



*The Reformation*  
**Messenger**

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**WE BELIEVE:** The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is

the Owner and Sustainer. He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh. The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all

unrighteousness. The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform. His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus. Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.

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- Telephone: 905-876-2518
- E-mail: [imsmessenger@yahoo.com](mailto:imsmessenger@yahoo.com)
- Internet: [www.imsmessenger.org](http://www.imsmessenger.org)
- Mail: RR #3, 7899 15 Side Road, Milton, ON L9T 2X7, Canada

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“Christ says, ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you’--the yoke of restraint and obedience--‘and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’ We are to find rest by wearing His yoke and bearing His burdens. In being co-workers with Christ in the great work for which He gave His life, we shall find true rest. When we were sinners, He gave His life for us. He wants us to come to Him and learn of Him. Thus we are to find rest. He says He will give us rest. ‘Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.’ In doing this you will find in your own experience the rest that Christ gives, the rest that comes from wearing His yoke and lifting His burdens “ –*The General Conference Bulletin*, April 4, 1901

“In accepting Christ's yoke of restraint and obedience, you will find that it is of the greatest help to you. Wearing this yoke keeps you near the side of Christ, and He bears the heaviest part of the load.

“There is a condition to the rest and peace here offered us by Christ. It is that of yoking up with Him. All who will accept the condition will find that the yoke of Christ will help them to bear every burden needful for them to carry. Without Christ at our side to bear the heaviest part of the load, we must indeed say that it is heavy. But yoked with Him to the car of duty, the burdens of life may all be lightly carried. And just as a man acts in willing obedience to the requirements of God, will come his peace of mind. . . .

“We are to bear the yoke of Christ that we may be placed in complete union with Him. ‘Take My yoke upon you,’ He says. Obey My requirements. But these requirements may be in direct opposition to the will and purposes of the human agent. What then is to be done? Hear what God says: ‘If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’ The yoke and the cross are symbols representing the same thing,--the

giving up of the will to God. Wearing the yoke unites finite man in companionship with the dearly beloved Son of God. Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps. . . .

“Your work is not to gather up burdens of your own. As you take the burdens that Christ would have you, then you can realize what burdens He carried. Let us study the Bible, and find out what kind of yoke He bore. He was a help to those around Him. . . . There is a yoke to bear. Now this is the very faith that we want--a faith that will grasp the promises of God, one that will take the yoke of Christ and bear the burdens that He would have us. We often think we are having a hard time in bearing burdens, and it is too often the case, because God has not made any provision for us to carry these burdens; but when we bear His yoke and carry His burdens, we can testify that the yoke of Christ is easy and His burdens are light, because He has made provision for these. But when you feel depressed and discouraged, do not give up the battle; you have a living Saviour that will help you, and you will have rest in Him. . . .

“Wearing the yoke with Christ, means to work in His lines, to be a copartner with Him in His sufferings and toils for lost humanity. It means to be a wise instructor of souls. We shall be what we are willing to be made by Christ in these precious hours of probation. We shall be the sort of a vessel that we allow ourselves to be molded into. We must unite with God in the molding and fashioning work, having our wills submitted to the divine will.

“The Lord calls His yoke easy, and His burden light. Yet that yoke will not give us a life of ease and freedom and selfish indulgence. The life of Christ was one of self-sacrifice and self-denial at every step; and with consistent, Christlike tenderness and love, His true follower will walk in the footsteps of the Master; and as he advances in this life, he will become more and more inspired with the spirit and life of Christ.

“Take hold of the arm of God, and say, ‘I am nothing, and Thou art everything. Thou hast said, “Without me ye can do nothing.” Now, Lord, I must have Thee abiding in me, that I may abide in Thee.’ Then advance step by step, by living faith abiding in Jesus Christ. This is wearing His yoke, the yoke of obedience.” –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1090–1902

*Ellen G. White*

# Spiritual



# Blindness

There are millions of people in our world who are blind, living in a dark world. We pity them and we feel sorry for them. Bright sunlight to them is the same as the darkness of night. They cannot see the beautiful trees, flowers and nature. They grope in darkness, trying to find their way.

A man bandaged his eyes for a day and said it was a terrible experience. But more terrible than physical blindness is spiritual blindness. Millions of people cannot see spiritual things. "He has blinded their eyes..." John 12:40

They have eyes but they see not. The strongest, clearest evidence from the Word of God, they cannot see or understand. People love error and fables, but sound doctrine they cannot stand. They hate the truth.

There are many great evangelists who preach the gospel message. I went to one of these meetings of Billy Graham's where 60,000 people came together in Toronto to listen to him speak. Many religious preachers are popular and are accepted by millions. But there are preachers who are not popular. They are hated, rejected and persecuted. Their work often has small results.

"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the Flood upon the world of the ungodly." 1 Peter 2:5

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. After 120 of preaching, only his own family believed him and accepted his message. He and seven others were saved.

People were blinded—they did not recognize the message of God.

If Jones and Waggoner had preached a message of prophecy, Sabbath, health reform, and faith, this would have been accepted, but they decided to preach the message of righteousness—for this reason they were rejected by many, and even ridiculed.

The Christ's Our Righteousness message was so unpopular that in 1888, Sister White wrote that not one in one hundred among church members understood it for themselves.

People were so blinded that they could not recognize the messages of God. Still today, very few accept it and even understand the message from Jones and Waggoner.

Jesus was a preacher of righteousness. Was His message accepted? Did people recognize Him as a Messenger from God? The religious leaders at that time rejected Him and His message. They hated Him and they killed Him.

Who recognized Christ the Messenger as divine? Perhaps John the Baptist, like Elijah, who was to prepare the way for His coming.

"And John, calling unto him two of His disciples, sent them to Jesus asking, Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" Luke 7:19. Here we see that John sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, Art Thou He that should come? Or look we for another? Even John the Baptist was not sure.

Was Adam and Eve blinded? Yes. They did not obey God.

William Miller was a messenger of God. He could see the prophesies of the Bible better than anyone else at

that time. He went faithfully through the proclamation of the First Angel's Message.

In the Second Angel's Message He also participated. In the Midnight Cry he started doubting, but yet in the end he accepted it. He rejected the Third Angel's Message. What happened to his spiritual eyesight?

We know that a 17-year-old girl could see the truth clearer than William Miller. That girl was Sister White.

Jones and Waggoner would be the best people to proclaim the Christ Our Righteousness message. Wrong. They lost their way. They lost the message that Sister White wrote about. They confused the people after 1888.

Saul was a very religious man. He knew the Old Testament very well. He had read it through many times. Hundreds of prophecies were given in the Old Testament about Christ's first coming. He heard the testimony of Stephen. He listened to the Christians that he persecuted. But all his intelligence, his learning, his Bible knowledge did not open his eyes to see the truth. "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church. Entering into every house and haling men and women, he committed them to prison." Acts 8:3

Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the first communion service the night when Jesus was taken and condemned to death. Judas watched the solemn service of feet washing. He listened to the words of Jesus. "This is My body which is broken for you." In this solemn occasion, what did Judas see, what was before his eyes? He did not see Jesus, nor His character. Judas saw only 30 pieces of silver. And in the middle of the celebration he went out into the night to betray his Master.

Was Judas blinded? Yes, he was. Yet he had been with Jesus for three and a half years.

"Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? And they have slain those who foretold the coming of the Just One. Of Him ye have now been the betrayers and murderers." Acts 7:52

Is there someone here today who still wants to become a preacher of righteousness? In the same way you will be unpopular, hated, and rejected. Yet, there is nothing new in this message. For the past 6,000 years this same message has been preached in the world. Yet it is a new and strange message to Christians because they purposely have neglected its study. For the lack of interest they have declined. Anyone who dares to preach it will be rejected.

Satan is not against religion as long as the message of

Christ Our Righteousness is not preached. The message that cooking on Sabbath or buying food on Sabbath does not look so bad. The message was that sin does not look so terrible. However, without the message of Christ Our Righteousness, sin cannot be overcome. Perfection is only a dream to them who reject it or change it. Yet every Christian church claims that they have this message, and in every age there is only one church which preaches the message of Christ Our Righteousness clearly and correctly. All the other churches quote the Bible, but without this message they have no saving power. Any church, by rejecting this message are only "play" churches. Without the power of the gospel, people do not receive the spiritual food for this time.

"Satanic agencies are clothing false theories in an attractive garb, even as Satan in the Garden of Eden concealed his identity from our first parents by speaking through the serpent. These agencies are instilling into human minds that which in reality is deadly error. The hypnotic influence of Satan will rest upon those who turn from the plain word of God to pleasing fables." – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 294

Every person who sins is blinded by Satan. One sin in our life, one neglected duty is enough to bring blindness and weakness upon us.

