life. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man.” Genesis 9:6. Cain, the first murderer was very much judged severely by God (Genesis 4:9–12). **Suicide** is self-murder. It is taking the life of the body that God gave you, which is not really yours. Remember, you are not your own; you belong to the Creator. You were not asked if you wanted to live and therefore you do not have the prerogative or right to end it when you choose. You cannot close what you did not open. The reality is that you will face God in the judgment one day as a murderer and “ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” 1 John 3:15. We have the example of Judas, who took his own life after betraying Christ. Is your life really yours to take?

Food: Does it matter what you eat? You may ask, why would God be concerned about your eating habits? Is

“It is our duty to study the laws that govern our being, and conform to them. Ignorance in these things is sin.”
–*Healthful Living*, p. 13



eating really a religious matter? Is it not man's personal business how he takes care of his body? No. No man has a right to say, "I will do what I want, as long as it is my body." Here they make a mistake. We are only stewards of someone else's property, and in this case, it is the body which the Lord has loaned to us. Caring for the body is not only a spir-

itual duty but also a moral and ethical requirement. The trouble in this day and age is that many people follow only their appetite in eating, drinking, dressing, etc., not their reason. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah 55:2. Good food, it is not necessarily by colour or by what we find tasty. Our taste needs to be educated to enjoy good wholesome food.

"Do not neglect or abuse the body, and thus unfit it to render to God that service which is His due. To my certain knowledge, some of the most useful workers in our cause have died through such neglect. To care for the body by providing for it food which is relishable and strengthening, is one of the first duties of the householder." *-Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 93. If people would reason from cause to effect before eating and drinking, God would be honoured. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31. "We are composed of what we eat. In order to make a good quality of blood, we must have the right kind of food, prepared in a right manner." *-Testimonies for the Church*. Vol. 1, p. 681. Daniel and his friends decided that "Even a mere pretense of eating the food or drinking the wine would be a denial of their faith. To do this would be to array themselves with heathenism and to dishonor the principles of the law of God." *-A Call to Stand a Part* p. 53-54

"We do not mark out any precise line to be followed in diet; but we do say that in countries where there are fruits, grains, and nuts in abundance, flesh food is not the right food for God's people. . . .

"Only when we are intelligent in regard to the principles of healthful living can we be fully aroused to see the evils resulting from improper diet. Those who, after seeing their mistakes, have courage to change their habits, will find that the reformatory process requires a struggle and much

perseverance; but when correct tastes are once formed, they will realize that the use of the food which they formerly regarded as harmless was slowly but surely laying the foundation for dyspepsia and other diseases.

"Fathers and mothers, watch unto prayer. Guard strictly against intemperance in every form. Teach your children the principles of true health reform. Teach them what things to avoid in order to preserve health. Already the wrath of God has begun to be visited upon the children of disobedience." *-Testimonies for the Church*. vol. 9, p. 159-160

Drunkness places the temple of God in a horrible situation. By depressing your body's central nervous system, you interrupt your ability to make wise and holy decisions. "On every side, Satan seeks to entice the youth into the path of perdition. . . . They exercise less and less self-restraint. They become addicted to the use of wine and alcohol, tobacco and opium, and go from one stage of debasement to another. They are slaves to appetite." *-Temperance* p. 273. "The stimulating diet and drink of this

day are not conducive to the best state of health. Tea, coffee, and tobacco are all stimulating, and contain poisons. They are not only unnecessary, but harmful, and should be discarded if we would add to knowledge temperance." *-*

Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 420-421. "Tea and coffee drinking is a sin, an injurious indulgence, which, like other evils, injures the soul. These darling idols create an excitement, a morbid action of the nervous system." *-Ibid*, p. 425

Sufficient Rest: Getting enough sleep is very important, but you should not get too much of it (Psalm 127:2; Proverbs 6:6-11; 20:13). We should sleep at least eight hours a night (though children need more), and a weekly rest day on the Sabbath is a blessing both for the body and soul.



Fornication: This is a sin against the body that is strictly condemned. It has brought God's judgment to many in past generations. God has limited physical relationships between men and women to marriage, not only for pleasure, but also for a purpose (1 Corinthians 7:1-5; Exodus 21:10). Virginity is a gift from God to girls, and it should be well preserved for their future husbands. They should be taught that they are special, and should value this gift. Every father is responsible for encouraging their daughters to preserve their virginity (Deuteronomy 22:13-21). Regard-

**"The wonderful mechanism of the human body does not receive half the care that is often given to a mere lifeless machine."
-Healthful Living, p. 10**

ing this, ask yourself—“Is it mine?” Certainly not. It is God’s, for His glory. It is written about Rebekah that she was, “very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her.” Genesis 24: 16

Appearance: Lack of proper dress has been shown to be wrong since Adam and Eve sinned. They chose fig leaf garments, but that was not sufficient. God gave them clothing from animal skins. Modesty and humility is shown by our outward appearance. Young women must be warned against vanity, which is in their nature and is promoted by society today. They should be taught to cultivate the inner beauty of a meek and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:3–4). Clothing should be chosen and worn to cover the body modestly for God’s honour and glory. If we would be careful of our appearance before an earthly dignity, how much more should we take care before the King of kings. The Bible is not silent about women being modest in their appearance. “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.” 1 Timothy 2:9–10. Also, tattoos and other mutilations of the body are condemned, even if for religious rites (Leviticus 19:28; 21:5; Deuteronomy 14:1).

Tongue: We cannot close this topic without addressing the tongue, which is a small member of your body. David



said, “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.” Psalms 39:1. It is possible to sin with the tongue. The question is, “How do you control your tongue, and how important are your words?” Failing to control your tongue will ultimately cause you to transgress God’s law, and bring you into judgment. The Lord said “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:36–37

This is why “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart,

this man’s religion is vain.” James 1:26. And “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” James 3:2. If we are able to control the tongue we are also able to bridle the whole body. In other words, if we can control such a troublesome member—the tongue—then this is a very clear indicator that our life, as a whole, has been submitted to Jesus.

BE A FAITHFUL STEWARD

You have a body, yes. But, is it yours? In this article, it has been shown that your body is not really yours, but it is the Lord’s. Jesus created it and died to redeem it and the Holy Spirit inhabits it. Therefore, we are to glorify God, *in our bodies*, and everything we do *with our bodies*. Holiness in our body is our goal. With the help of the Lord we can attain this goal.

