



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**  
VOLUME 25, NUMBER 3, MARCH 2018

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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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# Fenced In



“The gardener does not refuse to minister to so unpromising a plant. He stands ready to give it still greater care. He will make its surroundings most favorable, and will lavish upon it every attention.

“The owner and the dresser of the vineyard are one in their interest in the fig tree. So the Father and the Son were one in their love for the chosen people. Christ was saying to His hearers that increased opportunities would be given them. Every means that the love of God could devise would be put in operation that they might become trees of righteousness,

“God had planted Israel as a goodly vine by the wells of life.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 214

“Christ described His vineyard, fenced about by the commandments of God.” —*The Signs of the Times*, October, 31, 1900

“Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching His vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.” Isaiah 5:1–2

“Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” Luke 13:7–9

“In the parable the dresser of the vineyard does not question the sentence that the tree, if it remained fruitless, should be cut down; but he knows and shares the owner’s interest in that barren tree. Nothing could give him greater joy than to see its growth and fruitfulness. He responds to the desire of the owner, saying, ‘Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well.’” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 215

bringing forth fruit for the blessing of the world.” —*Ibid* p. 215–216

“These words show plainly that obedience to God’s commands is the condition upon which His promises are fulfilled. These commands are not grievous. God has given them for the good of His people. His law is the hedge which He has built around His vineyard for its protection. The Lord has plainly declared that He will abundantly bless His people if they will obey the laws of His kingdom. It is their life to obey. In keeping God’s commandments there is great reward.” —*The Signs of the Times*, November 30, 1904

“To this people were committed the oracles of God. They were hedged about by the precepts of His law, the everlasting principles of truth, justice, and purity. Obedience to these principles was to be their protection, for it would save them from destroying themselves by sinful practices. And as the tower in the vineyard, God placed in the midst of the land His holy temple.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 18

“Satan knows it is his time. He has but little time left now in which to work, and he will work with tremendous power to ensnare the people of God upon their weak points of character. . . . It is necessary to guard the thoughts; to fence the soul about with the injunctions of God’s Word; and to be very careful in every thought, word, and action not to be betrayed into sin.” —*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 220

**Ellen G. White**



# Fullness of Joy

People are seeking joy and happiness in their lives, and they seek it in different places, and in different ways. The business man seeks success happiness in his business, to gain money and riches. A sportsman practices day after day to become a champion, and to win the race. A musician is playing music for years, until he is noticed and becomes famous. Others are seeking their joy in entertainment, in parties, in movie theatres, and in dance halls. But all these things do not give them fullness of joy.

We find true joy and happiness only, in serving God. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11

Even when we are persecuted and reviled, we are exceeding glad. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11–12

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." Luke 6:22–23

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings: that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth up on you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." 1 Peter 4:12–14

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalm 16:11

Jesus clearly stated that the things of this world, where people are seeking joy and happiness, will not provide it for them. "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." Luke 6:24–26

In one of my dreams I saw that I was sentenced to death for Sabbath-keeping. As I was taken to the place of execution I spoke about salvation, eternal life and of Jesus to the soldier who took me there; finally we came to the place, and I said my last prayer before I died. But I did not suffer; I felt much joy and happiness, similar to when I saw a dream of heaven, and spoke with Jesus. I was so happy that I could die for Him, who died for me.

Martyrs who gave their lives for Jesus went to their death smiling and praising God.

Unfortunately, nowhere are there so many broken dreams as among religious people, among Christians. Jesus said, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say until you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." Matthew 7:21–23

The joy of heaven and happiness comes upon us when our sins are forgiven. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Psalm 32:1–2

However, there are sins that will not be forgiven, and many professing Christians have committed the unpardonable sin, and have lost the joy of heaven. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matthew 12:31–32

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Hebrews 10:26–27

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter; therefore if we have the Holy Spirit living in us, then the greatest persecution and suffering will not take our fullness of joy away. But if we would lose the Holy Spirit, then our lives will be continuous misery and unhappiness. This can happen to anyone, at any time.

The sons of Aaron, (Nadab and Abihu) brought strange fire into the tabernacle, and by this they committed the unpardonable sin. They knew that it was wrong, but they did it anyways.

Uzzah touched the ark of God, and this sin was not forgiven. The sin of Judas was not forgiven. Jesus could

have told him to repent and confess his sin, but it was too late for him.

When God is shaking His church, He only separates members who have committed the unpardonable sin. God is patient with members who are not yet fully committed to serve the Lord; they can yet be converted and be born again.

Christians who do not have fullness of joy are dying spiritually. Jesus saw this happening to the Jewish nation, and tears came to His eyes, because there was nothing more could He do for them, to save them. They rejected His calls to repent.

"While the Christian's life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Romans 8:1

"Through Jesus the fallen sons of Adam become 'sons of God.' 'Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.' Hebrews 2:11. The Christian's life should be one of faith, of victory, and joy in God." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 477

Nehemiah writes, "Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8:10. A Christian with fullness of joy is a strong Christian; He can overcome sin and Satan's temptations.

There is joy in heaven when one sinner turns to God and turns away from the sin of the world. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Luke 15:7

To us, the joy in the Lord is a far greater happiness than what all the pleasures of the world can give, and this joy continues for all eternity. Let us be careful that we will never lose this joy that Jesus gives us, but let it grow stronger and stronger. Amen.

**Timo Martin**

# 41 Dollars



A sister in the faith shared the following experience.

She had gone to the bank and went up to the bank teller to ask him how much money she had in her account. The teller politely replied that she had 41 dollars. “41 Dollars?!!!” she asked with alarm. The sister was quite incredulous and clearly not happy that she was told there was only 41 dollars. This would not seem to be very helpful in having to pay her bills and buy food for her children. The bank teller kindly looked at her furrowed brow and listened to her words of disdain. “You are very lucky,” he replied. “Lucky? How could I be lucky with only 41 dollars?” she countered. The bank teller repeated again, ever so kindly, “You are very lucky.” “How could you call me lucky with only 41 dollars in my account?” she queried. “Well,” continued the bank teller, “if you only knew how many people come up to my window, wanting to withdraw money but they have nothing in their account. Zero!! Or their account is overdrawn. You are lucky you have 41 dollars.”

The sister took these words to heart. Yes, we need to count our blessings. Yes, she had 41 dollars while there are others out there with nothing. God has promised to take care of our daily needs if we are faithful, no matter how much money is in our bank account.

We are promised provisions for the day—today. Let the Lord worry about tomorrow. “‘Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.’ It is a misfortune to borrow the trouble of next week to embitter the present week. When real trouble comes, God will fit every meek and lowly one to bear it. When His providence permits it to come, He will provide help to endure it. Fretting and murmuring cloud and stain the soul, and shut out the bright sunlight from the pathway of others.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 641

We will now compare this sister’s experience to our spiritual lives. There are some Christians whose religion always has a negative focus.

## WHAT YOU CANNOT DO

The tendency for some Christians is to focus on what they

cannot do. They focus on the “Taboos” – things to be avoided in order to gain entrance into the Kingdom of God. They are good at compiling long lists of things to avoid. Wrong kinds of TV shows and entertainments; wrong types of books and magazines to read; wrong kinds of dress to wear, etc. And the list gets especially long when they mention foods that should be avoided.

You share your faith with your friends, associates, co-workers, employers, teachers, and they seem to grasp on “what you cannot do, what you cannot eat, where you cannot go, and the fact that you cannot work on Sabbath.” These are things that they feel they can do, but due to your religion, you cannot. They make it sound like cult worship as they are only focusing on the negative.

We want to turn the people’s minds into a positive focus. When people ask me about vegetarianism by saying, “are you a vegetarian because your religion says you must be?” I tell them no, that is not the reason I am vegetarian. I believe it is a much healthier way to eat and I want to live a happy healthy life and I am glad I found a church that supports me in this belief and promotes healthy living.

When asked about the fact that you cannot work, go shopping or engage in worldly entertainments, on Sabbath they feel it is your religion that prohibits you. They believe they can do these things without guilt as they belong to a different religion that permits these activities. The simple answer is that I did not make the commandments, the Lord did, and I am choosing to want to obey Him. It is not my religion that makes the rules. It is God, and I am thankful I found a church willing to uphold all the laws of God.

None of the prohibitions on the part of the Lord are negative, with the intention of His children living a sad and miserable life, missing out on the joys and pleasures of the world. Quite the contrary, the prohibitions are quite positive. They are meant to promote a happy healthy lifestyle. More than anything the Lord wants His children to be hap-

py. "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Psalm 34:8

In reality, as Christians we should be asking, "What must I *do* to be saved." Not, "what must I *not do* to be saved." The Rich young ruler asked Jesus, What must I do to be saved. (Matthew 16:16) The Philippian Jailer asked the same question of the Apostle Paul. (Acts 16:28-33). That should be our question also. A positive focus.

### THOU SHALT NOT COVET

The 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment reads, "Thou Shalt Not Covet." This commandment does not deal with actions, but with motives and thoughts—negative thoughts and desires. Coveting is focusing on what you do not have. You want what you see others have but you do not have, and so you are extremely unhappy unless you have what you strongly desire. Many people, including Christians, live unsatisfied lives, always wanting more of something.

There is a very great danger that those who have less of the world's material wealth, will covet the possessions of those that have more. Even those who are economically stable, may covet those who are extremely wealthy. The wealthy may have unhappy relationships and may covet the poor man's happy wife. The focus is on, what I do not have but want.

