



*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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# As the Waves of the Sea



“The moment you surrender yourself wholly to Him in simple faith, Jesus accepts you, and encircles you in His arms of love. He holds you more firmly than you can grasp Him. Come to the light, and triumph in God. Then shall your peace be as a river, and your ‘righteousness as the waves of the sea.’” —*The Review and Herald*, July 22, 1884

“It is the love of self that brings unrest. When we are born from above, the same mind will be in us that was in Jesus, the mind that led Him to humble Himself that we might be saved. Then we shall not be seeking the highest place. We shall desire to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. We shall understand that the value of our work does not consist in making a show and noise in the world, and in being active and zealous in our own strength. The value of our work is in proportion to the impartation of the Holy Spirit. Trust in God brings holier qualities of mind, so that in patience we may possess our souls.

“The yoke is placed upon the oxen to aid them in drawing the load, to lighten the burden. So with the yoke of Christ. When our will is swallowed up in the will of God, and we use His gifts to bless others, we shall find life's burden light. He who walks in the way of God's commandments is walking in company with Christ, and in His love the heart is at rest. . . . ‘O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.’ Isaiah 48:18.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 330–331

“You need the blessing of the Lord in your home. This is necessary if you would be a wholesome, healthy Christian. Keep yourself under control, or else you will kill your influence for good. Eat daily of the leaves of the tree of life.

“Thus you will be enabled to glorify God. Speak no hasty, overbearing, dictatorial words, for thus you misrepresent Christ. Strive to reveal in your life the fruits of righteousness. Make earnest efforts, by a well-ordered life and a godly conversation, to perfect the church. Remember that God is looking on and that the world is taking knowledge of you, and that the world is looking to discern in you the likeness of Christ.

“Do you love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself? This is the whole duty of man. On these two principles hang all the law and the prophets. If you fulfill them, light and joy and peace and gladness will come into your life. Show by your life your preparedness for the inheritance of the saints in light. In word, in spirit, in action, be a true representative of Christ. Then you will be rich for all eternity. . .

“Will you wear Christ's yoke? Doing this, your peace will be as a river and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. Will you not take right hold and wrestle for the victory?” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 21, p. 278–279

“Sin has destroyed our peace. While self is unsubdued, we can find no rest. The masterful passions of the heart no human power can control. We are as helpless here as were the disciples to quiet the raging storm. But He who spoke peace to the billows of Galilee has spoken the word of peace for every soul. However fierce the tempest, those who turn to Jesus with the cry, ‘Lord, save us,’ will find deliverance. His grace, that reconciles the soul to God, quiets the strife of human passion, and in His love the heart is at rest. ‘He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven.’ Psalm 107:29, 30. . . . ‘The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.’ Romans 5:1; Isaiah 32:17.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 336–337

“True freedom lies within the proscriptions of the law of God. ‘O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.’ ‘There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.’ ‘But whoso hearkeneth unto Me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.’ [Isaiah 48:18, 22; Proverbs 1:33.]” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 285

*Ellen G. White*



# Partnership with God

To be alone is weakness, but, in unity there is strength. To be stronger, people create partnerships in marriage as well as in business.

If you start a business with a partner who has no money and no skills, he is not much help to you. You must do most of the work alone. But, if you form a partnership with someone who has means, power, ability, and skill, your business will be successful even if you yourself are lacking these things.

Therefore, people who plan to get married or start a business, often are very careful in selecting their partners. However, many are disappointed. The partner they chose proved not to be so great, but was rather a hindrance—someone that in the beginning looked so good, like pure gold.

Many spend years looking for a perfect partner, and some never find one. The best of men may let you down, and disappoint you. However, if you want to find the perfect life partner or business partner, there is only one, and that is God Himself.

You may ask, “Is He willing to go into partnership with me?” “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” Jeremiah 31:3

It is not us so much we desiring to be in partnership with God; it is He that actually desires to be in partnership with us. Jesus left heaven to come to this sinful world to seek us, to save us, to come into a partnership

with us. We should consider that it is a great honour to have the company of Jesus. It is a wonderful experience!

What does this partnership bring to us?

Two disciples were very disappointed and cast down. Suddenly they met Jesus and after talking with Him for a while, what happened? “And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?” Luke 24:30–32

Their tiredness and depression was gone. They were filled with joy and happiness.

Jesus said, All power in heaven and earth is given Me, and, lo, I am with you all the way. (Matthew 28:20). He also said, take My yoke upon you. My yoke is easy, my burden is light (Matthew 11:29–30). He will carry most of the burden so that it will feel easy and light to us.

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John 1:14. Once we receive Him, He gives us power.

What does He tell us next? “And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” John 14:13. What friend do you have who tells you, “anything you ask for, I will give

you”?

“Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” *Matthew 6:25*. Take no thought and do not worry or be anxious for the necessities of life.

“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” *Psalm 91:9–10*. We are assured protection from evil, from the plague. We are safe.

What are we reassured by, even in the time of trouble? “He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” *Isaiah 33:16*. God will be our defense and He will provide for us.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” *Isaiah 1:18*. All our sins are forgiven, and they are cast into the depths of the sea.

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” *Psalm 16:11*. Not only do we have the future promise of happiness, we can have joy in the present time.

“God seeth the solitary in families: He bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.” *Psalm 68:6*. Those who are lonely and single, He will find them a family.

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” *1 Corinthians 2:9*. Far beyond the capabilities of the imagination will be the splendor that awaits those who love Him and believe on Him.

In the end, we will cry as did David, “My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” *Psalm 23:5–6*

Yes, how can it be that a Christian who has made a covenant with God and entered into a partnership with Him, does not have power or perfect peace? His face does not shine with happiness. All he does goes wrong as if there is a curse upon him. He looks worried, sad, and depressed. Clearly something has gone wrong.

This is because partnership with God means doing things together, having the same interests, talking and planning together, working together, loving one another.

Now, how could it work if you want Christ to be your partner, but you do not agree?

One day you may say, I want to go to a party, to a movie, or you simply want to stay home, and then Christ tells you: I want to go to a prayer meeting. Christ would not miss the meeting for any reason. Then there would be a separation. You would go your way, and Christ would go to church. Then you would lose His company and feel miserable again.

Or then, you are sitting in your living room with Christ, and you say: I want to listen to some popular music or rock music. Christ wants to listen to sacred music. That would mean a separation. He would leave your room and go where He can listen to religious music, and you are alone again.

Then, what if you want to read a book, and Christ tells you, let us read the Bible together, but you say, no, I would rather read this worldly novel. Christ must leave again.

Christ is constantly asking you, His partner, “Let us go and do missionary work, visit people.” You say, “No, I would rather stay home and watch television.” Christ will go out and you will be alone again.

Then you sit down to eat. Christ is at your table, but the food that is set on it is not wholesome, or healthy. He cannot bless it. He cannot join you, and you must eat alone.

If you then want to invest money in speculation, in the stock market, or lottery tickets, Sister White states that God will curse your investment, and you will lose your money.

You may want to start a business of buying and selling, and so you ask Christ to join you, and to bless your work. But then you try to deceive others in what you are selling, asking for a higher price than it is worth. Or you deceive in customs duties, in income tax returns. Do you think Christ will join with you in your work or business and bless you if it is not done honestly? Even a little dishonesty, and He will have no part in it. You lose the blessing and you lose His company.

He tells you, “Give, and it shall be given unto you.” *Luke 6:38*. But if you try to take advantage of others, certainly you will not be given by God, nor will you



prosper.

“And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. . . . And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house for Joseph’s sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.” Genesis 39:3, 5. Because Joseph was in partnership with God, all that he did prospered. There was a blessing upon it.

“And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” Job 1:8–10



God had blessed Job. But now he was put to a test. “But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Job 1:11

How did Job react to the test put upon him, when he lost all that God had given him? “And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.” Job 42:10. Job did not curse God. Instead he prayed for those who tried to discourage him.

The Lord is able to bless us and prosper us as He did with Job, when it is for our good. However, God also knows that prosperity can often cause some to become unfaithful to Him. In this case, He will not give them all things, because He wants to save them.

Do you wonder why it is that God does not bless you more? “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Malachi 3:9–10

Have you been faithful in paying your tithes and offerings? Again, it is your decision, whether you choose a curse or a blessing. God is willing to open the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing to you, His partner. But if you do not return to Him what is His, He will not bless you and you will be the loser in the end.