"The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan's superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God's people. Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be extorted; minds will be hypnotized." – *Ibid.*, p. 293

Who were deceived by Satan in the time of Christ? Were they the learned, educated, wise people, or the unlearned, simple people? Who will be deceived today? The wise, educated people or the simple, unlearned people?

Educated, wise people often get proud of their knowledge, and God cannot use them. "Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach." – *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 43

In the time of Christ the educated, wise people rejected Christ; they found fault in His teaching, which was blindness for them, because Jesus was perfect and sinless. Spiritual blindness is existing among professed Christians. This is the reason we have so many Chris-



tian churches, each teaching something different.

It is dangerous to neglect even one requirement of God. "One sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown." — *Steps to Christ*, p. 34. The result of cherishing one sinful desire can lead to spiritual blindness.

Here are some examples: paying less than 10% of tithe, abusing health reform, neglecting church meetings, or neglecting missionary work. Without saving others you cannot have perfect peace and a clear conscience.

Who are the most blind people today? The ones who have the greatest light and knowledge, but do not live up to it. Lukewarm Laodicea is more blinded than other churches because of their greater privileges and greater knowledge, which is not put into practice. Unfaithful Sabbath-keepers are more accountable before God than unbelievers who do not profess religion as they have sinned against greater light.

In the fallen churches, sinners feel comfortable. The smooth messages by their ministers comfort the guilty conscience. But, in the church of God, a sinner does not feel at ease. The constant reminder of his sin either brings him to obedience and faithfulness or he will go and seek a church where he feels comfortable and where his sin is tolerated.

This Reformation Movement is not based on some new and strange theory, but on the message of Christ's righteousness, simple and clear, upon the law of God.

The first pioneers of this movement were willing to go to prison and even to death for their faith. This proves that the Reformation message is not just to satisfy intellect but it is the power of God to overcome sin and to be faithful unto death.

One distinguishing sign of the true reformation is that they are in unity. They all speak the same thing.

"The time has come for a thorough reformation to take place. When this reformation begins, the spirit of prayer will actuate every believer and will banish from the church the spirit of discord and strife. Those who have not been living in Christian fellowship will draw close to one another. One member working in right lines will lead other members to unite with him in making intercession for the revelation of the Holy Spirit. There will be no confusion, because all will be in harmony with the

mind of the Spirit. The barriers separating believer from believer will be broken down, and God's servants will speak the same things. The Lord will co-operate with His servants. All will pray understandingly the prayer that Christ taught His servants: 'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.' Matthew 6:10." — *Testimonies for the Church.*, vol. 8, p. 251

"The mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth and to sacrifice for God and His cause. The angel said, 'Think ye that any will be compelled to sacrifice? No, no. It must be a freewill offering. It will take all to buy the field.' I cried to God to spare His people, some of whom were fainting and dying. Then I saw the judgments of the Almighty were speedily coming, and I begged of the angel to speak in his language to the people. Said he, 'All the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai would not move those who will not be moved by the plain truths of the Word of God, neither would an angel's message awake them.'" — *Early Writings*, p. 50–51

Do not wait for the shaking in the future. She wrote that it has commenced and will go on until the end. William Miller was astonished when he realized that it was only 13 years to the end of the world. He could not remain silent, but began to preach all around the message of the end of the world everywhere. Today, we know we are living in the end of time. Should we not be more in earnest in warning the world of the coming doom? Tell the sinners of their lost condition. Call the lukewarm Laodiceans to repent and to return to their first love.

Compare your own life to the standard, the character of Christ. If you lack in one point, do not let this day come to an end without a thorough reformation. Put away sin even if it kills you. Sacrifice your cherished idols. Confess your sins, bring them to the judgment before the end. This may be your last chance. May God be merciful to us.

Millions of professed Christians are resting in their graves—unsaved. Millions of professed Christians who are living today are yet unsaved, and they do not know it, because they are blind. Never have people had so much knowledge of the Bible as today. Never have people understood the Bible prophecies as today. Never has the knowledge of God's will been so great as today.

Even though there are many Bibles in hundreds of languages, never has the darkness and blindness been so great as it is today. Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. This darkness is self-inflicted. The

blindness of people is of their own choosing.

Jesus said, "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind." Matthew 15:14. Jesus did not tell the disciples to go to them, and try to save them, argue with them, or debate with them. Jesus said, "Let them alone." The blind refuse to see the strongest evidence—light and darkness are the same to a blind person.

What kind of people did Jesus call blind? Ones who kept the Sabbath very strictly. They fasted twice a week. They gave money to the poor. They paid 20–30% of their income to the church. They prayed in the street corners.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!" Matthew 23:15–16. They did much missionary work, travelling land and sea to make one convert. And yet Jesus called them blind, and the children of the devil.

Are there blind Christians today? Is history repeating itself? Is not anyone who commits sin choosing to be a blind person? "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8. Who commits sin chooses to be blind to the truth.

"But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:11. Whatsoever ye have done unto the least of My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. It is sin to dislike any



person, when we should love even our enemies, thus blindness will result if the sin is not repented of.

"To reject the Lord's servants is to reject Christ Himself." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 489

"In rejecting God's chosen instrument they rejected Christ; they insulted the Spirit of God." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 635

To reject a messenger of God or His message is sin. Satan knows this. He does not tell you to reject God or to reject Jesus but to reject the Lord's, mortal messengers. To reject the messengers of Jesus is to reject Jesus Himself. Let us love everybody.

If someone of us is fallen into spiritual blindness, there is a remedy to open our spiritual eyes. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Revelation 3:18

God has provided eyesalve to anoint our eyes so our spiritual eyesight can be restored. Then we will see where to go and what to do, and we will meet each other in heaven. Amen.

*Timo Martin*



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# I Am a Worm

On the sixth day, “God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind.” Genesis 1:24–25

What constitutes the creeping things? The creeping things are creatures that creep on the earth, such as reptiles, small rodents and insects. In Leviticus 11:21–23, grasshoppers, beetles and locusts are mentioned. In Leviticus 11:29–30, the creeping things mentioned by name are the weasel, mouse, tortoise, ferret, chameleon, lizard, snail and mole. Some other creeping things that are mentioned in the Bible are: flies, gnats, worms, moths, bees, hornets, ants and spiders.

In this article I will speak about the worm.

Firstly, the creeping things did enter the ark. “And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.” Genesis 6:19–23

If worms had remained out of the ark and in the ground, they would have drowned. “Every species of animals which God had created was preserved in the ark.” –*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 78

When you think of a worm, often the first thought that

comes to mind is the lowly earthworm. You see them in your gardens and lawns. After a rainstorm, sometimes you see them washed up on the roadways. Fishermen use them as bait on their hooks to catch fish. Thus, a worm is often thought of as a very lowly creature, valued by few.

By definition though, a worm is, “any of numerous small creeping animals with more or less slender, elongated bodies, and without limbs or with very short ones, . . . as earthworms, tapeworms, insect larvae, and adult forms of some insects.” <https://www.dictionary.com>. Thus, there are more species of worms than just the earthworm.

In the Bible the worm is used to describe a few people. There are several Hebrew words used in the Old Testament that are translated into English as *worm*.

One Hebrew word is *rimmah*, which literally means maggot, but is translated as *worm* into English. A maggot is actually the larvae state of flies and it does not live underground but it feeds on rotten organic material, whether it is from the plant kingdom or the decaying flesh of humans or animals. The thought of maggots causes some to be repulsed. If you find a maggot in a piece of fruit, it goes immediately into the trash bin.

In the following verses, the Hebrew word *rimmah* is used, and translated into English as *worm*.

“And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.” Ex-



odus 16:23. If the manna was kept overnight during the week, the next morning it was rotten and full of maggots. However, manna collected on Friday had no maggots when kept over until Sabbath.

Although we think of maggots with repulsion, they do serve a good purpose in allowing us to know when food was spoiled. They also feed on dead organic material, returning it into soil as it was prior to its creation.

Job makes reference to this. "The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree." Job 24:20. When man and animal die, they return to the ground and become food for the maggots.

Job also said, "My flesh is clothed with worms." Job 7:5. Poor Job was so sick that even while alive, the maggots were breeding in his decaying flesh.

Another Hebrew word, "*Towla*" or "*tola'ath*" is also translated into English as *worm*.

In Psalm 22:6, the Psalmist used the word *towla*, for *worm* when he wrote, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." This Psalm is prophetic of the cross of Jesus. What did the Psalmist mean when he wrote, "I am a worm?" In the eyes of the world, and many from the Jewish nation, Jesus was viewed as lowly and unimportant, just a carpenter's Son. He also stated that, not only was He a worm, but that He is despised by all people. Truly this was seen in the life of Jesus. He was despised and not appreciated, or understood by many of His people, especially the Jewish leaders to whom He had entrusted the oracles of His law (Romans 3:1-2).