Ellen G White wrote a long testimony to a sister in the faith who was struggling with poverty and illness. She was very faithful, however, she was a little covetous, when she said, "O, if I only had the means handled by those who are unfaithful in their stewardship, I would feel it one of the greatest privileges to help the need and to aid in the advancement of the cause of God!" —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 276

Further on in the testimony, Sister White was told, "The Lord said to His angel who had hitherto ministered unto you: 'I have proved her in poverty and affliction, and she has not separated herself from Me, nor rebelled against Me. I will now prove her with prosperity. I will reveal to her a page of the human heart with which she is unacquainted. I will show her that money is the most dangerous foe she has ever met. I will reveal to her the deceitfulness of riches; that they are a snare, even to those who feel that they are secure from selfishness, and proof against exaltation, extravagance, pride, and love of the praise of men.'" *Ibid*, p. 278. Sadly, this woman proved unfaithful with her wealth.

This does not mean that if you have little, you must remain in that condition. The Lord gives wisdom and talents that we can use to improve our situation in life. It is not sin to improve our situation as long we are not covetously driven by materialism, so that we forget the Lord. We may

not be billionaires but we have food to eat and a place to live and billions in heaven.

The Lord does not want us to be negatively coveting what we do not have as it is not conducive to happiness. We are encouraged to rather count our blessings and appreciate what we *do* have. "We need not keep our own record of trials and difficulties, griefs, and sorrows. All these things are written in the books, and heaven will take care of them." —*Help in Daily Living*, p. 29. We may only have 41 dollars, but we do have.

### GEOGRAPHICAL RELIGION

Often people make geographical excuses also for their lack of faithfulness. They have a negative attitude towards their surroundings and see them as disagreeable. "I am too cold to go out and do missionary work. If only I lived in a warmer climate then I would go out more faithfully." "It is hard to be faithful here in the city. If I lived in the country, I would be a better Christian." "I simply can't be faithful living with worldly relatives, wait until I can move out and have my own place, then I will be more faithful." They have made their religion geographical.



Although the Lord encourages country living, and sometimes opens up the way to do so, the way does not always open up when we want. We have to be content where we are and work for the Lord where we are, not making our geographical location an excuse for our lack of performing our duty. For those who feel this way, usually the most ideal geographical location is never achieved. As the saying goes, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence." There is no ideal place on this earth where there are perfect conditions for a person to grow spiritually without being buffeted by Satan. On the other hand though, there is no place on this earth that the grace of God cannot reach. Into the deepest jungles of heathenism, the Lord is there. In the midst of the worst crime centers of the large cities, the Lord is also there.

Many years ago I was speaking with one sister in the faith who shared with me the fact that when her children were young they lived in a suburban neighborhood of a large city. For many years they prayed that the Lord would open up the way for them to move into the country which is a much better environment to raise children. The Lord delayed in answering this prayer for many years and at first this sister did not know why. However, when the way opened up and they finally did move, their previous neighbour became a Seventh-day Adventist. This neigh-

bour was a good friend even though very little religion was spoken of during those years. What led this neighbour to seek the truth? She said that every Sabbath she saw them worshipping the Lord. They would go for Sabbath afternoon walks. The neighbour also noticed the excitement when a visiting minister paid them a visit. Only after the Lord opened up the way for them to move did they understand the Lord's delay. The delay was for the salvation of this neighbour. It is only safe to follow the leading of the Lord. We must never run ahead of the Lord, nor should we lag behind.

What more forbidding environment could a Christian find themselves in during the first century than in Nero's household. "Nowhere could there exist an atmosphere more uncongenial to Christianity than in the Roman court. Nero seemed to have obliterated from his soul the last trace of the divine, and even of the human, and to bear the impress of Satan. His attendants and courtiers were in general of the same character as himself – fierce, debased, and corrupt. To all appearances it would be impossible for Christianity to gain a foothold in the court and palace of Nero." – *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 463. But it did. And, once these servants and attendants were converted, they did not ask for a change of environment. They kept on working in their environment, shedding the light of the love of God to those around them. "These were not Christians secretly, but openly. They were not ashamed of their faith." – *Ibid*, p. 463

There are many examples in the Bible where people found themselves in seemingly difficult and forbidding geographical locations, but they did not complain or make excuses for lack of obedience due to their less-than-ideal geographical situation. Joseph was faithful to the Lord as a slave and then a prisoner in a foreign land. Moses, at the age of 12, went into Pharaoh's palace surrounded by idolatry. Daniel, as a young man, was with his friends in Nebuchadnezzar's palace and attending school to learn all of the wisdom that a heathen empire could impart. John, was on the island of Patmos surrounded by prisoners. Jesus grew up in the city of Nazareth, known as one of the most wicked cities around. And we see the Apostle Paul, with Silas, singing while in prison. Paul continued preaching as a prisoner in Rome. None of them lamented their poor geographical location and circumstances, but like Daniel, who "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat," (Daniel 1:8), they purposed in their hearts to serve the Lord at all costs, regardless of their geographical location. They did not have the wealth of the world, but they did have their 41 dollars—the daily provision and care of the Lord.

### **SELFISH RELIGION**

For some, the focus is on themselves (selfishness)—they see nothing good in themselves and think they cannot do anything good, or they feel that they have been mistreated

or misunderstood.

#### ***I Cannot:***

*Moses said*, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Exodus 3:11. "I am not eloquent, . . . I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" Exodus 4:10

*The Lord said*, "Who hath made man's mouth? . . . have not I the LORD? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Exodus 4:11–12

*Jeremiah said*, "Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." Jeremiah 1:6

*The Lord said*, "Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." Jeremiah 1:7. "Then the LORD put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." Jeremiah 1:9

And Jonah simply ran away. The job appeared too daunting.

It is true, we cannot. But, "with God nothing shall be impossible." Luke 1:37. Think positive and trust.

#### ***Poor me:***

Jeremiah at one time stated, "O LORD, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily." Jeremiah 20:7–8

The Lord says, "It is not wise to look to ourselves and study our emotions. If we do this, the enemy will present difficulties and temptations that weaken faith and destroy courage. Closely to study our emotions and give way to our feelings is to entertain doubt and entangle ourselves in perplexity. We are to look away from self to Jesus." –*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 109

To look to self makes us selfish. This is inherent in every human being, unless filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Then we will look away from ourselves and our negative circumstances and situations in this corrupt world of sin, and see the Love of Christ in all that is around us and in all that we do. We will see the positive side to every situation.

Jeremiah even went as far as to say, "Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name." Jeremiah 20:9

"We must look away from self to the spotless Lamb of God, who did no sin; and by looking to Him in faith we shall become like Him." –*Gospel Workers*, p. 427



Jeremiah eventually took comfort in the promises of the Lord, “But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.” Jeremiah 20:11. We too are to look to Jesus and take comfort in His promises. He is our helper and guide at all times and in all places.

### THE FAULTS OF OTHERS

There are some Christians who thrive on looking at the faults of others—their negative character traits. Their religion consists on the seeking out the sins of others and trying to purge them with a strong arm. We are to counselled to help our weak brethren (Romans 15:1), and to, “Cultivate the habit of speaking well of others. Dwell upon the good qualities of those with whom you associate, and see as little as possible of their errors and failings. When tempted to complain of what someone has said or done, praise something in that person's life or character.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 492

“Earnest workers have no time for dwelling upon the faults of others. We cannot afford to live on the husks of others' faults or failings. Evilspeaking is a twofold curse, falling more heavily upon the speaker than upon the hearer. He who scatters the seeds of dissension and strife reaps in his own soul the deadly fruits. The very act of looking for evil in others develops evil in those who look.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 492

“The true brethren of Christ are those who guard the interests of their brethren and sisters. How inappropriate it is to condemn others, when every soul is to be saved, not on his own merits, but by the merits of a crucified and risen Saviour! We are all erring, finite creatures, accountable to God for our words, works, and influence.” —*The Review and Herald*, October 24, 1893

“O that all among us would cease to *think* or *speak* evil of others! O that all might see themselves and their neighbors in a true light!” —*The Review and Herald*, January 2, 1894. (emphasis mine). Whether you speak or not, it is a sin to even *think* evil of others. See the 41 dollars in other people's lives.

### FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

When things go wrong in life, or they do not go as we expected, we are tempted to question God and get upset that things did not go as planned. However, we are to focus on the positive through every seemingly negative experience.

Last year, while attending the General Conference in Italy, due to an accident in my little cabin on Friday night, I broke

the calcaneus bone (heel), on the bottom of my foot. It was an extremely painful experience. While sitting in the hospital waiting for my sister to pick me up the next day, I looked at the cast and simply thought, “well clearly I cannot work for quite some time, probably 2 to 3 months . . . how will I manage to pay my bills with no income?” I then and there decided that it was not my problem. It was the Lord's problem. The Lord could have prevented the accident, but in this world of sin, accidents happen in God's permissive will. So, I committed my care and keeping into His hands. He never disappointed me.

We are not to focus on negatives, but we are to focus on:

What we *do* have. It may not be the wealth of this world, but we have food today, a place to live where the Lord wants me to be, and the promised treasure in heaven, a mansion and eternal life.

What you *can* do. We may not eat an unhealthy diet and partake in worldly entertainments, but we have good health, peace and restful happiness found only in Jesus, and working for Him—helping the poor, the sick and the needy. The happiness of the world is fleeting, but the happiness in doing the will of Christ is eternal.

The positive talents and character traits of others. Encourage the growth of their positive traits of character and you are building pillars in the temple of the Lord.

“Look away from your own trials and difficulties. Cease to magnify your little grievances. Put all thoughts of self out of your heart. Cease self-service, and serve the only true and living God. Let His melody be in your heart, and His praises on your lips. The blessings of God are more than the hairs of our head, more than the sands of the seashore. Meditate upon His love and care for us, and may it inspire you with love that trials cannot interrupt nor afflictions quench.” —*The Review and Herald*, December 23, 1884

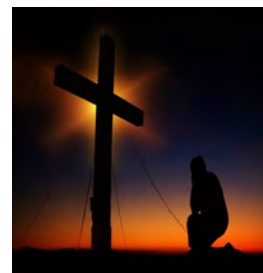
It took only five loaves and two fishes for Jesus to feed 5000 men plus women and children (Matthew 14:15-21).