If you make a plan to hurt someone in revenge for the hurt done to you, and wish harm to come to them, Christ has no part in your plans. Let us read a few Bible verses as examples of the consequence of wishing harm to someone else. “Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit God turned the curse into a blessing.” Nehemiah 13:2. “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 12:3. “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.” Proverbs 26:27

If you make plans on Sabbath for work or business, Christ cannot be your Sabbath guest and your plans will have a curse upon them. If you go and sleep for most of the Sabbath day, Christ will go on and leave you alone again.

Christ is very sensitive, very polite. He will not force His way into your home. You must invite Him. “And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and He made as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them.” Luke 24:28–29. Had they not invited Him in, He would have passed by.

We see the example of the Samaritans, “And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem.” Luke 9:53. Many miss His company by not inviting Him in.

If you neglect your morning prayer you may have to go through your day without His company. Or, if you neglect your evening prayer, you will pass through the night alone.



Christ, your partner, knows the way you should go. He leads you all throughout your life, and

nally into heaven. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. If you complain about the hardships on the way, you are complaining about His leading. You say that, "The Lord is my Shepherd, but He leads me the wrong way." He will then leave you alone, as you are choosing your own way if you are not satisfied with His leading.

Christ is very religious, He will be present in every meeting in the church. He will not stay home with you when a meeting is announced. He wants to talk about the Bible, heaven, and salvation. If you like to think and talk about worldly things, He leaves you alone. Thus, many professed Christians are total strangers to Christ. They may have done miracles and wonders, but Christ will tell them, "I never knew you. Depart from Me." Matthew 7:23. They never created a partnership with Christ.

Jesus is walking on the narrow pathway that leads unto life. If you choose the broad road, your ways will part. You cannot continue together. Therefore, it is the duty of the members in God's church to bring men and women back into partnership with Christ, to teach others to live in His company, to walk with Him, and work with Him.

Many Christians are deceived by counterfeits. There is someone called the antichrist, the false Christ. And he has many followers. He looks like Christ. He imitates Him in many ways. And he is with you in your sinful practices, in the wrong places you go. He joins with you in deception. With him you do not need to keep the Ten Commandments. Yet he promises you heaven. He flatters you, how good you are, and you will become very proud of yourself. In his company, you will soon look down on others.

Remember, you cannot serve two masters. If you are not serving God, you are serving the antichrist, Satan. If you are not in partnership with God, you are in partnership with Satan. Many do not enjoy the company of Christ. They like the company of the antichrist much more.

Do you feel natural in the company of Jesus or are you

uneasy and nervous? Are you glad when He is gone again and you can do what you like, read what you like, listen to your kind of music, speak freely on the subjects you enjoy?

Those who have chosen to be partners with God, to walk daily with Christ, develop a beautiful friendship. But you must keep your part of the covenant agreement. When God sent Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, He did not send him alone. Moses said, "I cannot speak and I am not able to do it." God gave Moses the words to speak, He gave Aaron to speak for Him, a staff with which to perform miracles, and plagues to subdue the Egyptians.

Throughout the wilderness journey, Christ was in the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day to lead them. Manna came from God to provide food. Water came from the rocks. There was no sickness among them. Their clothes did not wear out.

What did Moses do? He and Christ did it together. With God, that which Moses thought was impossible turned out to be easy.

Also, your life will change completely when Christ is your partner. Everything becomes so easy, and you enjoy His company so much that you will be very careful not to hurt His feelings, or to offend Him. You will not do anything that would separate you from Him.

Three men in Babylon were not afraid to be cast into the fiery furnace when Christ was with them. Daniel had no fear in the lion's den. Paul and Silas sang praises to God in the prison cell because Christ was with them.

Do not spend one moment away from His company, learn of Him, study His word the Bible, and copy Him. Then throughout all eternity, this partnership and friendship will continue between you and Christ. Amen.

*Adapted from a sermon by Timo Martin*





# Dan, Ephraim, and Simeon



In Revelation 7:4–8, we see a list of twelve names representing the 144,000. “And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.”

God’s peculiar people in the last days will have 12 divisions, bearing 12 different names. These 12 names have characteristics that are unique from each other. They have different temperaments, weaknesses, and personalities. Likewise, according to our tendencies and the primary weakness we overcome, we will be assigned to one of these 12 names.

However, two names from the original tribes are missing from this list. These are Dan and Ephraim. Very often, their weaknesses and sins are taught at church, emphasizing these as the types of sins God hates the most. However, it is rarely mentioned that these tribes were initially richly blessed and cared for by God. In this article, we will talk about how blessed and honoured these tribes were by God and how they lost their names in the 12 tribes comprising the 144,000.

## TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Before starting, some might ask, “How can there still be 12 tribes if two names are missing?” When we study the 12 tribes, we should remember that there were originally 14 names. This is because Joseph’s two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh—were added. Why were their names added?

In the times of the patriarchs, the firstborn received three exceptional heritages that the other siblings could not receive: a double portion of the property, the priesthood of the family, and the progenitor of Christ. Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, had lost these privileges. It was because he had sinned, degrading one of his father’s concubines (Genesis 35:22). Therefore, his heritage as the firstborn was taken away from him. Instead, it was given to three of his brothers. Levi received the priesthood of the family; Judah received the privilege of being the progenitor of Christ; and the double portion of property was given to Joseph by his two sons, who both received a blessing from Jacob. In this way, Joseph’s two sons’ names were added to the 12 sons of Jacob, as tribes of Israel.

Then how did they maintain the perfect number of 12 tribes with 14 names? First of all, the tribe of Levi was not counted as part of the 12 tribes. As the people of Levi were dedicated to the service of the Sanctuary, they were regarded as part of the sanctuary, not a tribe. For this reason, the tribe of Levi was not counted when the census was taken to count the Israelites in Numbers 1. Also, when the 12 tribes were instructed to divide into four groups and build tents in each direction (North, South, East, and West), the tribe of Levi was told to stay around the Tabernacle, unlike the other tribes.



“But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them. For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel: But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. And when the tabernacle seth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.” Numbers 1:47–53



For the same reason, Levi did not receive any land, but only cities when they entered the Land of Promise. They were given 48 cities, six of them being the cities of refuge. “Only unto the tribes of Levi He gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by are their inheritance, as He said unto them.” Joshua 13:14

Who is the other name that was not counted as part of the 12 tribes in Ancient Israel? It is Joseph. This is because his two sons’ names were there. In other words, Ephraim and Manasseh were present as two tribes of Joseph; therefore, there was no need to count Joseph’s name directly.

In this way, the number 12 was maintained, comprising the tribes of Ancient Israel, yet with 14 names. However, we can see a difference between the 12 tribes of spiritual Israel and the 12 tribes of ancient Israel. In Revelation, we see that Levi and Joseph are back on the list. However, Dan and Ephraim’s names are gone. Levi and Joseph’s names were originally not counted, for exceptional reasons: for being special servants to God and for receiving double portions of blessings. Whereas, Dan and Ephraim’s names were removed for very unfortunate reasons.

**DAN**

Probably, the most frequently mentioned Bible verse when we study about Dan would be Genesis 49:16–17: “Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path,

that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.”

This Bible verse shows that Dan was sneaky and intentional in committing sins and betraying others. Whereas, his other brothers’ sins came from impulsivity and intemperance. However, like a snake hiding in the bushes and attacking a horse’s heels from behind, Dan’s sins are intentional and planned. In other words, his mind and will to commit sins are determined and purposeful, making it harder to repent. We can easily understand his character when we think about the betrayal of Judas Iscariot or Satan the serpent.

However, the first part of this blessing is rarely mentioned. Jacob said, Dan shall judge his people. Jacob saw intelligence and talents in Dan. Before entering Canaan, Moses also blessed Dan with beautiful words as follows “Dan is a lion’s cub that jumps out from Bashan.” Deuteronomy 33:22

Indeed, throughout the records in the Bible, we can see that this tribe was blessed by God. One of the crucial ways to study the 12 tribes is by looking for significant figures born from each tribe. And, yes, many talented people came from this tribe.