“We are to make the most of the capabilities and talents lent us by God. All who are weakening and destroying the physical, mental, and moral powers by sinful eating, sinful dressing, and violation of the laws of health in any respect, will have to render an account to God for all the good they might have done had they observed the laws of health, rather than being self-indulgent, careless, and reckless of

the house they live in.” *—In Heavenly Places*, p. 192

“God in His wisdom has established natural laws for the proper control of our dress, our appetites, and our passions, and He requires of us obedience in every particular.” *—Healthful Living*, p. 17

“It was a wonderful thing for God to create man. . . . One soul is of more value than a world. The Lord Jesus is the author of our being, and He is also the author of our redemption; and every one who will enter the kingdom of God must develop a character that is the counterpart of the character of God. None can dwell with God in a holy heaven but those who bear His likeness. Those who are redeemed will be overcomers; they will be elevated, pure, one with Christ.” *—Healthful Living*, p. 12

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31. Whatsoever therefore we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God, *glorifying Him in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are God’s*. Amen.

Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo

New Partnership For New Progress



“Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 26:3–4

Abraham, Isaac’s father partnered with God before Isaac was born. After the death of Abraham God still continued the partnership with his son. There is a blessing in partnering with God in whatever you do. The presence of God alone will bring prosperity into your life. He will not leave you to do anything on your own; He will support, guide, and protect you from all potential evil practices. “And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” Genesis 28:15

For God to partner with you there should be:

1. Decision from within to please Him at all times. “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.” Daniel 1:8

“There are many among professed Christians today who would decide that Daniel was too particular, and would pronounce him narrow and bigoted. They consider the matter of eating and drinking as of too little consequence to require such a decided stand—one involving

the probable sacrifice of every earthly advantage. But those who reason thus will find in the day of judgment that they turned from God’s express requirements and set up their own opinion as a standard of right and wrong. They will find that what seemed to them unimportant was not so regarded of God. His requirements should be sacredly obeyed. Those who accept and obey one of His precepts because it is convenient to do so, while they reject another because its observance would require a sacrifice, lower the standard of right and by their example lead others to lightly regard the holy law of God. ‘Thus saith the Lord’ is to be our rule in all things.” –*The Sanctified Life*, p. 19–20

You must make up your mind that there are things God does not like and that is sin. You have to restrain from sin if you want His partnership in order to progress in your spiritual life.

2. Submit yourself to God. “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7. You give Him the steering wheel and let Him drive you to your destination without stopping. Submission implies complete trust that God’s arrangements are for your own good. Willing submission is what is needed. The verse closes by telling you to take a stand against the devil. The devil will flee from the soul that has submitted to Christ. “We cannot save ourselves from the tempter’s power; he has conquered humanity, and when we try to stand in our own strength, we shall become a prey to his devices; but ‘the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.’ Proverbs 18:10. Satan trembles and flees before the weakest soul who finds refuge in that mighty

name.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 130–131. “We may resist temptation, and force Satan to depart from us.” —*Ibid.*, p. 130

3. Abide in the Lord. “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.” John 15:4. A continuous abiding in a living connection with Christ is essential for growth and fruitfulness. Occasional attention to matters of religion is not sufficient. Riding high on religious fervor one day while falling into a low period of neglect the next day does not promote spiritual strength. To abide in Christ means that the soul must be in a daily, constant communion with Jesus Christ and live His life. “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. It is not possible for one branch to depend on another for its vitality; each must maintain its own personal relationship to the vine. Each member must bear its own fruits.

4. Do not follow the Crowd. “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” Proverbs 1:10. The will of man is sovereign of his being. Neither man nor the devil can make us sin except by persuading us to will to do it. The soul must contemplate the sinful act before passion dominates over reason. Sometimes men who have long resisted submit to iniquity, feeling that they have done all that can be expected of them. But temptation, no matter how strong, is never an excuse for sin. Even though the pressure mounts with continued resistance, the will can, and must learn to say NO—to the very end.

“An impure thought tolerated, an unholy desire cherished, and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised. ‘Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.’ If we would not commit sin, we must shun its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be held in subjection to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly repelled. To your closet, followers of Christ. Pray in faith and with all the heart. Satan is watching to ensnare your feet. You must have help from above if you would escape his devices.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 177

5. Forget about false Science. “Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.” Jeremiah 10:2. The heathen often predict fortune from celestial phenomena such as eclipses and comets and other extraordinary appearances in the sky.

The only true science is in the word of God; and the best science is the science of salvation.

6. Do not tolerate sin. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Ephesians 5:11. Not only will they not participate in unfruitful works they will not countenance them nor have any sympathy with them. The Greek word for “reprove” here used is “*elegcho*” which can also be translated to mean, “to refute, to convict or to expose.” But in word and in life the Christian should be a continuous rebuke to the world of evil. It is not sufficient to only “have no fellowship” with the works of evil; but they must be reprovèd—convicted. The Christian cannot remain neutral, a passive observer in the face of wickedness; he must be aggressive in the exposure and denunciation of sin. Sympathy with afflicted men must not degenerate into indifference or sentimental tolerance.

7. Refuse to Partake in evil. “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.” 1 Timothy 5:22. Dare to be different, as were Daniel’s three friends when asked to bow to the golden statue. They decided to remain strong, even in the face of the fiery furnace. Although there were likely other Hebrews on the Plain of Dura, only three chose to stand for the Lord (Daniel chapter 3), and refused to partake in the sin of bowing down to the golden statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. It takes courage to go against the flow of sin in this world, but if we are partnered with Christ, “With God nothing shall be impossible.” Luke 1:37

To progress you need to partner with God, which means that you must:

Refuse, Rebuke, Resist, Remove, Reject, Refrain from sin at all times.

“The work of gaining salvation is one of copartnership, a joint operation. There is to be co-operation between God and the repentant sinner. This is necessary for the formation of right principles in the character. Man is to make earnest efforts to overcome that which hinders him from attaining to perfection. But he is wholly dependent upon God for success. Human effort of itself is not sufficient. Without the aid of divine power it avails nothing. God works and man works. Resistance of temptation must come from man, who must draw his power from God. On the one side there is infinite wisdom, compassion, and power; on the other, weakness, sinfulness, absolute helplessness”. —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 482

Ebrima John Jaiteh and Wendy Eaton

General Conference Session 2017

Tortoreto, Italy

Over 800 believers gathered together in the small Italian town of Tortoreto for a spiritual feast, from September 27 to 30. The setting was a peaceful resort on the shores of the Adriatic Sea. It was a time to come apart from the world and spend four days in communion with the Lord and His people—a small foretaste of things to come in the new heaven.