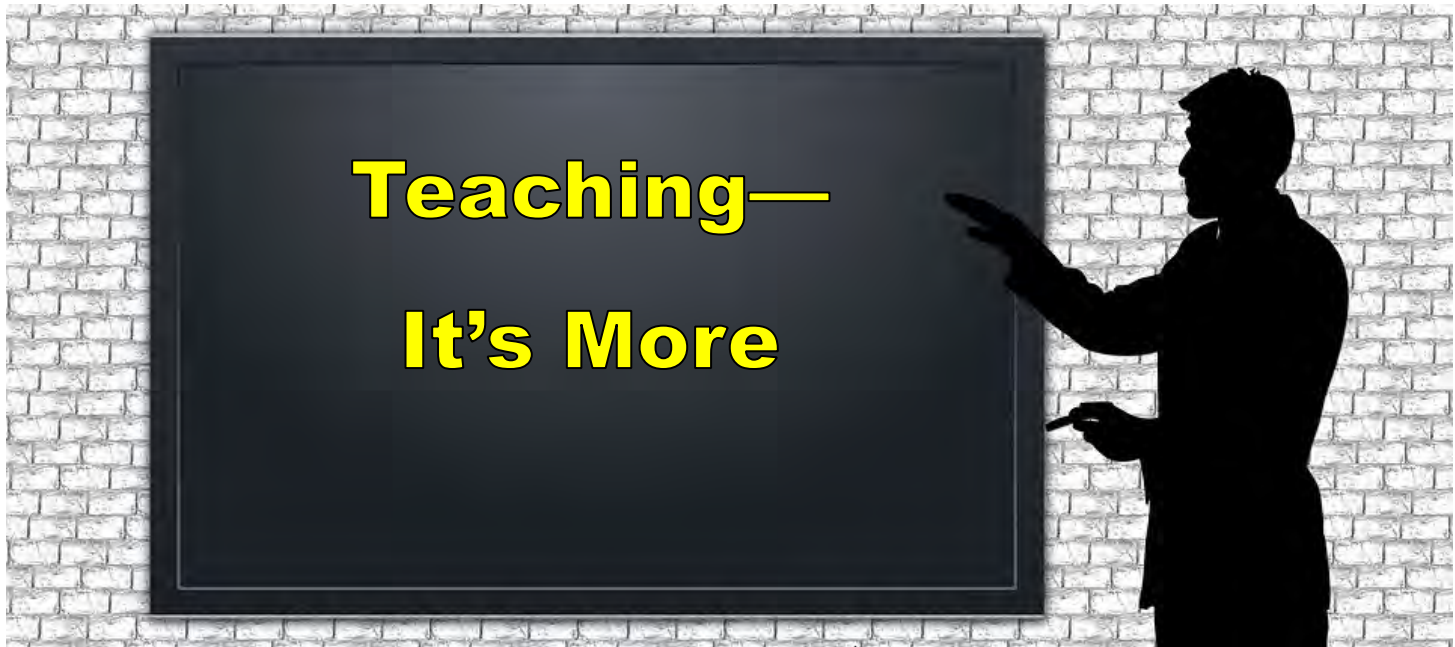


What can He do with 41 dollars? In the hands of the Lord, it can go further than we have ever thought possible. Think positive and trust. You have more than the majority of the people on this earth if you have Christ as your leader and guide.

Brethren and Sisters, as the song goes, “Count Your many blessings name them one-by-one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” Amen.

**Wendy Eaton**





I have known since I was a barefooted young girl playing school in my home in Italy that I had an inclination for teaching. As a child I often put a row of chairs in my room, positioned myself in front of my imaginary students and welcomed them to the lesson with little Miss Di Franca.

During my high school years, I started working with disabled children during my holidays. Interacting with these children gave me so much fulfillment and also the affirmation that this was my calling in life. I therefore decided to study social work after my graduation in 2006.

When I finished High School I applied for the appropriate program at the University of Applied Sciences in Nuremberg, Germany. It was not easy to get into this program because the number of students who can be admitted was limited, so I waited anxiously for the answer and prayed for God's guidance. Finally I received the letter with the desired communication—I had been accepted into the Bachelor's program. I was looking forward to starting university in October of the same year. However, God had a different plan for my life. Looking through the schedule of classes, I noticed that many of the required lectures and courses were on weekends. That was out of the question for me because Sabbath is the Lord's day of rest and it is a day which I want to dedicate to God only. I struggled with my tears and felt disappointment. Had it not been God who helped me get accepted into this program? Was it not His will for me to work with children and young people? Back then I did not understand why God hindered my plans, but I still wanted to trust His word. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are

your ways My ways, saith the LORD." Isaiah 55:8

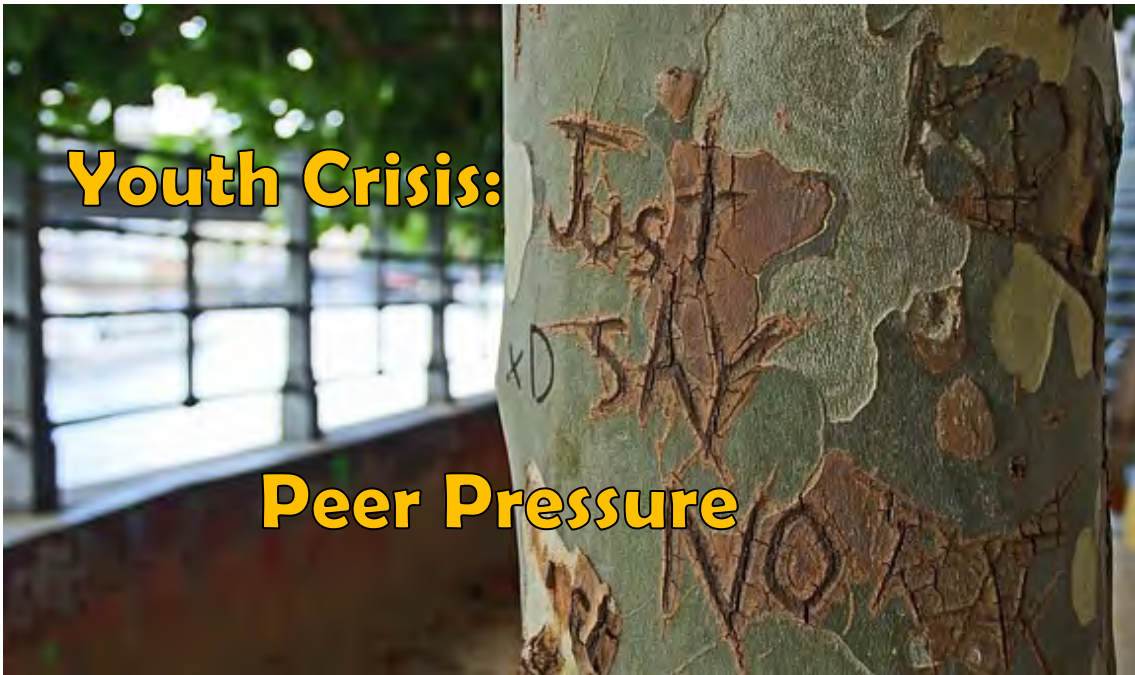
During one of those days, my father gently put his hand on my shoulder and reminded me: "What about becoming a language teacher? Do you not remember your childhood dream?" So I ended up cancelling my enrollment and registering for a Bachelor's and Master's program for teaching on the same day.

Several years have gone by since that moment; in the meantime I have been working as a full-time teacher in several middle and high schools in Southern Germany. I used to think teaching was a job, then I thought it was a profession, but now I think it is my calling, my passion and my mission. As a Christian teacher, I want to do more than just inspire my students to love academics. I also want to make a real and lasting impact in their hearts and lives. I strive to help them grow in character and wisdom and I experience the greatest joy when I see Christ work directly in their hearts. I am convinced that He is big enough to do something through me and work in my classroom despite the fact that some schools do not want Him there. It is my constant prayer that God works in my students' lives. He also reminds me that every day is a day of learning for students and teachers alike.

Finally, I would like to thank my father who has always believed in me and inspired me to become a teacher by his own example. At the same time I praise my heavenly Father for calling me into this mission.

**Manuela Di Franca**

"If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well." Romans 12:7. (New Living Translation)



## Youth Crisis:

## Peer Pressure

There are many aspects that youth must deal with in their lives which has led to a “youth crisis”. I will cover the topic of peer pressure. “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.” 1 Corinthians 11:1–2. These verses state that no matter what, we should be followers of Christ and keep His ordinances as they are, and never stray. As youth, we encounter many new things as we go into the world or to school, or to a new work environment, etc.

Peer pressure is not the only type of pressure that youth may face. They may face family pressure, academic pressure or work pressure. The official definition of peer pressure is “The social influence a peer group exerts on its individual members, as each member attempts to conform to the expectations of the group.” So basically, a person will attempt to try new things or dress differently, or change their personality to fit in to the “Social norm” or “Social expectations.” You may also call it “trendiness.” Peer pressure can be very dangerous because if we want to follow the Lord, a lot of the time, we will not be able conform to the “social norms” because they go against the expressed will of God. Let me give you an example from my own personal experiences.

I recently entered high school in September, and it was a very big adjustment because they were bigger kids, a bigger work load, and bigger temptations. In middle school, I had a group of friends with whom I was very close with. We hung out together all the time, and we

talked all the time. Over the summer, we never really talked to each other that much. Then came September, and school started again—High School. The group that I used to call my best friends, we had grown apart over the summer. Some of us went to different schools now, and those who went to the same school as me did not have classes with me. That aided in our drifting.

