

The Reformation *Messenger*



VOLUME 17, NUMBER 2, FEBRUARY 2010

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



“Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched,
and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:”

Genesis 18:4

MESSENGER SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL, DETAILS INSIDE

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

ABOUT THE COVER

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Kenya
Photo by: Eric Song

Inside Cover:
Photo by: Oscar Oviedo
Church group in Calgary at baptism.

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The Reformation
Messenger

Official Publication of the International Missionary Society of the Seventh Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field.

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God's leading

He who is your leader determines your destination. We are like sheep who need a shepherd. And there are two leaders from whom you can choose. One of them leads you to heaven and eternal life, and the other will lead you to destruction and eternal death. Both of these leaders invite you to follow them, and you must decide which one it will be.

Out of the six and half billion people in our world, only a few will make it to heaven. It will be like in the time of Noah when only a few were saved from the millions of people who lived on the earth. And the reason for it is that only a few decide to follow the right leader.

The way to heaven is narrow, and Satan is confusing people, and leading them in the wrong way that seems easier to walk on. Even the professed Christians, who think that they are led by God, are in reality following Satan. If God leads us we all would be in heaven, because He knows the way.

"Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord your God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Isa. 48:17.

God, the Ruler of the whole universe has promised to lead us each one personally. He will lead us in the only good and perfect way

that gives us happiness in this life and salvation and eternal life.

But Satan confuses people that they do not know which way to go, and they mess up their lives and bring untold misery upon themselves, by refusing to follow God's way. So much suffering and trouble is created by selfishness and greed in people.

Because of pride, envy, jealousy, and hatred they make foolish plans and decisions, which cause suffering to themselves and also to others around them. Even physical sickness and early death are the result of man's foolish way of living, eating and drinking.

God knows the way. God who created man knows exactly what is good for us, for our wellbeing and happiness. Yet people think that they have to decide for themselves how to live, and to decide their own future.

Should you get angry if someone is against you, and tries to hurt you, what does God say? "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matt. 5:44.

Solomon writes, "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him." Prov. 26:27.

Haman tried to destroy Mordecai. He made gallows 75 feet high to hang Mordecai on it, but he himself was hung on it, and Mordecai was exalted.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Gal. 6:7.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Prov. 14:12.

Millions are choosing the way that seems right to them and end up in death. The Bible is clear on it, that man has no ability to choose his way.

“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jer. 10:23.

We are led by God or by Satan.

“We all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.” Isa. 53:6.

Even the angels do not have the ability to direct their steps. When one third of the angels decided not to follow the way of God, they ended up following Satan and destroyed themselves. They became evil demons.

If God would allow us to choose our own way, how many fiery trials would we want to pass through, how many disappointments, how much sorrow and affliction would we choose to go through.

Abraham would never have chosen for himself to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Yet what a beautiful lesson did he learn by it. By this sacrifice he understood what God did sacrifice by giving His son to die.

Would Paul have chosen to have the painful thorn to afflict his flesh, which kept him humble?

Would Joseph have chosen to go to Egypt as a slave and spend years in prison?

Would Moses have chosen to spend 40 years caring for sheep?

Would Adam and Eve have chosen to leave paradise and earn their living with hard work outside?

How many martyrs would have chosen the martyr's death for themselves?

Even Jesus prayed that His Father would remove the bitter cup, which was waiting for Him to drink?

If God would allow people to choose their own way, would it not be

prosperity, luxury, much idle time and pleasure?

If this would happen, how many would be sanctified and learn humility and overcome their selfishness and pride, and be fit for heaven?

For the purpose to save us, God has to lead us on a narrow way, beset with difficulties, disappointments, and sorrows.

Jesus said that in the world His followers will have tribulations, and need to deny self and carry a cross.

When we understand the purpose of the fiery trials, then we do not complain, but thank God for them. Peter wrote, “The trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” 1 Pet. 1:7.

We can actually enjoy the way of God. He is happy in the fiery trials and afflictions. Because the Old Israel murmured about the way of God, therefore they could not enter into the Promised Land, but perished in the wilderness.