The conference opening address was given by outgoing president Idel Suarez Jr. He introduced the theme of the conference which was, *The Time of the Reformation—500 Years of Reformation*.

John the Baptist was a great reformer. After the prophet Malachi, 400 years passed before John the Baptist began preaching. It was a mysterious time of silence with no prophets. No books had been added to the Canon of the Bible during that time. The final verses in the Old testament read, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” Malachi 4:5–6. The Jewish people held on to this promise and as the Passover was celebrated year after year, they always kept an empty seat, waiting for Elijah to come. Finally, Elijah did come. Jesus Himself stated, “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” Matthew 11:13–14. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). It was a spirit to awaken those dead in trespasses and sins; a spirit to make people turn back to the worship of the Lord. John came to direct the people to Christ. “Behold the Lamb of God.” John 1:29. He came to reform and restore the

religious practices of the people, showing that salvation is not through their ceremonies, but salvation is having Jesus enthroned in your heart. We need to crucify ourselves and live in Christ. Just as John the Baptist broke the 400 years of silence, we are called to break the silence and proclaim the coming of Christ. We need to preach, as did John, the necessity of true repentance and returning to basic Christianity, through a simple faith in Christ.

For the remainder of the day on Wednesday and during sessions on Thursday and Friday, the history of the Reformation was studied in more depth. Two sessions ran concurrently—one session focused on the lives and ministry of the great reformers of the past, and the other session focused on various doctrinal issues that were brought to light during the times of those reformers.

On Wednesday the focus of the meetings was on the time period before the days of Martin Luther. On Thursday the sessions focused on the Reformers of the 16th Century, and on Friday, The Great Themes of Adventism.

The lives of the following Reformers were presented:

Columba—the Great Missionary from Ireland: (Brother Pablo Hunger). Columba was not a simple man; he was of royal heritage—the descendant of a king. During his life he decided to take a pilgrimage to Rome, and on the way he stopped in France. There he came across a piece of the Scriptures. After reading it, he changed his mind about going to Rome. Although he faced much opposition, he then became a great reformer, preaching the truths of the Bible and also training other missionaries. We need to have the courage of Columba,

preaching and teaching the great truths of the Bible for the time in which we live.

Peter Waldo and the Waldenses: (Brother Douglas Francis). It was Rome's war against the Bible that plunged the world into The Dark Ages and it was in this time of spiritual darkness that the Waldenses upheld the truths of God's word. Peter Waldo was a businessman who underwent a spiritual conversion. He was rich, but became poor for the sake of the gospel. After providing for his wife and daughter, the remainder of his money he spent to pay missionaries and produce Bibles. The Waldenses were treated cruelly for no wrongdoing on their part. However, this is how God's children have many times been treated in history. And history will repeat itself once more in the time of the end. Our freedoms and rights will be taken away if we choose to observe the true Sabbath of God's law. Will you be able to stand?

Girolamo Savonarola—The Great Italian Reformer: (Brother Francesco Caputo). Girolamo Savonarola faced a martyr's death in daring to defy the Roman church. He wrote many books, and was a great reformer. He was courageous in death knowing that they may take his earthly life, but the promise of eternal life was waiting for him. If Jesus is first in our lives, in the last trial of this earth He will be with us and will see us through.

John Wycliffe—The Morning Star of England: (Brother Larry Watts). The message of John Wycliffe was that Jesus is the only Saviour of the world. He wrote many books and was a fearless preacher in the face of fierce opposition. He had a passion—that the scriptures be made available for the common person to read, and thus he translated the Bible into the English language. The Lord is looking for more Johns to stand against the tyranny of the devil today.

John Huss—The Reformer from Bohemia: (Brother Tzvetan Petkov). John Huss was an orphan who came from poor circumstances. Yet, he still managed to get an education for free through the church. He was a good student and fell in love with the word of God. From reading the Scriptures he underwent a change in his life. He learned much also from the writings of John Wycliffe. John Huss learned to ignore criticism and stand firm in his religious convictions which were based on the Word of God. He tried to reform the church from within, with little success. He courageously met a martyr's death for his faith. It is today that we are to have our characters molded so we will be able to face

the trials of the future and perhaps a martyr's death.

Jerome—the Knight from Bohemia: (Brother Roland de la Paz) It was Jerome who brought the writings of Wycliffe to John Huss. He and John Huss worked closely together. John Huss faced a martyr's death before Jerome. Although Jerome faltered and recanted when first threatened with death, he deeply repented. The Lord forgave him and he was given a second opportunity to answer for his faith. The second time he stood faithful and followed John Huss to the flames. God in His mercy may give us a second opportunity if we falter; however, we need to pray that we can remain faithful the first time and at all times.

Casiadoro De Reina—The Great Reformer of Spain (Brother Danilo Lopez Moterosso). De Reina was an author, translator, writer, and theologian. He translated the Bible into Spanish. He came into conflict with the state religion and was persecuted by the inquisition. He later spent some time in England where he was given some freedom to preach. When the devil tried to destroy the Bible, people wanted it more and more. Today we have many Bibles in our homes and few take the time to search it diligently.

Martin Luther—The Great Reformer of Germany (Brother Daniel Serban). Martin Luther was not only a reformer of Germany, but of the World. His books were distributed all throughout Europe. He was a faithful Catholic priest, but as he searched the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit revealed the truths to him, his faith led him to a place where he was in opposition to the many false practices in the church. He boldly stood for the true faith in the Word of God and was led to answer for his faith in front of the greatest dignitaries and leading men of this earth. Their high positions did not cause him to falter, and he humbly asked his accusers to show him from the Word of God where he was in error. They were unable to provide an answer to his question. In his exile Luther translated the Bible into the German language. He discovered that the true God is a God of joy and he wrote many songs to accompany religious services.

Julianillo—the Great Canvasser of Spain (Brother Alfred Fiscaro). Julianillo was not as well known as Luther, Huss and Zwingli; however, the Lord still had work for him to do. He dedicated himself to distributing the Word of God. He was short, looked weak and sickly; however, he gave what he could to the Lord. He went to Switzerland to find pamphlets and Bibles printed into the Spanish language and found a way to smuggle them



Public



Delegates



Conference

into Spain, as it was against the law to import religious material. He then distributed the material. He put his talents into the service of the Lord. In the Spirit of Prophecy we read of the importance of literature work and canvassing in the final days of this earth's history. May God help us to participate in this very important work.