Interestingly, the Hebrew word *towla* also can mean a maggot, and more specifically, "the crimson-grub, but used only (in this connection) of the color from it, and cloths dyed therewith:—crimson, scarlet, worm." — *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*

*Towla* denotes not only a maggot but further describes the maggot as a crimson or scarlet worm. This worm is common to the Middle East, and predominantly in Israel. In this crimson worm, we find a beautiful analogy. It looks more like a maggot than a worm. When the female crimson worm is ready to lay her eggs, which happens only once in her life, she climbs up a tree or fence and attaches herself to it. With her body attached to the wood, a hard crimson shell forms. It is a shell so hard and so secured to the wood that it can only be removed by tearing apart the body which would kill the worm.

The female worm lays her eggs under her body, under the protective shell. When the larvae hatch, they remain under the mother's protective shell so that the baby worms can feed on the living body of the mother worm for three days. After three days, the mother worm dies and her body excretes a crimson or scarlet dye that stains the wood to which she is attached, and also stains her baby worms. The baby worms remain crimson-colored for their entire lives and so they are identified as crimson worms.

The dead bodies of these insects were then collected and the scarlet fluid extracted; the resulting brilliant dye was prized for colouring fabric and thread. In biblical times, the red dye excreted from the crimson worm was used in the High Priest's robe. Uses of this red dye continue today.

Since, *towla* can be properly translated in two ways: either as *worm* or as *scarlet material*. The context determines the meaning.

It is interesting to note that In Isaiah 1:18 the word is translated into *scarlet*. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet [shaniy—root word of *tola'ath*], they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson [*tola'ath*], they shall be as wool." How fitting the use of this word to describe the love of Jesus for mankind, who is willing to wash away the scarlet stains of sin by shedding His own blood.

There is very much symbolism we can see in the use of this crimson worm to describe Jesus on the cross. He was nailed to the cross, as the mother worm attaches herself to the wooden tree or fence. Jesus was bruised on the cross and shed His blood, just as the worm excretes a crimson dye. The worm's dye covered her offspring and she fed them, and in doing so she died. Jesus shed His blood, in order to give life to those who accept His sacrifice and gives them new life.

Isaiah wrote: "Fear not, thou worm [*towla*] Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 41:14. The baby worms received their colour from their mother as she was dying. They needed her to die in order for them to live. Here the nation of Israel are compared to a worm. They are baby worms in need of their mother, to feed on their mother (the Lord) in order to live. He came to help them and gave His life to redeem them.

Of themselves, the children of Israel had no power or glory. They would be trampled by the other nations as



easily as people would trample a worm. But God promises deliverance to His people, protection from their enemies, and triumph in the end. "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (verse 10). Though they are a mere baby worm, a symbol of insignificance, the Lord God Almighty was on their side.

In two verses, the word *worm* appears twice and both times the different Hebrew words were used.

In reference to the King of Babylon, Isaiah wrote, "Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee." Isaiah 14:11. The word *worm* is mentioned twice here. The first mention is *rimmah* and the second *towla*. Yes, when he dies, the maggots will do their business but also he is covered by crimson worms. Why did Isaiah use the two different words here? It would be an interesting study.

And also in this verse. "How much less man, that is a worm? and the Son of Man, which is a worm?" Job 25:6. Bildad, Job's friend, is here speaking. He calls man less than a worm (*rimmah*-maggot). With these words he intended to humble Job and impress upon him his littleness. Job was indeed sick with decaying flesh. A good breeding ground for maggots. And again, the second word for *worm* is from *towla*. Here we could say that truly, mortal man is as a maggot, but the Son of Man, the crimson worm who gave His life for mankind.

Let us read another verse from Isaiah. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Isaiah 66:24. In this verse, the Hebrew word, *towla* is used again.

This verse is commonly understood that the worm will continue its work until all evil flesh is devoured, as confirmed in the following statement. "I saw that some were quickly destroyed, while others suffered longer. They were punished according to the deeds done in the body. Some were many days consuming, and just as long as there was a portion of them unconsumed, all the sense of suffering remained. Said the angel, 'The worm of life shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched as long as there is the least particle for it to prey upon.'" – *Early Writings*, p. 294. This is a well-founded and reasonable explanation.

Jesus quotes a portion of this verse in Mark 9:44,

"Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." It is in the same context of the unquenchable fire.

The small lowly worm also had a significant impact on Jonah's state of mind one day. After the city of Nineveh was spared, and he was sitting in the shade of a gourd on a hot day, "God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered." The word *towla*



was the word of choice for *worm* here. Why? It was truly a literal worm, but can we not say that the Lord will sometimes cause us discomfort when we stray to wake us up? "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." Hosea 6:1, Yes, He does. But He has promised healing. Jonah was not having the right attitude when the Lord spared the people of Nineveh and thus the Lord sent the worm to cause him grief, to teach him a lesson.

Now, I want to address the lowly earthworm. In the following verse, it likely was an earthworm that was written about. "They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of Thee." Micah 7:17. The word *worm* here is translated from the Hebrew, *zachal* which literally means, to crawl, but was translated into *worm*. It is earthworms that crawl out of the holes of the earth.

People often view an earthworm as weak, helpless, insignificant and despised, and do not care if they are trampled underfoot. If you call a person a worm, you are insulting them by saying that they have a very weak or have an unpleasant character and you have no respect for them.

Is it really true, though, that earthworms are insignificant? What would happen if we eliminated all the earthworms from this earth? Our soil would become rock solid. Worms are vital to the health of the soil in the world. With their constant burrowing, they keep the soil from becoming compact. Thus, as they keep the soil softer, there is increased nutrient availability to the plants and better drainage. They also break down organic matter like leaves and grass. They feed on plant debris (dead roots, leaves, grasses, manure) and soil.



When they eat they leave behind castings that are good fertilizer.

They are described, as “fantastic burrowing creatures are the living, breathing, engineers of the underworld, eating and recycling organic matter to keep our soil healthy.” —<https://www.soilassociation.org/causes-campaigns/save-our-soil/meet-the-unsung-heroes-looking-after-our-soil/why-are-worms-important/>

These poor lowly creatures were created by God and have a very useful purpose. They go about their work silently. They are not a threat to humankind. Although sometimes despised and not appreciated, they quietly go about their work to benefit mankind without complaint or animosity.

We are to work as the worm, silently working for the Lord, not looking for recognition from anyone, because our reward is in heaven. “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Galatians 6:9. “Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 15:58. We may be despised by those on the earth, and our work may not be appreciated even by some of the members in our own church, but our work is vital to the cause of God if we faithfully do the work He has outlined for us. Never give up.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.” John 15:18–20. Just do your work and ignore those who do not appreciate it. The Lord does, and that is all that matters.

Yet, the wicked owe some of the blessings they have in this life to the righteous even though they may despise them (as we depend on the lowly worm).

“Hearts that respond to the influence of the Holy Spirit are the channels through which God's blessing flows. Were those who serve God removed from the earth, and His Spirit withdrawn from among men, this world would be left to desolation and destruction, the fruit of Satan's dominion. Though the wicked know it not, they owe even the blessings of this life to the presence, in the world, of God's people whom they despise and oppress.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306. Sodom would have

been spared if ten righteous souls had been found (Genesis 18).

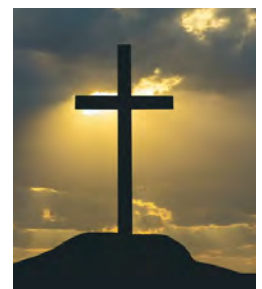
Worms have no eyes, but have cells called receptors that can sense whether it is light or dark. This allows worms to tell if they are underground or above ground. Thus, they know where the light is at all times. We are to be like the worm and know where the light of Jesus is at all times. We may face dark times in our lives, we may feel like we are deep in the depths of the darkness of the earth. We may not physically see the light of Jesus, but we can know He is there. We are to know where the light is at all times so that we do not get overwhelmed with the darkness.

“As His [John the Baptist] work was closing, He taught His disciples to look to Jesus, and follow Him as the Great Teacher.” —*Early Writings*, p. 154. “Look, O look to Jesus and live! You cannot but be charmed with the matchless attractions of the Son of God.” —*Christian Education*, p. 76

Worms actually have five hearts, but their hearts and circulatory system are not as complicated as ours because their blood does not have to go to so many body parts. The heart, although just a muscle that pumps blood, is commonly referred to with a feeling of love. When someone does something from the bottom of their heart, they have done it out of love. When someone puts their *heart* into a task, they put all their energies into it—it is a task that they have a love and passion for. When two people fall in love, it is said to be coming from the heart.

The Love of Jesus reached to all humanity. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. He showed His love by His actions. He did not just give lip service to love. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:7–8

Many who were despised by the Jewish leaders and society were drawn to Jesus. He had a heart of hearts. We also need to have a loving, kind and generous heart—loving even our enemies, “Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” Ro-





mans 12:20

One with a loving heart will be able to say like Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34) and Stephen, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60) when they were being killed by their own countrymen. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3:16 (and for our enemies).

