

# *The Reformation* **Messenger**

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International Missionary Society of S.D.A. Church Reform Movement



"Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow." Psalm 147:7,17,18



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# LIVING SAINTS



“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 1:1-3

## Saint Who?

Are you surprised to find Paul addressing his letter to “saints?” After all, saints are dead people who have achieved such spiritual eminence that they have been given that special title, “saint.” Even the dictionary defines a “saint” as a “person officially recognized for holiness of life.” Who makes this official recognition? Usually some religious body, and the process by which a person becomes a saint is technically know as “canonization.” The deceased person’s life is examined carefully to see whether he qualifies for sainthood. If the candidate’s character and conduct are found to be above reproach, if he has been responsible for working at least two miracles, then he is qualified to be made a saint. “Martin Luther wanted to be preserved from the fanatical church in which there are none but such saints.” (GC 190-192).

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## Incredible Falsehood

As interesting as this procedure is to some, we do not find it authorized anywhere in the Bible. “The mediation of saints which the Catholics invoke, or so called intercession is the greatest falsehood invented.” (7BC 913;GC 73). “This adoration of the saints, invocation, and mediation, cannot atone for sin.”(GC 220). As a very small child, whenever anyone in the family irretrievably lost something, my mother (Gk..Orthodox), would pray to Aghios Fanaris,( Gk.-Saint Lighted Lamp), to find the lost item! When invariably found, it only increased my faith in such folly.

Nine times in his brief letter, Paul addresses his readers as saints. These saints were gloriously alive, not dead, though once they had been “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph 2:1-3). Furthermore, it is clear that they had never performed any miracles, although they had experienced a miracle by trusting Christ as his Saviour (Eph 2:4-10).

## Out Of This World

The word “saint” is simply one of the many terms used in the New Testament to describe “one who has trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour.” The person is beamingly and gloriously “alive,” not only physically, but also spiritually! (Eph 2:1). In Acts 9, you will find Christians called, “disciples,” “people of the Way,” and “saints.”

The word “saint” means “one who has been set apart.” It is related to the word, “sanctified,” which means “set apart as holy.”(Gk aghios-holy). When the sinner trusts Christ as his Saviour, he is taken out of the world and placed “in Christ.” The believer is in the world physically but not of the world spiritually (John 17:14-16).

## Spiritual Harmony

Years ago I was a certified scuba diver, venturing into the mystic deep and darkened waters. The sea puts another element there that you have no control over. I existed in

a harrowing, alien environment because I possessed highly specialized, underwater diving equipment systems and technologies – in this case, the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. Every true believer possesses the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19-20; Rom 8:9), and it is through the Spirit's power that the Christian is able to function in a troubled, alien world.

### The Believer's Standing

Now for the important question: How did these people at Ephesus become saints? The answer is found in two words: "faithful" and "grace" (Eph 1:1-2). When Paul addresses his letter to the "saints... and faithful in Christ Jesus" he is not addressing two different groups of people. The word "faithful" carries the meaning of "believers in Christ Jesus." These people were not saved by living faithful lives; rather they put their faith in Christ and were saved. The word (Gk. *pistis*, *pisteuo*) faith, means adherence to, committal to, faith in, reliance upon, trust in a person or object; not only consent of mind, but an act of the heart, and will of the subject. Belief, then is synonymous with faith.

### Undeserving

The word "grace" is used 12 times in Ephesians, and refers to "the kindness of God toward undeserving people." Grace and mercy often are found together in the Bible, and they certainly belong together in the experience of salvation. Someone beautifully said, "God in His mercy doesn't give me what I do deserve, and God in His grace gives me what I don't deserve." You see, "grace" and "faith" go together, because the only way to experience grace and salvation is through faith. (Eph 2:8-9).

That later phrase "in Christ Jesus" is used 27 times in his letter to the Ephesians! It beautifully describes the spiritual position of the believer: he is identified with Christ, he is in Christ and, therefore, is able to draw upon the wealth of Christ for his own daily, practical living.

### THE AIM

You will find that each book in the Bible, interestingly, has its own special theme and message, even though it many deal with many different topics. For example, Genesis is the book of "beginnings"; Matthew is the

book of the "kingdom;" Galatians is the book of "liberty;" Ephesians 1-3 states its theme; "the Christian's wealth (blessings) in Christ."

The source of our blessings: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God the Father has made us rich in Jesus Christ! Now, when you were born again into God's family, you were born rich. Through Christ, you share in the riches of God's grace (1:7; 2:7), God's glory (1:18; 3:16), God's mercy (2:4), and the unsearchable riches of Christ" (3:8).

Our heavenly Father is not poor; He is rich – and He has made us rich in His Son. There are many rich people in this world: Getty, Gates, Rockefellers, and oil sheiks, worth billions. Yet, all their wealth is but "pennies" when compared with the spiritual wealth we have in Christ. Paul explains what these riches are and how we can draw upon them for effective Christian living.

The scope of our blessings: "all spiritual blessings." This can be translated "all the blessings of the Spirit," referring to the Holy Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, God promised His earthly people, Israel, material blessings as a reward for their obedience (Deut 28:1-13).

Today, He promises to supply all our needs "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19), but He does not promise to shield us from either poverty or pain. The Father has given us every blessing of the Spirit, everything we need for a successful, satisfying, Christian life. The spiritual is far more important than the material. Our spiritual possessions in Christ are from the Father, the Son, and from the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned many times in this letter, because He is the one who channels our riches to us from the Father, through the Son. Not to know and depend on the Holy Spirit's provision is to live a life of spiritual poverty. No wonder Paul began his Ephesian ministry asking some professed Christians if they really knew the Holy Spirit! (Acts 19:1-7).

We might ask ourselves, too, and professed Christians, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? If the answer is no, then you are not saved." "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom 8:9). Unless you have the witness of

the Spirit (Rom 8:15-16), you cannot draw upon the wealth of the Spirit.

The sphere of our blessings: "in heavenly places in Christ." A clearer translation might be "in the heavenlies in Christ." The unsaved person is interested primarily in earthlies, because this is where he lives. Jesus called them "the children of this world" (Luke 16:8). The Christian's life is centered in heaven.

His citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20); his name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20); his Father is in heaven; and his attention and affection ought to be centered on the things of heaven (Col 3:1). Evangelist D.L. Moody used to warn about people who were so "heavenly minded they were no earthly good," but that is not what Paul is describing. "The heavenlies" (literal translation), describes that place where Jesus Christ is right now (Eph 1:2) and where the believer is seated with Him (Eph 2:6).

The battles we fight are not with flesh and blood on earth, but with Satanic powers "in the heavenlies" (Eph 6:12); and, "Satan, the prince of darkness, demons, devils, evil, air, and of this world; the earth's first great rebel against God's law; an unsleeping, cunning, wily foe." (DA 71; 1T 364; SL 67; GC 534; TM 54; 3T 419).

### On The Move

The Christian really operates in two spheres: the human and the divine, the visible and the invisible. Physically, he is on the earth in a human living body, but spiritually he is seated with Christ in the heavenly sphere – and it is this heavenly sphere that provides the power and direction for the earthly walk!

The President of the United States is not always seated at his desk in the White House, but that executive chair represents the sphere of his life and power. No matter where he is, he is the President, because only he has the privilege of sitting at that desk. Likewise with the Christian. No matter where he may be on this earth, he "is raised and seated in the heavenlies with Jesus Christ, reconciled and set into the temple," (Eph 2:6) and this is the basis of his life and power. What a privilege! What a seat!!



### The Good Life

When she was young, Victoria was shielded from the fact that she would be the next ruling monarch of England lest this knowledge spoil her. When her teacher finally did let her discover for herself that she would one day be Queen of England, Victoria's response was, "Then I will be good!" Here life would be controlled by her position. No matter where she was, Victoria was governed by the fact that she sat on the throne of England.

### Bank On This

The fact that Paul is writing about wealth should be significant to the saints. Why? Because Ephesus was considered the bank of Asia. One of the seven wonders of the world, the great Temple of Diana, was in Ephesus, and was not only a center for idolatrous worship, but also a depository for wealth. Some of the greatest art treasures of the ancient world were housed in this magnificent building.

You see, Paul compared the Church of Jesus Christ to a familiar temple and explained the great wealth that Christ has in His church and saints. Paul already used the word riches; but there are other words, "financial words" such as inheritance (Eph 1:11; 5:5) and fullness or filled. (Eph 1:10; 3:19; 5:18). Paul, in essence, is telling us, therefore to, "Be Rich!"

### Investment Strategy

To be sure, we inherit the wealth by faith and invest the wealth by works. Without this balance, our spiritual riches do us no good. If we are to be the saints, also, as those whom Paul addressed as the believers in Ephesus, "we must be saints first on earth in order to be saints in heaven." (TM 105; AH 16). Remember, "the crown of glory may be worn by the weakest saint" (AA 313), and can be more than a match for Satan and all his angelic host who cannot destroy him."(PK 513). Moreover, there is hope for all, as "all men can be saints in this world through Christ's grace." (ML 273).

### Saints Alive

Who are the saints? "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Rev 14:12).

"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence... He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." (Ps 50:3-5).

Stand Up For Jesus, while Standing on the Promises of God. You are the Living Saints! **AMEN.**

*John Theodorou, U.S.A.*

## LOOKING FOR YOU!!

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*Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness; the beginning of the creation of God. REVELATION 3:14*

“The message to the Laodicean church is highly applicable to us as a people. It has been placed before us for a long time, but has not been heeded as it should have been. When the work of repentance is most earnest and deep, the individual members of the church will buy the rich goods of heaven.” 7BC 961

“I was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God’s people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts.” 1T 185

“The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. The greater part are lukewarm professors, having a name but no zeal.” 4T 87

Seventh Day Adventists have long had difficulty dealing with the message to Laodicea recorded in Rev 3:14-22.

In the months and years following the Great Disappointment of 1844, Sabbath-keeping Adventists rather smugly applied this message to those Adventists who had not accepted the Seventh-day Sabbath or the changing ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. In spite of the attention given to the importance of the idea of “righteousness by faith” that developed in 1888, and during the years that followed, most Adventists found it difficult to accept the True Witness’s evaluation of Laodicea, and applying His counsel to themselves.

This condition has persisted to this present time and we have continued in a “lukewarm” state.

But Christ has not found a lukewarm church appealing, rather Christ finds it nauseating/ sickening.

Part 1 seeks to arouse all of us to our true condition, and to accept the gracious remedy provided. I do not pretend that this will be easy for any of you, but it is essential.

There are seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, etc. All these parallel passages deal with the same time periods, but each concentrates on a different issue, therefore we must consider the context of all seven churches (Rev 1 -3) in order to accurately understand what Christ is saying to the Laodicean church, the last in the series – I won’t be covering this in this article, however will do so later, if that be God’s will.