Phillip Melancthon (Arnolfo Cortes). Philip Melancthon was the right-hand man and most trusted friend of Martin Luther. He is characterized as being meek, cautious, and conscientious, with a love for the people. He loved peace. Although some may look at him and say he lacked decision and courage, however, he had a great interest in the welfare of the church. Yet, these were essential qualities for the growth of the church. The Lord gives varied talents and gifts to the different members and leaders and all have their duties in the Lord's vineyard.

The Reformation in Africa (Parmenas Shirima). After the time of Christ, the truth of Christianity was brought to Africa through faithful men like the Ethiopian Eunuch who met Philip on his journey. Africa began with a good future on the horizon, but in the course of time problems arose and it became known as the Dark Continent, with many satanic practices such as witchcraft and voodoo. The Protestant Reformation came to Africa through many dedicated missionaries, David Livingstone being the most well-known. He opened the way and encouraged others to follow in his footsteps. And he was a pioneer in the abolishing of slavery. The Seventh-day Adventist message came to Africa in 1887 with two missionaries coming to South Africa. The message of Reformation began in Zimbabwe in 1930 and has spread to many other countries. The message is going to the far corners of the earth. The Lord will come soon.

John Calvin—The Great French Reformer (Alfred Ngwenya). There was much activity in Europe because that is where the seat of the beast sits. Wherever there is darkness, the Lord sends light. John Calvin was a theologian who read and accepted many of the works of Martin Luther. He was also a lawyer. Whatever your career is, the Lord has an assignment for you. Calvin spent much time in Bible study and held daily and weekly services. Calvin could have been prominent in the world, but he chose to submit to the Lord. We are also encouraged to give our plans to the Lord, submit to His leading, and accept the direction He decides to lead us.

Theodore Beza (Brother Yapci Trujillo). Theodore Beza was the successor of John Calvin. He was a poet and also had a law degree. He was an educated man and came from a family of governors. Once he accepted Christ he became a positive influence as did Daniel and his three friends. After he had a serious illness, being in danger of losing his life, he began to think seriously about the Lord and he surrendered his life to Christ. Because of his influential position, in a subtle way he was able to save many of the lives of his brothers in the faith who were persecuted. The Lord has His people in all classes of society, the rich, the poor, the educated, and the unlearned. The Lord has a mission for each and every one.

Space does not permit us to go into more detail regarding the doctrinal subjects that were being studied concurrently at the conference. The doctrinal subjects, as they were discovered by the Reformers were as follows: The Sabbath and Church Festivals; Icons and Idolatry; Celibacy; False theory of Purgatory; False theory of Indulgences; and, The Debate about the Bread and Wine. Some of the great principles that came out of the Protestant Reformation were the concepts of Salvation: By grace alone; Salvation only through the Scriptures; Through faith; and, most importantly, only through Christ, not through any rites or ceremonies or priests.

On Friday morning, Brother Humberto Avellaneda Blanco spoke of the hope of the Christian, which is Christ's Second coming. All the signs foretell that His coming is near. May God help us to be ready and courageous to stand for the truth as did the Reformers of old. Brother Pablo Hunger continued on this theme for Sabbath opening, encouraging us to follow the footsteps of Jesus and know what our commission is in life. May it be in union with the gospel commission that the Lord has given. The Lord will not force us to follow Him. Our service must be through love.

A most wonderful event took place on Friday morning, with the baptism of eight dear souls in the clear waters of the Adriatic Sea. All heaven rejoiced as these souls made a covenant with the Lord, to turn their backs on the world and to follow Jesus.

The morning and evening worships also were very inspiring.

Brother Morris Lowe gave us an individual call for Reformation in our personal lives. He encouraged us to be familiar with the enemy within and through the help of Christ, to conquer that enemy. Satan has an alibi with us—our human nature. It is our greatest liability

against sin and Satan. We cannot change by ourselves. We must make a conscious decision that we want to follow the Lord and He will help us gain the victory. What we do not overcome, will overcome us in the end. Our only hope is in Jesus.

A Reformation in our personal life includes not only doctrines, but also practices; and Brother Lowe shared with us the importance of the health message and salvation. Vegetarianism is only one small part of Health Reform. There are also social factors and psychological factors (such as stress) that affect our health. It is the Lord's plan for man to enter paradise sanctified.

The Divine Service on Sabbath brought all the themes studies in the past few days to a conclusion. Brother Tzvetan Petkov shared the subject of, *The Time of Reformation*.

Quoting Hebrews 9:9–10, “Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” Brother Petkov brought out two themes mentioned here—Conscience and Forms.

Our conscience is dependent on our values. It needs to be perfected by the Holy Spirit and purified by the Word of God. Our conscience will disappear or turn around if we pay too much attention to the world. However, when we read the Bible it creates in us a desire to be like Jesus and His disciples and then what goes against the Word of God gets rebuked by our conscience. It is possible to put our conscience to sleep as did the Pharisees. They calmed their conscience by doing “good works”. They paid their tithes and performed all their rituals to quiet their troubled conscience. They were worse than the blind because they did not see their weakness. The formalism of the Pharisees is deadly. In contrast we see the Publican Jesus spoke of, who

externally was not a good person. Publicans took extra money so they could have for themselves. However, this publican had a conscience that was alive. When he came to the temple he felt so unworthy, he could not even look up.

The church of Laodicea is blinded (Revelation 3:17). They are rich in knowledge, but also rich in form. In comparing formalism with real Christianity, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus told this story to bring out the point that Christianity was given by God to make you a better person. Your religion is worthless if your life does not change for the better and you have a greater burden for helping others.

In the history of the Reformation we see how the Reformers earnestly studied the Bible, and how their consciences became enlightened. They had a great desire to follow Jesus, and also to share the love of Jesus with others. They did not keep their light to themselves. We are encouraged to follow the footsteps of the great Reformers of the past—to read our Bibles and point others to the great truths contained therein. May God help us to have an active and sensitive conscience and a great desire to follow and please the Lord.

Following an afternoon filled with music and testimonies, all too soon it came time to say farewell. Encouragement was given by several of the Pastors for each member to continue in the pathway of the Reformation and remain firm as a rock as far as truth is concerned, but meek as a lamb when working with souls. May God help us to be faithful in the corner of the world where He has us today. Amen.

As it was not possible to attend both sessions, only a partial report is given here.

All of the services can be found in their entirety on the General Conference web site:

<http://www.sda1844.org/>



Outgoing President: Idel Suarez Jr.