Firstly, we can see Aholiab, who performed an essential role in building the tabernacle in the wilderness. “And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, And the altar of burnt offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, And the cloths of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest’s office, And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee shall they do.” Exodus 31:6–11

Another descendent of Dan also took a significant role in building the temple of Solomon. “Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved His people, He hath made thee king over them. Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the Lord, and an house for his kingdom. And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of

Huram my father's, The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father." 2 Chronicles 2:11-14

But, probably the most famous person in the tribe of Dan would be Samson (Judges 13:2, 23-24). He is known as the strongest man in history. As a Nazarite, he was consecrated for a sacred purpose before his birth. Even though he made many mistakes, he is still recorded as one of the important judges who fought against the enemy to protect Israel.

We can see more evidence of the blessings given to Dan in their numbers at the census made just before entering Canaan. Population, or the number of descendants, was an important indication of blessings in ancient times. At this census, the population of Dan was 64,400 people (Numbers 26:42-43), the second highest number after the tribe of Judah. As Judah was the tribe in which Jesus would be born, taking second place after Judah in population had a significant meaning. Also, when we compare this number to the average population of all the tribes, which is around 50,150 per tribe, we can see that the tribe of Dan is indeed a large one.

Since Dan was a richly blessed tribe, how come it was removed from the 144,000? It was not due to his character or weakness. It was not because he was sneaky and intentional in committing sins. There are no sins or weaknesses which cannot be corrected.

"When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your Redeemer and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' and that you may be saved by His matchless love. 1 Timothy 1:15. Jesus asked Simon a question in regard to two debtors. One owed his Lord a small sum, and the other owed him a very large sum; but he forgave them both, and Christ asked Simon which debtor would love his Lord most. Simon answered, 'He to whom he forgave most.' Luke 7:43. We have been great sinners, but Christ died that we might be forgiven. The merits of His sacrifice are sufficient to present to the Father in our behalf. Those to whom He has forgiven most will love Him most, and will stand nearest to His throne to praise Him for His great love and infinite sacrifice. It is when we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we under-

stand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition." -Steps to Christ, p. 35

If Dan had truly repented, no matter what his sins may have been, he would have been forgiven. Therefore, it was not his nature that prevented him from being a part of the 144,000, it was his choice.

"And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh." Judges 18:30-31

The tribe of Dan had chosen a different god, leaving behind all the opportunities, blessings, and privileges that the God of Jacob had given them. Many modern Christians repeat the same mistakes. They choose modern idols, such as money, talents, and positions, even though God blesses them with intelligence, talents, numbers, and blessings. In this way, many people whose talents could be blessings and contributions to the work of the gospel become the bitterest enemies of God's faithful people.

The tribe of Dan cannot make an excuse for not being part of the 144,000. He cannot blame God for creating him in this way. Dan's name was not removed because of his temperament. There are no sins or weaknesses that we cannot overcome through the blood of Jesus.

## EPHRAIM

The history of Ephraim starts with him being blessed more than his older brother. "And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.... And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wisely;



for Manasseh was the firstborn.... And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up



his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." Genesis 48:9-10, 13-14, 17-19

Though it was a custom to bless the firstborn more, Jacob blessed Ephraim over Manasseh, even though Ephraim was the second son. Jacob's blessings indeed came true. Many significant individuals came from this tribe. Joshua, the leader of Israel who conquered Canaan, was a descendant of Ephraim (1 Chronicles 7:20-27). Hannah, the mother of Samuel and the example of a woman of prayer and faith, was of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Samuel 1:1-2). Abdon, one of the judges of Israel, was also from the tribe of Ephraim (Judges 12:13-15).

Finally, there is Jeroboam. After King Solomon died, the kingdom was divided into two pieces. God gave 10 of 12 tribes to Jeroboam; thus, he became the northern kingdom's first king.

"And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:" 1 Kings 11:26, 29-31

Ever since that time, the tribe of Ephraim became a loyal family of northern Israel until Babylon destroyed it. If Ephraim was blessed so much by God, how did this tribe end up being excluded from the 144,000? Again, it was his own choice.

"Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan." 1 Kings 12:28-29

Just like the tribe of Dan, Ephraim chose to leave God and worshipped idols. It was not Ephraim's character, personality, or weakness. After all these blessings and privileges from God, Ephraim's failure could not be blamed on his nature or tendencies. It was his choice.

"How have we shown our love for Christ? How many

have allowed their attention to be diverted from Him to their own pleasure, their own enjoyment? We are all taking sides, and by the choice we make we are either honoring or insulting the One who for our sake became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. Those who refuse to receive and obey the Lord's instruction show contempt for the sacrifice made for them, and will be called upon to answer for the choice they have made." – *An Appeal for Missions*, p. 26

## SIMEON

Contrary to these two blessed tribes, we can see the opposite case in Simeon. There might not be a better word to describe Simeon than being "cursed." Even though it is called Jacob's blessing, we can see from his words that it is instead a curse for Simeon. "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Genesis 49:5-7

This was because of the sin of Simeon and Levi. There was a time when Dinah, a sister of Simeon and Levi, was defiled by a heathen man. "And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her." Genesis 34:1-2

As revenge, Simeon and Levi destroyed the whole city with their swords. "And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males." Genesis 34:18. Due to this sin, Simeon and Levi were cursed by Jacob.

Later on, Levi received blessings, as they stood firm against the worship of the golden calf under Mount Sinai; thus, God accepted them as the tribe of the priesthood (Exodus chapter 32). However, the curse remained on the tribe of Simeon throughout history. At the census before entering Canaan, this tribe had only 22,200 men. It was the smallest of all the tribes. Notably, this number is not even half of the average population of each tribe. Also, Simeon was the only tribe that Moses did not bless before his death.

Even when the Israelites received the land of Canaan, God did not give any significant portion of land to Simeon, like He did to the other tribes. Simeon was only given several cities within Judah's territory (Joshua 19:1-9). In

this way, Jacob's prophecy that Simeon would be divided and scattered among Israel was fulfilled. Interestingly, this prophecy was also fulfilled in Levi, as they did not receive any lands except cities of refuge. But, what a contrast in its reason! While Levi did not receive lands due to its consecration, Simeon could not receive any due to their sins.

Furthermore, there is no significant figure that came out from Simeon. The only individual from Simeon mentioned in the Bible is as follows: "And Israel abode in Shilim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.... And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.... Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian." Numbers 25:1-3, 6-8, 14-15

This shameful name, Zimri, is the only figure from the tribe of Simeon whose personal life is written about in the Bible. Except for this figure, the names that are written as Simeonites are as follows: Salu who is Zimri's father; Simeon's direct sons (Genesis 46:10; Exodus 6:15); elder, representative, chief or spies of Simeonites mentioned with other tribes' representatives (Numbers 1:6; 2:12; 7:36; 10:19; 13:5; 34:20; 1 Chronicles 27:16); the family tree of Simeon (Numbers 26:12-14; 1 Chronicles 4:24-42). As you can tell, none of these names are of significant people.

However, even with all these curses and disadvantages, the tribe of Simeon made its way into the 144,000. What can we learn from these interesting contrasts between two tribes that were blessed, but did not make it to the end, versus a cursed tribe who made it to the end?

Our salvation does not depend on our temperament,

tendencies, or weaknesses that we were born with. We cannot make any excuse. We cannot say "I have this weakness. I was born with this weakness and tendencies. So I cannot make it."

"Today angels are sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, to help them to escape from the thralldom of Satan's power, and stand as faithful volunteers in the army of Him who in their behalf came to this world and endured suffering and a crucifixion. Each human being is given the freedom of choice. It is his to decide whether he will stand under the black banner of rebellion, or under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel. With deep solicitude heaven watches the conflict between good and evil. None but the obedient can enter the gates of the city of God. Upon those who choose to continue in transgression, the death sentence must at last be pronounced. The earth will be purified from their misdoings, their defilement of God. . . .

"Those who refuse to conform their characters to the divine similitude can never enter the city of God. They have cut themselves off from the happiness, and hope, and peace, and joy that might have been theirs. Had they accepted the grace of Christ, they would have been made strong to resist the temptations of the enemy; and they would at last have been received into the holy city as sons and daughters of God, to be eternally blessed, to live a life measuring with the life of God." -*The Review and Herald*, March 15, 1906

Some might wonder why Simeon was cursed so much. However, let us remember that God never holds grudges. God was not giving Simeon a hard time due to the past. Instead, all these curses were given so that they could remember what the consequences of sin can bring into their tribe. The purpose was to remember the past so that they would not repeat it in the future. They humbly accepted the lessons, and in the end, they will be honoured by being able to be a part of the 144,000.