How do we know for sure that God is leading us, and not Satan? To profess religion does not mean that God is leading us. Careless Christians do not pray without ceasing. “God is not in all His thoughts.” Ps. 10:4. He may think of God sometimes and pray once in a while, but not always. This is a sign that he does not walk with God like Enoch did.

“He abhorreth not evil.” Ps. 36:4. He does not hate sin. He can watch sin and crime on television for entertainment and does not hate and abhor it, but rather enjoys it. This kind of Christian does not love righteousness.

“There is no fear of God before his eyes.” Ps. 36:1.

He may have fear of people, but when no one is watching, he can do sin. He is not afraid that God sees him and his sin.

“The way of peace they know not.” Isa. 59:8. What people do to them makes them upset and angry easily. They are easily offended.

These four points show that while they may profess religion, they are not led by God, but by Satan.

Again there are other four points that prove that God is leading us.

“To guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 2:79.

All who are led by God will have peace that passes understanding. They cannot be offended. They even love their enemies.

“He will guide you into all truth.” John 16:13.

Those that God is leading are not confused. They have no doubts, the deep mysteries of God come clear to them.

“He leadeth me beside the still waters.” Ps. 23:2.

There may be a storm and battle going on outside, but our hearts and minds are calm, as walking beside the still waters.

“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” Heb. 12:6.

If we make a mistake and commit a sin and we feel no chastening of the Lord, it may be that He is not leading us.

If God is leading us, it may be a way that we would not have chosen ourselves.

“I will lead them in paths that they have not known.” Isa. 42:16.

“God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him.” DA 224

How long will He lead us? “For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.” Ps. 48:14.

Our God who loves us so much that He gave His Son to die for us, surely will care for us in all things. He wants us to be happy and full of joy. When He calls us, then answer quickly, “Here am I, take my heart, take my life, take all that I have and lead all the way to the end.” **AMEN.**

Timo Martin, Canada

INDEX TO THE MESSENGER

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Another Royal Invitation

Part 2

*You are invited to come dine with Me,
From now through all eternity.
Believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
And dine with Jesus as your host.
To live eternally,
All you must do is...
R.S.V.P.*



If you wish to meet the great Monarch of the universe who created us and this planet, besides myriads of other worlds, you are to “set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col. 3:2 “Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” (Tit. 2:13) for a much greater banquet is in the making!

Jesus Christ lovingly invites you and every person on earth to be present at His special banquet: “Behold, I have prepared my dinner... all things are ready,” (Matt. 22:4) a feast which in every sense of the word will be “out of this world.”

Which earthly monarch could ever offer an invitation of such magnitude? It is the feast of Jesus Christ, better said, the “marriage supper of the Lamb,” who purchased you and me for an eternal possession unto Himself with His own blood from the iron grip of the deadly enemy Satan, who snatched our first parents out of the Creator’s hand and claimed the earth and everything on it as his.

Unlike the host of skilled, selected servants, cooks, etc., who prepare for a feast of earthly royals, Jesus the “King of kings, and Lord of lords” **Himself** is going to serve His chosen guests. It will then be at the last moment which He had been waiting for since He ate the last supper with His disciples on earth before His suffering and death.

“I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven.” Luke 22:16.

Now this time will be fulfilled when Jesus bids the host of His redeemed that cannot be numbered—to sit down with Him at the miles-long golden table to eat for the first time the fruits of the heavenly Paradise. From one end to the other all can clearly see each other with Jesus at the end, for they have a new body of eternal youth and celestial quality.

With unspeakable bliss everyone beholds the lovely countenance of Jesus, whose face shines brighter than the sun. All trials, tears and pain, fierce struggles against temptations, the hatred and persecution of the ungodly will flee away in an instant, never to be thought of; they will sink into oblivion for the glory of this moment.

At the end of this sublime celestial feast, Jesus will arise, not as a servant to wash the feet of His followers, but as the grand King of the vast universe, who Himself will place the crown of life upon the head of each faithful one.

The words spoken by Jesus to John in Revelation 2:10 to His people, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life,” will then be glorious reality.