Incoming President: Tzvetan Petkov

LIST OF NEW OFFICERS (2017-2022)

President – Tzvetan Petkov (Bulgaria/U.S.A.)
Vice President – Humberto Avellaneda Blanco (Colombia)
First Secretary – Douglas Francis (Sri Lanka)
Second Secretary – Yony Delgado Cotrina (Peru)
Treasurer – Evance Mtikama (Malawi)

GENERAL CONFERENCE FULL COMMITTEE

The five officers listed above, plus:

Jose Vicente Giner Hernandez (Switzerland) (Social Ministry Leader)
Idel Suarez, Jr. (U.S.A.) (Ministerial Committee Leader)
Morris Lowe (Canada) (Help Ministry Leader)
Pablo Hunger (Austria/U.S.A.) (North American/Caribbean Division Leader)
Francesco Caputo (Italy) (European Division Leader)
Anton Salavyov (Bulgaria/Australia) (Oceania Division Leader)
Alfred Ngwenya (Zimbabwe) (African Division Leader)
Danilo Lopes Monterroso (Guatemala) (Latin American Division Leader)
Roland De La Paz (Philippines) (Asian Division Leader)
Elijah Zwane (Swaziland/Madagascar) (African Division Vice President)

Ministerial Department Leader– Idel Suarez, Jr. (U.S.A.)

MINISTRY LEADERS

HELP MINISTRY	Leader – Morris Lowe (Health Department Leader) Good Samaritan Department – Stefano La Corte (Italy) Health Department – Morris Lowe (Canada) Architecture/Engineering Department – Edison Martinez
MISSIONARY MINISTRY	Leader – Pablo Hunger (Evangelism Leader) Evangelism Department – Pablo Hunger (Austria/USA) Publishing Department – Raquel Orce (Spain/USA) Canvassing Department – Joel Barnedo (Philippines/USA) Multimedia Department – Jose Fernando Leon (Mexico/Italy)
SOCIAL MINISTRY	Leader – Jose Vicente Giner Hernandez (Youth Department Leader) Family Department – Adalicio Fontes Souza (Portugal) Education Department – Margaret Seely (USA) Youth Department – Jose Vicente Giner Hernandez (Switzerland)

For a complete listing, see the **General Conference Web site**.

Please join us in prayer for the new officers in their responsibilities in the work of the Lord for the next five years.



Distance

Between

Heaven

and

Earth



your sins have hid His face from you.” Isaiah 59:2. The earth was cut off from heaven and would remain

“God made the world to enlarge heaven.” *Manuscript 78*, 1901. In terms of physical distance, heaven is very far. No man can tell how many kilometers away from earth are those celestial courts above! No estimations or speculations can be close to the truth, for the word of God has not revealed this to us. In our world we know that distance affects many operations. Even now when transport technology is advanced, people may have to wait for days for a person to arrive from a far country to conduct a meeting, seminar, or some kind of task requiring his personal presence. In this article, we look at whether the physical distance between heaven and earth affects the way God works with us. We will be inspired to see that it is possible to live in Him in heaven, even while we are here on earth.

From the beginning, distance was no issue to limit heaven’s access to this world. “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” Genesis 3:8. Before the entrance of sin, the Lord often personally visited the holy pair in Eden and they had the joy of communing with their Creator and enjoyed His presence in the garden. The inspired writings attest also to this fact, that in their innocence, God Himself and His angels made frequent visits to see them.

Something disrupted that sacred communion and harmony. Through disobedience, sin entered. Thus, a great gulf was fixed between heaven and earth. “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and

utterly desolate, and ripe for its final destruction. Thanks to God, infinite wisdom devised a plan by which man could be reconciled to his Maker and the communion that he had lost would be restored. A life of probation was granted during which the image of God, which was lost through transgression, could be restored in man. The beautiful image of the way God would reconnect the world to Himself was shown in a dream to the patriarch Jacob on the night he fled from home.

“And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.” Genesis 28:11–13

“In the vision the plan of redemption was presented to Jacob, not fully, but in such parts as were essential to him at that time. The mystic ladder revealed to him in his dream was the same to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathaniel. Said He, ‘Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.’ John 1:51. Up to the time of man’s rebellion against the government of God,

there had been free communication between God and man. But the sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, so that man could not have communion with his Maker. . . . The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication. Had He not with His own merits bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power.” – *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 184

Angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Hebrews 1:14

Christ Jesus is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8. All people that lived before His condescension found salvation by faith in Him as the coming Deliverer. To such, Christ identified (and still does) His interests with their interests and worked for their uplifting. He would be present personally, or by means of His holy angels. When the three Hebrew captives in the Babylonian realm were thrown in the fiery furnace, kindled seven times hotter than usual, He [Christ] came down personally to “suffer” with His faithful servants. As He walked with them in the furnace, the fire lost its power and could not do its destructive work before Him who created it. The heathen king was astonished! In haste he rose up; inquiring of his counsellors, to whom he said: “Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered. . . True, O king. [Then] He answered. . . Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire. . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Daniel 3:24–25. When Daniel himself refused to have his interaction with His Creator disrupted, he was thrown into a den of lions. What happened? God sent His angel to seal the mouths of the lions and they hurt him not (Daniel 6:22). “Heaven is very near those who suffer for righteousness’ sake.” – *Prophets and Kings*, p. 545

How can we be thus connected with heaven? It is through prayer. Through prayer we are able to commune with heaven and obtain answers to our needs.



Daniel recounts his experience: “Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.” Daniel 9:21. Daniel did not have time to finish his prayer before

he was interrupted! Just as he began to pray, a command was given and Gabriel the mighty angel who fills the position from which Lucifer fell was sent in answer to Daniel’s prayer.

“From the time it takes to read Daniel's prayer down to the point at which Gabriel made his appearance upon the scene, the reader can judge of the speed with which this messenger was dispatched from the court of heaven to this servant of God. No wonder that Daniel says he was caused to fly swiftly, or that Ezekiel compares the movements of these celestial beings to a flash of lightning. (Ezekiel 1:14).” –Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 76

The question of distance does not arise with these divine beings. They could travel from heaven to earth in moments to execute the command of their Creator. What a wonderful and solemn thought!

“To the worker for God the record of these angel visits should bring strength and courage. . . . Heaven is brought near to earth by that mystic ladder, the base of which is firmly planted on the earth, while the topmost round reaches the throne of the Infinite. Angels are constantly ascending and descending this ladder of shining brightness, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and bringing blessing and hope, courage and help, to the children of men. These angels of light create a heavenly atmosphere about the soul, lifting us toward the unseen and the eternal.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 153

Prayer must be done in faith. “Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness.” –*Education*, p. 253

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17. What must we pray for, then?

“For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christ-like temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received. . . . Through faith in Christ, every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed. . . .