Some of them began smoking, others began doing drugs and others began vaping. They did invite me to join them, but I declined. They moved on, and began making more friends, while I made new friends who were “pure” as they did not smoke or vape. I used to call some of those people my best friends, and now all we do is say hi in the hallway. It was a bit discouraging, but at the same time I had found new people, and a new group who shared my interests and not theirs.

It is not only the youth who get tempted and pressured by the people around them. Solomon, the wisest man to have ever lived, fell prey to pressure and temptation. With all his heathen wives, it was bound to happen. “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.” 1 Kings 11:3–8. We can see that Solomon turned away from God, and turned to idols, because of the pressure to make all his wives happy. In the end of his life, he realized the error of his ways, and asked for forgiveness. He

was forgiven, and then, not long after he died.

The main point here is that we should not surround ourselves with toxic people, who do evil in the sight of the Lord. We should separate ourselves from them, as God said we should. It is my wish and prayer that we, as youth, and the rest of the church, the adults, not be tempted and pressured into things we do not want to do or things that God had specifically told us not to do. Let us be leaders, and not followers. "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Mathew 15:14. May God help us in the new year to be careful when we choose new companions and face new obstacles. May Jesus help us be an example to the world, instead of following blindly to fit in. Amen.

**Stephen Newby**

## DRESS

Another aspect of the youth crisis is clothing. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Peter 3:3-4



How should we dress? Our clothing should be inexpensive, comfortable, simple and modest. This does not mean that we should wear bad quality clothes. "But our clothing, while modest and simple, should be of good quality, of becoming colours, and suited for service." –*Messages to Young People*, p. 351

Simplicity and modesty are also very important. We cannot dress like the world.

We are a chosen people, so we must look and behave differently. Sometimes it can be hard not to follow some trends or to dress like your friends, but we have to remember that we represent Jesus here on this earth. "Satan is ever inventing fashions that cannot be followed except through the sacrifice of money, time, and health." –*Ibid.*, p. 359

How about when we come to church? We must dress nicely but modestly and not look like we do not care about how we look. We are going into God's church and therefore we should be respectful to the heavenly kingdom and wear simple, neat, modest, and pure clothes. We must remember, Jesus is here with us. It is my wish and prayer that we may remember that we are a peculiar people, called to be an example to others in our dress and behaviour. Amen.

**Sarah Newby**

## MUSIC



**Where did music originate? What was music's original purpose?**

"The hour for joyful, happy songs of praise to God and His dear Son had come. Satan had led the heavenly choir. He had raised the first note, then all the angelic host united with him, and glorious strains of music had resounded through Heaven in honour of God and His dear Son. But now, instead of strains of sweetest music, discord and angry words fall upon the ear of the great rebel leader." –*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 28

Music originated in heaven for the purpose of singing praise in worship to God. Lucifer was the leader of the angelic choir and was created perfect. In Ezekiel 28:15 it says: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day

that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”

God’s original design for music was for praise during worship to Him. Worship is a spiritual act, so much so, that music has the power to drive out evil spirits. An example can be found in 1 Samuel 16:23: “And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.” We see then that if Godly music has the power to drive out evil spirits, we can conclude that worldly music does just the opposite; it has the power to invite them in.

Worldly music is very attractive, it is catchy and alluring. The reason behind this is very simple. Music is powerful. According to advertising results, researchers have found that music invokes memory. Music invokes emotion and nostalgia. Naturally, advertising with music is an effective marketing technique. A well-composed jingle will stick with people, playing on repeat in their heads. Just listening a few times to an effective jingle will recall memory and emotion. When we hear a familiar song, we are often able to recall a moment from our past that is connected to that tune. Many times we may even complain of “getting a song stuck in our head,” which shows that music is easily ingrained in our memory. Therefore, information set to music is among the easiest to remember.

Knowing this, Satan, is using the power of music to lure many young people. A famous American rock guitarist, Jimi Hendrix, once said, “Music is a spiritual thing all on its own, once you hypnotize one with the music you can preach to the SUBCONSCIOUS mind what you want to say.”

Therefore, when we listen to worldly music, what are we feeding our minds, and who is ultimately speaking to us? Only Satan. However, we often try to rationalize our choice of music, and begin to reason with the devil as did Eve in the Garden of Eden. We know Eve reasoned with the serpent, and began to dialogue about sin with the devil, and therefore she failed to see its deceptive power and its penalty, which is death. The serpent told Eve, “Ye shall not surely die.” Genesis 3:4. In the same way we can become confused and repeat the same words in our mind and tell ourselves, “You shall not surely die, It’s just music, it’s harmless, everyone else is doing it.”

Knowing that singing heavenly music is an act of worship to our heavenly Creator, then on the other side, singing or listening to worldly music is an act of worship

to Satan himself. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” 2 Corinthians 6:14

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” 1 Peter 2:9. By nature we are inclined to sin, to even enjoy sin, but God is calling us today to come out of darkness and into His light.

When we listen to music two things occur. First, thoughts are put into our minds. And second, feelings begin to occur. What thoughts are created with worldly music? And what feelings are produced when we hear worldly music? If by beholding we become changed, into whose image are we becoming like? Jesus our Saviour, or Satan the Deceiver? When we behold or contemplate worldly music we are inclined to follow that which we are listening to. Unconsciously, we become changed to that which we listen to. But, when we behold heavenly music, we become closer to the image of God. We begin to reflect the God who created us.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24

It is not easy to let go of something we so dearly like, as music. It lures us and pulls us towards it. But there is hope. “Come to Jesus just as you are, and He will receive you, and put a new song in your mouth, even praise to God.” –*Gospel Workers 1892*, p. 451

Let us bring every desire to Him, whether good or bad and He will help us overcome daily. If we lack praises to Him He will put the desire to praise Him in us if we permit Him and are willing to leave off with the worldly music.

It is my wish and prayer that we may remember that it is our character we take to heaven. Now is the time to allow God to build our character. Let us feed our ears and eyes with heavenly things. Make it your decision today to surrender fully to Him and allow Him to change you. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” Joshua 24:15. Amen.

**Mabel Urizar/Cyrus Newby**





# Mission Impossible

Today the world's population stands at more than seven billion people. According to a study<sup>1</sup> conducted in 2012, about 32% of the world's population are adherents to the Christian faith, 23% to Islam, 16% to Hinduism and 15% are non-religious/agnostic/secularistic or atheists. These percentages have not changed significantly in the past five years. Yet, even within each religion, various sects exist that give evidence to how much disunity exists. For instance, Christianity is split into two major groups: Catholicism and Protestantism, the latter being divided into innumerable sects with various conflicting creeds and beliefs.

## THE MISSION

In recent years, calls for unity and a setting aside of theological differences have become more and more prominent, not only in Christian circles but other religions as well. Efforts to unite all peoples of the world under one common brotherhood based on shared common values and mutual respect have indeed reached advanced levels. However, in order to achieve this form of unity as propounded by most world political and religious leaders, concessions have to be made by all parties. The year 2017 saw the world celebrate 500 years of the Protestant Reformation. Sadly, however, this

also signified the *end of reformation* as several Evangelical leaders joined hands with Catholic leaders in calling for an end to the protest, setting aside of differences and seeking unity of all. In fact, according to a report, "after 500 years, reformation-era divisions have lost much of their potency"; in other words, there doesn't seem to be much difference between Catholicism and Protestantism today than it did in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the reformation began! Should we celebrate this as the dawning of a new era of love, unity and enlightenment in which denominations do not matter anymore? What should characterize the unity of God's people and ultimately that of the entire human population? Is such a unity even possible? How can it be fostered? What differences are we to set aside?

In order to find answers to all these questions and, possibly, a solution to the disunity that exists, we must first know its cause. Perhaps we can find a clue by considering what most religious leaders have been referring to in their calls for unity. Most prominently, unity has been urged on the basis of love: "Let us all love one another and forget our differences. Let us all come together and stand as one in the fight against common problems that threaten humanity's survival." From such utterances, it appears the secret to unity is love; love which would banish differences between individuals, societies and religious groups, in favour of a common cause. However, a question that begs consideration is: Why is it then so difficult for everyone to just love one another and forget their differences in light of humani-

<sup>1</sup> ["The Global Religious Landscape". The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. Pew Research center. 18 December 2012. Retrieved 20 January 2018.](#)

<http://www.pewforum.org/2017/08/31/after-500-years-reformation-era-divisions-have-lost-much-of-their-potency/>

ty's common problems? Many definitions and synonyms of the word love can be found in common English dictionaries. Generally, love is defined as a "strong feeling of affection" towards something or someone. Its synonyms include fondness, attachment, intimacy, unselfishness, etc. If this is what love is, why is it too difficult for everyone to just love others regardless of religious affiliation, and hence get the whole world united? It is because the Bible definition of love, is rarely thought of—it says God is love. According to Scripture, he who does not love, does not know God (1 John 4:8, 16); in other words, he who does not know the character of God, does not know what true love means. Yes, you got it right—true love, which means that there is a false type of love which is not based on God's character, a type of love that does not border on God's principles and government. The Apostle Paul states that love is the fulfilling of the law—God's law (Romans 13:10), and in his first letter to the Corinthians, he gives characteristics of a love born of God (1 Corinthians 13: 1–13).