Moving on to the brain of the worm. It is not particularly complex. Each worm's brain sits next to its other organs, and connects the nerves from the worm's skin and muscles, controlling how it feels and moves. Our brain, likewise, has to determine and control how we feel and move. Many today are controlled by their emotions, appetite and passions. They excuse their sin or think light of it, allowing passions and feelings to control their actions. Health reform is looked upon as too complicated. People love their meat, dairy and unhealthful food items. Their taste buds crave them and their system craves the euphoric feeling that follows. Or they fall in love with their neighbour's wife, or maybe a non-member of the church and passion takes control of reason. Yet, our brain is to control our decisions and all our actions, not our appetites and passions. We must deny ourselves many sinful desires that our hearts may be crying to be fulfilled. This is a challenge for many, but not an impossibility in Christ.

Worms breathe through their skin—but only if it's kept moist. A worm's skin is covered in mucus that helps it absorb oxygen. Its body is 90% water and the most common cause of death is its drying out. If a worm's environment becomes too dry, it will dry out and be unable to breathe. We also have to be kept moist by the blood of Jesus. It was shed for you and I. Thus if we lose sight of Jesus, and our first love (Revelation 2:4) and become dry Christians, we too will spiritually suffocate and be unable to breathe.

Worms have the ability to regrow lost tissue and can survive losing parts of their body. Mature worms have a swollen gland just below the head, known as a clitellum. If cut below this gland, the worm will be able to regenerate the tissue it has lost. A wounded Christian is not a dead Christian. There is healing in Christ. "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again." Proverbs 24:16. This verse brings comfort to the struggling Christian who is discouraged by his failure in his struggles against sin. We can rise up in fresh hope after each failure, if we lay hold again upon the saving strength so freely offered to us (Matthew 11:28). The desire to be-

come righteous and the strength to carry out the desire both come from Jesus. Therefore, we do not need to despair, however weak we may think we are, or how hurt we are. As long as we are willing to be made willing to do the right, the strength will be provided.

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me." Micah 7:8. This verse reads, "*when* I fall," not "*if* I fall." A note of triumph is brought here to the discouraged soul. The enemy may try to hold us in darkness, but we have the light of the Lord to lift us up. The enemy is a conquered foe.

There are times that it is necessary for us to be cut and wounded for our salvation. "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Matthew 5:29–30

Next time you see an earthworm, do not trample on it and look upon it as a lowly creature. Look at it in wonder and remember the lessons that we can learn from this essential creature that God has created. Appreciate them and treat them gently. And if someone calls you a worm, do not take it as an offense. Lift up your head. You can be a worm for Jesus. You can show love in the face of hatred, five times over, with five hearts. You can get up when hurt and wounded and you are controlled, not by your passions, but by the reasoning power of your brain.

You can gladly say like the Psalmist, "I am a worm" and be happy. Jesus truly was a worm in its truest sense. He meekly and quietly did His work, opening the way for millions to be saved. He never answered in a rude manner or retaliated when hurt.

Let us be true worms for Jesus is my wish and prayer for each of you reading this article. Amen.

*Wendy Eaton*







# *Ruth - the Moabitess*

## *Part I*

*Based on "The Book of Ruth"*

*Ruth - a descendent of righteous Lot - Abraham's nephew,  
Was not like all the others in her land, who touched idols with their hand,  
Kissed, fell down to them in adoration, brought sacrifices with devotion,  
Cried and prayed to them with labour, cut their skin to gain their favour.*

*Yet even worse, they sacrificed their children in a frenzy rite,*

*Oh, it was a dreadful, cruel, bloody, awful sight...*

*To appease their angry, cruel god, who could not see, nor hear, nor move nor  
leave his given spot.*

*This for Ruth has been appalling, loathsome to her gentle soul,  
she shrank from such worship, nor*

*Bowed down like a blinded, ill-directed fool.*

*Though she also had some idols as the custom was, but neither took  
her heart nor spirit this as serious.*

*The God she dreamed of would be gracious, merciful and loving,  
Kind, compassionate, forgiving.*

*This desire Providence did notice, and when the time was due,  
God the strings together drew,*

*A foreign family to meet her, to get acquainted with the living God -  
Creator, Yahweh,*

*God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Ruth's ancestor Lot.*

.....

*Naomi with her two sons and Elimelech her husband came to Moab  
because of famine in their land. From Bethlehem in Judah, a long way  
they came, to find and make a home.*

*Then when they settled and all seemed well, one day Naomi's husband  
suddenly fell ill, and passed away.*

*Grief-stricken, bereaved of the family's security,  
Naomi with her sons went out to search for opportunity,  
To support their welfare, for Naomi, this was hard to bear.*

*This was the moment then for God to intervene.  
Soon Mahlon the older son found labour, by a nearby neighbour,  
Who also had a daughter, she and Mahlon fell in love,  
in time they were united with the blessing from above.*

*Chilion, the younger found a maiden fine, she was healthy, strong,  
helped him and his mother all along. She also found great favor with Naomi,  
and soon were given into holy matrimony.*

.....

*Years did pass, then like a sudden thunder, the family was struck asunder -  
By the tragedy of death - both sons, Mahlon, Chilion - in a matter of few years,  
Were taken from their wives, in passing watered by rivers  
of their spouse's tears.*

*Naomi's life was shattered, her mind perturbed, benumbed and in despair,  
For the worst of all - there was no heir.*

*In her sorrow deep she thought, she has been dealt very hard by God.  
She saw only one solution, in her distress, confusion,  
to leave, go back home,  
to her own land she was coming from.*



*Naomi, Orpah, Ruth, all three with their possessions  
on three donkeys left the place*

*That seemed be cursed, indeed for Naomi it was the worst.*

*On the way she bade her adopted daughters now to leave,  
Returning to their families, and that God may give  
them comfort in their grief,*

*grant them many sons to bare with new husbands true with care.*

*Both, Ruth and Orpah would not go,*

*Kept on moving while the tears did flow,*

*But Naomi urged them not to follow*

*She has nothing left to give, it is better her to leave.*

*Then Orpah kissed her weeping, turning back with tearful waving.*





*But Ruth would not be persuaded, pleading cleaving to Naomi,  
She then said: "Wither you go, I will go,  
Wither you live, I will live, your people shall be my people,  
Your God be my God, where you die,  
I will die till death shall part us, you and me.  
You are my mother, and I love you dearly,  
I will care for you in all your need, truly help with everything indeed."  
"O, Ruth, my dearest daughter, you are most precious,  
May God to you be gracious, bless you with much happiness,  
For you are a comfort in my loneliness.  
Let us go now, come, you are most welcome to my now empty home."*

.....  
(How they journeyed and entered Bethlehem, is told in  
"Naomi's Sorrow" in the December issue of the Messenger)

.....  
*After resting from the strenuous journey, Ruth brought order  
To the home so dusty from the many years of absence,  
With joy and vigor, diligence,  
Till all was neat and homely, pleasing to Naomi.  
As Naomi's neighbours, friends, beheld Ruth's loving dealing,  
Gentle care, they took of her great liking,  
Regarded highly this dear Moabitess, also for her love for God,  
Embracing her new faith with joyfulness.*

*With the barley harvest on the way, Ruth said to Naomi then one day,  
She would go to glean some barley in the field  
Trusting God to grant her a good yield.  
"Go my daughter, dearest, and bring a blessing from the harvest."*

*Then Providence was watching Ruth now where to glean,  
The hand of God did lead her glean to the field of  
Naomi's kinsman,  
The mighty Boaz, a godly, wealthy man.*

*End of Part I  
Edda Tedford, Canada*





My name is Tumaini Nkunda Young. I live in Goma City DR Congo. My wife's name is Mugoli Rachel and I have three children, Kenny, Kevin and Ketia. Here is my testimony.

I would like to ask "What is the most important day in our life?" "For some, it is the day they were born; for others, it is the day they graduate; for the wandering foreigner, it is the day he receives new citizenship and can settle down in a new country; for many, it is their wedding day. What day does God consider the most important in our life? It is a day that actually combines all of the above events: birth, graduation, citizenship, marriage, death, resurrection, and a happier life. Is that all possible in one day?" See [biblewell.org](http://biblewell.org). This is what I want to share with you.

I was born and grew up in a humble family with modest parents in East Congo where, after my high school, I joined the Jehovah Witness Organization (Watchtower Society). For me it was a pleasure to study the Bible. I was very happy to preach to my neighbours, believing that I had all the truth according to God's word. I did not know it at that time, but unfortunately it was mingled with errors.

I then got married and things started to change. I started to be interested in the Protestant churches. I especially wanted to know more about Christ. What the Watchtower Society believes and teaches is what I also believed and taught to many people with zeal.

# One More Soul for Jesus

Here are some of their false teachings I unknowingly taught, with Biblical references that I now have discovered as to what the truth is.