The True Witness evaluates each church, and we find as we examine the messages to these churches that each follows a pattern made up of 4 basic elements:

#### **Commendation**

Jesus makes note of the good points about each church

#### **Reproof**

Jesus judges each church by its works stating, “This is what I have against you”

## Counsel

Jesus never rebukes His church without giving it a remedy for its problems. For every problem the church faces there is counsel

## Promise

Jesus closes His counsel with a promise. If His people will accept the counsel and follow it, the promise will be fulfilled to them.

BUT there are some interesting exceptions to this pattern. Jesus has no reproof for two of the seven churches – Smyrna and Philadelphia

Unfortunately, Jesus has much to say in reproof to Laodicea, representing the church in the time we live – our church.

But there is something even more disturbing about Christ's message to Laodicea than His reproof.

Not only does Jesus reprove Laodicea, He has nothing good to say about her. There is no "commendation" for the Laodicean church.

Ellen White says, "The message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation and is applicable to the people of God at the present time." 3T 252

Applicable to who? – the people of God. Are we the people of God? – then this applies to us.

What? When? and Where? – to get this into times and places – at the present time, in other words, this means us and now.

Here is a church that claims to have present truth – and Jesus has NO commendation for her; here is a church which claims to be God's remnant church – and don't we claim that in this church? Jesus says, "I have nothing good to say about you" – that certainly is a "startling denunciation."

Further, Christ's message to Laodicea is vitally connected with the message of "righteousness by faith", the message God brought to the church in 1888.

This is clearly supported by Ellen White (7BC 964) "Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever providence opens the way.

1 – justification by faith and  
2 – the Righteousness of Christ  
are the themes to be presented to a perishing world."

This message is one that we first need to apply to ourselves before we attempt to share it with others. When we see ourselves, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, THEN we can take the message of life to a world that is dying. This message will illuminate the entire world with "God's glory". When we all understand and apply Christ's words to ourselves they will (Christ's words) bring a revival and power to our lives.

When we write a letter, we identify the person to whom we are writing in a greeting – "Dear Mary" or "Dear John". And we sign our name to show who has written the letter. Just so, Revelation 3:14, the introduction to Jesus' letter to Laodicea, contains these same two items. It identifies the one to whom this letter is addressed, and it names the One who is sending it – the recipient and the Sender.

As we look carefully at verse 14, we'll notice that the letter to Laodicea is addressed, not to the church itself, but to the "angel" of that church. What does this mean? Who is this "angel"?

To answer these questions, we need to go back to Revelation chapter 1 and look at the introduction to these messages to the seven churches. In chapter 1, we find John in vision on "the Lord's day" – Sabbath (verse 10). He hears a voice and turns to see who is speaking to him. The first thing he sees in

vision are seven golden candlesticks. And in the middle of these candlesticks, or lamp stands, he sees "one like unto the Son of man" (verse 13). This is Jesus Christ. While He was here He called Himself by this title in order to identify Himself with us.

So John hears Jesus and sees Him walking among the golden candlesticks. In his vision, John sees Jesus holding in His right hand seven stars and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword (verse 16). The New Testament symbolized the Bible, God's Word, as a sharp two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

Verse 20 explains the symbols of the seven golden candlesticks and the seven stars in Jesus' right hand: "The seven stars" Jesus tells John, "are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

The seven candlesticks represent the churches themselves. This is an appropriate symbol. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to His followers, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) but in John 8:12 Jesus said of Himself "I am the light of the



world". Which is it? Are we Christians the world's light, or is Jesus? How can both statements be true?

The answer is evident in the original language of Matthew 5:14. It isn't so apparent in English, but in Greek it is clear that the word ye is plural; Jesus is referring to all Christians. But the word light is singular. There is only one light, and that light is Jesus Christ. He is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). So when Jesus said in Matthew 5:14 "Ye (all His people) are the light (Christ's representatives) of the world," He was saying that His church is to reflect Him, the true light of the world. The church is to represent Christ to the world. The world needs to see "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). Whatever light we shed in the world is the result of reflecting the rays from the true Light, Jesus Christ.

Jesus went on to say that when a person lights a candle, he puts it on a candlestick so that it will give light to everyone around. That, He said, is how His people are to shine for Him in this dark world (see Matthew 5:15,16). Like candles set on a candlestick, each member of God's church is to let His light, Christ in you, so shine before men that they may see His good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven. So the symbol of the seven candlesticks representing the seven churches is very fitting. We need to keep this in mind as we look at Christ's message to Laodicea in order to understand why the church has failed to be the light of the world that God intended her to be.

It is clear, then, that when John saw in vision Jesus walking among seven candlesticks, holding seven stars in His right hand, the candlesticks represent the seven churches (see Revelation 1:20). But who or what do the stars in Jesus' hand represent?

Verse 20 clearly answers that question also: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Remember that each of Christ's letters to the seven churches is addressed to the "angel" of that church. What does this symbolize?

The word angel means "messenger". Hebrew 1:14 describes angels as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." They are God's messengers to minister to

us who are the recipients of salvation. So when Jesus speaks of the "angel" of each of the seven churches He is referring to those who are the spiritual leaders of the church. The Living Bible paraphrase doesn't use the word angel in these verses in Revelation that speak of the seven churches. It uses the word leader. That is the correct sense of the word; the "angel" of the Laodicean church symbolizes the "spiritual leader" of that church.

A church's spiritual leaders include the elders, Sabbath School teachers and other officers. But the primary meaning seems to refer to the pastor, the shepherd who is in charge of the spiritual condition of the church. Ellen White says:

"God's ministers are symbolized by the seven stars, which He who is the first and the last Christ has under His special care and protection. The sweet influences that are to be abundant in the church are bound up with these ministers of God who are to represent the love of Christ. The stars of heaven are under God's control. He fills them with light. He guides and directs their movements. If He did not, they would become fallen stars." (Gospel Workers, 13,14)

To a large degree, the spiritual condition of the church is in the hands of the ministers. Traveling to Jerusalem from his missionary journeys, Paul stopped briefly in Miletus, where he met with the leaders of the church in Ephesus. He challenged them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). We have placed many responsibilities on our pastors today, but their primary task is to feed the church spiritually and bring about growth in grace. The spiritual condition of the church will depend largely on the pastor and the food with which he feeds his flock every Sabbath.

All of us, when we first believe in Christ and accept His gift of salvation, do so from a selfish motive. There may be rare exceptions, but because our human natures are selfish, we usually accept Christ in the beginning because we are afraid of punishment or because we want the reward. Our evangelism often appeals to these same motives. When we tell people that there is a "heaven to gain and a hell to shun", aren't we appealing to their egocentric natures?

Of course, it's true that we should want to gain heaven and shun hell. But if that is the only motivation, then we are operating from basically a selfish orientation.

Likewise, the disciples – all 12 of them – accepted Jesus for selfish reasons. Even after three years spent with Jesus, what were they arguing about in the upper room? They were arguing about who would be the most important in the coming kingdom. They were still thinking of themselves.

Most of us are what Paul calls "carnal" Christians, or "babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1), when we first accept Jesus and join His church. It is the pastor's responsibility to feed these spiritual babies so they will grow. As the spiritual leader of the church, he is to help them move from carnality to spirituality. There has to be spiritual growth. A carnal Christian is a weak Christian, a baby in Christ, and the pastor must carefully nourish him and help him to grow.

In His letter to the Laodicean church, Christ is saying, "Pastors, there is something wrong with the church". Of course, the message to Laodicea is relevant to every member of the church (see Revelation 1:11), but the ministers have a special responsibility to build up the church. We need to pray for our ministers and pastors, that they will feed the flock and help it to grow spiritually. Ellen White recognized the special importance of Jesus' words to church leaders:

"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand".

These words are spoken to the teachers in the church – those entrusted by God with weighty responsibilities" (Review and Herald 26 May 1903)

So now we have seen to whom in Laodicea Jesus has addressed His letter. He addresses it to the ministers, the spiritual leaders of the church. Yet Jesus is not speaking only to them; He isn't addressing just certain individuals in the church. Through the leaders, He is speaking to the whole church, to every member. There is something dreadfully wrong with the Laodicean church, and Christ is appealing to the leadership of the church – and through them to every member – to realize the urgency of what He is saying. The whole



church, top to bottom, needs to understand this message and the leaders, particularly, must consider it carefully.

Now let's look at the second half of Revelation 3:14. What names does Jesus use when He "signs" the letter to the Laodicean church?

In every one of the seven letters to the churches, Jesus gives Himself a special title, or name. And in each case the title He gives Himself harmonizes with the special needs of that church. Therefore, the title Christ gives Himself when speaking to Laodicea is based on Laodicea's needs; it is connected with the message to that church. Here is what Jesus calls Himself when He is speaking to Laodicea. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14).

First, Jesus refers to Himself as the "Amen, the faithful and true witness". The word Amen is being used here as a proper noun, a name. Amen actually means "so be it". Or it can mean "the truth" or "what is being said is the truth". The emphasis in this first title seems to be on the truthfulness of Jesus' witness to Laodicea.

Why does He need to stress the truthfulness, the accuracy, of what He is saying? Because, as we will see in more detail later, there is a great discrepancy between Laodicea's evaluation of herself and the evaluation that Christ gives. Laodicea has a major problem; her self-evaluation does not agree with Christ's evaluation of her spiritual condition. Laodicea says, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing". Jesus says, "Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17).

Who says that Laodicea is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked? Jesus Christ, "the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (verse 14).

We say we are rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing.

Do these two evaluations agree? Clearly not. Therefore, the question is: Who is right? Obviously, the Faithful and True Witness is right. That's what Jesus wants to emphasize. That's why He calls Himself "the Amen" the truth, the Faithful and True Witness.

We need to clearly understand that the church is the body of Christ. It is a corporate whole – a *koinonia* – made up of individual members, just as the physical body. When a person's hand is diseased, the whole body is affected – not just the hand. The Bible is clear on this point. For example, when Daniel prayed (Daniel 9) he said "WE have sinned against thee" (verse 8). He included himself in the sins of Israel that had brought them into captivity in Babylon. Was this true of Daniel personally? No. Yet he identified himself with God's people. He understood that the church is a corporate body and that what affects one affects all.

This is my main complaint against many of the independent movements that are arising these days to criticize the church. They hold up the shortcomings of the church, and then they look upon themselves as self-righteousness as if they alone are on the right track. The Bible teaches that we are all one body; we each need to identify ourselves with the mistakes of the church, for we are one. I might look at myself and say "I'm all right; I'm feeding the people in my sermons and writings. I'm doing my job". But the truth is that I, too, am part of the body and thus part of the problem that Christ identifies in Laodicea.