Imagine this moment! All stand in deepest awe and admiration before Jesus. Now He turns to you. He crowns you and looks into your eyes; you behold the glorious beauty of His sublime majesty.

Infinite love and gentleness radiate from His eyes and face—you are smitten, overwhelmed by such glory, and you cannot do other than sink to the feet of Jesus, exclaiming with fervent ardour from the innermost depth of your being in utter bliss:

“My Saviour, my God, who am I to be rewarded like this! I owe everything to Thee, for without Thee I could do nothing!” And Jesus will gently lift you up and say to you and all the redeemed: “You have kept My word, you have endured to the end... enter into the joy of the Lord.” Matt. 25:21.

To Prepare For The Banquet

However, to partake in this solemn, blissful scene, there are conditions to be met. To be a guest of this grand, joyous feast, one needs to have a special garment to enter the heavenly courts. It is called the robe of righteousness, the “wedding garment”.

This precious garment is not of earthly design or making, nor is handed out by earthly dignitaries.

It is the robe of the righteousness of Christ which garbs the saints in spotless white. It is the gift of Jesus Christ prepared for all who have washed their character in the cleansing blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 17:14)

This is accomplished by entering with heartfelt prayer and unwavering faith, into the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, where Jesus Christ, our faithful High Priest ministers on our behalf. He invites us to “come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 4:16.

We have a specific task to perform, namely to conquer a corrupt nature, a polluted heart with selfish demands; it is impossible to face this challenge on our own. We all know this very well. No matter how hard we tried, we always faced defeat at the end.

We need the mighty Saviour Himself to give us the power for victory.

Giving, yielding ourselves to Him is our only chance, believing, trusting His word that He is able “to save us to the uttermost” (Heb. 7:25), to receive heavenly aid and thus become partakers of the divine nature to obey His commandments, being able to resist the temptations of our wily foe and the inclinations of the flesh.

Jesus Christ became man to become acquainted with the conflicts and weaknesses of sinful flesh and to understand the needs of the fallen race.

In order to redeem us from the curse of sin and eternal death, He “endured the cross, despising the shame.” Heb. 12:2. Jesus offered Himself as the prize to ransom us from the penalty we deserve.



"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18), giving us in His earthly life an example of implicit trust in God His Father, in perfect obedience to the divine Decalogue which man had transgressed.

Engraved In His Heart

We can overcome our faulty character. Heaven provided everything for it. The way to Paradise has been prepared; it is open for everyone who will comply.

Never look at your weakness, it will always discourage you; the only way is to look to Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith," (Heb. 12:2) and thrust your helpless, poor and wretched self into His powerful, saving arms.

He will never let you go, never! He died for you, enduring the heartbreaking horror of the separation from His Father on Calvary for you and me. He broke down the insurmountable wall of separation from God which sin had raised up—through the tormenting blast of soul anguish which unleashed upon Christ with such ravaging violence, that forever and ever we have been engraved in His heart, His mind, His hands!

Take courage, always go forward, never give up, no matter how often you fail. Jesus is at your side to lift your downcast spirit. Trust Him you must, it is the decisive factor by which victories are gained. Come close to Him, make Him your first and intimate friend, to whom you can tell all your troubles.

Then little by little, "our righteousness, that are as filthy rags," (Isa. 64:6) will be stripped off to be replaced "with the garments of salvation," "covering you with the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61:10

Then we will not be strangers to our Advocate, Mediator and King, when He examines the guests in the judgment, when He will say to those who trusted their own righteousness: "I never knew you, depart from Me." Matt. 7:23.

Jesus is coming soon. For over two thousand years the invitation "Come," has gone into the world. "And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. Soon it will call the last guest to get ready.

Are you preparing to receive the "wedding garment"? **Amen.**

Edda Tedford, Canada

New Years Resolutions:

Toronto Church

During our annual New Year's Eve get-together in Toronto, all the participants joined in to give their New Year's resolutions for 2010.

Wendy—Do more missionary work.

Gaetan—Quit smoking.

Ruth—Be a better daughter of God.

Diana—Do better in school.

Eric—Not to waste time, dedicate it to God.