“Many, even in their seasons of devotion, fail of receiving the blessing of real communion with God. They are in too great haste. With hurried steps they press

through the circle of Christ's loving presence, pausing perhaps a moment within the sacred precincts, but not waiting for counsel. They have no time to remain with the divine Teacher. With their burdens they return to their work. . . .

"They must give themselves time to think, to pray, to wait upon God for renewal of physical, mental, and spiritual power. They need the uplifting influence of His Spirit. Receiving this, they will be quickened by fresh life. The wearied frame and tired brain will be refreshed, the burdened heart will be lightened.

"Not a pause for a moment in His presence, but personal contact with Christ, to sit down in companionship with Him—this is our need." – *Ibid.*, p. 258, 257,260–261

Christ said: "Abide in Me and I in you." John 15:4. So great is this mutual connection! If we are in Him; where is He now? It is said of the Father that "when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." Ephesians 1:20. If we are in Him, He then, "made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:6. His second coming will just be the completion of a process. We have been with Him through His Spirit, through lifelong communion and obedience; we then will have the privilege to live physically with Him in heaven.

How many times have we been in heaven? Countless times! "Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him." –*Steps to Christ*, p. 93. It means that while in prayer we are carried into the presence of the Father who is in heaven. The more often we pray, the more we visit heaven for our needed supplies.

"We are seldom, in all respects, placed in the same position twice. We continually have new scenes and new trials to pass through, where past experience cannot be a sufficient guide. We must have the continual light that comes from God." –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 509

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." Joshua 1:8. Some herbivores are ruminant animals. These offer us a good example. After they gather their food during the day, they busy themselves regurgitating at night. As the sun sets in the western horizon they retire to rest in their places. Yet at night while lying down, you can hear the sound of chewing. They are busy chewing the cud! Nature is a good lesson book. We too can train ourselves to "chew the cud" at night. Our thoughts and dreams would be glorious and our atmosphere beautiful.

In Revelation 8:1 it is said that "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." In prophetic time this is about seven days. This will be the time taken for our journey to heaven. "We all entered the cloud together, and were seven days ascending to the sea of glass." –*Early Writings*, p. 16. This will be the last act of God to bring us physically to Himself. We have been with Him all along in heaven spiritually; we have lived a life of heaven on earth, now time is ripe for us to be physically with Him for eternity. Heaven is near indeed! Let us put all our efforts to prepare for our journey to heaven. Amen.

Joel Msiska, Malawi



LOOKING FOR YOU . . .

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HEALTH MATTERS:

Sesame

Small But Powerful



Sesame is a flowering plant which grows wild, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and India, and has thousands of different varieties. It is also grown as a crop in tropical regions around the world, mainly cultivated for its seeds. The sesame fruit is a rectangular capsule, 2–8 cm long. These capsules or pods naturally burst open when they reach full maturity, exposing the seeds within. The actual seeds of the plant contain the oils. In 2014, 6.2 million metric tonnes of sesame seeds were harvested. Sesame seeds are considered one of the most ancient foods on earth, and the sesame is the oldest known plant to be grown primarily for the oil from its seeds. Remains of sesame recovered from archeological excavations have been dated as far back as 3500 BC. Records from Babylon and Assyria, dating about 4000 years ago, mention sesame. Ancient Egyptians called it *sesemt*, and was used as a medicinal drug.

Sesame, as a crop, is favoured because of its ability to grow in areas where other crops are unable to grow. It grows in drought conditions, in high heat, in soil containing little moisture after monsoons are gone, or even when rains fail or when rains are excessive. Sesame has been called a survivor crop.

Sesame seeds are small. Their size, form, and colours vary among the many varieties of the plant. The most commonly sold variety of sesame is off-white coloured. Other common colours are buff, tan, gold, brown, reddish, gray, and black. Sesame has one of the highest oil contents of any seed and has a rich, nutty flavor. For this reason, sesame seeds and oil is highly valued in eastern, Mediterranean and African cultures, used for thousands of years to flavour foods, provide essential fats and enhance overall health.

NUTRITION FACTS

Sesame seeds contain up to 55 percent oil, and 20 percent protein, making them an excellent source of essential fatty acids and certain amino acids. Also contained in the sesa-

me seed are a group of polyphenols known as lignans. These polyphenols are estrogen-like chemical compounds that work as antioxidants, and are most commonly found in seeds and cereal grains such as sesame seeds, flax seeds, wheat bran and soybeans. Sesame oil is rich in Omega-9 and Omega-6 fatty acids. Sesame seeds also contain phytosterols, which are cholesterol-like compounds.

Sesame seeds also contain many other nutrients. One tablespoon of whole sesame seeds has:

52 calories; 4 grams fat; 1 gram carbohydrates; 2 grams protein; 4 mg copper; 2 mg manganese; 87 mg calcium; 31 mg magnesium; 3 mg iron; 57 mg phosphorus; 7 mg zinc ; 1 mg thiamine.

Sesame seeds are a good source of many different minerals, fiber and even protein. One serving of whole sesame seeds contain a substantial amount of iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, copper and manganese. This same size serving also has about one gram of dietary fiber and two grams of protein, which, given the small serving size is more protein than many other protein foods like nuts and seeds contain.

The iron found in sesame can help prevent iron deficiency associated with anemia and low energy. Sesame seeds provide a good dose of copper needed to maintain nerve, bone and metabolic health. Sesame also contains a good deal of calcium; however, it is not always fully absorbed due to its oxalic content, which inhibits calcium absorption.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF SESAME SEEDS

Sesame seeds and sesame oil have powerful cholesterol-lowering effects. In fact, sesame seeds rank highest in cholesterol-lowering phytosterols of nearly all nuts, seeds, legumes and grains. Phytosterols are structurally similar to cholesterol; they act in the intestine to lower the absorption of cholesterol, by displacing cholesterol within the in-

testinal tract, reducing the amount of available cholesterol that can be absorbed into the body. The specific type of phytosterol in sesame seeds is also linked to improved prostate health and function of arteries. Lignans contained in sesame seeds, also work to normalize cholesterol levels. Lignans help to naturally lower cholesterol by lowering both blood and liver cholesterol levels. They reduce overall cholesterol, and bad (LDL) cholesterol levels.



Sesame oil is considered a strong antihypertensive (lowering blood pressure) since it can help normalize blood pressure levels naturally. A study done on patients with high blood pressure, who used sesame oil as their only edible oil for 45 days, found that sesame oil helped significantly lower blood pressure, decreased free radicals (known to damage health) and increased antioxidant status.