We in Laodicea today have the same problem Peter had. Just before His betrayal, Jesus sadly announced, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matthew 26:31). All the disciples denied it, and Peter denied it vehemently.

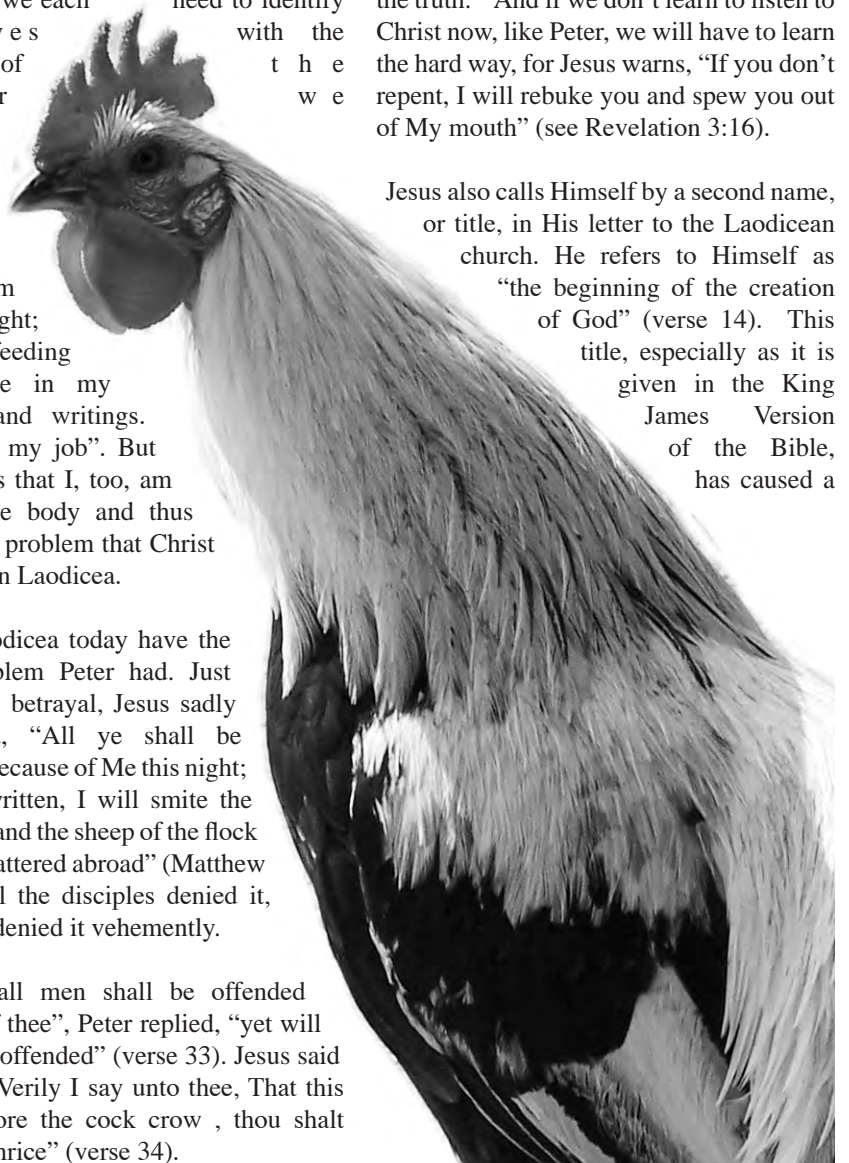
"Though all men shall be offended because of thee", Peter replied, "yet will I never be offended" (verse 33). Jesus said to Peter, "Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice" (verse 34).

But Peter insisted, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee" (verse 35).

Peter had the Laodicean problem. Jesus had one evaluation of him. Peter had another, far different, evaluation of himself. Did they agree? No. Who was right? Jesus was right. Just think how much embarrassment and how many problems Peter would have avoided if he had simply said, "Yes, Lord, You know all things. You are right, and I am wrong." But Peter had to learn the hard way that Jesus knew him better than he knew himself. That Jesus' evaluation was the truth.

In His letter to the Laodicean church, Jesus is saying, "I am the True Witness. What I am telling you is the truth. You may not agree with Me, but I am telling you the truth. You may not like to hear it, but I'm telling you the truth." And if we don't learn to listen to Christ now, like Peter, we will have to learn the hard way, for Jesus warns, "If you don't repent, I will rebuke you and spew you out of My mouth" (see Revelation 3:16).

Jesus also calls Himself by a second name, or title, in His letter to the Laodicean church. He refers to Himself as "the beginning of the creation of God" (verse 14). This title, especially as it is given in the King James Version of the Bible, has caused a



lot of problems. Many Christians through the years, including some Seventh-day Adventist pioneers, have understood Jesus to be saying that somewhere back in the past ages, He had a beginning as the first being God created. One early Adventist writer tried to minimize this difficulty by saying that Christ's origin was so far back in the days of eternity that as far as humans were concerned, it was almost as though Christ really didn't have a beginning. Ellen White, however, took an opposite view. In her book, *The Desire of Ages*, she wrote; "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" (530). Thus she took a position that was contrary to the thinking of most of the early leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. And her view was in harmony with the clear teaching of the New Testament.

You see, when Christ calls Himself "the beginning of the creation of God", He isn't saying that He was the first being God created and that He hadn't existed before that time. The word beginning here simply means "the source" or "the origin" or "the chief cause". Christ is saying "I am the Source of all creation".

This is what the New Testament teaches clearly. "All thing were made by him (Christ); and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Speaking of Jesus, Paul says, "By him were all before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16,17; see also 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9). Jesus is saying to the Laodiceans, "I am not only the True Witness, I am also the Source of all creation. I can re-create you into My image, but only if you allow Me to do so. I can create in you a new heart; I can make you a new person, but only if you repent and accept My true evaluation of you."

He is not only saying "I am telling you the truth about yourselves, as painful as that may be." He is also saying, "I am the solution to your problems." That is why He calls Himself by two titles. "I am the Faithful and True Witness," He says, "because you need to know your true condition. You aren't even aware of it; you are in denial regarding it, so you need the truth." And then He says, "But I have the solution to your problem. I am the Source of God's creation. I made everything, and I can re-create your heart."

In reality, Jesus is offering to fulfill in us the new covenant promise. He made this promise first to the Jewish nation, but the Jews rejected Him. What was the result? With tears in His eyes and tears in His voice, Jesus looked out over Jerusalem during His triumphal entry into the city just before His crucifixion, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered Thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Mathew 23:37). In other words, "I am going to spew you out of My mouth as a nation and I will turn to the Gentiles."

Christ couldn't fulfill the new covenant promises to the Jewish nation because it had made its ultimate and irrevocable decision to reject Him. Individual Jews could still take advantage of the promises, of course, but the nation as a whole had turned away. Now He is making the same new covenant promises to us today. The original promises found in Ezekiel 11:19,20; 36:26,27 are repeated to us in Hebrews 8:10-13.

So what have we discovered as we have examined the opening address of Christ's letter to the Laodicean church?

We have learned that Christ is not speaking only to a few people in the church. He is addressing the leadership, and through the leaders, He is speaking to the entire membership. The problems Jesus points out in Laodicea are not the problems of only a few of its members. They are the problems of the whole corporate body of Christ, the last generation of Christians and they apply especially to the International Missionary Society Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement.

We have learned that although Christ's spiritual evaluation of us is negative, it is nevertheless true. The question for us becomes: "Are we willing to accept His evaluation of our lives, painful though it is?" It's painful when someone says to us, "You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked" – especially when we are a church that claims to have the truth. It is very painful. But if we are going to experience Christ's solution to our problems, we are going to have to accept what the True Witness is saying about us. Let's not apply this message to other churches; let's apply it first to ourselves.

We have been deceived regarding our own spirituality, just as the Jews were deceived regarding their experience with God. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). The Jews rejected Christ because they did not accept His evaluation of them. We must not do the same.

When we look at Christ's evaluation of us in the letter to the Laodiceans, we will have to make a response: Is it true? Is it false? If we decide it is true, then we will take His counsel. If we decide it is false, then we will refuse the counsel and will be spewed out of His mouth. Thus the words of Jesus to Laodicea become vitally important to us.

What is our problem as identified by the Faithful and True Witness? What is it that we don't know? What is it that has deceived us? What does Jesus mean when He says that our works are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm? Does He mean that we aren't doing enough works? I don't think that is true. We are not lacking works, but our works have a problem. What is wrong with our works?

In Part 2 we will answer these question as we study Revelation 3:15,16. Verses 15 and 16 are so important because these two verses are Christ's evaluation of Laodicea's spiritual condition. All the rest of His letter is based on that evaluation. *Amen*

*John Warncken, Western Australia*

# SOUL HUNGER



Thousands of people starve to death every day in our world. Many countries do not have enough food for the people. Others are sick and dying from the wrong kind of food that they have been eating.

So important is food for us that Jesus includes it in His model prayer; "Give us this day our daily bread."

Many things we would give up before we would give up our daily food. Hunger is one of the strongest feelings in the human body. People do almost anything in order to satisfy it. Yet there is a hunger that is stronger than the physical hunger, and it is the soul hunger.

Because of the soul hunger people can lose their appetite for the physical food. Emptiness in the soul makes a person to lose interest even in life. For the soul hunger that is not satisfied people have committed suicide; so strong it can be.

People have invented many things to satisfy the soul hunger. They include theatres, movies, parties, and even drugs and alcohol in order to lose the reality of their lives. But these are all temporary. As soon as the show is over or the effect of the drugs and alcohol has worn off, they fall back into their misery and depression.

There is a spiritual food that can satisfy the soul hunger completely. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." John 6:35.

This means that there will be no more broken dreams, no sleepless nights, no tears nor weeping, no sad countenance and not seeking anything that the world could offer.

Jesus can satisfy us by His grace and fill us with His righteousness, so that our joy will be full, and there will be no more hunger or thirst in our souls.

The Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. 12:9.

Even if we have nothing else, His grace is all we need to live a happy life.

The Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob had been seeking happiness in her life. She had had five husbands and living with another man and yet she had a soul hunger. Jesus said to her, "If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." John 4:10.

The woman did not know that such a water was available and millions of others who are seeking happiness do not know it either and therefore continue in their misery.

Jesus continued, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14.

David had experienced this in his life. He writes, "The Lord is shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Psalm 23: 1, 2, 5.

Now what is on this table that the Lord has prepared for His children, and what is in this cup that runneth over? With all this, can there be even one hungry or thirsty Christian?

All the hundreds of promises that the Lord has given us will supply all our needs and satisfy us fully.

Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." John 15:11.

The words of Jesus will give us fullness of joy. The Bible is our spiritual food; the more we eat of it, the stronger do we become.

The church where the word of God is taught could be called the dining hall of the food. Yet the teachers in the church must be careful to give the right kind of spiritual food to the people.

Jesus spoke of two kinds of servants who were to provide food to the household. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." Matt. 24: 45-46.

We have the truth for the present time which must be presented to the people; and the faithful servant will do it. But the other servant, who is called the evil servant, "shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his

fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." Matt. 24: 48, 49.

The pure water of life will not make us drunk but the wine of Babylon will, and Satan is constantly trying to introduce these errors to the people of God.

On the table that the Lord has prepared for us are a variety of foods. As we eat this spiritual food, much of it is the church history, right from the beginning on.

Sister White writes, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teachings in our past history." LS 196.

History repeats itself; therefore we need to study it and by so doing we prepare ourselves for the future events. Also much of the food on the Lord's table is the law. The commandments and the statutes of the Lord, including the ceremonial laws and the moral law are important, but many Christians do not eat this food. They do not find it tasty.

Yet David writes, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night." Ps. 1:2.

Some people have complained that in the church so much is spoken about "don't do this, do that;" too many rules and laws are presented as spiritual food. Yet these foods are on the table that the Lord has prepared for us. We need to learn how to keep the Sabbath holy, what to eat and drink, how to dress ourselves modestly, and how to treat others.

We also find on the table of the Lord, the prophesy. This knowledge will guide us through the events that are before us.

There is also milk for the children for them to grow, and later they can eat the strong food.

Jesus said to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." John 16:12. After three and half years in the company of Jesus they were yet unable to digest the strong food. This is the reason why there is always something new, something stronger that we could not digest earlier.

Yet when Jesus spoke the truth to the people, the 70 disciples were offended and left Him. The rich young man could not digest the food that Jesus gave him; he went away sorrowful.

Satan also has prepared a table, and almost the whole world is eating the food that he has prepared. It is good tasting to the perverted appetite, but it is poison to the soul. The churches are offering this poisonous food to the people and they love it, even that it destroys the soul.

The words of Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out demons and calmed the storm. His words are still as effective as before.

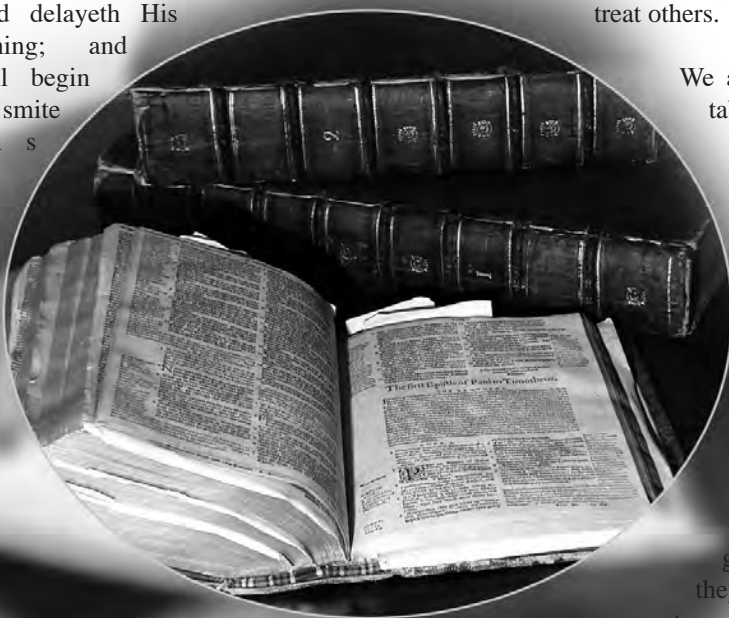
Jeremiah enjoyed eating the words of God, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Jer. 15:16.

Today the spiritual food is freely offered to everyone, but the time will come when it cannot be found anymore. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." Amos 8:11, 12.

Today the Lord is calling you and everyone to come to His table to eat and drink, and you will never hunger or thirst anymore. Your soul will be satisfied and filled with joy and happiness for now and for eternity.

May the Lord help us all to avoid the poisonous foods at the table of Satan and eat only the bread of heaven and drink the water of life, is my wish and prayer. **AMEN.**

*Timo Martin, Canada*





### *Signs of the Times*

“Holidays are numerous; the whirl of excitement and pleasure attracts thousands from the sober duties of life. The exciting sports – theatergoing, horse racing, gambling, liquor drinking and reveling--stimulate every passion to activity” 9 T. 89.

“The powers of Satan are at work to keep minds diverted from eternal realities. The enemy has arranged matters to suit his own purposes. Worldly business, sports, the fashions of the day--these things occupy the minds of men and women. Amusements and unprofitable reading spoil the judgment.” 9T 43. Sports have become the great god of the day. Even Seventh-day Adventist Schools and Adventist Church Youth are engaging in this kind of evil practice and are calling it physical exercise. But we do not blame these children. The teachers, pastors, and elders are asleep, ignoring the word of God. Remember, Adventist Youth are not interested in evangelism, but love for the game of soccer. They are being changed into the image of the world, a world that worships sports such as soccer. Yet the church leaders and parents see no harm in sports that mimic the world; youth and adult people are being led into worldliness. The whole world is going on to ruin. Sabbath- keeping parents and their children no longer reverence the Sabbath day because of the passion for football. The youth are making millions of dollars out of it ... “[students] those in the school who take pleasure in showing their

independence, and in engaging in wicked sports in disobedience to the rules and who fill the hearts of their teachers with sorrow and discouragement.” Fundamentals of Christian Education (FE), p. 297.

“If in our schools the land were more faithfully cultivated, the buildings more disinterestedly cared for by the students, the love of sports and amusements, which causes so much perplexity in our school work, would pass away.” FE 512.

“Parents, unless you know that their surroundings are unexceptionable, do not permit your children to go into the streets after nightfall to engage in out-door sports, or to meet other boys for amusement.” FE 63.

“The intense passion for money getting, the thirst for display, the luxury and extravagance--all are forces that, with the great mass of mankind, are turning the mind from life’s true purpose. They are opening the door to a thousand evils.” 9T 90

### **Samson's Example**

“The history of Samson conveys a lesson for those whose characters are yet unformed, who have not yet entered upon the stage of active life. The youth who enter our schools and colleges will find there every class of mind. If they desire sport and folly, if they seek to shun the good and unite with the evil, they have the opportunity. Sin and righteousness are before them, and they are to choose for themselves. But let them

remember that ‘whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.’” Conflict and Courage, p.135.

“Satan has been multiplying his snares in...; and professed Christians who are superficial in character and religious experience are used by the tempter as his decoys. This class are always ready for the gathering for pleasure or sport, and their influence attracts others.” Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students (CT), p. 340. “All the powers of Satan are set in operation to hold the attention to frivolous amusements, and he is gaining his object. He is interposing his devisings between God and the soul. He will manufacture diversions to keep men from thinking about God. The world, filled with sport and pleasure loving, is always thirsting for some new interest; but how little time and thought are given to the Creator of the heavens and the earth.” CT 456.

“How much time is spent by intelligent human beings in horse racing, cricket matches, and ball playing! But will indulgence in these sports give men a desire to know truth and righteousness? Will it keep God in their thoughts? Will it lead them to inquire, How is it with my soul?” CT 456.

“I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone. I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads

# JOYOUS REFORMATION

to an outlay of means that should be expended in bringing the light of truth to souls that are perishing out of Christ. The amusements and expenditures of means for self-pleasing, which lead on step by step to self-glorifying, and the educating in these games for pleasure, produce a love and passion for such things that is not favourable to the perfection of Christian character.” 2 Selected Messages, p. 322. Let us draw closer to Jesus Christ; He is coming soon.

“God has given us a probation in which we may prepare for the higher school. For this school the youth are to be educated, disciplined, and trained by forming such characters, moral and intellectual, as God will approve. They are to receive a training, not in the customs and amusements and games of this worldly polluted society, but in Christ’s lines.” FE 397.

“What force of powers is put into your games of football and your other inventions after the way of the Gentiles--exercises which bless no one!... I cannot find an instance in the life of Christ where He devoted time to play and amusement. He was the great Educator for the present and the future life. I have not been able to find one instance where He educated His disciples to engage in amusement of football or pugilistic games, to obtain physical exercise or in theatrical performances; and yet Christ was our pattern in all things.” FE 229. “Ye are a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.”

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.” 1 Cor. 9: 24-25.

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt...” Heb. 11: 24-26. Where are the distinctive messages of the three Angels to be proclaimed in these last days? Whose side are we on? **AMEN.**

*Anthony Cedric Adjei, Ghana*

Whereas the word “revival” represents the concept of life, the word “reformation” represents the concept of change. In this article I would like to speak an encouraging word about the issue of change and in so doing assert that the changes that God leads us through, being for our best good, instead of being resented may be rallied to with enthusiasm, hence “Joyous Reformation”.

First we may generally recognize that change is the very action of life. Although we are creatures of habit we cannot control the circumstances of life that surround us; thus we constantly adjust our habits with those circumstances. Oftimes we are challenged with spiritual change influenced by idealistic theological interpretation. This is the case for many when they discover the Sabbath or vegetarianism. What may be easy for one can be extremely distressing for another. The simple fact is that overall change is painful. It is viewed by most as undesirable. So this real life dynamic can make life thorny and frustrating. So how can we cope with such a reality?