When we see our own weaknesses, what do we think? When we remember the sins and mistakes of our fathers, what do we think?

My dear brothers and sisters, the blood of Jesus is enough to atone for all our sins. The army of heaven is waiting to fight against the powers of evil. Among every weakness we were born with, none is strong enough to shut the power of salvation off from us. Everything is our choice. My dear readers, what is your choice today? May God bless us that we will all be found entering the gates of New Jerusalem as part of the 144,000. Amen.

*Makoto Matsumoto*



# PARADIGM OF EDUCATION.



There is so much to know, we have so many things to learn. We have true education and counterfeit education. The world is flooded by many forms of doctored education, all with different intentions. If we are not careful, we will be clouded by gross darkness. In the instruction given in our schools, the natural and the spiritual are to be combined. The laws obeyed by the earth reveal the fact that it is under the masterly power of an infinite God. The same principles run through the spiritual and the natural world. Eliminate God from the acquisition of knowledge, and you have a lame, one-sided education, dead to all the saving qualities that give true power to man. The Author of nature is the Author of the Bible. Creation and Christianity have one God. God is revealed in nature, and God is revealed in His word. In clear rays the light shines from the sacred page, showing us the living God, as represented in the laws of His government, in the world's creation, and in the heavens that He has garnished. His power is to be recognized as the only means of redeeming the world from the degrading superstitions that are so dishonoring to God and man.

## ARTIFICIAL LIFE AND DEVIATION FROM TRUE EDUCATION

Almost everything is turning out to be synthetic; organic organisms are replaced by inorganic organisms as demonstrated by the evolution of biotechnology and genetic engineering. AI (artificial intelligence) systems could become so powerful as to take over the world. The modern generation has witnessed different skilled tasks partially taken over by machines, including research, translation, journalism, and other complex undertakings. Furthermore, entertainment, tasks requiring empathy

and care have also been overtaken by robots.

The Science-Fiction addicts are connected to virtual reality equipment and intravenously fed. It is a solemn warning to us all, that now or in the future we may be lured into virtual environments. These can lead us to escape the dimness of our realities in the real world and become dependent on it at the expense of our mental, physical, and emotional health. Ultimately this will cost us our eternal life. It is a thought-provoking and serious revelation of the future.

“When Christ came to the earth, humanity seemed to be fast reaching its lowest point. The very foundations of society were undermined. Life had become false and artificial. The Jews, destitute of the power of God’s word, gave to the world mind-benumbing, soul-deadening traditions and speculations. The worship of God ‘in Spirit and in truth’ had been supplanted by the glorification of men in an endless round of man-made ceremonies. Throughout the world, all systems of religion were losing their hold on mind and soul. Disgusted with fable and falsehood, seeking to drown thought, men turned to infidelity and materialism. Leaving eternity out of their reckoning, they lived for the present.

“As they ceased to recognize the Divine, they ceased to regard the human. Truth, honor, integrity, confidence, and compassion were departing from the earth. Relentless greed and absorbing ambition gave birth to universal distrust. The idea of duty, of the obligation of strength to weakness, of human dignity and human rights, was cast aside as a dream or a fable. The common people were regarded as beasts of burden or as the tools and the stepping stones for ambition. Wealth and power, ease, and

self-indulgence were sought as the highest good. Physical degeneracy, mental stupor, and spiritual death characterized the age." —*Education*, p. 74–75

Born amidst poor surroundings, sharing a peasant's home, a peasant's fare, a craftsman's occupation, living a life of obscurity, and identifying Himself with the world's unknown toilers,—amidst these conditions and surroundings,—Jesus followed the divine plan of education. The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and the experiences of life—God's lesson books, full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart." —*Ibid.*, p. 77

Most people in our time value all things that are determined by outward show. The value system on materialistic things centers their self-worth and self-esteem, on rewards and the praise of others. Religion has declined in power and increased in pomp. The education systems seek to command respect by display and ostentation.

The history of Joseph and Daniel is an illustration of what He will do for those who yield themselves to Him and with the whole heart seek to accomplish His purpose. "The greatest want of the world is the want of men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall." —*Ibid.*, p. 57. But such a character is not the result of an accident; it is not due to special favors or endowments of Providence. A noble character is the result of self-discipline, of the subjection of the lower to the higher nature, and the surrender of self for the service of love to God and man.

Education is not just about acquiring knowledge, but also about learning how to apply that knowledge in the real world. While modern education systems provide a wealth of information, they often neglect the development of moral and ethical values. It is very important to recognize the importance of true education, which comprises training both the mind and the heart. Intellectual education may develop the mind, but it is value-based education that influences the heart. Education that fails to instill strong moral and ethical values can be dangerous for society. It is crucial to build fundamental character traits such as honesty, compassion, courage, persistence, and responsibility in our schools.

### THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS

Wherever in Israel God's education plan was carried into effect, its results testified of its Author. But in very many households the training appointed by Heaven, and the

characters thus developed, were alike rare. "These schools were intended to serve as a barrier against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. To this end, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they studied the word and the works of God, His life-giving power quickened the energies of mind and soul, and the students received wisdom from above. The instructors were not only versed in divine truth, but had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of His Spirit. They had the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and for piety. In Samuel's day, there were two of these schools—one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim. In later times others were established." —*Ibid.*, p. 46

### INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

With the help of God, the General Conference has invested in opening missionary schools and colleges/universities, one of which is Kibaha Berea Adventist Institute. If well managed, it has the potential to grow to become a great university. The institute is offering online courses, which is a modern way of learning. The online course, "Bible Science," is centered on true education which is rare to find in this world.

We have well-organized subjects that a student should cover before graduating:

#### 1. SCIENCE OF SALVATION

Understanding the current condition of the human being and his regeneration to restore the image of God as it was at the beginning of creation. This process that must be known and applied in a genuine conversion and religious experience.

#### 2. PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

Knowing the biblical foundation for the beliefs that make up biblical truth is vital to leading a life consistent with faith. Then using this knowledge to instruct others in the same biblical principles.

#### 3. BIBLIOLOGY

The Holy Scriptures in their diversity of authors, historical periods, and richness of content in both the Old and the New Testaments are of growing importance to anyone interested in the Bible.

#### 4. BASIC EVANGELIZATION & CANVASSING

Knowing the modalities of approach in the process of com-



municating the gospel to different classes of people is essential for every enthusiastic believer in biblical truth. Skills in marketing and innovation are keys to success.

## 5. HOMILETICS

Applying the general principles of rhetoric to the specific art of public preaching to efficiently present the Word of God.

## 6. PROPHECY

Biblical predictions throughout the Old and New Testaments in their historical context and projection in time are a fundamental part of the biblical content.

## 7. ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

To be able to fulfill the gospel commission, to accomplish much work in a relatively short time, and to guarantee peace and united action. Exact order and organization are indispensable.

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“What we need is knowledge that will strengthen minds and souls, and will make us better men and women. Heart education is of far more importance than mere book-learning. It is well, even essential, to have a knowledge of the world in which we live; but if we leave eternity out of our reckoning, we shall make a failure from which we can never recover.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 87. There is a science of Christianity to be mastered, a science that is much deeper, broader, and higher than any human science. It is as high as the heavens are higher than the earth.

The drama of the great controversy opening with the inception of sin in the heart of Lucifer and the fall of our first parents, and moving forward to the time when the New Jerusalem becomes the abode of the redeemed was repeatedly opened to Ellen White in vision. “God’s greatest gift was bestowed to meet man’s greatest need. The Light appeared when the world’s darkness was deepest. Through false teaching the minds of men had long been turned away from God. In the prevailing systems of education, human philosophy had taken the place of divine revelation. Instead of the heaven-given standard of truth, men had accepted a standard of their devising. From the Light of life, they had turned aside to walk in the sparks of the fire which they had kindled.” —*Ibid.*, p. 74

Having separated from God, their only dependence being the power of humanity, their strength was but weakness. Even the standard set up by themselves they were incap-

ble of reaching. The want of true excellence was supplied by appearance and profession. Semblance took the place of reality. Thus hidden, they can see God, even as Moses saw Him. By the power and light that He imparts, they can comprehend more and accomplish more than their finite judgment had deemed possible.