David—To attend church more often.

Rafael—To seek forgiveness with others.

Pasita—To progress spiritually.

Emelinita—To get to know Christ better.

Emelina—To do more missionary work.

Leone—To be a better living Christian.

Irene—To graduate from school, and to read the Bible more.

Joaquin—To study more Bible and Testimonies, and to teach them to others.

Gustavo—To practice vegetarian diet.

Darren—To be more productive.

Diana—To go to church more often.

Emelin—To make more right decisions.

Lolita—To be more regular in the church and become a member.

Bernice—To be closer to the Lord.

Abel—To be born again.

Rosario—To be more patient.

Amalia—To bring more souls to church with God's help.

Jonatan—To grow in Jesus, and never give up.

Juan—To go to college.

Gabriella—To be more punctual.

Timo—To write a book.

Kenya Youth Conference 2009



The Disarming Dog



CHILDREN'S CORNER



Traveling in a buggy between Battle Creek and Jackson, Michigan, Ellen White watched the landscape putting on its first spring garments. The weather was cool, and a soft breeze created by the vehicle's movement bathed her face. After a while she noticed a small short-haired mongrel dog trotting beside the carriage. Smiling to herself at the dog's decision to accompany her, she returned her gaze to the road ahead.

Several minutes later they approached a bridge across a creek. Waiting near it, a large savage-looking dog loomed up out of the dust of the road, apparently prepared to pounce upon the smaller animal. Seeing the huge black creature, the dog beside Sister White's buggy slowed. Although he could sense danger, he did not turn and dash away, but crouched close to the ground, his tail and head held lower than the rest of his body.

Cautiously, he crawled slowly toward the bigger animal.

Sister White halted her buggy to watch the dog's unusual behavior. When he passed within a certain distance of the black dog, the larger one leaped astride him, snarling, his teeth bared. The little dog seemed to know that he could not defeat his tormentor in a fight. Instead, he rolled upon the ground, his unprotected stomach exposed to the teeth of the larger dog. Had he tried to defend himself, his action would have caused his enemy to instinctively attack. By timidly rolling on his back, the mongrel dog avoided triggering the bigger creature's fighting instinct. The mongrel's act of trust left the huge dog confused. It could not fight another animal unless it responded with equally threatening gestures. The little dog refused to return the threats. Unable to fight someone who would not fight back, the larger dog walked away, leaving his intended victim on the ground.

Slowly, carefully, the mongrel rolled on his stomach and stood. His body tensed briefly, as if he wanted to flee, but fear prevented him. Keeping his eyes on his former attacker, he slunk in the opposite direction until he thought he had put a safe distance between them. Then he burst into a run, still watching over his shoulder to see if the bullying dog followed. Seconds later the little dog disappeared around a curve of the road, and Sister White resumed her journey.

The dog's behavior greatly impressed Mrs. White. Instead of condemning it for cowardice, in her diary she commented, "If human beings would manifest such humility under injustice as this . . . creature, how many unhappy quarrels might be saved."

Wolves and many other animals besides dogs will not fight

each other if one refuses to respond to signs of aggression or belligerence, such as growling, bared teeth, or the display of a bright color patch such as some birds have. When this happens, the attacking animal always gives up and goes away. It is a part of their normal behavior pattern.

Human beings act in a similar way. Some people seem determined to quarrel, but they cannot quarrel by themselves. It takes two people. When one person refuses to argue or fight back, the other has to give up and go away. Sister White knew the principle, and when she saw the little dog act it out, she instantly decided to record the incident so that others could understand it and see how it worked.



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International Youth Conference: Kenya 2009

**International Youth Conference December 24-31, 2009
African Nazarine University, Kenya**

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” Ps. 133.

The above, wonderful Psalm was experienced at the African Nazarine University as both youth and workers from many parts of South, East and North Africa convened for the International Youth Conference. It was the first experience for African youth since the Reform Movement came to the continent in 1927.

The conference was officially opened by Pastor J.V. Giner, General Conference Youth Director, on Thursday December 24th 2009 at 10:00 am with about 150 people in attendance. Pastor Permenas Shirima presented a sermon on the problem of sin and how we can overcome it.