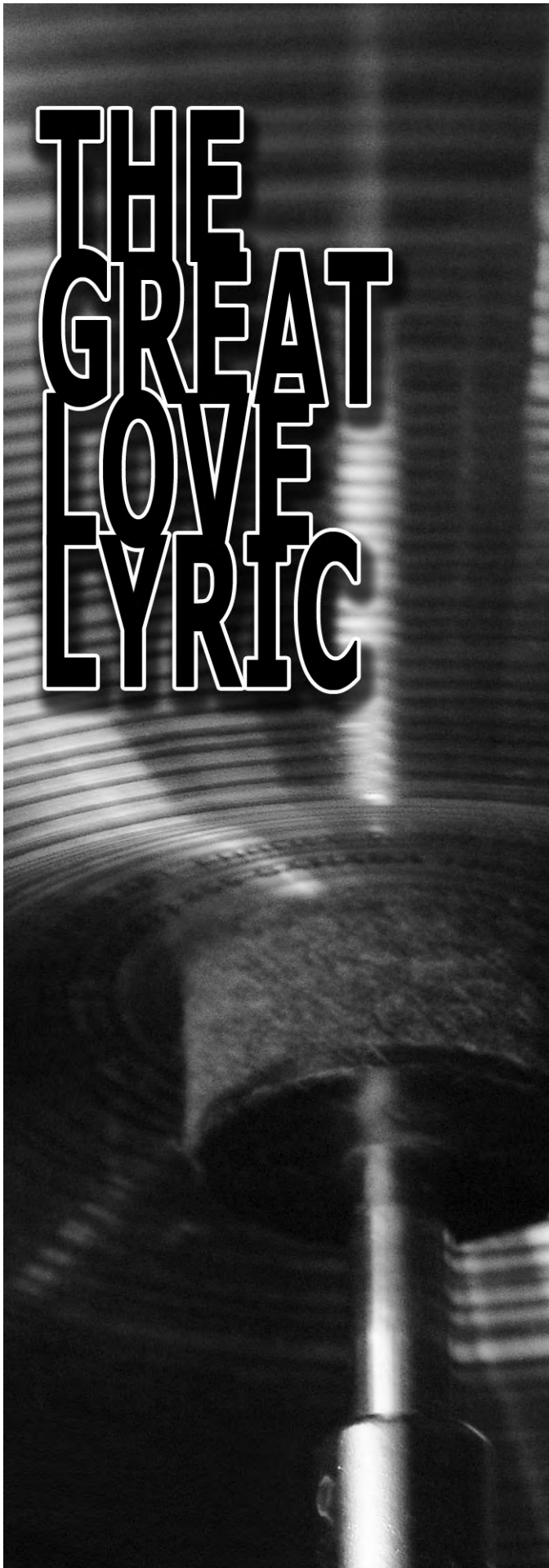
God makes all the difference! Our attitude makes a difference as well and we can motivate our attitude with such quips as “when life gives you lemons make lemonade” but really it is God wherein our strength lies. You see change/reformation requires giving and, “God loves a joyful giver.” II Cor. 9:7. But how can we give unless we have received? So we must go to God first.

This becomes the basis to “joyous reformation”; the use of our choice to first go to God and second to enjoy the change by which we are challenged. Go to God and there pour your heart out to Him and wrestle with the issue of change; receive from God the strength to joyfully move forward. Then break the change required down to doable steps and address those steps with all the enthusiasm you can muster. When once challenged by change and having gone through these steps, though faced with an exceedingly grim prospect, I actually found myself excitedly singing, “I’ve discovered the way of gladness...” This was joyous reformation.

I believe that we as Reformers are best poised to advocate joyous reformation. We are not a miserable crowd. Rather our belief is that it is our privilege and joy to draw as close to God and His ways as possible regardless of the difficulties that it may involve. Hence we may encourage others to assertively engage change/reformation for God as a friend rather than a foe.

May “joyous reformation” for Jesus continue to be our principle, practice and proclamation is my prayer, **AMEN!!**

Kelly Schultz, Alberta, Canada



“And not abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the great of these is LOVE.” 1 Cor. 13:13.

In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul accents the exquisitely beautiful element in Christian life—LOVE, the precious and indispensable love of God pervading human lives and portrayed in behaviour.

### Love Gifts of the Spirit

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31; 13:1; 14:1, Paul describes the many spiritual gifts with which the Spirit had endowed the Corinthians. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit were meant to enrich the believers “for the common good.” 1 Cor. 12:7 RSV. Paul did not want the Corinthians to lack any gift (1 Cor. 1:7). But in the Corinthian church some were exercising gifts that the Holy Spirit had not inspired. “Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gift of God’s Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:14 RSV). Paul added, “I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh.” (1 Cor. 3:1 RSV)

Unless the Spirit of God inspires and activates our gifts, we cannot regard them as “spiritual” gifts, but as counterfeits. The gifts that Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and verses 27-31 are always bestowed and inspired by the Holy Spirit, any attempt to use these gifts apart from the Holy Spirit’s action in our lives is an unloving deed. “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have no love (imparted by the Spirit), I am as a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” (1 Cor. 13:1 RSV)

### Love is our Individual and Corporate Need

As we read 1 Corinthians 13, we see to what heights an author may climb when borne aloft by the Holy Spirit of God. 1 Corinthians 13 is devoted to this sublime subject. Without love the Christian who may receive many other gifts of God is a pauper. Some one has said, “Without love he (humanity) is a moral cipher, a zero in the arithmetic of the ages.” The energy and power in all of God’s rich endowments is love.

“The Lord desires me to call the attention of His people to the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. Read this chapter every day and from it obtains comfort and strength. Learn from it the value that God places on sanctified, heaven-born love, and let the lesson that it teaches come home to your hearts. Learn that Christlike love is of heavenly birth, and that without it all other qualifications are worthless.” Ellen G. White Comments, SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1091.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” 1 Cor. 13:1-3.

“A missionary paraphrased the first three verses of 1 Corinthians 13 in this way: If I have the language perfectly and speak like a native, and have not His love for them, I am nothing. If I have diplomas and degrees and know all the up-to-date methods, and have not His touch of understanding love, I am nothing. If I have all faith and great ideals and magnificent plans, and not His love that sweats and bleeds and



*“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not.”*

weeps and prays and pleads, I am nothing. If I give my clothes and money to them, and have not His love for them, I am nothing.

“If I surrender all prospects, leave home and friends and make the sacrifices of a missionary career, and turn sour and selfish amid the daily annoyances and slights of a missionary life, and have not the love that yields its rights, its pleasures, its pet plans, I am nothing. Virtue has ceased to go out of me. If I can heal all manner of sickness and disease, but wound hearts and hurt feelings for want of His love that is kind, I am nothing. If I can write articles or publish books that win applause, but fail to transcribe the Word of the Cross into the language of His love, I am nothing.” Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations*, pp. 758-9.

In his first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul sets forth the importance of that love which should be cherished by the followers of Christ. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

No matter how high his profession, he whose heart is not imbued with the love for God and for his fellow men is not a disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith, and even have power to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality, but should he from some other motive than genuine love bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favour of God. In his zeal he might even meet a martyr's death, yet if destitute of the gold of love he would be regarded by God as a deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite.

The apostle proceeds to specify the fruits of love: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not.” The divine love ruling in the heart exterminates pride and selfishness. “Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” The purest joy springs from the deepest humiliation. The strongest and noblest character rests upon the foundation of patience and love, and trusting submission to the will of God.

Charity “doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” The heart in which love rules will not be filled with passion or revenge, by injuries which pride and self-love would deem unbearable. Love



is unsuspecting, ever placing the most favourable construction upon the motives and acts of others. Love will never needlessly expose the faults of others. It does not listen eagerly to unfavourable reports, but rather seeks to bring to mind some good qualities of the one defamed.

Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” He whose heart is imbued with love is filled with sorrow at the errors and weaknesses of others; but when truth triumphs, when the cloud that darkened the fair face of another is removed, or when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected, he rejoices.

“Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” Love not only bears with other’s faults, but cheerfully submits to whatever suffering or inconvenience such forbearance makes necessary. This love “never faileth.” It can never lose its value; it is the attribute of heaven. As a precious treasure it will be carried by its possessor through the portals of the city of God.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace. Discord and strife are the work of Satan and the fruit of sin. If we would as a people enjoy peace and love, we must put away our sins; we must come into harmony with God, and we shall be in harmony with one another. Let each ask himself: Do I possess the grace of love? Have I learned to suffer long and be kind? Talents, learning, and eloquence, without this heavenly attribute, will be as meaningless as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. Alas that this precious treasure is so lightly valued and so little sought by many who profess the faith!” 5T 168, 169.

“Love one another, says our Saviour, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Christ has given us an example of pure, disinterested love. You have not as yet seen deficiency in this respect, and your great need of this heavenly attainment, without which all your good purposes, and your zeal, even if it be of that nature that you could give your goods to feed the poor and your body to be burned, is nothing. You need that charity which suffereth long, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Without the spirit of

love, no one can be like Christ. With this principle in the soul, no one can be like the world.” 2T 169.

### Loveless, Faithless Prophecy

“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove “MOUNTAINS,” and have not charity, I am nothing.” 1 Cor. 13:2.

Bible prophets from Moses to John exhibited true, persistent faith and abiding love. They bore the signature required to qualify as God’s true messengers. “Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” (2 Peter 1:21) and the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit bestowed on them. True, sin may have marred their record, but the habitual tendency of their lives was commendable in God’s sight.

Love and faith in God are the acid tests of a prophet—the credentials above all their other God-given gifts. Concerning Ellen G. White, God’s messenger to the remnant, A.G. Daniells wrote: “She was uniformly pleasant, cheerful, and courageous. She was never careless, flippant, or in any way cheap in conversation or manner of life. She was the personification of serious earnestness regarding the things of the Kingdom. I never once heard her boast of the gracious gift God had bestowed upon her, or of the marvelous results of her endeavours.” *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy*, p. 368.

### Signs of God’s Love and Care

The bow represents Christ’s love, which encircles the earth, and reaches unto the highest heavens, connecting man with God, and linking earth with heaven.

“As we gaze upon the beautiful sight, we may be joyful in God, assured that He Himself is looking upon this token of His covenant, and that as He looks upon it He remembers the children of earth, to whom it was given. Their afflictions, perils, and trials are not hidden from Him. We may rejoice in hope, for the bow of God’s Covenant is over us.” Ellen G. White comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1091. Genesis 9:13-17.

Dear co-workers and all believers in Christ

in the whole world, God is LOVE, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 1 John 4:16. “If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4:20, 21.

“The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin. Many think that they are representing the justice of God while they wholly fail of representing His tenderness and His great love.” MH 163.

“Nothing tends more to promote health of body and soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings—as much a duty as it is to pray. If we are heaven bound, how can we go as a band of mourners, groaning and complaining all along the way to our Father’s house.” MH 251.

“When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him; and in the contemplation of Him, self will be forgotten. Love to Christ will be the spring of action... A profession of Christ without this deep love is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery.” SC 44, 45.

“No matter how many good qualities we may have, however honourable and refined we may consider ourselves, if the soul is not baptized with the heavenly grace of love to God and one another, we are deficient in true goodness and unfit for heaven, where all is love and unity.” 4T 224.

We may be zealous in religious services, we may do much work; but without love, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven.

Above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. **AMEN.**

*Golden Kayawa Hingabantu, Zambia*

# VESSELS OF HONOUR



“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay [is] in the potter’s hand, so [are] ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.” Jeremiah 18:6.

God, our Creator, made man out of dust; He is the Potter and we are the clay. All men were created according to God’s image, for His honour and glory and we are all compared to earthen vessels.

Vessels made out of clay were used in the olden times to store different valuable products such as olives, oil, wine, etc. These vessels can be seen today in some well-known archaeological museums of the world.