Sesame can also positively affect sex hormone production, especially in post-menopausal women, which can help reduce the symptoms many women experience after reaching menopause. Because they are loaded with important nutrients, protein and fats, sesame seeds are also considered a superfood for a healthy pregnancy.

Whole sesame seeds are a rich source of mammalian lignan precursors, similar to whole flaxseeds. What does this mean? Precursors are compounds from which other compounds are formed. Mammalian lignans are produced in humans by the bacteria present in the colon. These lignans have potential anticancer effects, especially in regard to preventing colon and breast cancers. But, how does the body produce these lignans? The precursors in sesame seeds are converted by the bacteria in the colon to mammalian lignans, thus decreasing risk of these cancers; therefore, making sesame seeds a rich source of protective, anti-cancer compounds in the body. Women with the highest intake of lignans compared to the lowest intake had a 40 percent to 50 percent lower chance of developing breast cancer.

Fats signal our brain to produce hormones that make us feel satisfied so we stay full for longer between meals. Healthy fats like sesame seeds reduce ghrelin, the hunger hormone, so you tend to eat less. This is also key for overcoming sugar addiction, reducing cravings, and ending overeating. The lignans in sesame seeds enhance important liver functions. They can increase burning fat by improving the activity of several liver enzymes that actually work to break down fatty acids.

Sesame seeds' lignans act as compounds important for antioxidant activity since they help the absorption of vitamin E and other phytochemicals. Fatty acids found in sesame seeds are also needed to absorb fat-soluble nutrients, including vitamin A, vitamin D and many types of antioxidants.

WARNING: Sesame allergies are on the rise

One important thing to note is that sesame can trigger allergic reactions in some people. Sesame seed food allergies are on the rise, possibly due to cross-contamination with other nuts or seeds and due to manufacturing processes. People who have a difficult time digesting nuts and seeds, including almonds, flaxseeds and chia seeds, might want to use caution when eating sesame seeds. Some allergic reactions can be quite severe, and potentially fatal. If you have a sesame allergy, you can reduce your odds of having an allergic reaction by avoiding products that contain sesame seeds or sesame oil. Unfortunately, sesame seeds and sesame seed oil are widely used, so avoiding them completely means paying close attention to the ingredients in food products. To further protect yourself if you have a sesame allergy, avoid any products that do not have an ingredient list. Read labels every time you shop. Manufacturers may occasionally change their recipes or use different ingredients for varieties of the same product.

In some parts of the world, labeling laws require the identification of sesame as an ingredient in any product. The European Union, Australia, Canada, and Israel are among the regions where sesame is considered a major food allergen and must be specifically included on labels. This is not the case yet in the United States.

HOW TO BUY AND USE SESAME SEEDS

Sesame seeds come in a number of different sizes and colors. In developed nations, sesame seeds are usually sold with their seed coats removed (called decorticated). After harvesting, the seeds are usually cleaned and hulled. Any seeds that are rejected or not ripe when harvested are saved to be used for sesame oil production.

Make or buy sesame seed butter, also known as tahini. It is a great alternative to peanut or even other nut butters if you have an intolerance to nuts. Tahini is usually made from whole roasted sesame seeds and therefore is a more refined product than using plain, whole and unground sesame seeds, although it is still delicious and beneficial. Tahini is a staple ingredient in hummus and babaganoush. Hummus is a simple and healthy combination of ingredients that you can easily make at home using ground chickpeas, garlic and tahini. Babaganoush has a base of roasted eggplant and is seasoned with tahini, lemon juice, garlic and salt.

Another way to use sesame is to toss seeds in stir-fries or in salads. Add sesame seed oil to salad dressings, coleslaw, and other vegetable dishes. You can also add whole sesame seeds to homemade breads, bagels, buns or crackers.

Be creative and enjoy this small, nutrition packed powerseed in its different forms as part of a wholesome, healthy diet!



Faith like a Mustard Seed



"Grandpa! Grandpa!" Annie and Max ran to Grandpa who had just entered the door. Each child excitedly grabbed and hugged one of Grandpa's legs, almost causing him to lose his balance.

"Oh my" chuckled Grandpa, "How are my two little grandchildren?" he asked, as he tried picking both of them in his arms, barely lifting them off the ground.

"Grandpa, we're ready to go!" Max hopped out of Grandpa's arms and picked up his blue knapsack. Annie followed; she put on her purple knapsack.

"Okay, well then, let's go!" said Grandpa happily. They helped Mother put the picnic basket in the car. After a prayer, off they drove.

It took them about an hour before they were out of the city, and green fields began to appear more and more. The distant mountains looked more imposing than ever. The children couldn't take their eyes off the beauty of nature. Grandpa and Mother would recite verses by memory found in Psalms speaking of the wonders of God. Finally, after a very long drive, they came to a dirt road that led to a small white house surrounded by trees. It was in the middle of a great field. An old black tire tied with a sturdy rope hung from a tree close to the house. The children hopped out of the car and went to swing on it while Mother and Grandpa went to prepare the picnic under two large trees. After some playtime, the children went to eat.

"Today is a special day, children," said Mother, "Many years ago, when I was a child, just like the both of you, Grandpa did something special with me and today I will do the same with you."

"Yes," said Grandpa, as he looked at one of the trees, "and my father did with me as well."

"What is it, Mother, Grandpa?" Annie asked. Both chil-

dren had an anxious look on their faces; they couldn't wait to know what special thing they would do. Mother and Grandpa smiled.

"Look here." Grandpa took a neatly folded cloth out of his pocket. He carefully opened it and opened his hand to catch two very tiny black seeds. "Open your hands." The children opened their hands, and each one received a seed.

"These are mustard seeds. They are one of the smallest seeds, yet when they grow, they become large, majestic, and beautiful trees, like the ones we are under right now." The children gazed up in awe.

"Grandpa planted that one there when he was a boy with his father, and he and I planted this one," Mother said, as she pointed to each tree.

"Why?" asked Max, as he looked at the tiny black seed sitting in the palm of his hand.

"To remind us about the words of Jesus," Grandpa answered, as he pulled out his Bible from his brown leather bag. After flipping the pages a bit, he began to read, "*And He said to them, Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.*"

"What does that mean, Grandpa?" asked Annie, as she imagined one of the mountains in the distance moving from one place to another.