The afternoon session was interesting as we were blessed with choirs that had come from Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda. Then we heard a health talk presented by sister Eva Lammes from Sweden, who gave a deep analysis of what the spirit of prophecy and science say on matters of health. It was very clear that true science in our modern times does not contradict health reform, rather it confirms what the pen of inspiration put down on paper about 100 years ago. She also talked about diseases and their causes as well as solutions to them.

The afternoon session was crowned by an incisive discourse on Music presented by sister Christina McTavish who gave a clear cut message between the kinds of music that destroy the soul and spirit-healing music. It ended with presentations of songs from the Canadian /Swedish children and Eric Song from Canada. Evening worship was conducted by Eric Song from Canada about love and marriage.

ATTENDANCE

A good number of youth from the East African Sub-region attended the conference. The Sub-region is composed of the five East African Co-operation states: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Other nations that were represented included Ethiopia, South Africa, DRC., Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe plus Canada, Sweden and USA.

Each day was blessed as we received visitors from other faiths attending the conference. The average attendance was 300 people a day apart from the Sabbath which increased the numbers even more.

EVENTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The daily schedule was busy with activities such as lectures, music testimonies, recitation of poems and memory verses, power point presentations of pictures from various parts of the world and excursions by our visitors to various attractions in Kenya, i.e., The Nairobi National Park, Maasai Mara and Lake Nakuru. Most of the events are recorded on the program of the conference.

Monday, December 28th 2009 at 2:00 pm was a special day at the conference as all youth gathered to form the association that will enable them to work together in the furtherance of the gospel and church activities in the East African region. Under the presidency of Pastor Bright Fue, the sub-regional Representative, a nominating committee of seven youths was selected from among the youth to pray and propose the leadership for the new structure that will oversee the all-around development of youth in the region. The exercise went on the following day and resulted in the formation of the International Missionary Society Youth Organization, East Africa region (IMSYO- East Africa region) with the following structure of leadership:

Chairperson:	Fredrick Ayunga
(Kenya)	
Secretary General:	Jean Pierre
(Rwanda)	
Treasurer :	Justin Bwalya
(Tanzania)	
Communication Director:	Dennis Ombati
(Kenya)	
Project Coordinator:	James Mutiaba
(Uganda)	
Social Welfare Manager:	Albert Mpawenayo
(Burundi)	
Music Director:	Christopher Ruti
(Rwanda)	

Five Co-coordinators from the five countries of East Africa are elected leaders from the Union/ Fields.