They were made in a workshop, by skilled craftsmen. When a vessel had a crack it was mended with wax and sold at a cheaper price. People who treasured their products wanted vessels without wax so that they could hold the precious content without any risk. The Latin word for “wax” is “cera”, and for “without” is “sine”. The combination of these two words gives origin to the word sincere. We, as vessels of the Lord that contain the wonderful treasure of the truth, must be sincere, have a clean and virtuous heart so that no word of the precious truth of the gospel may be lost.

Since the fall of man into sin, we are all broken vessels; sin has opened big cracks in our character. It has destroyed the image of God in us, but there is no need to remain in that condition.

Our merciful God takes us into His workshop, but He does not use wax to mend us. The prophet Jeremiah explains to us what happens when we are found by the Lord, “The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make [it].” (Jeremiah 18:1-4). God makes us all over again. Through Christ we become new creatures, new vessels, capable of containing the truth, living it, and preaching it, for the glory of God.

Once, King Ahasuerus of Persia gave a great feast that lasted seven days and invited all the people in his palace, “And ... the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king’s palace; [Where were] white, green, and blue, [hangings], fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds [were of] gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble. And they gave [them] drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king. And the drinking [was] according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man’s pleasure.” Esther 1:5-8.

This feast is a wonderful allegory of the plan of salvation. Here it is spoken of golden vessels. In 1 Peter 1:7 we read, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” It is through trials and tested faith that we turn into golden vessels. Each one of us has gone through different trials, is tested in a different way, therefore the degree of genuine

# PRACTICAL RELIGION

faith is different in each one, as the vessels were different one from the other, but they were all made of gold. King Ahasuerus is a symbol of God the Father. We are all invited to His great feast and we can only attend when we have turned into golden vessels through faith.

The amount of wine served is according to the size of the vessels. The wine is the grace of God, represented in the blood shed on Calvary. The king is generous and offers His grace without limits, but each one receives according to the capacity of his gold vessel, of his tried faith. Does it not really happen that way? The more we trust the Lord the more of His grace we receive! Our faith plays a great role in our daily life and in our preparation for the marriage of the Lamb.

“And the drinking [was] according to the law; none did compel.” Which law? The law of love. Only love for His subjects moved the King of the Universe to offer such a feast! Nobody is compelled to drink of the wine; there is no obligation to accept God’s grace, but it is poured generously according to every man’s pleasure.” We are the ones who decide how much we want to receive from His infinite grace.

We all have the privilege to become gold vessels for the glory of our God and receive of His grace in abundance. May the Lord help us to walk by faith at all times, so that we may be found prepared for the day Jesus comes as King of kings to take us home.

*AMEN*

*Teresa Corti*



Our religion and our faith is practical. It is intensely practical in our every day lives. “How is this?” you may ask.

Well, it has to do with the way we eat, the way we dress, the way we work, and the way we relate to those around us.

In our unconverted state we eat, dress, work and relate to others exactly as our unconverted heart impresses us to do. We eat, dress, work and relate the way we feel like it. But when we have received the Holy Spirit of God, and been convicted and converted, we make changes and begin new ways of doing all these daily things.

If we want to work for God, and be a part of His work, we can begin exactly where we are. We can educate ourselves to be patient in situations that irritate our feelings. For example: Someone interrupts you when you are studying; you feel impatient and angry, but you send up a silent prayer for help, and answer patiently. Or you are driving, and someone cuts in front of you, causing you to have to slow down. What is your reaction?

In our Christian experience we must begin at the bottom of the ladder of progress. We must start at the ABC’s of elementary faith and religion. Just as in school where we practice printing over and over until we have mastered it, so our faith needs practice. Constant, continual practice. These things like patience, kindness and love are not natural to our depraved human hearts.

Obedience and submission to our parents is not natural to us, but it is essential to our experience, and we cannot be saved without it. God cannot take rebellious, disobedient persons into His kingdom of harmony and love.

When we gain the victory over our disobedient, rebellious, impatient natures, what a wonderful feeling of freedom comes over us. Really it is worth a great deal of suffering and self-denial to enter into the atmosphere of freedom and joy that is heaven where God is.

But then again, we are constantly confronted by our selfish human natures. It is a fight we must constantly maintain with ourselves, that self shall not have the victory. Through Christ we may conquer. We must entreat His help continually. We are constantly confronted by situations that tax our patience and our faith. But we cannot give out what we have not received in. We cannot manifest a patience that has not been instilled into our inmost souls.

And I think that is the key word. And the key to practical religion. Instilled. Still. “Be still, and know that I am God.” AMEN.

Kathleen Ross, Alberta, Canada

# WHO WILL YOU CHOOSE... JESUS OR BARABBAS?



Barabbas is a well known person in the Bible who was set at liberty at the trial of Jesus. He was a hardened criminal, however the Jewish leaders chose him over Jesus.

“It was customary at this feast to release some one prisoner whom the people might choose. This custom was of pagan invention; there was not a shadow of justice in it, but it was greatly prized by the Jews. The Roman authorities at this time held a prisoner named Barabbas, who was under sentence of death. This man had claimed to be the Messiah. He claimed authority to establish a different order of things, to set the world right. Under satanic delusion he claimed that whatever he could obtain by theft and robbery was his own. He had done wonderful things through satanic agencies, he had gained a following among the people, and had excited sedition against the Roman government. Under cover of religious enthusiasm he was a hardened and desperate villain, bent on rebellion and cruelty. By giving the people a choice between this man and the innocent Saviour, Pilate thought to arouse them to a sense of justice. He hoped to gain their sympathy for Jesus in opposition to the priests and rulers. So, turning to the crowd, he said with great earnestness, ‘Whom will ye that I release

unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?’” DA 733

“There stood the Son of God, wearing the robe of mockery and the crown of thorns. Stripped to the waist, His back showed the long, cruel stripes, from which the blood flowed freely. His face was stained with blood, and bore the marks of exhaustion and pain; but never had it appeared more beautiful than now. The Saviour’s visage was not marred before His enemies. Every feature expressed gentleness and resignation and the tenderest pity for His cruel foes. In His manner there was no cowardly weakness, but the strength and dignity of long-suffering. In striking contrast was the prisoner at His side. Every line of the countenance of Barabbas proclaimed him the hardened ruffian that he was. The contrast spoke to every beholder. Some of the spectators were weeping. As they looked upon Jesus, their hearts were full of sympathy. Even the priests and rulers were convicted that He was all that He claimed to be.” DA 735

It didn’t take them long to make their decision. “Like the bellowing of wild beasts came the answer of the mob, ‘Release unto us Barabbas!’ Louder and louder swelled the cry, Barabbas! Barabbas! Thinking that

the people had not understood his question, Pilate asked, ‘Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?’ But they cried out again, ‘Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas!’ ‘What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?’ Pilate asked. Again the surging multitude roared like demons. Demons themselves, in human form, were in the crowd, and what could be expected but the answer, ‘Let Him be crucified?’” DA 733. “Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.” John 19:15. They rejected Jesus as their master and chose Caesar as their king and chose to release Barabbas.

Every time this story is read, people cringe at the decision of the Jewish people. No one who claims to be a follower of Christ today would claim to be of that crowd. Even Pilate trembled, knowing that he was not facing an ordinary man. He was facing the Son of God. Pilate therefore made an attempt to free himself from the guilt. He washed his hands, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person.” At this point Caiaphas took full responsibility for the guilt.

“When Pilate declared himself innocent of the blood of Christ, Caiaphas answered

defiantly, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' The awful words were taken up by the priests and rulers, and echoed by the crowd in an inhuman roar of voices. The whole multitude answered and said, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.'

"The people of Israel had made their choice. Pointing to Jesus they had said, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.' Barabbas, the robber and murderer, was the representative of Satan. Christ was the representative of God. Christ had been rejected; Barabbas had been chosen. Barabbas they were to have. In making this choice they accepted him who from the beginning was a liar and a murderer. Satan was their leader. As a nation they would act out his dictation. His works they would do. His rule they must endure. That people who chose Barabbas in the place of Christ were to feel the cruelty of Barabbas as long as time should last.

"Looking upon the smitten Lamb of God, the Jews had cried, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' That awful cry ascended to the throne of God. That sentence, pronounced upon themselves, was written in heaven. That prayer was heard. The blood of the Son of God was upon their children and their children's children, a perpetual curse." DA 738/739

Throughout history we read of atrocities of the heathen against the righteous. Evil cannot tolerate good. Darkness hates light and attempts to stamp it out. Persecutions have arisen on many occasions against the people of God. The Apostle Paul, before his conversion, made a concerted effort to crush out the Christian religion by persecuting the followers of Christ – putting many of them to death. The persecutions have continued from that time onward and still today; in some parts of the world, being a Christian can cause you much difficulty.

Often these cases are not very well publicised. When Christians are persecuted in heathen nations, we don't hear about it routinely on the news. Even the atrocities against Christians in the Dark Ages are not spoken about regularly. However, many people are aware of the Holocaust during the last World War. Many movies have been made about the heroes who helped to rescue the poor Jewish people who were persecuted. While it was a sad event, there were many Christians also who lost their lives, who we hear little about.

The unfortunate fact for the Jewish nation is that they rejected God as their leader and Caiaphas requested that the blood of Jesus be placed on his nation and his children's children. Is it any wonder that they have suffered as much as they have through the ages?

As a nation, they rejected Christ as their Master, and Jesus is calling them individually to come back. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Romans 6:18 The opposite is also true; if we refuse to be servants of Christ, we become servants of sin. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16. Going from one side to the other is simply a change of masters. The person is either a slave to the tyrant of sin or a servant of righteousness. But to be a servant of righteousness is actually real freedom. Those who serve sin and Satan are slaves to their own impulses and passions, which in turn places them under the control of the wicked one. In calling men to serve righteousness, God is offering them freedom. God is calling them to make Him their Master on an individual basis.