### THE PROBLEM

If in order to be united, we must love one another, and in order to love one another, we must know God and His character which is revealed in His law and exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ. How possible then is it for us to achieve the unity championed by most religious and political leaders while God and His law are put out of the picture? The answer lies in the understanding of our human nature and the human mind. The Bible tells us that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. How is it so? "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6. So, the natural man referred to is one with a carnal mind and the death talked about here does not only refer to death as we commonly know it—breath departing from one's body—but signifies death of all life's forces and its relationships. When man's mind became carnal by adopting that of Satan's (Genesis 3:1–7), his relationship with God died—he ran away from God instead of towards God (Genesis 3:10); his relationship with his fellow human beings died—Adam blamed Eve as the cause of his problems (Genesis 3:12); and his relationship with nature and its creatures died—the ground was cursed (Genesis 3:17). Why does a carnal mind lead to death of life and its relationships? "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 8:7. Clearly here

we see that the only way to have life and peace in our world is to have a spiritual mind, a mind that is in harmony and submissive to the law of God. Man's hatred towards his fellow human beings is as a result of his hatred towards God's law. His failed relationships with his fellow human beings is a clear indication of man's failed relationship with God. I will repeat that, but put it another way:



if you fail to get along with your fellow human beings, it is a clear indication that you, or they, are failing to get along with God. So, there is the problem! Now let us find the solution.

Let us rewind a little bit, we have learned that the only way to have "life and peace" in our world is to have a spiritual mind—a mind that is subject to God's law. But, as it turns out, we are carnal! That means that our dreams of peace and security are false and our hopes of a united world are disillusioned as long as we have carnal minds. James 4:4 tells us, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." How does one become an enemy of God? "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." Colossians 1:21. The enmity that exists between God and man lies in the mind. As stated before, this enmity developed when man adopted Satan's mind of rebellion against God's government and His law. In Genesis 3:1–7 we learn that after Eve began to see matters as Satan would have her see, she "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise", hence "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (verse 6). This change of mindset is what made man an enemy of God, because, from that moment onwards, he would no longer be submissive to God's will but Satan's will. This is why it is easier to obey Satan while claiming to love God and disobey God while claiming to hate Satan. Without any divine intervention, it was impossible for man to wrest himself from the grasp of the serpent under whose dominion he had fallen. Recall that man was originally given dominion over all the earth and was to rule as a vicegerent of God (Genesis 1:26–27), but when he became friends with Satan by adopting his mind, Satan stole that dominion and man became his willing captive. This

is why Satan is referred to as the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4) and prince of this world (John 14:30).

### THE SOLUTION

To restore this lost relationship and thereby restore man to his primeval glory, God decided to execute His plan for man's redemption, a plan long thought of before man's creation. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. Satan had succeeded in making man an enemy of God by making his mind rebellious against God and His law. In his Satan-born mind, man looked upon God as a ruthless and selfish tyrant whose law was a yoke of bondage that restricted his freedom. Man became a friend of Satan indeed—a friend of the world and an enemy of God. In His plan, God was to restore His friendship with man by revealing His true character to him. This was to be achieved through His Son—the seed, and His Church—the woman. By healing this broken relationship, God was to restore all other relationships—man to man and man to nature (Romans 8:18–22). This was one of the reasons Jesus came to earth—to reveal God's character, that God is love. While it is true that by His death and sacrifice on the cross, Christ paid the penalty of transgression, it is also true that He did more than that! If it was merely an issue of paying for transgressions, yes we would have been forgiven but still remain enemies of God! Why? Because our minds would still be the same. Remember that our enmity with God does not lie externally but internally in our minds. It is not about offering sacrifices to appease an offended God but about transforming our minds to form a friendship with God. How did Jesus do that? He demonstrated God's love to us and the nature of His law. In Isaiah 42:21 it is written of Him: "He will magnify the law, and make it honourable," and in Matthew 5:17 he declares, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." By demonstrating God's love for humanity (John 3:16), Christ set in motion impulses that would change man's perception of God's character and His law. This is why He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die" (John 12:32–33). By His death on the cross, Jesus shows that God is not selfish and that His law is a law of love meant only to protect the best interests of His creatures, just like any earthly government has a constitution and law of the land that safeguards the interests of its citizens. The Apostle Paul adds and says, "Or despisest thou the rich-

es of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4. It is not the promise of heaven or fear of hell but an appreciation of God's love for us that leads us to view sin with the abhorrence it deserves and ultimately leads us to repentance. John says, "We love Him, because He first loved us" 1 John 4:19

### THE CHURCH AS PART OF THE SOLUTION

When Christ completed His mission on earth, He committed the work of reconciling men to God, to His church on earth. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:19–20

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9

If this is the mission of God's church—to reconcile man to God by displaying God's love and glory to the world, would such a mission be accomplished under the calls for unity we are faced with today? How appalling it is that many Christian denominations





of today think that Christianity is all about going to heaven and living happily thereafter, forgetting and ignoring the fact that Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven because of their rebellious minds against God's law and government. And, do we hope to enter heaven while our minds are in no different state than Satan's? Our change of environment from earth to heaven would not benefit us as long as our minds are the same. Heaven would not be the serene and lovely place we believe it to be—it is so because there is no sin, there is no carnal mind there! If you were to be taken to heaven today, you would still be thinking the same way you think right now and would still love the things you do right now. Which means that if you do not enjoy a worship atmosphere, the songs of heaven would be annoying to you. This is why God has given us probationary time on earth to prepare our minds for the society of heaven—minds that would be submissive to God's will revealed in His law, to develop characters that would be in harmony with God's character. To be ready for heaven, we must have heaven in our hearts. Strange as it may sound, many denominations of today have failed to reach God's standard and have instead lowered Him to their level and have come to view God as a very merciful God who does not care about what you eat, dress, see, hear, how you worship etc. but only cares about your heart—blatantly allowing their members to live a lie and have false hopes—forgetting that character is a quality of the soul that reveals itself in conduct and there is surely no way God would not care about what we believe and practice.

In light of these facts, how important then it is that every Christian denomination purporting to be God's church indeed be "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), a place where God's law, not human tradition and opinion, is the foundation of all doctrine and motivation for all actions and policies. So if, in order to be united, we must set aside our denominational differences and be united by our common belief in a deity, regardless of what we call that deity, would that still fulfil God's plan of redemption for man? Some people have issued arguments that it does not matter which church you belong to as long as you love. Is it possible to love without regard to God's law? Can you separate God from His law? According to what we have learned in this article so far, the answer is no! That is exactly what the Bible calls a false love—all such love that excludes God is actually selfishness.

How about denominations then—does it matter which

one a person belongs to? This question often leads to endless discussions and requires a lengthy article, but here is a simple case study—the apostle Paul. Recall that before the birth of Christianity, there was only one group of people on earth who knew God and His law—the Jewish church. This is the church that God formed with the calling of Abraham and used it to be a blessing to humanity by revealing His will and salvation through it (Genesis 12:1–3). It was to this church that Saul (who later used his Greek name, Paul) belonged. Saul was a Jew "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee. . . touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Philippians 3:5–6. When the Jewish church rejected Christ, the Prince of life, God took away their privilege of being God's church and gave it to the Christian church, which initially was constituted by former adherents to the Jewish faith—mostly Jews. Jesus Himself had said He had other sheep outside of His flock whom He would call such that there would be one shepherd and one flock (John 10:16). At His ascension, Jesus left two groups of believers in God—Jews and Christians. In his zeal for God, Saul persecuted Christians, thinking that they were just deluded enthusiasts who were causing nothing but confusion in the land (Acts 8:3). On one occasion, he obtained consent letters from the High Priest to go and arrest all Christians residing in Damascus (Acts 9:1). While on this journey, Jesus appeared to him (verses 3–5). Trembling and astonished, Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (verse 6). Saul (Paul) had heard about Jesus but now wanted to know Him more and understand God's will for his life. Jesus did not begin to explain everything about Himself and His mission to Saul—no, that was the work committed to the church! But, oops! Saul's church never taught such things; as a matter of fact, no one was allowed to speak of Jesus in Saul's Church (Acts 4:18). So Jesus directed him to the Christian church in Damascus (Acts 9:6). That is where he received instruction in the life and mission of Christ, where he got baptized. What would have happened if Saul decided to remain in the Jewish church? Would he have gained the knowledge that he did? Would he have been allowed to teach and practice the truth he had just received? The answer is no! This is why we read in Acts 2:47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Notice that the Bible says, God added to the church such as *should* be saved. This means that all those who were willing to reconcile themselves with God and be finally saved, God added them to the Christian church, not the Jewish

church. From the Christian church, they were to receive the knowledge of God necessary for their transformation and salvation—such knowledge they would not obtain from the Jewish faith because it was neither taught nor practiced. Jesus Himself, in His prayer for His disciples said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” John 17:3. To know God and know Him aright is life eternal. This is why God is careful that His church must teach nothing but the truth as it is in Jesus, lest people be misled and get lost by a knowledge that does not lead to salvation. Isaiah 4:1 speaks of churches in the last days that would only use the name of Jesus, but have their own doctrines and self-righteousness not founded on obedience to God’s commandments! So I ask again: does it matter which denomination one belongs to? If it does, should all denominations unite only on the basis that they all believe in one God?

### THE MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

In the times of the early Christian church, both the Jewish church and Christians faced perceived common threats, for example, possible persecution from the Romans, wars, famines and pestilences, as Jesus had foretold His disciples in Matthew 24. Should the Christians and Jews have set aside their doctrinal differences in view of such common threats? What impact then would such a unity have had on the mission of the Church of Christ? Under such a unity, it would have meant that no group should seek to convert adherents from another group under the same agreement, which would have meant no Jews would be persuaded by any Christian to convert to Christianity, with the understanding that all worship the same God. Indeed, they did worship the same God—Yahweh; they both upheld the Scriptures (Old Testament at that time) as their rule of faith; they both had a common origin and also a desire for redemption; but one fundamental difference between them was that while one group accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the other did not. As a matter of fact, the Jews persecuted Christians and demanded that Christians should denounce Jesus as an

impostor for the sake of peace so that the Romans do not come and take over their city, Jerusalem! (John 11:50). Similarly, while all religions believe in some deity, while all Christian denominations believe in God, there exist fundamental differences which, if set aside in favour of the common belief in God and in light of impending danger, would lead to loss of souls for God’s Kingdom. Clearly we can see that there can be no other platform of unity for God’s people than the truth. Any other basis of unity would lead to serious compromise that would undermine the mission of the church and give people a false sense of salvation in sin rather than from sin. While we promote unity and peace, while we champion togetherness and setting aside of differences, let it be a setting aside of personal pride and selfishness instead of setting aside of God’s law and doctrines that lead to man’s salvation.