**Watchtower Society teaches that Christ was created.** Jesus was the first creation of God the Father. They believe that Jesus was created by Jehovah as the archangel Michael before the physical world existed, and is a lesser, though mighty, god (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p. 209, 282–283).

**The Bible teaches:** Jesus is eternally God (John 1:1; 8:58; Exodus 3:14) and has the exact same divine nature as the Father (John 5:18; 10:30; Hebrews 1:3).

**The Watchtower Society believes that when Jesus was born on earth, He was a mere human and not God in human flesh.** This violates the biblical teaching that in the incarnate Jesus, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossian 2:9; Philippians. 2:6–7).

**The Bible teaches:** The word for "fullness" (Gk. *plērōma*) carries the idea of the sum total. "Deity" (Gk. *theotēs*) refers to the nature, being, and attributes of God. Therefore, the incarnate Jesus was the sum total of the nature, being, and attributes of God in bodily form. Indeed, Jesus was Immanuel, or "God with us" (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:1, 14, 18; 10:30; 14:9–10).

**The Watchtower Society teaches that Jesus was resurrected spiritually from the dead, but not physically.** Jesus' body was not resurrected. He was resurrected not as a human but as a "spirit person." (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p. 334; *What does the Bible Really Teach?* p. 73–74).

**The Bible teaches that,** the resurrected Jesus asserted that He was not merely a spirit but had a flesh-and-bone body (Luke 24:39; John 2:19–21). He ate food on several occasions, thereby proving that He had a genuine physical body after the resurrection (Luke 24:30, 42–



43; John 21:12–13). This was confirmed by His followers who physically touched Him (Matthew 28:9; John 20:17).

**The Watchtower Society teaches Christ will not come with an audible and loud event but that He is already here, being established since 1919.**

**The Bible**, however, teaches of a second coming as still in the future and it will be a physical and loud event, (Acts 1:9–11; Titus 2:13), and will be accompanied by great commotion in nature, such as earthquakes (Matthew 24:29–30). Every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7).

**The Watchtower Society believes there are two peoples of God: (1) the Anointed Class (144,000) will live in heaven and rule with Christ; and (2) the “other sheep” (all other believers) will live forever on a paradise earth.**

They teach that a heavenly destiny awaits all who believe in Christ during the 1000 years before living in the restored paradise forever. Those who did not know or serve God (“the unrighteous”) will undergo a bodily resurrection on earth and will have a second chance to learn about God (*What Does the Bible Really Teach?* p.73).

**The Bible teaches that**, God’s word states clearly that the great multitude, which began with Adam and goes through the close of probation, is to be saved as well as a group of 144,000 in number from 1844. The sealing work of the 144,000 began with the proclamation of the third angel’s message. The sealing work will continue until the close of probation. Spiritual Israel will be gathered from all nations, kindreds, and tongues (Revelation 7:2–8; 14:1–5; Ezekiel 20:12, 20; Daniel 12:1–2; Revelation 1:7). The sign, or seal, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, the Lord’s memorial of creation.

There are many other teachings that led me far away from the narrow path of the Heavenly Kingdom. I call them fictions but not facts.

**Fiction:** to drink alcohol is not a sin, so long you are not drunken.

**Fact:** the Bible is very clear about the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit, and thus forbids the use of any addictions such as alcohol (Isaiah 5:20; Proverbs 20:1)

#### **OTHER FALSE TEACHINGS**

The wicked will not be resurrected at all. They will cease to exist (*What Does the Bible Really Teach?* p. 73).

The Millennium reign of Christ supposedly began in 1873, and the Kingdom of God was “invisibly” established in 1914.

Jesus was supposed to have overthrown all political governments and set up his earthly kingdom in 1914, but they had to change their interpretation after the passing of that time and it did not happen. It is not proper to worship Jesus. Only God the Father is to be worshiped (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p. 282–283; *Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 1329).

After I got married, I attended a Protestant Church for a while and I got baptized on 25 December 2018. It was in that church that I got some clarifications, especially about Jesus, which was different, but Biblical, from what was taught by The Watchtower Society. I then met Brother Victor Shumbusho and his family as well as Brother Timothe Weragi and I learned much from them. We had Bible studies, and I visited the church many times since I met them in 2013. I did not heed the truths they taught me until I saw how the IMS believers from Rwanda and locally around here in Goma city, East Congo, were running away from the COVID-19 vaccination. They left their beautiful homes, jobs, families, and stopped everything they could do to enjoy life. They went to farms, retired villages where they could find quietness and refuge. We received 43 more souls from the neighbouring country. This shook my soul, and increased my curiosity to know much about the eschatology and prophecy of last day events as taught in the Bible and explained by the SDA Reform Church.

I was surprised to see how the Bible explained the Sabbath so well. Finally, I surrendered, and decided to follow all the truth I had been taught. I started by asking some questions in my church, but they tried to tell me that we are living in the time of grace. The Ten Commandments are not necessary today. This I could not accept by God’s help. I then began to distribute the pamphlet “100 REALITES AU SUJET DE LA QUESTION DU SABBAT” (100 facts about the Sabbath).

I learned much about the Sunday law, the USA in Prophecy, the Sanctuary and the judgment, the immutability of the Ten Commandments, the health reform, the Spirit of prophecy, the specificity of the Remnant church, and many other topics. The two topics that have awakened my mind are: “*Why are there so many religions?*” “*What is the most important day in our life?*” I also studied from the booklets “*At the Feet of Jesus.*” [biblewell.org](http://biblewell.org)

I was baptized on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 2022 into God's remnant Church, The International Missionary society, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Reform Movement. What happiness I have found!

I thank God for all the opportunities and steps that helped me to be where I am today. I also thank all brothers and sisters near or far, including Brother Ivan Jitar from Argentina, who encourages the work also. My wife is not yet with me in the same faith, but I pray and trust that the Holy Spirit will continue working in her life. I continue to learn and do research every day with Sister Maombi Ellen, the current treasurer of the local church.

After my decision to be baptized, I met many challenges: open opposition from my family, loss of my job (I was head teacher at one Primary school). Critics and visits from the church leaders of my previous church to bring me back to their apostasies. Please pray for me. I have a little family renting now the two little rooms in Goma near our chapel.

Dear readers of this page, pray for my family also. I hope God will open the way forward. I am happy to be a member of the big international family, and hope to meet you in heaven. Before my baptism I told the former church affiliation leaders to come and attend the baptism ceremony, and I withdrew my membership from their organization. After my baptism, I visited many of my relatives and my wife's family to share with them the things I learned from the Bible.

I have, however, decided to be supporting the gospel by lay activities in giving Bible studies to my relatives, friends, and new contacts. I know it is not easy but it is the burden the Lord has laid on me. I praised the Lord very much when I saw that the International Missionary

Society, Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement preaches using the house-to-house method and many others. I would like to be a canvasser if books were available. I hope that your end and mine will be in this faith that we meet one day, sooner or later. Pray for me, Amen.

*Tumaini Nkunda Young, Goma DR Congo*



## **Baptism at Kivu Lake**







**HEALTH MATTERS:**

## **Reducing the Impact of Stress**

Last issue we learned about stress, both acute stress which lasts for a brief period and then is gone, and chronic stress which can last for weeks, months, years and even a lifetime. Our response to difficult situations is what determines whether the situation is stressful to us. We also learned that what is considered stressful for one person is not stressful for another person. We are very individual in our responses to situations in our lives. This is determined by genetics and previous life experiences. Some people seem to be relaxed about almost everything, whereas others react strongly to the slightest stress. Those who have lived through traumatic events tend to be more vulnerable to stress. Most people react to stress somewhere in between these two extremes. We also looked at events that would be considered stressful for anyone. And then, there are situations in which there may not be an external stressor, but our own negative thoughts can create an internal state of stress. And then we become our own stressor. For example, you may see that your boss seems out of sorts, and you decide that he is unhappy with you. When, in fact, the way he is feeling has nothing to do with you.

There are two types of stress—physical and psychological. We can be physically exhausted by strenuous work, but if it continues, the stress can also affect our emotional state. There is also the impact of an accumulation of small stressors that can become overwhelming. Large stressors can also lead to a number of other stressors, such as the death of a spouse. Not only are you dealing with a significant loss, you may have to deal with issues such as loss of income, learn new skills that your spouse used to take care of, and the need to develop new social supports. No matter what the source or type of stress, our physical response is the same. As we learned last issue, chronic stress can permanently damage our bodies. We may develop a weakened immune system, with

resulting physical or mental illness.

Therefore, when we look at stress, it can happen “to us” or we can also bring stress on ourselves by the way we think about a situation.

Good stress can actually enhance our physical and mental functioning, whereas bad stress wears us down, both physically and mentally.