"The Jewish rulers did not love God; therefore **they cut themselves away from Him, and rejected all His overtures for a just settlement.** Christ, the Beloved of God, came to assert the claims of the Owner of the vineyard; but the husbandmen treated Him with marked contempt, saying, '**We will not have this man to rule over us.**' **They changed masters – why?** They envied Christ's beauty of character. His manner of teaching was far superior to theirs, and they dreaded His success. He remonstrated with them, unveiling their hypocrisy, and showing them the sure results of their course of action. This stirred them to madness. They smarted under the rebukes they could not silence. They hated the high standard of righteousness which Christ continually presented. They saw that His teaching was placing them where their selfishness would be uncloaked, and they determined to kill Him. They hated His example of truthfulness and piety and the elevated spirituality revealed in all He did. His whole life was a reproof to their selfishness, and when the final test came, the test which meant obedience unto eternal

life or disobedience unto eternal death, they rejected the Holy One of Israel. When they were asked to choose between Christ and Barabbas, they cried out, 'Release unto us Barabbas!' Luke 23:18" COL 293

"With a father's heart, God bore with His people. **He pleaded with them by mercies given and mercies withdrawn.** Patiently He set their sins before them, and in forbearance waited for their acknowledgment. Prophets and messengers were sent to urge God's claim upon the husbandmen; but instead of being welcomed, they were treated as enemies. The husbandmen persecuted and killed them. God sent still other messengers, but they received the same treatment as the first, only that the husbandmen showed still more determined hatred." COL 293

"**Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book** which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah." COL 294

**Is Jesus pleading for you? Would you choose Barabbas? What choice are you making?**

Unfortunately although they condemn the Jewish nation for what they did to Jesus, many are choosing Barabbas still today. When they refuse to accept Jesus they are choosing Barabbas. Even if they claim to be Christians they may be choosing Barabbas. When they love the idols of this world – they choose Barabbas. When they have no time for Jesus – they choose Barabbas. When they don't have time to pray, study and attend religious services – they are choosing Barabbas. When they refuse to keep the law of God – they are choosing Barabbas. When they would rather watch TV or read a novel, than read the Bible – they are choosing Barabbas. There are many other ways that people choose Barabbas. It would do well for each one of us to investigate our lives to see if we are choosing Barabbas over Jesus in any areas.

Jesus told a parable about people who were choosing Barabbas rather like the kindness of a rich man who made a feast for his friends (Luke 14:16-26). One of his friends had just married a wife, another one had

just purchased some oxen and another had just purchased a piece of land. These were more important to them than Jesus. They had no time for Him. Even family ties are not to be more important than Jesus. Some have stayed away from the truth to please a parent or spouse, but this is not acceptable with God. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Matthew 10:37

In the day of Judgement these people will sadly be found wanting. Too long they've delayed changing masters. "When sinners are compelled to look upon Him who clothed His divinity with humanity, and who still wears this garb, their confusion is indescribable. The scales fall from their eyes, and they see that which before they would not see. They realize what they might have been had they received Christ, and improved the opportunities granted them. They see the law which they have spurned, exalted even as God's throne is exalted. They see God Himself giving reverence to His law." (RH June 18, 1901).

### **Where will these people who have chosen Barabbas be when Jesus comes?**

Jesus is pleading with all sinners through His chosen messengers to give up their sinful ways. Some will gladly accept the reproof and admonishment, while others will reject the message and get angry.

"Those who reject the mercy so freely proffered, will yet be made to know the worth of that which they have despised. They will feel the agony which Christ endured upon the cross to purchase redemption for all who would receive it. And they will then realize what they have lost – eternal life and the immortal inheritance." RH Sept. 4, 1883

"What a scene that will be! No pen can describe it! The accumulated guilt of the world will be laid bare, and the voice of the Judge will be heard saying to the wicked, 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.'

"Then those who pierced Christ will remember how they slighted His love and abused His compassion; how they chose in His stead Barabbas, a robber and murderer; how they crowned the Saviour with thorns, and caused Him to be scourged and crucified; how, in the agony of His death

on the cross, they taunted Him, saying, 'Let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.' 'He saved others; himself he cannot save.' They will seem to hear again His voice of entreaty. Every tone of solicitude will vibrate as distinctly in their ears as when the Saviour spoke to them. Every act of insult and mockery done to Christ will be as fresh in their memory as when the satanic deeds were done.

"They will call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. 'The wrath of the Lamb'--One who ever showed Himself full of tenderness, patience, and long-suffering, who, having given Himself up as the sacrificial offering, was led as a lamb to the slaughter, to save sinners from the doom now falling upon them because they would not allow Him to take away their guilt." RH June 18, 1901. You too will share in this fate if you are choosing Barabbas over Jesus.

"The whole world stands condemned before the great moral standard of righteousness. In the great day of judgment every soul that has lived on the earth will receive sentence in accordance as to whether his deeds have been good or evil in the light of the law of God. Every mouth will be stopped as the cross with its dying Victim shall be presented, and its real bearing shall be seen by every mind that has been sin blinded and corrupted. Sinners will stand condemned before the cross, with its mysterious Victim bowing beneath the infinite burden of human transgression. How quickly will be swept away every subterfuge, every lying excuse! Human apostasy will appear in its heinous character. Men will see what their choice has been. They will then understand that they have chosen Barabbas instead of Christ, the Prince of Peace." ST March 7, 1895

### **WHO WILL YOU CHOOSE?**

Some people in God's church are also choosing Barabbas today. People have left the faith because they loved the world. They have left the faith because they were offended. They have also left the faith because they did not love the truth and therefore God sent them a strong delusion that they believed a lie (2 Thess. 2:11).

"The scene in the judgement hall in

Jerusalem is a symbol of what will take place in the closing scenes of this earth's history. The world will accept Christ, the Truth, or they will accept Satan, the first great rebel, a robber, apostate, and murderer. They will either reject the message of mercy in regard to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, or they will accept the truth as it is in Jesus. If they accept Satan and his falsehoods, they identify themselves with the chief of all liars, and with all who are disloyal, while they turn from no less a personage than the Son of the infinite God." RH Jan. 30, 1900.

"When Jesus was on earth, Satan led the people to reject the Son of God, and to choose Barabbas, who in character represented Satan, the god of this world. The Lord Jesus Christ came to dispute the usurpation of Satan in the kingdoms of the world. The conflict is not yet ended; and as we draw near the close of time, the battle waxes more intense. As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will personate Jesus Christ; and the world that has rejected the truth will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings. He will exercise his power, and work upon the human imagination. He will corrupt both the minds and the bodies of men, and will work through the children of disobedience, fascinating and charming, as does a serpent. What a spectacle will the world be for heavenly intelligences! What a spectacle for God, the Creator of the world, to behold!

"The form Satan assumed in Eden when leading our first parents to transgress, was of a character to bewilder and confuse the mind. He will work in as subtle a manner as we near the end of earth's history. All his deceiving power will be brought to bear upon human subjects, to complete the work of deluding the human family. So deceptive will be his working, that men will do as they did in the days of Christ; and when asked, Whom shall I release unto you, Christ or Barabbas? the almost universal cry will be, Barabbas, Barabbas! And when the question is asked, 'What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?' the cry again will be, 'Crucify him!'

"Christ will be represented in the person of those who accept the truth, and who



identify their interest with that of their Lord. The world will be enraged at them in the same way that they were enraged at Christ, and the disciples of Christ will know that they are to be treated no better than was their Lord. But Christ will surely identify His interest with that of those who accept Him as their personal Saviour. Every insult, every reproach, every false accusation made against them by those who have turned their ears away from the truth and are turned unto fables, will be charged upon the guilty ones as done to Christ in the person of His saints.” RH April 14, 1896

“When Christ was upon this earth, the world preferred Barabbas. And today the world and the churches are making the same choice. The scenes of the betrayal, the rejection, and the crucifixion of Christ have been re-enacted, and will again be re-enacted on an immense scale. People will be filled with the attributes of the enemy, and with them his delusions will have great power. Just to that degree that light is refused will there be misconception and misunderstanding. Those who reject Christ and choose Barabbas work under a ruinous deception. Misrepresentation and false witness will grow to open rebellion. The eye being evil, the whole body will be full of darkness. Those who give their affections to any leader but Christ will find themselves under the control, body, soul, and spirit, of an infatuation that is so entrancing that under its power souls turn

away from hearing the truth to believe a lie. They are ensnared and taken, and by their every action they cry, Release unto us Barabbas, but crucify Christ.

“Even now this decision is being made. The scenes enacted at the cross are being re-enacted. In the churches that have departed from truth and righteousness it is being revealed what human nature can do and will do when the love of God is not an abiding principle in the soul. We need not be surprised at anything that may take place now. We need not marvel at any developments of horror. Those who trample under their unholy feet the law of God have the same spirit as had the men who insulted and betrayed Jesus. Without any compunction of conscience, they will do the deeds of their father, the devil. They will ask the question that came from the traitorous lips of Judas, What will you give me if I betray unto you Jesus the Christ? Even now Christ is being betrayed in the person of His saints.

“In view of the history of the life and death of Christ, can we be surprised if the world is hollow and insincere? Can we in our day trust in man, or make flesh our arm? Shall we not choose Christ as our Leader? He alone can save us from sin.

“When the world is at last brought up for trial before the great white throne, to account for its rejection of Jesus Christ,

God’s own messenger to our world, what a solemn scene it will be! What a reckoning will have to be made for nailing to the cross One who came to our world as a living epistle of the law. God will ask each one the question, What have you done with My only-begotten Son? What will those answer who have refused to accept the truth? They will be obliged to say, We hated Jesus, and cast Him out. We cried, Crucify Him, crucify Him. We chose Barabbas in His stead. If those to whom the light of Heaven is presented reject it, they reject Christ. They reject the only provision whereby they may be cleansed from pollution. They crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. To them it will be said, ‘I never knew you: depart from me.’ God will assuredly avenge the death of His Son.” RH Jan. 30, 1900

“On whose side are we? The world cast Christ out, the heavens received Him. Man, finite man, rejected the Prince of life; God, our sovereign Ruler, received Him into the heavens. God has exalted Him. Man crowned Him with a crown of thorns, God has crowned Him with a crown of royal majesty. We must all think candidly. Will you have this man Christ Jesus to rule over you, or will you have Barabbas? The death of Christ brings to the rejecter of His mercy the wrath and judgments of God, unmixed with mercy. This is the wrath of the Lamb. But the death of Christ is hope and eternal life to all who receive Him and believe in Him.” 5BC 1107.

“Each son and daughter of Adam chooses either Christ or Barabbas as his general. And all who place themselves on the side of the disloyal are standing under Satan’s black banner, and are charged with rejecting and despitefully using Christ. They are charged with deliberately crucifying the Lord of life and glory.” (RH Jan. 30, 1900.

***Who will you choose as your master? Will you choose Jesus or Barabbas?***

***Wendy Eaton, Australia***

# COOKING CLASS AT HAMILTON CHURCH

After much planning, preparing and prayer for several weeks, the Hamilton Church held their cooking class on Sunday, October 29th. at 2:30pm.

Although we had distributed our printed invitations in stores and had invited friends and acquaintances, we did not know how many to expect. We hoped and prayed that we would have a good turn out. Well, we were not disappointed. Several of us came early to get things set up and while busy at work the people began coming by ones and twos and threes. Some, who had promised to come, did not, but then others came instead.

After Brother Evald had welcomed everyone. Brother Jerry held a very interesting and informative seminar .He first spoke about treating skin cancer with a wild plant "leafy spurge "He then with Herson's help showed the proper way to rest and exercise a bad lower back. Following this, the visitors had many health questions which Br.Jerry was able to answer with ease.