The system of education instituted at the beginning of the world was to be a model for man throughout all time. As an illustration of its principles, a model school was established in Eden, the home of our first parents. The Garden of Eden was the schoolroom, nature was the lesson book, the Creator Himself was the instructor, and the parents of the human family were the students.

Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is a need for a broader scope and a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.

The source of such an education is brought to view in these words from the Bible, pointing to the Infinite One: In Him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom.” Colossians 2:3. “He hath counsel and understanding.” Job 12:13

The world has had its great teachers, men of giant intellect and extensive research, men whose utterances have stimulated thought and opened to view vast fields of knowledge. These men have been honored as guides and benefactors of their race, but there is One who stands higher than they. We can trace the line of the world’s teachers as far back as human records extend, but the Light was before them. As the moon and the stars of our solar system shine by the reflected light of the sun, so, as far as their teaching is true, the world’s great thinkers reflect the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Every gleam of thought, every flash of the intellect, is from the Light of the world. Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness, godlikeness, is the goal to be reached. Amen.

Daniel Kimeu





# David - From Hero to Outcast



1 Samuel 18 & 19

After slaying Goliath of Gath by his heroic act,  
Saul took David that same day, not anymore let go away  
To his father's home. But from this day on

Exciting and turbulent, even treacherous, perilous times would come.  
David went wherever Saul did send him, behaving himself wisely, keenly,  
Was made headman of the army, and all the people did accept him.

Then it came to pass when David and the army on the way,  
Returning from the battle of the day,

That from Israel's cities women came to meet King Saul,  
Dancing, singing joyous, shouting loud and clear,  
And every ear could hear:

"Saul slew thousands, David his ten thousands!"

Then indignation filled the king, enraged him greatly what they sing,

"Giving David more than me, what more can get he  
But the kingdom! This shall not, not ever be!"

Jealousy and envy filled his heart, from this day forward...

It was the beginning of dark clouds,

Forebodings of uncertainty because of Saul's unstable moods and doubts...



## Interlude

Saul was not a virtuous, pious king, on God depending, faithful, trusting,  
He lacked true integrity, loyalty to God, carrying out His strict command he did not.

Twice directly went against the orders, when rebuked blamed others.

His mind with Samuel would clash,

And God rejected him for being stubborn, rash.

God's promised blessings Saul then lost, but at what immensely dire cost -

For abandon him God's Spirit did, (1 Samuel 16:14),

Betimes be troubled by an evil spirit...

.....

One morning from God an evil spirit over Saul did come (1 Samuel 18:10).

Raging wildly in his home,

David as usual on such days did play the harp, then the evil spirit would depart.

But this time Saul eyed him full of envy and suspicion -

To avenge his wounded pride, unpleasant situation,

Took his javelin to smite young David to the wall,

Twice he escaped, Saul could not make him fall.

He was afraid of him, removed him from his presence,

Made David captain over thousand,

Behaving himself wisely, God was with him,

Was loved by all the people of the land.

.....

Wicked Saul flattered David promising,





*His daughter Merab give for wife,  
If valiantly the LORD's battles he will fight,  
But Saul had no intention doing this, his morbid mind was wishing only this,  
David to be killed not by his own hand, but by the enemies of Israel's land.  
David did not realize that heinous scheme, that was imposed on him.*

*Merab, she was given to another man, but then  
There was Saul's younger daughter Michal,  
And she loved David. This was told to Saul  
And it pleased him, but his pleasing did reek foul -  
For through his servants mention the condition,  
David 100 foreskins from the Philistines to bring  
To seal the deal that Michal be his wife.  
But Saul in truth did hope that in that enterprise  
Would David lose his life...*



*And David with his men went out, fighting with the Philistines out loud,  
Slew not just hundred but the double number,  
Bringing the demanded "dowry" yonder,  
To the most astonished king, who had no other choice but give  
Michal to heroic David for his wife, and happily to live.*

.....

*But Saul feared David for God was with him,  
Seeing how Michal loved him, made him even more afraid...  
Increasingly Saul became the enemy of David.  
So that he spoke to Jonathan his son and all his servants,  
That they should kill David.*

*But Jonathan esteemed David highly ever since he met him.  
His heart was knit with that of David.*

*He spoke nicely to his father, David did not sin against him,  
Rather brought blessings, victories for the land,  
Why should he lift his hand against him for no cause,  
Heaping guilt, God's wrath upon his head and house?...  
But peace not long did last, Saul's good mood deteriorated fast,  
David had to flee Saul's house, was in jeopardy again  
Otherwise he would be slain.*



*By Saul's dreadful jealousy and deadly hatred,  
A conspiracy hung over David's head,  
When to Michal he then fled,  
Saul's servants were to kill him in the morning,  
She made him safely to escape with many tears and mourning...  
Then David went to Ramah to the home of Samuel,  
Of Saul he all would tell.*



*Then both did go to dwell in Naioth Ramah.  
Hence David the great hero, warrior, became a fugitive,  
A homeless, haunted victim from a maddened, envious mind,  
That to all reason, equity and dignity had become blind... Amen.  
To be continued.*

*Edda Tedford, Canada*

# The Needle, the Scissors, and You



Let us first define them.

Scissors are hand-operated shearing tools used for cutting various thin materials into many pieces, such as paper, cardboard, metal foil, cloth, rope, and wire. Scissors are mostly used to cut, to split, and not to unify.

A sewing needle is used for hand-sewing. It is a long slender tool with a pointed tip at one end and a hole (or *eye*) to hold the sewing thread. It is used to repair, to unify.

These two tools are very useful depending on the circumstances. In this article, we will look at these tools and compare them to the tongue. The tongue can be powerful and can be used for sewing, healing, putting together, or the opposite—to destroy.

## THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

The human tongue is a small part of the body, yet it has tremendous power. The weight of an adult tongue is about 80–100 grams. However, its potential for evil is so great that God saw fit to imprison it behind the teeth and the lips.

“The tongue is a little member, but the words it frames have great power. The Lord declares, ‘The tongue can no man tame.’ It has set nation against nation, and has caused war and bloodshed. Words have kindled fires that have been hard to quench. They have also brought joy and gladness to many hearts.” —*Voice in Speech and Song*, p. 18

The tongue is a very powerful weapon. It can be used for good, or can be used for evil. God is giving you the ability to choose what you are going to do. “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.” Proverbs 18:21. Politicians use the tongue to convince people; gospel ministry is done by the tongue.

The tongue is very close to the heart, “out of the abun-

dance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

“Matthew 12:34. Jesus continued to say, “A

good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Matthew 12:35–37

“Guard well the talent of speech; for it is a mighty power for evil as well as for good. You cannot be too careful of what you say; for the words you utter show what power is controlling the heart.” —*Ibid.*, p. 19

James wrote much about the tongue. (see verses 1:19, 26; 2:12, 14, 16, 18; 4:11, 13, 15–16; 5:12). In the Bible, the tongue is described as wicked, deceitful, perverse, filthy, corrupt, aerring, slanderous, gossiping, blasphemous, foolish, boasting, complaining, cursing, contentious, sensual, and vile. And that list is not exhaustive. The tongue possesses unspeakable power.

Two of the Ten Commandments refer to sins of the tongue. (3rd) “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.” Exodus 20:7; (9th) “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” Exodus 20:16

Of the seven things that God hates, three have to do with the tongue. (Proverbs 6:6–19): A lying tongue, a false witness that bears lies, and he who sows discord among brethren.

Words reveal the man. Just an accent (way of pronouncing words) often betrays one’s country of origin. Peter’s Galilean accent gave him away during the trial of Jesus, “and after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.” Matthew 26:73. Just as an accent indicates one’s country of origin, so speech betrays the condition of one’s heart.

It is very difficult for some to learn to control their speech. Words have a way of slipping off the tongue and pass our lips before we even know it. Sometimes negative results follow, either for us, or others, or both.





Consider for a moment the wisdom of Solomon:

“A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.” Proverbs 16:28

“A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.” Proverbs 18:6

“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” Proverbs 18:7

“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.” Proverbs 19:9

“The legs of the lame are not equal: So is a parable in the mouth of fools.” Proverbs 26:7

“A lying tongue hateth those who are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.” Proverbs 26:28

David wrote: “I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle.” Psalm 39:1. Only the spiritually mature can control their tongue.

A study made by Steve Stephens about home communications and our words in our marriage wrote: “There is nothing more painful than having unhealthy communication with the one you love. It is through communication that we connect and our spirits touch. If that connection becomes contaminated, it is only a matter of time before the whole relationship is poisoned.”