How do we ensure that our responses to difficulties are healthy and even beneficial? Can we actually shut off our stress response so that life events do not affect us in a negative

way? The answer is “yes”! By the grace of God it is possible.

Stressful events are a fact of life. You may or may not be able to change your current situation. But the Lord can give you wisdom to take steps to manage the impact that these events have on you. Coping with stress is a process; we can learn coping strategies that can be used in many different situations. Once we learn some of these strategies, we are better equipped for future stressful events that may arise.

When we talk about coping strategies for stress, they can be viewed in two main ways. Stressors that are perceived to be changeable or can be fixed by using some problem-solving coping strategies. Stressors that are perceived to be unchangeable respond to emotion-focused strategies and the seeking out of a support system.

There are times in our life where we feel a sense of unhappiness or unease and we have physical reactions such as poor sleep and lack of appetite but are unsure of what could be causing this level of emotional and physical distress. These feelings indicate that there is some stressor in our life that is triggering these feelings. The first step in dealing with stress is to pray and identify what the stressor may be. Common sources of stress in people’s lives are related either to work, finances, school, family, parenting, relationships, health, and responsibilities. Once we are able to identify the source of stress, we need to ask ourselves several questions: Are there practical things I can do to remove the stressor in my life? If I can’t remove the stress, can I do something to reduce the impact of the stress? Is there something that I am doing that contributes to stress in my life? Each one of us may use different strategies to cope with stress—these differences usually reflect dif-

ferences in personality, not effectiveness of the strategies.

Let us first look at some strategies that help us remove or reduce the stressful situation we are in. Firstly we need to look at the role that we play in our stress. Is there something that we are doing that could be contributing to the stress, or making it worse? Our attitudes towards a situation can create an even worse situation. For example, do we have unreasonably high expectations of ourselves or others that could be causing undue pressure? In school, do we expect to always achieve perfect marks? Do we expect our children to behave perfectly at all times? Do we expect our spouse to be attentive to all our needs? Do we need to make enough money so that we can have a big house, a nice car, or regular vacations? Can we stop sinning? Do we have certain expectations and put pressure on ourselves to make it happen?

Often our values about the way our life “should” be, puts a lot of unnecessary pressure on us. Challenging these beliefs and deciding to live a simpler life can relieve a lot of stress. We do not need to have the perfect children, house, job, or friends to be happy. We do not need to surround ourselves with material things to be happy. We have a Saviour who will forgive our sins and help us to live a righteous life. Being content with what God has provided for us will relieve a lot of stress.

Do we have goals in life that cause us stress? Do we have career goals that have expectations concerning the type of job we have, the amount of salary we should be making? We may need to change our career goals to be more in line with reality. We may not be able to achieve the type of financial success we are hoping for. Perhaps we will never reach the goal of finding a life partner and having a family and children. Sometimes we need to change our goals and set more realistic goals in order to reduce stress. We need to pray and ask God for direction, so that He can work out His will in our lives as we surrender our lives to Him.

When we see all the crime and corruption in this world, we see that people no longer have a love for God, do we constantly fear for our children when they go to school, and what type of influences they may be encountering? When we see people take advantage of others to “get ahead”, when selfishness and greed are all around us, how does this make us feel about people? When we feel disappointment and sadness about the way we see society becoming, we feel stressed. We need to look at our own beliefs and accept that people have beliefs that are

not the same as ours, but as long as we treat others in a way that aligns with our own beliefs, we will feel good about our interactions with others, and also accept that the world is the way it is because of sin and corruption. When we teach our children our values and beliefs that we learned from the Bible, we can send them out into the world with the training that they need to be in the world but not of the world.

Sometimes the simplest solution to deal with stress is to distance yourself from the source of stress. If you have a job that is causing you a lot of difficulties, pray that the Lord will help you find another job; if you have a challenging friendship, end it; if you have too much debt, sell some of your belongings; if you live in an area with a lot of crime, move. Sometimes these solutions are not possible. Pray for direction and the Lord will either help you distance yourself from the stress or give you strength to manage the stressful situation.

Problem-solving often can be used to get things back on track to reduce stress. The definition of problem-solving is “the process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.” Sometimes a solution is obvious, but not always. Using a step-by-step process to problem-solve helps to achieve your outcome.

First you must identify all the aspects of a stressful event. This includes your behaviours, thoughts, and feelings. Behaviours would be things like needing to look for another job if you have been laid off from work. Identify thoughts and feelings that can be obstacles to your goal, such as “I’m a failure, I will never find another job.” Are you feeling angry about being fired? Negative thinking patterns can worsen the stress we feel. Recognize when these feelings come and focus on positive thoughts instead. “The Lord has given me many skills that I can use in a variety of different jobs.” Or “It’s no use being angry, it can’t change the past.” It is natural to initially feel upset, angry, and disappointed, but how you express these emotions are important so that they do not become all-consuming so that you can go forward. Say like the Apostle Paul, “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13–14. Hanging onto negative emotions can make us stuck.

It is important to identify any physical responses such as fatigue or trouble sleeping that may affect your motivation to find another job; take care of yourself by addressing your physical needs. Give your burdens to the



Lord. He can find you friends that can offer support and help in different ways, they can help us find solutions, or just provide a listening ear. Surrounding ourselves with an emotionally-supportive network is the most important strategy to cope with stress. Connections with others reduces stress. There are many sayings with similar meaning such as, "Grief shared is grief halved."

The next step would be to brainstorm some options. Think of as many solutions as you can, even if some might be far-fetched. At this stage, do not criticize any of your solutions, just write them all down. You may consider jobs that might take you to another city, another country even. Or perhaps you consider a job that is not in your same line of work, but that you would be willing to try. Perhaps consider a part-time job instead of a full-time job. Consider jobs that you would never have considered in the past, changing your beliefs about the "ideal" job expands your options.



The third step is to evaluate. This step involves rating all the options that you have written down. Consider the likelihood that you will be able to carry it out and succeed. Identify the cost and energy of each option. And think of the solution in terms of its impact on other people. Rewrite your list in order of its rating. You may have the option of a lucrative job, but you will have to move away from your family. Is the job worth this sacrifice? For another job, you may have to return to school to take some classes to upgrade your skills. Will your new job give you enough of an income to justify the cost of taking extra courses? Bring your list to the Lord and ask for guidance. In which option can you bring the greatest honour and glory to God?

The final step involves acting on the option that the Lord has impressed you to follow.

We had mentioned that everyone perceives situations differently, which then determines how stressful we find a situation. Even though we might not be able to change the situation, we can decrease the amount of stress we feel by changing how we feel about something. We often feel stress because we do not know how to cope with the situation, we feel it is beyond our resources to deal with. Thus, it becomes a threat to our wellbeing. But, does it always have to be a threat?

If the Lord has helped us change something about the stressful situation to make it less stressful, we will feel a sense of control. He has helped us do something to help ourselves and the way we feel improves; our perception that the stress is a threat is no longer the case. We work in cooperation with the Lord.

For example, if you are struggling with managing deadlines at work, and always feel pressured to work extra hours to complete your work, you could send a quick prayer to heaven and then go and talk to your manager, and explain the struggles you are having and ask for help with solutions. The manager may even provide ways to reduce the amount of work or provide extra help for you to complete your work. Because you have taken the initiative to control your stress, you now do not have the same sense of feeling overwhelmed by it. However, if the manager says to you that there is nothing he can do to help you, that the expectation to produce results are still the same, then what do you do? You need to change the way you feel about the situation. You decide that you will see the deadlines as a challenge. Often this change in thinking will allow you to be more productive in your work, you are able to think more clearly and be more focused when you have a positive attitude, and you will find that the challenging deadlines are now manageable. Perhaps you can do some problem-solving, perhaps approach your work in a different way that may make you more efficient or work out a timeline as to when you should finish different parts of the project. Just ask the Lord to help you and He will.

A way to change one's perceptives about something that appears overwhelming is to break down complex tasks into smaller pieces; this will make any task feel less overwhelming. Each time you finish a smaller piece of the task, you feel a sense of accomplishment that gives you motivation to keep going. The amount of work has not changed, but how you feel about the work has changed, and has decreased your level of stress.

Sometimes we have to accept the fact that the work we produce will not be "perfect" if we do not have the time to make it so, but accept that "good enough" is still a reasonable expectation. In my work as a nurse, I often do not have the time to do all what I would like for my patients as often we are short-staffed in the hospital. If I always had the expectation to do a "perfect" job, I would quickly get frustrated, and eventually burn out, and then would no longer enjoy going to work. But, when the Lord helps me to do a job that I know is "good enough", where my patients are still well cared for, but

certain things I could not get done due to lack of time, then I can go home at the end of the day, feeling good about the work that the Lord helped me do that day, and still enjoy what I do. For many things in life, reduce your stress by thanking the Lord for helping you to do what is sufficient. By altering the way we interpret the world around us, we can gain control over stress. By allowing the Lord to change our perception about a situation, we can even gain the insight to see its benefits.