Next Brother Evald spoke on the nutrients in carrots, celery and beets and the value of juicing. He then served a glass of delicious juice to everyone. He also distributed copies of the article from the November issue of the Messenger entitled " Cancer-Fighting Powerhouses".

Lentil Bean Soup, Sunflower Carrot Loaf and Crunchy Coleslaw were presented next by Sister Gloria Ferguson.

Sister Franziska made Hummus and Cashew/Olive Spread and Sister Rosario showed how to make Soy Butter. Many of the guests then expressed their desire to attend another cooking demonstration in the near future. While we were busy setting our food on the table, the visitors could browse through the many books offered for purchase and quite a number were sold.

In addition to the items mentioned above, we also served four kinds of bread, lentil spread, pineapple/date squares and tapioca pudding.

During the meal, Brother Evald and Brother Jerry had the opportunity to speak with several of the visitors. We thank the Lord for giving us this opportunity to share this small portion of the health message with about 20 visitors. May He bless all who attended.

I also wish to thank Maria (one of our visitors) Lois, Maurine, Valerie and Br. Abel for helping with the setting up and the cleaning up afterwards. It was very much appreciated.

On behalf of the Hamilton Church, thank you to all who supported us from the Mississauga and Toronto Church by your presence. **Amen**

**Franziska S. Pedersen, Hamilton**

## Recipes For Cooking Class:

### **SOY BUTTER**

*1 cup plain soymilk  
2 tbsp. soy flour*

### **METHOD**

*Mix and boil together for 5 minutes, then let it cool. When it has cooled down, pour into blender and slowly add 2 cups of the oil of your choice (corn, soy or vegetable), while blending. Add salt according to taste and add some drops of lemon juice.*

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### **MAG'S PEAS & BEAN SOUP**

*1 ½ cups onions  
1 cup yellow split peas  
1 ½ cups celery, chopped  
1 cup green split peas  
1 ½ cups carrots, chopped*

*1 cup red kidney beans  
1 ½ cups squash, chopped  
3 Tbsp. seasoning  
3- 4 cloves garlic  
2-3 sprigs thyme  
3 green onions  
2 bay leaves  
1 scotch bonnet pepper  
3 Tbsp. olive oil  
8-10 cups water  
6-8 pimento seeds  
Mini Dumpling  
salt to taste*

### **METHOD**

*Wash and soak beans and peas together overnight in refrigerator. Saute onions, garlic, carrots, celery, squash and seasoning in olive oil for about 5-10 minutes. Add soaked beans and water. Cook until beans are tender. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer for approximately 30 minutes. Adjust seasoning and thickness of soup if necessary.*

*Serves 8-10 persons*





# HOW IT WAS BLOTTED OUT



## CHILDRENS CORNER

For many years I had been a follower of strange god, and a lover of this world and its vanities. I was self-righteous, and thought I had religion of my own which was better than that of the Bible. I did not know God, and did not serve Him. Prayer was forgotten, public worship neglected; and worldly morality was the tree which brought forth its own deceptive fruit.

But when I shared parental responsibility, and our boy was growing up, our love for him made us anxious about his welfare and future career. His questions often puzzled me, and the sweet and earnest manner in which he inquired of his poor sinful father to know more about his Heavenly Father, and that "happy land, far, far away," of which his nurse had taught him, proved to me that God had given me a great blessing in the child.

A greater distrust of myself, and a greater sense of my inability to assure my boy of the truth contained in the simple little prayers that I had learned from my mother in childhood, gradually caused me to reflect. Still, I never went to church; had not even a Bible in the house. What was I to teach my boy, --Christ and Him crucified, or the doctrines I had tried to believe?

One of his little friends died, then another, then his uncle. All these deaths made an impression on the boy. He rebelled against it; wanted to know "why God had done it?" It was hard that God should take away his friends; he wished He would not do it. I, of course, had to explain the best I could. One evening he was lying on the bed partly undressed; my wife and I were seated by the fire. She had been telling me that Willie had not been a good boy that day, and I had reproved him for it. All was quiet, when suddenly he broke out in a loud crying and sobbing, which surprised us. I went to him, and asked him what was the

matter.

"I don't want it there, father; I don't want it there," said the child.

"What, my child, what is it?"



"Why, father, I don't want the angels to write down in God's book all the bad things I have done today. I don't want it there; I wish it could be wiped out;" and his distress increased. What could I do? I did not believe, but yet I had been taught the way. I had to console him, so I said,--

"Well, you need not cry; you can have it all wiped out in a minute, if you want."

"How, father, how?"

"Why, get down on your knees, and ask God, for Christ's sake, to wipe it out, and he will do it."

I did not have to speak twice. He jumped out of bed, saying, "Father, won't you come and help me?"

Now came the trial. The boy's distress was so great, and he pleaded so earnestly, that the man who had never once bowed before God in spirit and truth, got down on his knees beside that little child, and asked God to wipe away his sins; and perhaps, though my lips did not speak

it, my heart included my own sins too. We then rose, and he lay down in his bed again. In a few moments more he said,--

"Father, are you sure it is all wiped out?"

Oh, how the acknowledgment grated upon my unbelieving heart, as the words came to my mouth,--"Why, yes, my son; the Bible says that if from your heart you ask God for Christ's sake to do it, and if you are really sorry for what you have done, it shall be all blotted out."

A smile of pleasure passed over his face, as he quietly asked,--

"What did the angel blot it out with? With a sponge?"

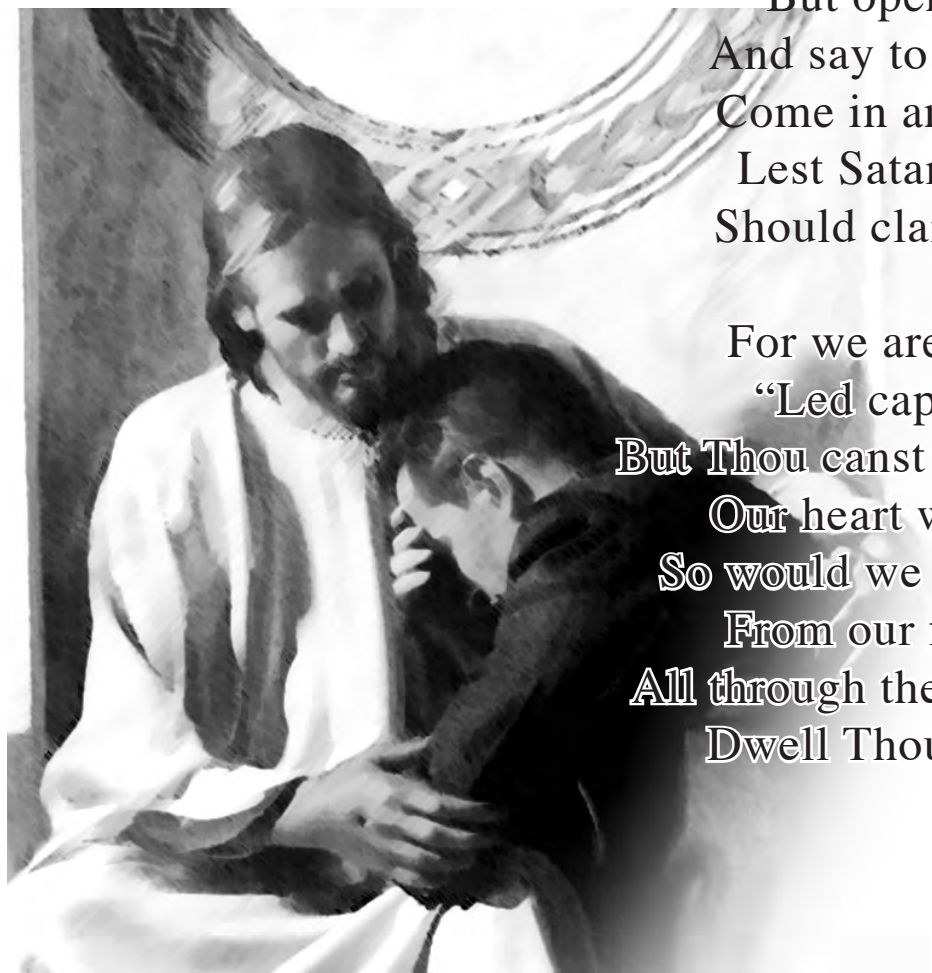
Again was my whole soul stirred within  
me, as I answered,--

“No, but with the precious blood of  
Christ. The blood of Christ cleanseth  
from all sin.”

The fountains had at last burst forth.  
They could not be checked, and my cold  
heart was melted within me. I felt like  
a poor guilty sinner, and, turning away,  
said,--

“My dear wife, we must first find God,  
if we want to show Him to our children.  
We cannot show them the way, unless we  
know it ourselves.

And in the silent hour of the night I bowed  
beside that dear boy and prayed, “Lord,  
I believe, help thou mine unbelief!” My  
wife, too, united with me, and we prayed  
jointly for ourselves and our child. And  
God heard our prayers, and received us,  
as He always does those who seek Him  
with the whole heart.



## The Way to Overcome

When first from slumber waking,  
No matter what the hour,  
If you will say, “Dear Jesus,  
Come fill me with Thy power,”  
You’ll find that every trouble  
And every care and sin  
Will vanish, surely, fully  
Because Christ enters in.

It may be late in morning,  
Or in the dark before,  
When first you hear His knocking;  
But open wide the door.  
And say to Him, “Dear Jesus,  
Come in and take the throne,  
Lest Satan with his angels,  
Should claim it for his own.”

For we are weak and sinful,  
“Led captive at his will.”  
But Thou canst “bind the strong man,”  
Our heart with sweetness fill.  
So would we have “Thy presence”  
From our first waking hour;  
All through the swift day’s moments,  
Dwell Thou with us in power.



# IMS around the world



Cooking Class In Hamilton, Canada



Toronto Canada



Toronto Canada

# Thank You

*Amidst the darkness that the world has produced,  
dear Lord I thank You for giving me a different path to choose.  
When fear and pain surrounded my soul,  
You brought your blessings and made me whole.  
You have carried me through the hardest times,  
You filled my darkened heart with light.  
When my hope was dimmed You lifted me up.  
When love was lacking You gave me more than I asked.  
Your power reformed me, Your love restored me.  
With great care You have handled someone as weak  
as I. Great power You give me to set wrong habits aside.  
How to put in words all that You are, a Saviour, a King,  
the Glory that sets me free.  
You are the refreshing stream that cleanses my soul  
the only true love I've ever known.*

*Poem by Emelina Garcia  
Toronto, Canada*