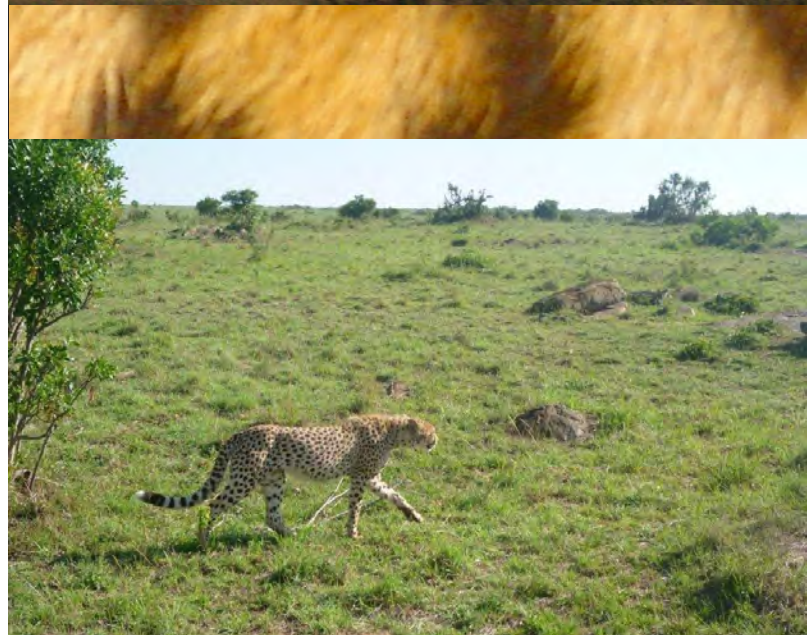
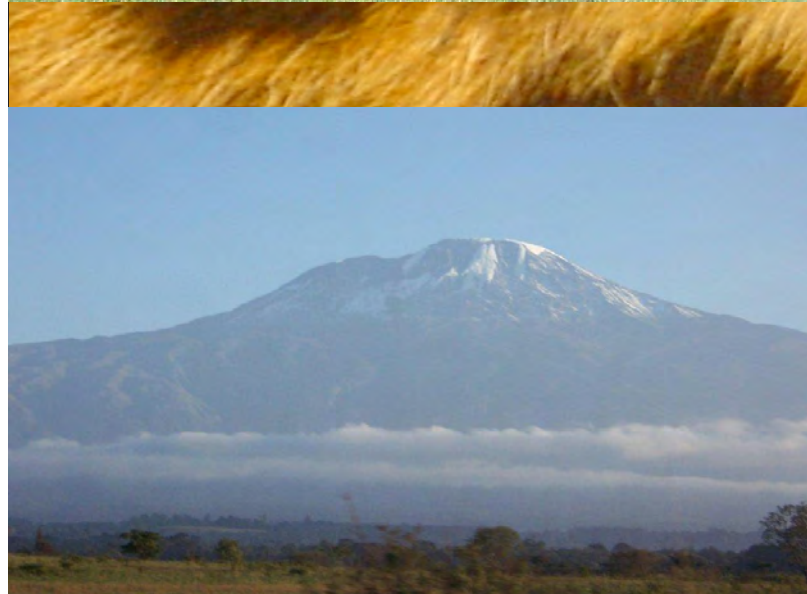
Also to be included in this structure will be the sub-regional representative.

The executive committee shall be composed of the first seven members plus the regional representative in attendance.

The new leadership was presented before the congregation in the presence of Pastor Permanas Shirima (2nd Vice President of the General Conference) and Pastor J.V. Giner (General Conference Youth Director)

Our Vision Statement

The present truth to all the world in this generation.





International Youth Co



Conference: Kenya 2009

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the organization is to unite all youth in East Africa, involve them in missionary activities, provide them with quality education and training that will enable them to support the ministry, innovation and creativity and cultivate moral values for sustainable development of the human person to grow from grace to grace unto holiness.

We are requesting our brothers and sisters from all over the world to support this organization both morally and materially.

You can send your views and donations to:

Email: ims.eastafrica@yahoo.com

Postal address: IMS Youth Organization East Africa Region

P.O Box 42927 -00100 Nairobi Kenya

May God bless those who are willing to support His cause.

SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE

Pastor J.V. Giner, General Conference Youth Director, was the guest speaker at the conference. Other speakers were as follows: Pastor Shirima from Tanzania; Pastor Jerry Eaton from Canada; Sister Eva Lammes from Sweden; Sister Christina McTavish from Canada; Brother Eric Song from Canada; Sister Jennifer Tavera from Canada; Sister Edda Redford from Canada.

Pastor Jerry Eaton presented sermons on prophecy and marriage. Br. Giner, the guest speaker, dwelt on moral values, relationships, purity before marriage and also pointed the young people to Jesus Christ who can enable them do all things for His glory.

THE WINDING UP OF THE CONFERENCE

The afternoon of Tuesday, December 29th provided youth from various countries to present their problems and experiences. It was a wonderful moment to learn from others and what they did elsewhere in their countries.

Pastor Giner left for the USA on the same day after the congregation joined to sing, "God be with you til we meet again."

The conference continued until Wednesday evening, December 30th 2009. The conference was officially closed by pastor Shirima who bid our speakers and attendees farewell. Visitors and attendees left Nazarene on the following morning.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The African Nazarene University Administration commended the behaviour of our people that it was so good. Some workers felt sorry that we had to leave, "So the place is going to remain lonely and cold", they said. The kitchen staff was impressed by our manner of eating and it aroused their interest in the health reform message.