Often when unpleasant things or difficult events occur in our lives, we spend a lot of mental and emotional energy lamenting their existence. We wish that these difficulties would go away, we feel anger and resentment. A way to reduce stress when bad things happen is to use "radical acceptance;" this is accepting that sometimes there is nothing we can do to fix or change what has happened, or when something has happened that seems unfair.

Radical acceptance is different from regular acceptance. Regular acceptance implies that you agree with a situation. However, with radical acceptance, it does not mean that you agree with or approve, or understand what is happening, or what happened to you but you accept it.

Remember, all that happens to us is in God's permissive will for our character development. These include events such as the loss of a job or the loss of a loved one either through death or a break-up. We cannot change how someone else feels about us, whether it is an employer or a partner. We cannot change that an event has taken place. Grief, anger, hurt, and disappointment are normal emotions when these things happens, but suffering results when the initial pain is prolonged due to a lack of accepting what has happened. We have to accept the fact that God is in control. "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

Radical acceptance also gives you permission to feel pain and sorrow. With acceptance and trust in God, eventually you will experience a reduction in the intensity of these emotions. You will accept that life has its ups and downs, and that to feel hurt is part of being human. When we can learn to accept pain, sadness, and grief as part of being human, and that it has purpose and value. It is possible to relieve the feelings of anger, shame, resentment and frustration, which keep us in a

state of unhappiness. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James 1:2-3

We will than have hope that we will feel better, because we accept the reality rather than fighting against it. This is not easy to do, especially when things are going badly in life, but continuing to either avoid or dwell on negative emotions will only add to misery. This is where our faith can grow as we trust fully in the leading of the Lord, when we do not understand the negative things going on around us.

With radical acceptance, (accepting God's leading) there is also a recognition that even if you are in pain, life is worth living. These thoughts reduce the amount of stress that a situation may cause. In the case of a death, rather than focusing on the unfairness of the death or that it should not have happened, you can accept your grief as a normal human reaction and find help in Christ and He will help you with your emotional struggles,. He will give you the ability to cope and recover from adversity, and to take positive action. This does not mean that we do not experience stress but we learn to successfully adapt to difficult or challenging life situations and to reduce stress. Thus we no more feel overwhelmed or helpless and relying on unhealthy coping strategies (such as avoidance, isolation, and self-medication).

To accept life on the Lord's terms, and not on our own, is a conscious choice that we make thus allowing healing to take place by not fighting the situation or continuing to ask "why?" but accepting that "this is the way the Lord has laid out." When we truly acknowledge our inability to change a situation that we are in, and relinquish all sense of control to the Lord, we have arrived at radical acceptance. Radical acceptance is not easy. In fact, it can require a lifetime of faith and trust in order to truly accept it.

We should not use radical acceptance in situations where we are being abused, taken advantage of, when we are experiencing fear, or if it is an obstacle to getting out of a bad situation.

A global example of a stressor that we have all experienced for the last three years is the coronavirus. It has impacted our lives in significant ways, and has many problematic aspects to it which we cannot control. It affected our ability to work and to travel. Many restrictions were placed on us such as the mandatory use of masks and often mandatory vaccines. People we love got sick and even died of covid and many of us are



dealing with the long term aftereffects of a covid infection. I would say that none of us like this situation. This is a good example of the need for radical acceptance. We accept the situation as it is so that we do not make it any more stressful than it has to be.

Acceptance in Christ frees up the energy we would use fighting against reality so that we can take specific steps to actually feel better. Acceptance is active. It does not mean agreeing with stressful situations but it allows us to take steps to reduce our suffering.

Another powerful way to reduce stress is to be grateful. Gratitude is a sense of happiness and thankfulness in response to a fortunate coincidence or a gift. Gratitude should be a constant state of mind when we focus on the Lord's goodness in our life, and see the elements that make life worth living. To experience gratitude sometimes involves a conscious effort on our part. Being able to show gratitude to the Lord, even in the worst situations in our lives, leads to having more positive feelings such as joy and compassion, while switching our thoughts from more negative emotions such as resentment and envy. Gratitude is also associated with a stronger immune system, fewer aches and pains, lower blood pressure and a deeper sleep.

There are people who have everything and still feel like they have nothing, whereas those who are grateful may have nothing but are still happy with what they have. Gratitude is a perspective that we make a choice to express. "Be content with such things as ye have." Hebrews 13:5

To develop gratitude, keep a gratitude journal. Every day, write down 3-5 things that you are thankful to the Lord for in your life that day. Start your day on a positive note by writing in your journal when you first get up in the morning. Thank the Lord for another day of life. If you write in your journal in the evening, you can reflect on the Lord's leading; the positive aspects of a day that may have been long and stressful. It helps to retain God in your thoughts when you focus on the positive things in your life. People who keep a gratitude journal feel happier and more optimistic about their lives, and are better able to meet positive goals and complain about fewer physical ailments.


If you are under a lot of stress, it may be difficult to find things for which to be grateful for. Under stress, our mind tends to focus on the negative because we think about "survival"—being able to figure out what needs to be fixed in order to reduce stress. Pray. The Lord will help you find a perspective that allows you to enjoy

what is going right. Even being grateful for small things can pick up your spirits. Perhaps the sun was shining that day and you did not need to work in the rain. Thank the Lord. Try to make very specific statements instead of general facts. For example, instead of saying, "I am grateful for my health", you could say, "I'm grateful the Lord has given me strength to walk to my job two miles away from home." Or instead of saying, "I am grateful for my children" you could say, "I am lucky to have children who help me with my chores at home."

It is important to ask the Lord to help you find the positive side of negative situations such as the loss of your health or financial hardship. Instead of only dwelling negatively on those things that are not working out, try asking the Lord to help you find something positive in those situations that you could be grateful for. "I am still unemployed, but I was able to feed my family because I was able to pick up a few odd jobs." Or "I am concerned about my health condition, but I am grateful that this ailment has allowed me to realize how much I need to thank the Lord for each day and appreciate the value of life." This will help focus on the positive in even the most dire situations.

Gratitude can also be expressed by thanking someone who has helped us. We recognize our connection to others and the role they play in our lives. This builds stronger relationships between spouses, families, friends, and colleagues. Think of how it lifts your spirits when someone thanks you for helping them; gratitude not only benefits the one who has received help, it also benefits the giver. The Lord loves to hear us giving Him thanks for the many benefits He has given to us.

This month is an introduction on coping with stress, both with stress that can be controlled and stress that is beyond one's control. Now think of how all the principles that I have introduced can also be found in the wisdom that God's word provides for us when dealing with life's trials and difficulties. We will discuss those more in the next issue.



**Gratitude  
is not only the  
greatest of virtues,  
but the parent of  
all the others.**

*Cicero*

## CHILDREN'S CORNER:



# When God Answered His Prayer



Abraham walked slowly through the village, his head lowered, watching the little clouds of dust kicked up by his bare feet. He passed old women sitting in front of their huts, their skinny black fingers molding pots from hunks of gray clay. Little children ran past him and disappeared into open doorways or behind the huts. Young wives chatted together noisily under the village's only shade tree, one or another of them interrupting occasionally to call to her children. But Abraham scarcely noticed any of them. He had his own problems to worry about.

In just two weeks, school would begin at Malamulo Mission, nearly 120 km away. Abraham had already spent a year at the mission school, and now he wanted more than anything to go back for this coming school year. But he did not have a good pair of pants, a shirt, a blanket, or even the money needed for school fees. What could he do?

Just then Grandfather Mankwala shuffled by carrying a great load of bamboo on his shoulders. Abraham knew he was going to his hut to make mats to sell at the market. Mankwala had promised to give him a mat to take to school.

"I will give you a good one, my boy," the old man had told him. "If I had money, I would give that to you too, but I have a hard time keeping food in my own and my old wife's stomachs. I cannot hoe big gardens like I used to."

"That is all right, Grandfather," Abraham had assured the kind old grandfather. "I will be very happy with the mat that you give to me. It will keep my blanket clean, if God provides me one."

But here he was, only a few days before the opening of school, and still without a blanket. Watching the retreating figure of old Mankwala, a thought came to Abraham. Mankwala prayed a lot. He was always saying, "I have been praying about . . ." and in the mission period at

Sabbath School, he often shared how the Lord answered His prayers.

Sometimes Abraham felt a little impatient. Why pray, when you can *do* something about it? But Abraham had tried all summer to do something about it, and nothing had worked.

He was not able to get a job on the tea plantations because they demanded he work on the Sabbath. A job on any farm meant the same thing. To get a job as a houseboy, he had to work seven days a week. The same went for a cookboy. He had even tried selling vegetables at the market, but the drought came and the garden dried up.