Unity of all can only be achieved when all men know God and value life and view matters as He does, when God’s law is upheld as the standard for all human beings, and this can only be achieved when our minds are transformed by the renewing grace of Christ. We cannot seek to unite man with man without first uniting man with God. Any such attempts would prove futile and possibly lead to more turmoil and persecution. To this end, God has set His church on earth to reveal His love to lost humanity and uplift Jesus and His law as the way to life and peace. Unity without God is indeed a mission impossible!

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”  
Philippians 2:1–5

*Mukelabai Mukelabai,  
Sweden*

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# DNA of God

DNA replication is the biological process of producing two identical replicas of DNA from one original DNA molecule. DNA replication is the process by which DNA makes a copy of itself during cell division; before a cell can reproduce it must first replicate or make a copy of its DNA.

In Genesis 1:11–12 God said that the fruit trees whose seed is in itself should yield fruit after its kind. Genesis 1:21–22 speaks of great whales, and every living creature in the sea, and winged fowl bring forth also after his kind. In Genesis 1:24–25, cattle, creeping things and beasts should also be after his kind. And finally, God said, let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. So, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.” Genesis 1:27–28

In Genesis 6:1–2 we are called sons and daughters of God. “He shall cry unto Me, Thou art my Father, my God and the rock of my salvation.” Psalm 89:26

“Doubtless Thou art our Father, . . . Thou, O LORD, art our Father.” Isaiah 63:16. “And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.” Luke 11:2

By creation and redemption we all should be children of God; but, sad to say, many have chosen not to accept the Creator as their rightful Father and have chosen instead to have another father, the devil. “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness.” Acts 13:9–10. “I speak that which I have seen with My Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. . . . Ye are of your father the devil.” John 8:38–44

But how did this change come about? When God made man He gave him instruction, “And the LORD God com-

manded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it.” Genesis 2:16–17. This instruction was given by our heavenly Father and should have been obeyed; but, sad to say, the opposite happened. “She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Genesis 3:6

Not only Adam and Eve, but “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.” 1 John 3:8. However, although humanity fell into sin, the Lord promises us a rebirth. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” John 3:7

When we are born of God, we will not sin. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:9. When this change takes place, then we can overcome every sin; and in so doing we once more become sons of God. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1–2. And we shall see Him face to face. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8

DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid is the hereditary material in humans and most living things. When Christ’s righteousness is reproduced in us and the righteous seed planted, then we will not sin, because He abides in us. Christ overcame the enemy; hence we should claim that victory by faith. Greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world. God has the ability to reproduce us in His image and likeness, both physically and spiritually. So the DNA of God in us is His righteous character. Amen.

**Marline Campbell,  
Jamaica**





# The Lamb Of Revelation



Many people may read the book of Revelation and not really understand everything in it. Therefore, for many it is a mystery. But, it is entitled “Revelation,” which means something that is revealed—there are no hidden messages that cannot be understood. This is the last book of the Bible. It is a conclusion of many prophecies and possesses the most solemn messages as final warnings to you and me.

“In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end. Here is the complement of the book of Daniel. One is a prophecy; the other a revelation. The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days. The angel commanded, ‘But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.’ Daniel 12:4.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585

It was Christ who bade the apostle record that which was to be opened before him. “What thou seest, write in a book,” He commanded; mostly, the book reveals the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world. “As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies relating to the last days especially demand our study.” — *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 133

## THE LAMB OF THE REVELATION

The word “Lamb” appears 27 times in the book of Revelation. It refers to Christ, who is revealing the prophecy. “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7. The revelation from God comes in a specific order: From God the Father → Jesus Christ → The angel → John the prophet, the human instrument → Mankind (you and me). John bore record of the Word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is the Word of God because God is its source; it is the testimony of Jesus Christ because Christ is declaring the message. The words written are Christ’s testimony. Revelation 22: 16, 20. He could write, “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revela-

tion 1:9

John, the apostle recognized Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He also recognized Him as Lord and God (John 20:28); the Way, Truth and Life (John 14:6); He is my Light (John 1:4–9); He is my Life (John 1:4–5; 4:13–14; 6:48–58); He is Himself the Resurrection, and the Life (John 11:25); He is the Door (John 10:7); Teacher (John 13:13); as an Advocate and Mediator (1 John 2:1); He is my Beginning and End (Revelation 21:6); this Jesus is revealed as King of kings, and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16).

In the Gospels, when John the Baptist met Jesus for first time, he declared, “Behold the Lamb of God.” John 1:29. In Revelation we read, “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda.” Revelation 5:5. When it comes to expressing the power or might, “It was the Lion of the tribe of Judah who unsealed the book and gave to John the revelation of what should be in these last days. Daniel stood in his lot to bear his testimony, which was

sealed until the time of the end, when the first angel’s message should be proclaimed to our world. These matters are of infinite importance in these last days. . . . The book of Daniel is unsealed in the revelation to John, and it carries us forward to the last scenes of this earth’s history.” — *Christ Triumphant*, p. 334 (emphasis mine)

## WHY STUDY THE BOOK OF REVELATION TODAY?

“The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in.

Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed, be left untouched. If our people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message.” — *Evangelism*, p. 195

The book is a Revelation of Jesus Christ (in Greek, *Apocalypse* = a disclosure, a revelation). It is a revelation by Him, but also a revelation of Him. No other book in the Bible gives a manifestation of Christ as does Revelation. In the first 71 verses the name of Christ, or some pronoun referring to Him, is used 126 times. In the book we see a panorama of Christ’s glory, presenting His enthronement with the Father since His ascension, His overruling- providence in the affairs of men, and His coming again in triumph. Revelation means some-

### Some blessings of the book:

- Blessed are those who read
- Blessed are those who do His commandments
- Blessed are those who die in Christ
- Blessed are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- Blessed are those who have part in the first resurrection
- Blessed is he who keeps watching

thing that is revealed. Therefore, it belongs to us. "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29. No seal has ever been placed on the book of Revelation as was the book of Daniel. Revelation 22:10. "The book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585

There is no better time to study this book than now as we await Christ's Second Coming. We need to make a genuine preparation. Are you ready and prepared? Have you put all sin away? Today is the time to prepare. "The return of Christ to our world will not be long delayed. Let this be the keynote of every message. The blessed hope of the second appearing of Christ, with its solemn realities, needs to be often presented to the people. Looking for the soon appearing of our Lord will lead us to regard earthly things as emptiness and nothingness." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 406

"In the past teachers have declared Daniel and the Revelation to be sealed books, and the people have turned from them. The veil whose apparent mystery has kept many from lifting it, God's own hand has withdrawn from these portions of His word. The very name 'Revelation' contradicts the statement that it is a sealed book. 'Revelation' means that something of importance is revealed. The truths of this book are addressed to those living in these last days. We are standing with the veil removed in the holy place of sacred things. We are not to stand without. We are to enter, not with careless, irreverent thoughts, not with impetuous footsteps, but with reverence and godly fear. We are nearing the time when the prophecies of the book of Revelation are to be fulfilled." –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 113

#### **BOOK OF BLESSING AND SOLEMN WARNING**

The book of Revelation opens and closes with a blessing (Revelation 1:3; 22:14). The blessing comes to the doers.. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Revelation 1:3; 22:14. The book reveals a company who receive this blessing (Revelation 14:12).

"When a real love for the Bible is awakened, and the student

begins to realize how vast is the field and how precious its treasure, he will desire to seize upon every opportunity for acquainting himself with God's word. Its study will be restricted to no special time or place. And this continuous study is one of the best means of cultivating a love for the Scriptures. Let the student keep his Bible always with him. As you have opportunity, read a text and meditate upon it. While walking the streets, waiting at a railway station, waiting to meet an engagement, improve the opportunity to gain some precious thought from the treasure house of truth." –*Education*, p. 191

The same book has solemn warnings, counsels for overcoming, and promised rewards. We are warned not to worship the beast, his image or receiving his mark; not adding or reducing the books of the Bible; and promises are given to those who shall overcome. We are solemnly warned about the fall of Babylon, the three angel's messages and the other angel, etc.

**The study of Revelation will lead you to be an overcomer in the period of Laodicea and have the right to six great rewards:**

- 1) To be spared from the seven last plagues which will come upon the earth (Revelation 3:10).**
- 2) To receive a new name when Christ comes (Revelation 2:17).**
- 3) To eat directly from the tree of life (Revelation 2:7).**
- 4) To have power over the nations (Revelation 2:26).**
- 5) To have access to the temple in heaven (Revelation 3:12).**

"Let every soul be on the alert. The adversary is on your track. Be vigilant, watching diligently lest some carefully concealed and masterly snare shall take you unawares. Let the careless and indifferent beware lest the day of the Lord come upon them as a thief in the night. Many will wander from the path of humility, and, casting aside the yoke of Christ, will walk in strange paths. Blinded and bewildered, they will leave the narrow path that leads to the city of God.

"A man cannot be a happy Christian unless he is a watchful Christian. He who overcomes must watch; for, with worldly entanglements, error, and superstition, Satan strives to win Christ's followers from Him." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 99–100

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.' We can overcome. Yes; fully, entirely. Jesus died to make a way of escape for us, that we might overcome every evil temper, every sin, every temptation, and sit down at last with Him." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 144

He that lived and was sacrificed as lamb, will soon come as the "King of kings and Lord of lords." It is my prayer that each you readers follow the leading of the Lord and take time to understand the great prophecies and promises, in the book of Revelation, heeding its solemn messages. I encourage all to overcome every sin before your names are called in the judgement, so you will be ready when He appears in the clouds of heaven. Amen.