Here is a terrible warning “A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed. Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows.” –*Testimonies for the Church*,



**“Upon everyone is laid the duty of barring the way against corrupt communications.”**  
–*In Heavenly Places*, p. 175

vol. 5, p. 59. This same cruel spirit is indulged by some men and women who bear the name of Christians.

Words can reveal rebellion. They can

ruin a marriage. Words can be full of deadly poison. Ask yourself, “am I like scissors to cut, or a needle to link, sew, unify, put together, and heal?”

The tongue can be compared to a “Thermometer.” Just like the thermometer reveals the temperature level, so one’s conversation reveals the level of his spirituality. Speech exposes the condition of the heart: Swearing indicates a profane heart. Impure stories indicate a filthy heart, and murmuring, a thankless heart; criticism a jealous heart.

Is this power of your tongue like a needle? Or like scissors? The tongue can also be similar to a Thermostat. The thermometer registers temperature, but does not regulate it. The thermostat governs the temperature. The tongue not only measures moral condition, but is also a determining instrument. It has been compared to the bit in a horse’s mouth and the rudder on a ship. A bit determines the course of a horse, making him turn to the left or the right, or allowing him run fast or come to a stop. A rudder guides the ship’s course, turning it in any desired direction. Similarly, proper use of the

tongue can guide a person safely through hazardous circumstances.

As a thermostat, the tongue can lower the temperature of: pride, temper, jealousy, spite, etc.

#### THE SINS OF THE TONGUE

We all stumble in many things. In other words, we all sin many times in many ways. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. Sins of the tongue can be numerous.

#### *Swearing*

God warned the people of Israel, “Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7, We are not to blaspheme the name of the LORD.

When someone swears, he lays aside his character, inflicts pain on those close to him, violates the Scriptures, and loses his soul. This is why the Lord said: “But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: nor by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.” Matthew 5:34–35

Euphemisms are substitutes people use to avoid directly taking the name of God in vain. However, they are still

sin. Some members of the church may have allowed them to creep into their vocabulary.

### *Gossiping and Talebearing*

The gossip assassinates someone's reputation. An old Welsh proverb reads, "Lord, remind us that a gossip's mouth is the devil's mailbag." Socrates wrote how to deal with a gossip: If you are tempted to reveal a tale that someone has told about another, make it pass, before you speak, three gates of gold. Three narrow gates: First, "Is it true?" Then, "Is it needful?" In your mind give a truthful answer. And the next is last and narrowest, "Is it kind?" If it is to reach your lips after passing through these gateways, then you may tell the tale without fear of the result.

**Why true?** No one has the right to relate any story about another unless he is absolutely certain that it is true. The Lord commanded in Exodus 20:16, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." As Christians, we must always remember the conditions of entering heaven: "LORD, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" Psalm 15:1. In the next verse he gives this answer: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." It is sad that many will pass on a story about another without taking time to verify the accuracy of it. No one should say anything about others that they would be unwilling to write out and sign. Most people have the tendency to add a little to a story before passing it on.

**Is it Kind?** Everything that is true may not be kind. Then why tell it to others? **Is It Needful?** One's remarks about others should serve a purpose. Sometimes, things about others which are true are better left unsaid. The



**"Do not allow the devil to use your tongue and your voice to ruin those weak in the faith; for at the day of final reckoning God will call upon you to give an account of your work."—The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p. 1161**

Bible says, "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." Proverbs 11:13. "The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan's special agen-

cies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many in the truthfulness of our positions." —*The Adventist Home*, p. 441

Remember that "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." Proverbs 17:9. I recall Elder Roland de la Paz writing: "If you destroy the reputation of a person and want to be forgiven, it is like taking a pillow, going up to the fourth floor of a building on a busy street, opening the pillow, and shaking all of its contents out the window. Then you go down to pick up all the contents of the pillow until you have put everything back where it was before. Because the building is on a busy road where buses, cars, and trucks pass and the wind may be strong, it will be extremely hard to pick up all the contents. The same is true in destroying the reputation of a person. It is a grievous sin before the Lord, not just before man. It is virtually irreversible even if we repent. It is a curse both to the speaker and the hearer."

If you wish to keep your tongue from speaking guile, here are five things to consider; Of whom are you speaking about, to whom are you speaking to, and how, and when, and where.

Gossip destroys. If you have been guilty, as soon as possible let the healing begin by humbling yourself before God and that friend, and ask for forgiveness. Pray now and ask our

Lord Jesus Christ for grace and strength to do what you must.

### *Criticism*

Jesus warned, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Matthew 7:1. The Lord was not condemning the proper kind of judgment, for He said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." John 7:24. Jesus was prohibiting fault finding and criticism where there is no law or basis.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, you art not a doer of the law, but a judge." James 4:11–12. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?"

When you are meeting criticism, remember that both his sister Miriam and his brother Aaron criticized Moses



because he had married a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1). It is true that you cannot please everybody. Jesus was perfect in every way. He was without sin, and yet was criticized all of the time, by the Pharisees and religious leaders for eating with sinners, for healing on the Sabbath, and so on. The reality is *you will be criticized*. "There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing." –*Aristotle*. In other words, if you are alive you are going to deal with criticism and especially if you are a follower of Jesus. You then need to learn how to deal with criticism. What do you do when you are criticized? How do you respond?

There is value, though, in constructive criticism. If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise. If you reject discipline, you only harm yourself (Proverbs 15:31–32). It is important to have people around you who care enough about you to give you honest, helpful, and constructive feedback. You need that in your life because "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Proverbs 27:6

In dealing with criticism, three prayers can help you: "God help me. . . . To know when to respond to criticism." "God help me to know when to ignore criticism." "God help me to overcome my own critical nature." This is important because there is a time to respond to criticism. The wisest man who ever lived, King Solomon, wrote these words, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under the heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. If you do not know whether you should respond to criticism or ignore it, ask God for wisdom. Also seek for counsel and advice from trusted friends.

### **Contentious Words**

Contention is sometimes unavoidable. It can usually be averted by proper control of the tongue. "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." Proverbs 15:1. We need to learn the art of remaining calm when a storm of contention is brewing. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Proverbs 16:32. Soft words will stop arguments as well as prevent arguments. Would you prefer to win an argument and

lose a friend? Win an argument and lose a soul? Win an argument and lose a Saviour?

### **Lying**

Lying ranks high among the vices of human beings. It was the first sin on earth, spoken in Eden. Many feel there is nothing serious about lying . . . unless one gets caught. We read: "Lying lips are abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are His delight." Proverbs 12:22. God hates "a lying tongue." Proverbs 6:17. If a person always speaks the truth, he need not worry about remembering what he has said, because the truth will always be the same. On the other hand, those who tell lies need to have exceptionally good memories.



**A true Christian will not dishonor God by dishonoring others. We must be courteous, kind, and forbearing, showing that the meekness of Jesus and His Spirit are ruling in our everyday lives so that His light will shine upon all men and His name will be glorified.**

Dear reader, do you understand that one lie leads to another? Always tell the truth, even if it chokes you. Lying, unless repented of and forgiven, will keep a person out of Heaven. The Bible gives us warning. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that de leth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are wri en in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27

### **Jesting and Idle Words**

Jesus said, "But I say to you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matthew 12:36. An idle word is one which is not producing something positive. It is a weed in the garden of speech.

Humor is not necessarily bad, It has its rightful place. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Proverbs 17:22. However, there are some kinds of jesting that are wrong. For instance: It is sinful to make fun of, or take advantage of, a person's handicap. The law says in Leviticus 19:14, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD." It is also wrong to jest at another's appearance or misfortune. We are warned that, "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished." Proverbs 17:5

We must decide whether our tongue will be a scissor in our hands or a sewing needle. The Bible emphasizes the fact that not all speech is sinful. King Solomon wrote:

“The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is like the worth.” Proverbs 10:20

“Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.” Proverbs 16:24

“A word truthfully spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

The tongue is also capable of great destruction. “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” James 3:5. A small fire can result in a large fire that quickly rages out of control, destroying life, property, and resources. This is the other way of being like scissors.

Likewise, the tongue, though small, can ignite the dry timber of suspicion and quickly spread flames which:

- Ruin reputations.
- Destroy friendships.
- Break hearts.

“Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin.” Ecclesiastes 5:6

In the day of judgment, we will face the record of our words. Thus, we need to pray: “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.” Psalm 141:3

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

### *Swift to Hear*

Although the Lord places a strong emphasis on the sins of speech, He has a lot to say about hearing. The word “hear” is used a total of 550 times in the Bible. “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” James 1:19. Everyone should always think twice before he speaks once. I once read this: “A wise old owl lived in an oak. The more he saw the less he spoke. The less he spoke the more he heard; Why can’t we all be like that bird?” The lesson is that we need to be careful, to taste our words before we let them pass our teeth.

“In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” Proverbs 10:19. So, be swift to hear. “He that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.” Proverbs 17:28. “A fool’s voice

is known by multitude of words.” Ecclesiastes 5:3

Do you know why God gave us two ears but one mouth? “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” James 3:2. Am I a wise man/woman? Ask yourself, what kind of impact do your words have? How many people killed themselves because of what they heard or read? When has an evil tongue burned you? Or kind words refreshed your soul? “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” Ephesians 4:29. Are my words loving or unwholesome? “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:17. Check the motive behind what you want to say.

Is my tongue soothing or sharp? The Bible says, “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” James 3:8. Self-effort cannot tame the tongue. Neither can good intentions. We need the power of God, because what we say can have a profound effect on others.

God made us expressive beings, so we are nearly lost without communication. That is why we have audio recordings and Braille for the blind, sign language for the deaf, and writing for anyone who has something to say. Indeed, speech has enormous implications, especially as a vehicle for sharing the gospel (Romans 10:14). Therefore, we are commanded to control the tongue, to “keep it from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.” Psalm 34:13. A Christian’s speech should consistently honour the Lord. “Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.” James 3:9. Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing.

A noble Christian will not destroy someone’s reputation to make himself appear better than his fellow men, and will not dishonour him, for he believes and understands that God is the owner of every person. Character assassination is rampant in the world and may creep into the church. Some professed Christians feast on rumors and gossip. They delight to hear destructive information about the people around them. Let us be like a needle, not scissors using our words to unite people and not destroy. Amen.

*Victor Shumbusho*





# Prayer Changes Things



In 1864, Stephen Haskell and his wife moved to South Lancaster, Massachusetts, USA, and joined the small company of Adventist believers. Not long after J.N. Loughborough arrived and organized the little group into a church. There were eight members at that time and Brother Haskell was chosen as the leader.

Stephen Haskell was very missionary minded. Although he had a secular job, the work of the Lord was always the most important to him. The company of believers in South Lancaster was warm in its first love and those who joined the church shared in the devotion.

After some time, four sisters in the church who felt a burden for their own children met for a season of prayer. They formed a prayer band. Others joined them, and once a week they came together for prayer and an exchange of experiences. Prayer led to activity. Soon they were writing to absent members and labouring with backsliders; they were calling on neighbors, sharing with them the blessed hope of Christ's return, lending them papers, tracts, and books, and ministering to their every need.

The women carried out this ministry for many years and were now meeting in the home of Elder Haskell and his wife. They were faithfully carrying out their church and neighbourhood ministry. One day Elder Haskell encouraged the women, to organize themselves into a missionary society. On June 8, 1869, he met them for that purpose, and they took the name Vigilant Missionary Society. They were about ten in number; most of them being busy housewives with little schooling and no special training in methods of soul winning. But their hearts burned with the urge to share their blessings with friends and neighbours.

At 3:00 p.m. every Wednesday afternoon they met to pray and plan. Each member was assigned a portion of the neighborhood to visit during the week. They found joy in ministering to the sick, in sharing their temporal blessing with destitute families and in bringing good cheer to the aged, the lonely, and discouraged. Whenever the opportunity was favorable, they offered prayer, and they distributed many printed messages. The society also carried on an extensive missionary correspondence.

In the spring of 1876, word was sent out that there would be no New England camp meeting that year. Ministerial help was scarce. James White had written that he and his wife could not be with them. But the Vigilant Missionary sisters did not see it that way. A group of them engaged in special prayer that God would give them a camp meeting. When Elder Haskell heard of this, his faith rose to the occasion and he said, "Their prayers must be answered; we shall have a camp meeting this year."

For a campground, a pleasant grove of oak and pine with the Boston and Main railroad running along one side, was selected at Groveland Massachusetts, about 60 km northeast of South Lancaster. As the time for the opening drew near, Haskell made out a list of special favours that he wanted the railroad company to grant and he went to see Mr. Ferber, the president of the railroad.

Haskell gave Mr. Ferber a long list of requests. Some of the things he asked for were: he wanted without charge, two carloads of freight transferred from the storage rooms at South Lancaster to the campground and returned at the close of the meetings. He wanted free

passes for the conference and committee men, and half-fare permits for the campers coming from a distance. Trains should be run on Sundays as well as weekdays, with extra trains during the week. A platform needed to be built beside the track by the campground, and water piped to the grounds.

Mr. Ferber looked at the list and frowned but a few pleasantries put him in a happier mood. He tapped a bell, and an office boy appeared. "Take these men to the manager's office," he ordered.

The manager read over the list, then looked up and said, "Gentlemen, why don't you ask for the world?"

"Oh, we thought we would be a little modest," said Haskell.

They ended up getting everything they asked for, except the train platform was not quite as long as they asked it to be.

The grounds were then made ready and soon campers came in more and more. So many people arrived that the camping area had to be enlarged twice. The New England newspapers carried notices of the meetings. Curious residents came to many of the meetings also. On the weekend there were so many people coming that extra trains had to run.

Food was supplied by the Winter Street Bakery. They were completely cleared of their stock, and they had just enough food for the event.

The local newspaper in Haverhill printed the following report on August 29.

"Sunday was a great day at the meeting in the woods at Bradford, by the Seventh-day Adventists, bringing together the largest assembly of people ever convened in this region for a similar purpose. . . The railroads were taxed beyond the utmost capacity of all their preparations for the occasion, and large numbers were prevented from attendance by not finding means of conveyance at the time the trains started. . .

"Two steam yachts were very busy, and omnibuses and barges were constantly running, while private carriages without number thronged the way. . . As it was, it was thought that fully 20,000 visited the grounds during that day."

James and Ellen White did end up attending and they each spoke twice.

The camp meeting was a triumph. A number who attended were baptized and joined the church. And to think, there might have been no camp meeting that year, except for a consecrated group of women who believed that, "Prayer Changes Things."

## Sacramento, California, USA







## North Kivu District Fellowship in East Congo Field

The East Congo Field covers the three provinces of the D R Congo (North Kivu, South Kivu and Maniema provinces). The lake, Volcano Mountains, natural hills and farms of Masisi in North Kivu and other sites attract many people for tourism. Unfortunately, many members and interested souls in this area are living in privation in camps because of the War of the M23 movement. (rebels recently qualified by the UA and UN as terrorists). Goma is the capital city of North Kivu. In different territories and rural zones of the NK province there are wars, violence and other crises. Some of our isolated members were forced to flee to save their lives. In Goma we received different families who are temporarily living either in the camp or in some family's home.

This is a very big challenge for the Goma church since it is not easy to assist them (food, health and other needed items.). Goma has one organized church with 12 members and 8 interested souls. A baptismal class will be organized in the near future. We worship in a small rented house and we sometimes have difficulty paying the rent since there are some unemployed members, some divorced sisters who face the challenge of providing a living for their children, some lost their jobs when they decided to join the truth. Dear reader please, pray for us during this challenging time.

Besides the hardships, we are strong in faith and organize revival meetings and seminars regularly. We visit and are visited by some brothers from Rwanda, Gikombe Church in Gisenyi, which is the nearest city from the border.

### Goma meetings and fellowship (North Kivu district)

From Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023, we held a baptism, had the Lord's Supper, held an Evangelism meet-

ing, Cooking classes, and seminar series. Different topics were presented and they proved to be a blessing to each and every one to strengthen them in their journey to the heavenly Canaan while in this troubled world. It was a real blessing. Around 20 Sisters and brothers from Rwanda attended joyfully and some Field and Union officers were present also.

The main theme was: "Behold, He comes." The following topics were presented.

**Families for Christ:** What to do to rescue my family? Secrets of happiness in the family, how to make my family a nest of love, educating for eternity.