"Well children, faith means to believe in what we can't see, nor touch physically, something that is not palpable. As human beings, we tend to have many doubts, just like the disciples. Yet Jesus says that if we believe even a tiny bit, just as the seeds you hold in your hands, we will experience marvelous things. In your lives, you will face many trials and obstacles, but remember it only takes a little faith to move mountains. Though



your faith begins as small as a mustard seed, it will eventually grow to be a great mature tree. Never forget whom you've believed in, Jesus Christ, the triumphant Saviour; never doubt Him, He will never let you down."

"Let us pray, and as a symbol of our faith, you will plant these two seeds here today," Mother said as she knelt down. Grandpa placed his hands upon the hands of his grandchildren and blessed them. After they had prayed, the children happily planted their seeds next to Mother's and Grandpa's trees.

Challenge nine

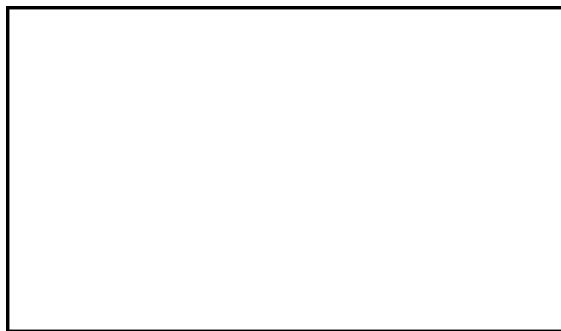
I. Unscramble the following words found in the Bible verse Grandpa read:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. TTLNSSEILE = | 6. OMEV= |
| 2. IFTAH= | 7. TOHNIGN= |
| 3. TMNUIOAN= | 8. EMSISMPOIBL= |
| 4. EDSE= | 9. ZSIE= |
| 5. TSAMRUD= | 10. YRUTL= |

II. Where is the Bible verse that Grandpa mentioned found? _____

III. Find out the exact size of a mustard seed and then draw it in the box

(also, look up what the mustard seed tree looks like):



Complete all 15
Challenges

Don't miss Grandpa's
next visit to Annie and
Max's home!!

Email your challenges here:

veronicanogarcia@gmail.com





General Conference Committee

Baptism in Tortoreto, Italy



General Conference, 2017—Special Music



Colombian Choir



**Brother Reijo Jyrkinen
Finland**

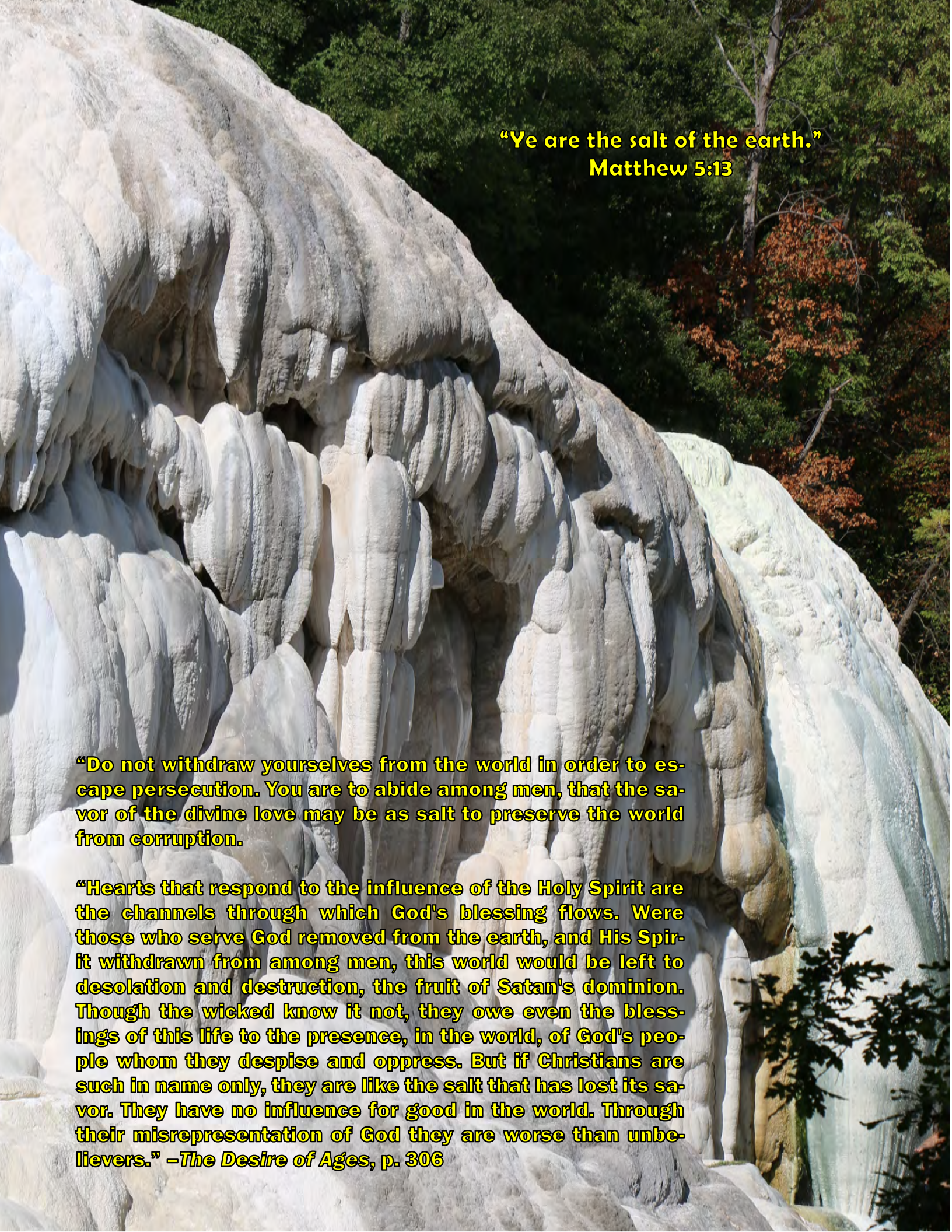


African Choir



Senegal





**“Ye are the salt of the earth.”
Matthew 5:13**

“Do not withdraw yourselves from the world in order to escape persecution. You are to abide among men, that the savor of the divine love may be as salt to preserve the world from corruption.

“Hearts that respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit are the channels through which God's blessing flows. Were those who serve God removed from the earth, and His Spirit withdrawn from among men, this world would be left to desolation and destruction, the fruit of Satan's dominion. Though the wicked know it not, they owe even the blessings of this life to the presence, in the world, of God's people whom they despise and oppress. But if Christians are such in name only, they are like the salt that has lost its savor. They have no influence for good in the world. Through their misrepresentation of God they are worse than unbelievers.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306