**Victor Shumbusho, D R Congo**

# Health Effects of Obesity

## Part 3



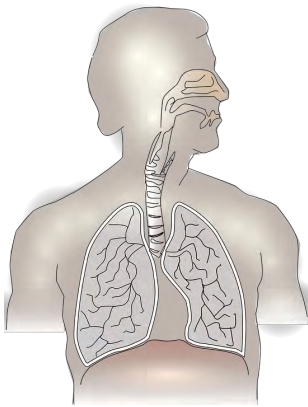
**“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.”**

**Proverbs 23:2**

Understanding how and why obesity develops is incomplete, but studies show it involves a combination of social, behavioural, cultural, physiological, metabolic and genetic factors. What we do know is that obesity has a significant impact on the person in many different ways. We continue this month, discussing the negative effects that obesity has on one's health.

### RESPIRATORY DISEASES

People with obesity have reduced lung capacity. Excess body fat prevents full expansion of the lungs. Because of this, obesity can contribute to a higher risk of respiratory infections. This is due to the fact that individuals are unable to clear potential infections from the lungs as readily when breathing. They are also more likely to have asthma and other respiratory disorders. Asthma has been shown to be three to four times more common among people with obesity. The increase in asthma with obesity is due to several factors. Overall body inflammation, which contributes to the risk of



developing asthma or worsening of existing asthma, is increased with obesity. Being overweight can affect lung function; people have reduced lung volumes and elasticity due to the narrowing of the airways, which can cause them to close during normal breathing. Also, obesity can change blood volume within lung tissue, impacting the efficiency of oxygen exchange. Increased body fat can compress the lungs and actually infiltrate lung tissue, increasing blood volume and decreasing the diameter of airways. All these changes lead to an increased difficulty in breathing, and can limit airflow in the lungs. Finally, there are specific genes that are related to both asthma and obesity, therefore there is a genetic component that links these two conditions. Weight loss in obese individuals can alleviate 48%–100% of asthma symptoms.

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a very serious breathing

disorder. More than half of those who are obese have OSA. This condition occurs when excess fat in the neck, throat and tongue block the air passageways when someone lies down, typically during sleep. This blockage causes apnea, which is when someone temporarily and repeatedly stops breathing for a few seconds to a few minutes at a time. A person with OSA may have up to hundreds of episodes of apnea during a night of sleep. One symptom of OSA is excessive snoring. During an episode of apnea, a person must wake up, even very briefly, to start breathing again. This disrupts the regular sleep cycle, and thus people with OSA do not tend to get a restful night's sleep, and often suffer from daytime fatigue. OSA can lead to even more serious cardiovascular complications such as high blood pressure, high pressure in the lungs, decreased oxygen in the blood, irregular heart rhythms, and increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. Standard treatments for sleep apnea will reduce cardiovascular risks.

### CANCER

Cancer affects more than half a million lives per year in the United States alone. Obesity is believed to cause up to 90,000 cancer deaths per year. In 2012 in the United States, about 28,000 new cases of cancer in men (3.5%) and 72,000 in women (9.5%) were due to overweight or obesity. Some cancers are more strongly linked to obesity. As body mass index (BMI) increases, so does your risk of cancer and death from cancer. These cancers include: Endometrial cancer; Cervical cancer; Ovarian cancer; Post-menopausal breast cancer; Colorectal cancer; Esophageal cancer; Pancreatic cancer; Liver cancer; Kidney cancer; Thyroid cancer; Prostate cancer; Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; Multiple myeloma; Gallbladder cancer; Leukemia.

Even comparing normal weight and obese people who have developed cancer, for people with severe obesity, the death rate increases for all types of cancer. With obese persons, the death rate is 52 percent higher for men and 62 percent higher for women than for those of normal weight.

Why does obesity increase the risk of cancer? Obese people often have chronic low-level inflammation, which can, over time, cause DNA damage that leads to cancer. They have

conditions or disorders that are linked to or cause chronic inflammation which are risks for specific cancers. Fat tissue produces excess amounts of estrogen, high levels of which have been associated with increased risks of breast, endometrial, ovarian, and some other cancers in women. Obese individuals often have increased blood levels of insulin, which promote the development of colon, kidney, prostate, and endometrial cancers. Fat cells produce hormones that may stimulate cell growth, including the increased growth of cancer cells. Obesity also alters a person's immune response, making it less effective in fighting cancer cells; it also causes a decrease in levels of antioxidants in the body. This then produces more free-radicals that can damage cells in the body, making them cancerous.

Many studies have found a positive relation between obesity and colon cancer. This is one cancer that occurs with a higher waist-to-hip ratio, than with an elevated BMI alone. Even among normal-weight people, a high waist-to-hip ratio is also associated with significantly increased risk of colon polyps, which often lead to cancer.

Breast cancer studies consistently show that obesity is directly related to death from breast cancer, predominantly in postmenopausal women. Interestingly, obesity decreases risk of breast cancer in premenopausal women. However, ten or more years after menopause, the premenopausal "benefit" of obesity disappears. Among postmenopausal women, peripheral fat is the primary source of estrogens, which is a major risk factor for postmenopausal breast cancer. A gain of more than 9 kg (20 lbs) from age 18 to midlife doubles a woman's risk of breast cancer. Even modest weight gains are related to increased risk of postmenopausal breast cancer.



### FERTILITY ISSUES

Women who are overweight or obese have less chance of getting pregnant overall. They are also more likely than women of healthy weight to take more than a year to get pregnant. Obesity can affect fertility by causing hormonal imbalances and problems with ovulation (ovaries ability to produce eggs), particularly for obese women having their first baby.

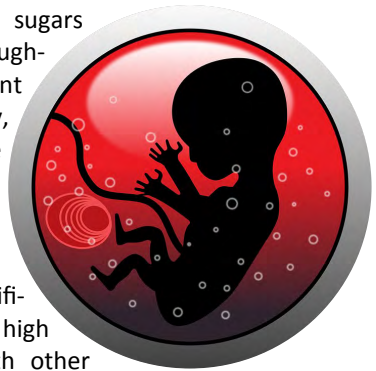
Obesity also increases a woman's risk of developing a condition called polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which is considered a leading cause of infertility. Obesity in women is associated with menstrual irregularity and amenorrhea (lack of menstruation), which affects normal ovulation. The greater the BMI at age 18 years, even at levels lower than those considered obese, the greater the risk of subsequent infertility when women try to conceive.

### PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS

Pregnancy complications can occur with any pregnant woman, independent of weight. However, obesity increases the

risk of complications for pregnant women and their babies. The higher a woman's BMI, the higher the risks. In women considering having a child, maintaining a normal weight is ideal in having a healthy pregnancy. However, if you are obese and pregnant, it may not be safe try to lose weight during your pregnancy. There is no evidence that losing weight while you are pregnant will reduce the risks.

A complication which occurs in higher incidence in obesity is miscarriages. The risk is doubled, and can be as high as 25%. Developing diabetes during pregnancy is three times more likely than in women whose BMI is below 30. This is known as gestational diabetes. Blood sugars will need to be monitored throughout the pregnancy to prevent complications for the baby, which may include excessive birth weight, early labour, and respiratory distress syndrome (difficulty breathing).



High blood pressure and specifically pre-eclampsia, which is high blood pressure combined with other complications is the leading cause of death to both mother and baby. Women with pre-eclampsia are at increased risk for damage to other organs, with the highest risk of kidney and liver damage. Pre-eclampsia may also affect the placenta. The condition could lead to a separation of the placenta from the uterus, preterm birth, or stillbirth. In some cases, pre-eclampsia can lead to organ failure or stroke. In severe cases, pre-eclampsia can develop into eclampsia, which includes seizures. If the fetus is not delivered, these conditions can cause the death of the mother and/or the fetus. If one has a BMI of 35 or above at the beginning of the pregnancy, the risk of pre-eclampsia is twice that of women who have a BMI under 25. Expectant mothers rarely die from pre-eclampsia in the developed world if they are being followed by a doctor during pregnancy, but it is still a major cause of illness and death globally. According to the World Health Organization, pre-eclampsia and eclampsia cause 14% of maternal deaths each year, or about 50,000 to 75,000 women worldwide.

All pregnant women have a higher risk of developing blood clots compared to women who are not pregnant; with obesity the risk is even higher. Obese mothers also have larger babies. Any baby weighing more than 4 kg can lead to the need for early delivery. Premature babies can have breathing issues. Because of these large babies, obese women are more likely to require a forceps delivery or an emergency caesarean section to give birth. One of the baby's shoulders can become stuck behind the mother's pubic bone during delivery, delaying the birth of the baby's body. If this happens, extra help is usually needed to release the baby's shoulder. Post-partum hemorrhage can occur, which is heavier than normal bleeding after birth. There is also a greater likelihood that a woman will go into labour early; often a

baby will be born early (before 37 weeks). There is also an increased risk of stillbirth in obese women. Congenital abnormalities in babies born to obese women are also higher than in normal weight women. Babies born to overweight or obese mothers are more likely than those born to healthy-weight mothers to become obese children and adults, and to have more health problems, including diabetes.