"Well, I tried everything and nothing has worked," Abraham sighed. "Perhaps I should pray like old Mankwala." He had said his prayers at night and in the morning as he was taught at school at the mission, but he never prayed for anything special. Slowly, Abraham turned off the pathway and into the bush. He would go far away from the village so he could talk aloud and concentrate on his praying, far from the ears of other curious listeners in the village. He came to a place he knew about, far off the beaten path, where a gigantic rock thrust up high out of the ground. Slipping behind it, Abraham knelt and began to concentrate on how to pray for particular things.

As he was about to pray, he remembered something Mankwala had always said about prayer. "You are purely wasting your time to pray if there is any meanness in your heart. If you have got anything hidden there, the Lord is sure to see it clearly. Then He cannot hear your prayer."

Suddenly, Abraham jumped up. Last week he had taken a huge yellow papaya from the neighbour's tree. He had sneaked off into the bush and ate every bit of it, even though he knew it was not his to take. One the way back to his hut, he had heard his neighbour talking to his father about the missing papaya. "It is not for me that I am



sorry, but the old mother has no teeth, and she has been watching that soft papaya ripen all these weeks.”

Abraham had crept into his hut ashamed, and now he stood in the shadow of this mighty rock, realizing that a papaya was big enough to stand between him and God.

Abraham quickly retraced his steps until he got to his neighbour’s house. Then he remembered that some big papayas hung from the trees in the next village. He had a few pennies in his hut and he decided to go and buy one. Then he would not have a face of shame when he went to see his neighbour.

Two hours later he stood again in the shadow of the big rock. He had bought a papaya even bigger than the one he had stolen. He paid for it with his precious money that he had earned last week working in another neighbour’s garden. Now his neighbour graciously forgave him for stealing the papaya and the old grandmother was sitting on a mat in the warm sun enjoying the juicy yellow meat of the sweet ripe fruit.

Then Abraham remembered something else he had almost forgotten. Soon after he had returned from school at the beginning of the summer his father had asked him to help clear the garden. But he had not wanted to work just then. His legs were still weary from the long journey home from school, and he felt a little angry at being asked to work so soon. He had pretended to have a stomach ache and had lain all day on his mat, groaning whenever anyone came near. Somehow he could not pray until he had made things right with his father. Again Abraham turned and went back to the village.

By the time he returned to the rock an hour later, the shadows of night were beginning to fall. He would have to hurry his praying, and old Mankwala had told him many times not to pray in a hurry!

But how clear the sky seemed now between Abraham and God. He felt as if he could reach up and touch heaven itself. So he knelt happily by the rock and prayed for God to help him find a way to go to school. When he arose from his knees, he realized it was too late to cut across the bushes. At twilight the wild beasts were often abroad, hungry and bold. He decided to go out of his way to a seldom-used road that trucks took occasionally to carry wheat from the villages. This would be safer than the bush.

As he came near the road, he noticed what looked like a piece of dirty brown paper caught under the end of a big rock. Since no one in his village had even a square inch of paper from one year to the next, he decided to retrieve it. He pulled it from under the end of the rock and found it

to be a long sodden brown envelope. The writing on it had blurred and he could only make out that it had been addressed to somewhere in the faraway Mozambique. Curious, he opened it. Inside, carefully folded, were three one-pound notes, unharmed, protected by the thick paper from mold and rot.

What a thrill for Abraham. “It is a wonder that the white ants have not found this,” he thought. “The God in heaven has saved it for me, yes, for me to go to school. And I would not have found it if I had not had so many things to make right before I prayed.” His two trips back to the village had taken just long enough so he had to come home on the road where he found the answer to his prayers.

With a light heart he started toward home. No longer did he shuffle slowly along the road, but he ran as fast as he could. He did not even have to look for the owner of the money, since trucks from many places in Mozambique came along the road during the wheat season and it would be impossible to find the right one. If there had been opportunity, Abraham surely would have returned the money to its rightful owner.

The next morning Abraham walked to the near-by store and bought himself a warm blanket and some clothing. After the purchases he had enough left over for school fees and spending money.

Abraham felt happier than he had all summer. He had raised his voice to the Lord and the Lord had answered his prayers.

Jesus said, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:23–24

“If we have in any manner defrauded or injured our brother, we should make restitution. If we have unwittingly borne false witness, if we have misstated his words, if we have injured his influence in any way, we should go to the ones with whom we have conversed about him, and take back all our injurious misstatements.” *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 59. The next time you kneel down and pray, carefully think, as did Abraham, if there is some matter you need to reconcile with someone before you kneel before God. Then go and make things right with your brother or sister, and then you will be in harmony with God and can, “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16



# Papua New Guinea



# Solomon Islands





# India



**Indian Field  
Conference at  
Tirupathur  
(headquarters)  
with  
Brother Douglas Francis  
and  
Brother Roland  
De la Paz.**



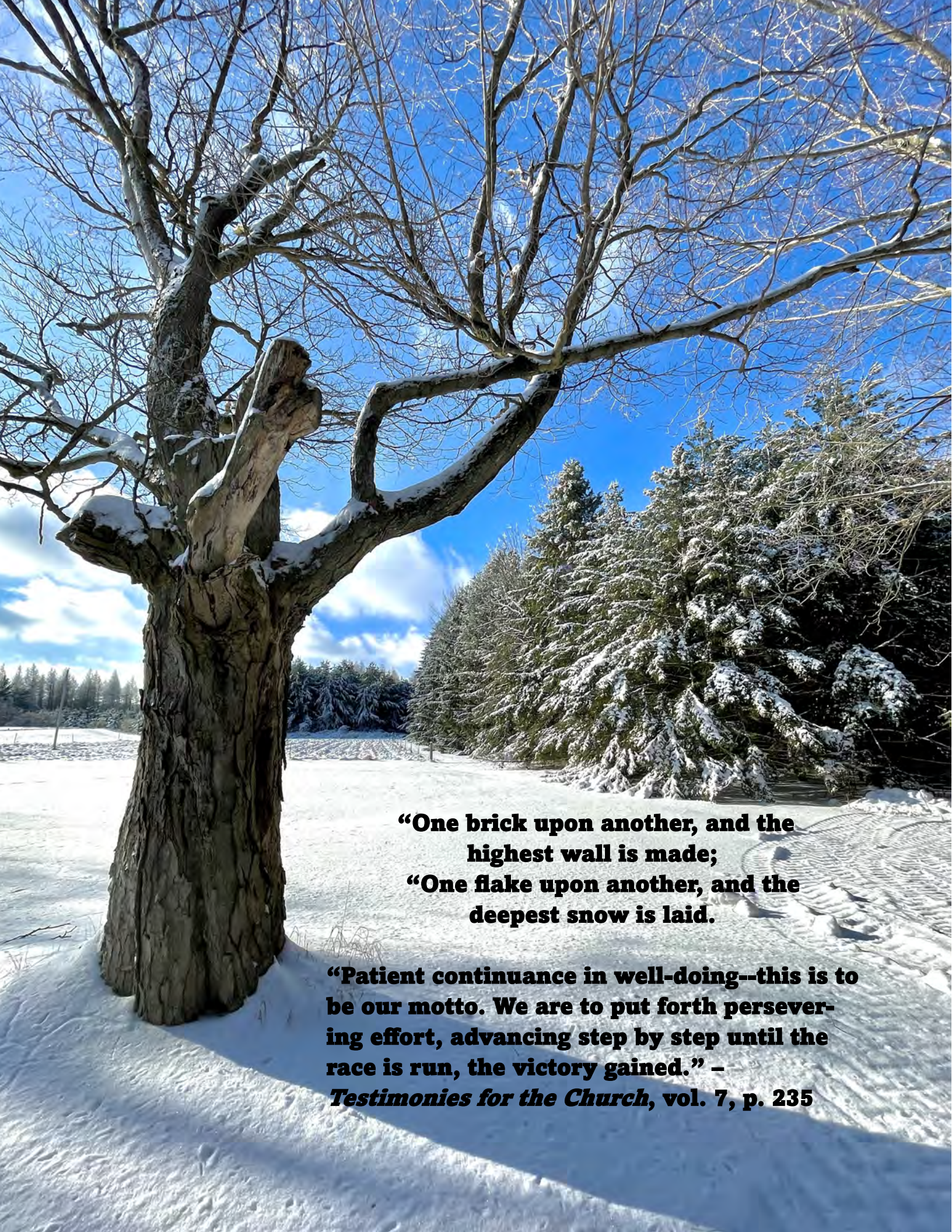
**Below: Baptism  
at the conference.**

# Sri Lanka



**Field Conference held at Mannar, January 5-7, 2023**





**“One brick upon another, and the  
highest wall is made;  
“One flake upon another, and the  
deepest snow is laid.**

**“Patient continuance in well-doing--this is to  
be our motto. We are to put forth persever-  
ing effort, advancing step by step until the  
race is run, the victory gained.” –**

***Testimonies for the Church, vol. 7, p. 235***