**Young people and their specific challenges today:** Am I ready for marriage? Choosing friends, the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment and my relation with my parents; courtship and marriages as approved by Heaven.

**My body, an inestimable wealth:** diseases and their cause. Drugs and their consequences vs Natural remedies, the health reform.

**The last warning and my duty as a Christian:** how to win souls for Christ in big cities and among atheist people or other religions.

**Preparation for the crisis ahead and last day events:** fulfillment of prophecy, signs of the times, and our needed preparation.

**The prophesied Reform Movement:** God's church in the last Days, historical facts and the truth of the Remnant Church. The full truth regarding the separation among God's people (1914-1919) and the Rebellion and overthrow of D. Nicolici in 1951. Identifying the false reform, and apostate rebel church.

On Friday the baptism of one soul took place in the clear waters of Kivu Lake. This newly baptized brother is now zealous to bring new souls to the Lord. On Sabbath, Pastor Normand Sindayihebura, the Union President gave the sermon based on how to make a responsible decision:

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the Jordan, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”  
Joshua 24:15

It is important for us to repeat the eternal meaningful words of Joshua. He emphasized the thought that, How do these words apply to us today as individuals and families?

To make the right decision, six points were brought out

**1) A family devoted to the Lord.** It is possible to serve God through our family relationships and to submit our family projects to the Lord’s will. Our family relationships should be based on the truth of God as revealed in His Word.

**2) True leadership begins at home.** The leadership of a true leader begins within his own house. “For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” 1 Timothy 3:5. Work diligently to take care of your family. Many marriages have failed and are separating because they can no longer find the time to care for and nurture their family.

**3) Committed to the family unity.** Joshua did not just say, “I will serve the Lord,” he said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” It is not enough to be a leader; you must, above all, be the leader of your own house. And be united.

**4) An example for those inside and outside the home.** How many people say, “Do what I say, but not what I do.” But Joshua set an example for his household and for others who could imitate him in his good decisions and behaviour. Joshua’s example encouraged the people to also declare, “Therefore will we also serve the Lord; for He is our God.”  
Joshua 24:18

**5) A house grounded in God’s truth.** The decision of Joshua can be yours today. And this will ground God’s truth in you and your family.

**6) Continuous blessing.** He made his decision taking into consideration all the blessings that are promised to the faithful. God honours them that honour Him. Obedience will always bring blessings. There can be no blessings in our lives and in our homes if there is no obedience.

*A family without God is susceptible to failure*

Ask yourself if you can make the same decision that Joshua

made. Are there improvements that need to be made in your family? This is a choice that we need to make, not just on one day, but every day. Things will always get in the way of you choosing to do so. These things will try to replace the first place that God should have in your heart.

A family without God is susceptible to failure, regardless of social class. If God is not in control of your home and your life, all will be in vain. Do not let your marriage end for lack of God’s presence. Do not give up on your family, fight for it! Jesus is our best friend and is always willing to help us serve Him in our life and in our family. Amen.

This was a very inspiring sermon for all present.

Around 76 souls attended the meetings and in the afternoon Sister Yvone Solomo, wife of Pastor Normand, gave a Bible study based on Christian attitude and Christian women. It was a wonderful day, we did not want to separate until sunset.

On Sunday, a cooking class was conducted by sister Yvone Solomo. She taught the other women how to make whole meal maize bread and Soy Tofu.

Brethren and visitors from different areas attended. We pray and hope that God will continue to open doors to our great needs so that souls can be strengthened. We are few in number but are firm in our decision to be light bearers in this city and the surrounding area. Many are our challenges, needs and hindrances but we trust that God is in control.

Because of the Civil war and M23 crisis in our province, which has caused the displacement of many people into camps, hunger, crime such as murder of innocents, violence in all of its forms, we have many great challenges. Please pray for us. We have nothing to fear. Your daily prayers for us are our strength. “In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what the Lord has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”—*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 196

*Sent by Victor Shumbusho, Church Leader (Goma Church)*



Sister Rose, wife of Brother Victor, conducts the Children’s Class



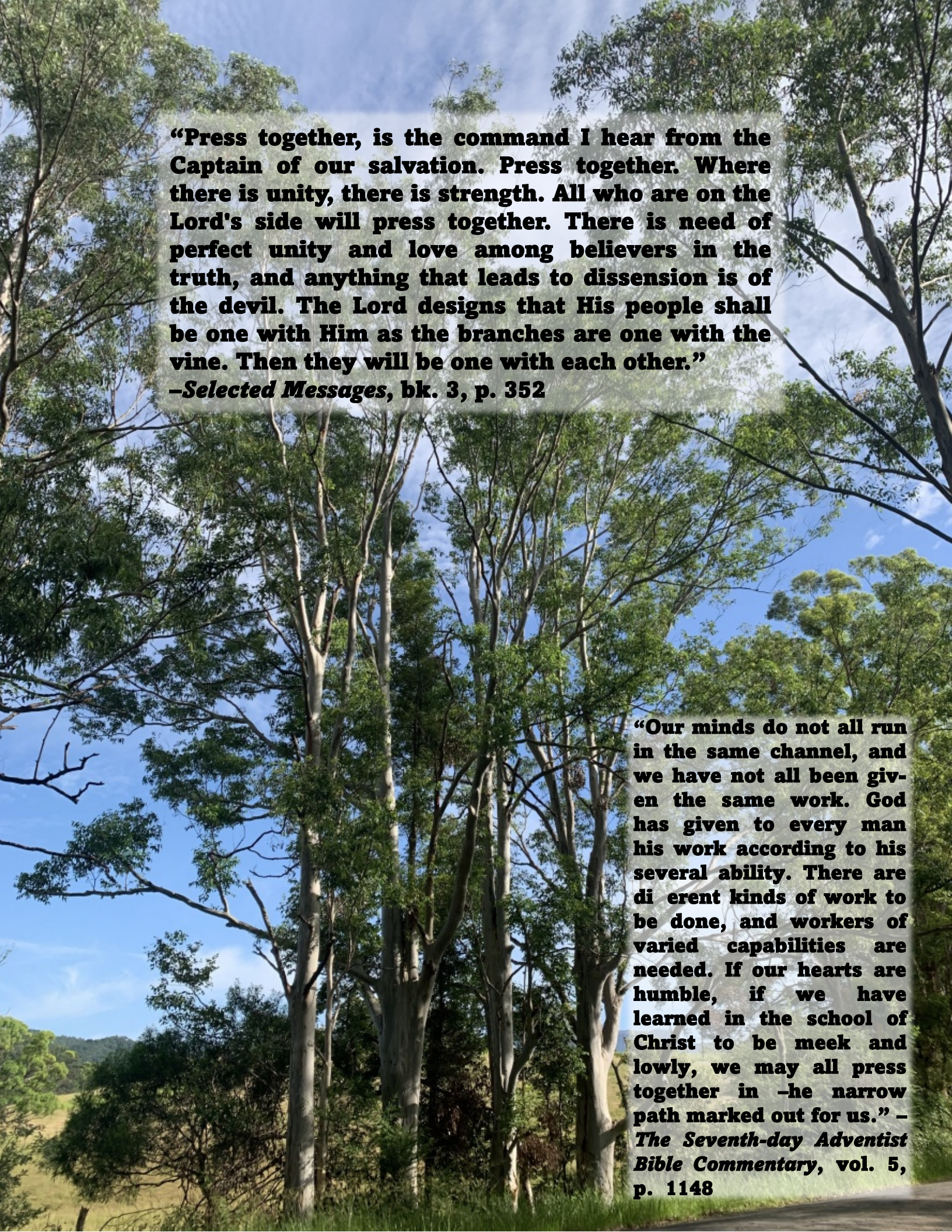
# Chile



# Malaysia







**“Press together, is the command I hear from the Captain of our salvation. Press together. Where there is unity, there is strength. All who are on the Lord's side will press together. There is need of perfect unity and love among believers in the truth, and anything that leads to dissension is of the devil. The Lord designs that His people shall be one with Him as the branches are one with the vine. Then they will be one with each other.”**

**–Selected Messages, bk. 3, p. 352**

**“Our minds do not all run in the same channel, and we have not all been given the same work. God has given to every man his work according to his several ability. There are different kinds of work to be done, and workers of varied capabilities are needed. If our hearts are humble, if we have learned in the school of Christ to be meek and lowly, we may all press together in the narrow path marked out for us.” –**  
***The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 1148***