### OTHER PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

As well as the health effects of obesity that have been mentioned over the last three articles, several other conditions are worth mentioning. Some of these conditions are as a result of the other health effects mentioned already. Obesity, especially in middle-age, with other health effects, contribute to the increased risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease later in life. Kidney disease and kidney failure have high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart failure as contributing factors. Septicemia, a serious blood infection that can often be fatal, is higher in people with obesity. This is related to an overall less effective immune system. Obesity is also a major cause of fatty liver disease, which can cause scarring of the liver, leading to worsened liver function, cirrhosis and liver failure. Obesity has been associated with a higher risk of Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), which causes stomach acid to leak into your esophagus, causing symptoms such as heartburn and indigestion. Increasingly, many of the diseases, previously associated only with adulthood, are also being seen in overweight and obese children.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

Obesity is not just an epidemic that is hazardous to one's physical health, with all the risks for life-shortening chronic diseases. Being obese also has an impact on the mental, emotional and social aspects of one's life. People who are obese have a greater risk of depression and anxiety. They also suffer from low self-esteem, and avoid interactions with other people because of their weight. Women especially, who are more conscious of their personal appearance than men, can lead to developing eating disorders such as anorexia so that they can slim down. Adults who were obese as children appear to have an increased risk of psychological problems.

The reason for the impact on one's mental health are the negative attitudes about obesity that are prevalent in society, in children, adults, with health care professionals, and in the overweight people themselves. In Western society, being overweight is stigmatized, with people who are obese considered as having a lack of self-control, being lazy, and gluttonous. Because of this, people who are obese are discriminated against in various situations. In employment, issues include finding and obtaining a job.

Certain jobs whereby a certain "image" is needed in order to perform well are given to those who are considered physically attractive. This can discriminate against those who are obese, as they are considered less appealing and would be less effective in their jobs. These include jobs that have face-to-face contact with those who an employer relies on for income and profit. Other areas of discrimination are in education, health care, schooling, housing, and relationships. Stigma can reduce the quality of care for patients with obesity despite the best intentions of healthcare providers to provide high-quality care, and often doctors avoid having discussions with their patients in helping them to reduce weight. In children, overweight and obesity has also been linked with poor concentration levels, poor academic success and social exclusion in school.

The social aspect of weight gain has been shown in a number of studies. In groups of people who are close friends, when one person gains weight their close friends also gain weight. Friends are the biggest influence when it comes to weight gain and if a friend became over weight you had a 57 percent higher chance of becoming obese; if it was a close mutual friend your chances rose to 171 percent. One changes their idea of what is an acceptable body type by looking at the people around them. Because of this influence, the amount of people who are obese is growing because of others around them who are obese.

As we have seen over these last three months, there exists many negative effects on an individual's health and wellbeing with obesity; however, there is a solution. It is a condition that people *can* do something about. Many of the risk factors for obesity are modifiable, within an individual's control. For example, by reducing body weight by just 5-10%, health risks are dramatically reduced. Losing weight also means levels of activity can be increased—contributing towards further weight loss. We will look at ways that an individual, and society as a whole, can help reduce the impact that obesity has on the world's population next month.

"In nine cases out of ten there is more danger of eating too much than too little. . . . There are many sick who suffer from no disease. The cause of their sickness is indulgence of appetite. They think that if the food is healthful, they may eat as much as they please. This is a great mistake. Persons whose powers are debilitated should eat a moderate and even limited amount of food. The system will then be enabled to do its work easily and well, and a great deal of suffering will be saved." —*Child Guidance*, p. 399

**NEXT MONTH: SOLVING THE OBESITY EPIDEMIC**







# Resist the Devil

Barbara was a good girl. She tried to keep the right kinds of friends, and together they tried to stay away from things they knew their parents and teachers would not approve of. Most of her friends were from the church so they listened closely to the sermons, the Sabbath school lessons, and other instructions they got at church to make sure they knew what was right. Barbara also did as she was taught and read the Bible and prayed for understanding. She had committed many Bible verses to memory.

Many of these verses she memorized often came to her mind when she was at crossroads in her life.

Sometimes, she would fall asleep while reading her Bible and then she would remember the disciples who slept in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus prayed. Jesus said to them, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41. Oh how she wished she would be stronger and not fall asleep so easily. Her conscience was very keen to convict her of her errors when she was falling into sin.

To Barbara it was clear that God had written the Bible for a very special purpose—to help her with her faith, in struggling against her weaknesses and to advise, comfort and teach her. That is a pretty good book, written by the inspiration of God.

One day, Barbara met Sarah—a new girl at school. Sarah was not like the other girls, she was new, exotic, kind of exciting. So Barbara wanted to know Sarah more; she felt that Sarah could teach her some of those grown-up things that other people would not tell her about, because they always treated Barbara like a little child, and she was tired of it.

Barbara started finding times to be with Sarah when her parents and other friends did not know. She found her best times with Sarah were always when nobody knew she was around and the things she was telling Barbara were secrets. Secrets are fun.

"You know, most of the things your parents and the church say are bad are not bad." Sarah told her one day.

"Really? Why would they lie to me?" Barbara objected. "I know they love me."

"They do love you, but they think you have to be protected because they don't want you to have the fun things they have. God could let you have fun things like smoking and drinking and staying out all night, but He knows the adults should keep things fun things all to themselves." Sarah lied to Barbara, just like the Satan, in the form of a serpent "beguiled Eve through his subtlety," 2 Corinthians 11:3. Sadly, Barbara started to believe her. It was so easy to want to be like Sarah and to try to please her.

As Barbara was walking home from spending time with Sarah, she was thinking about trying a few things she liked to do. After all, it was a secret so nobody would know. Plus, she would still be a good girl to her other friends and family and at church. Her fun times with Sarah would just be a little secret between the two of them. But her conscience still spoke to her, she thought of her "Father which seeth in secret." Matthew 6:4. And the words she had memorized so well from Psalm 139 came running through her mind. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Psalm 139:7–12. These verses were troubling her. Like Balaam, she knew what was right, but was sorely tempted by the wrong, and her mind was in turmoil. Balaam "Well knew that it was his duty to refuse the rewards of Balak . . . but the costly gifts and prospective exaltation excited his covetousness." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 439

And loudly she could hear the voice in her mind, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4:17. How long could she keep her little secret going? "Be sure your sin will find you out." Numbers 32:23, the voice said intently. Barbara was in such turmoil, because it was so much fun being with Sarah.

However, Barbara felt so much guilt and conviction in her spirit, but she was confused because she wanted it both ways. She wanted to be good and have the respect of God and her friends and family and the church, but the fun things Sarah offered were so hard to resist. Finally, she did start to give in and met with Sarah to try some things.

One day as she visited Sarah at her house, Sarah laid all of the exciting forbidden things on the table in front of her when nobody was around. There it all was, the cigarettes, the alcohol, the bad magazines and tapes, a connection to the Internet already on some naughty sites. All she had to do is reach out and take it and nobody was there to stop her.

Suddenly, she thought of Peter who denied Jesus. All Jesus did was look at him and he felt the conviction. Barbara felt the eyes of Jesus watching her now. What would she do? The Holy Spirit reminded her, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." James 4:7

Then she thought of what she would gain. It seemed to exciting to be with Sarah, and Sarah said all these things were harmless, but were they really harmless? Why would the Lord deny His followers something that was fun and pleasurable? As she pondered these thoughts, the verse came to her mind: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:15-17. Yes, this was very true, and, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36

Oh dear, she did not want to lose heaven and the favour of her lovely Jesus. The conflict was fierce. She heard the voice of the Lord speaking to her through this verse, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Galatians 5:17

And this verse sent a shudder through her entire being. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Hebrews 6:4-6. She did not want

to crucify her beloved Jesus.

"None of that will satisfy you Barbara." She heard an inner voice speaking to her. "All of these things are Satan's cheap substitute for the perfect joy and love that Jesus gives. Right now Jesus is inside you giving you the strength to get up and walk away from these sins. You can feel Him, can't you?" the voice said.

"Yes, I can feel Him." Barbara said out loud.

"Don't use your own strength to resist the sins Barbara," the voice said to her. "Use God's strength inside you and get up and walk away and go home and read your Bible." "For without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. But, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13

And that is what she did. She stood up and just turned and walked away. God's strength inside her even helped her resist arguing with Sarah or making any excuses. Without any word of explanation, she left and went home and knelt down in prayer, thanking Jesus for His help to resist and turn away from this temptation. She then put Sarah behind her and treated her like she did not even exist. Barbara had learned an important lesson about resisting the devil and his desire to make you sin. You can too. You are the believer, like Barbara. And you will have temptations, like the ones Sarah brought. But the Holy Spirit's job is to come and help you resist temptation. If you take time to read your own Bible every day, you will hear His voice and He will help you to resist temptation every day.

How thankful Barbara was that she had made a regular habit of reading her Bible and that the Lord loved her enough to send the Holy Spirit to help her in the time of temptation when she was ready to falter. She was thankful for the Bible verses that the Holy Spirit brought to her remembrance just when she needed them. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:7-8

Barbara determined to read her Bible now more than ever before, so she could be wise and strong to resist all temptations in the future, but she knew she could only do it in the strength of the Lord.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13



# Congo



**Youth Conference in Lubumbashi,  
December 23-24, 2017**

**65 participants attended the conference  
for two days.**

**Some of the different topics that were  
studied included: Joseph and his brothers,  
Eli and his sons, the rebellion of  
Absalom, Daniel and his three friends**

**Brother Timothee Mabangi,  
DR Congo Union Secretary (Far  
left) and Brother Victor  
Shumbusho,  
Publishing Leader (Far right),  
visiting the Mikondo Church,  
one of the three Churches  
in Kinshasa,**



# Dominican Republic National Conference—December 16, 2017



***“Fenced From Satan's Attacks.—‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.’ How careful is the Lord Jesus to give no occasion for a soul to despair. How He fences about the soul from Satan's fierce attacks. If through manifold temptations we are surprised or deceived into sin, He does not turn from us and leave us to perish. No, no, that is not our Saviour. Christ prayed for us. He was tempted in all points like as we are; and having been tempted, He knows how to succor those who are tempted.”***  
***—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary , p. 942***