Brothers who were promoting alternative medicine and natural methods of healing (especially herbal medicine) received many visitors on their desk, who inquired more about our health message.

The surrounding community and members of other churches (especially the Adventist faith) were impressed by the fact that the IMS SDA Church Reform Movement is not just local congregation but an International church.

We can say, in general terms, the International Youth Conference was a milestone for the advancement of IMS SDA Church Reform Movement activities in Africa, to prepare others also for the great day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God bless His work in Africa.

May He bless His work in the whole world.

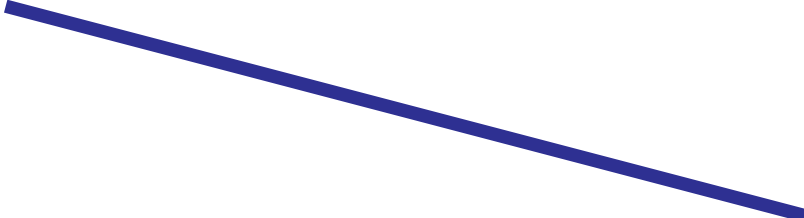
May He bless the International Missionary Society Seventy Day Adventist Church Reform Movement. **Amen**

Report compiled and written by:

Brother Fredric Ayunga

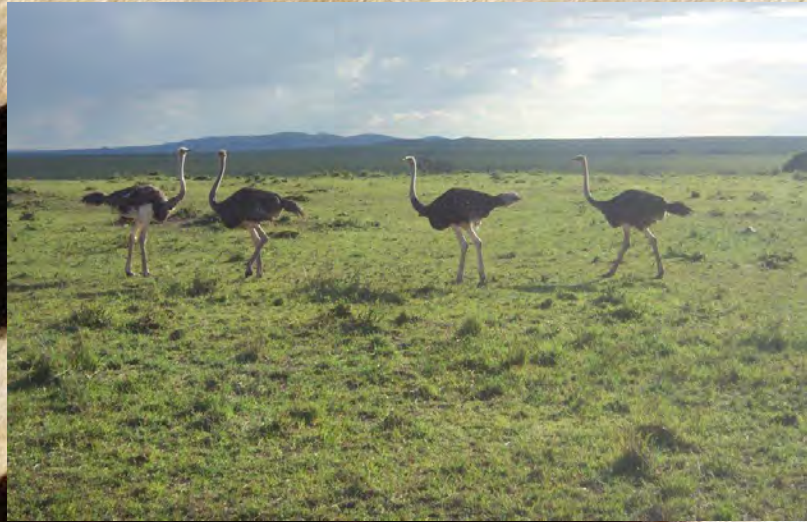
Assistant Youth Director, Kenya Union

Chairman IMS East Africa Youth Organization



As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity. A divine-human Saviour was needed to bring salvation to the world. And to men and women has been committed the sacred trust of making known "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 134

Kenya Youth
Conference
2009





A Taste Of God!

Leonard John Matthews, flickr.com

“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man who trusteth in Him!” Psalm 34:8

Specks

Oh! How thankful we are; how blessed it is to be able to taste of the Lord – to know Him and to savor of His goodness. In fact, we are small and but a mere speck compared to His greatness. Ah! But, as He created us, He still wants us, thusly, to taste of Him – to know Him! At an International Astronomers Society Meeting, a speaker was elaborating on the greatness and immensity of the solar system and its millions of galaxies, of which planet Earth was but one part in merely one galaxy, a mere speck in the overall solar perspective. Man, furthermore, was but a “mere speck.” A whiskered, old fashioned looking gentleman in a baggy sweater, long white hair, and with amused and melancholy eyes, arose and said, “yes, what you said is true; earth and man are mere ‘specks,’ but remember, God made the astronomer.” The dignified gentleman was the renowned scientist – Albert Einstein. The Apostle Paul set the Athenian idolaters straight too: “God that made the world... Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” (Acts 17:24, 25). “I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” Psalm 50:9-10 Delight in our God!

What Is It?

What is eternal life? A question on the lips of millions for thousands of years! Ah! But, the question can be simply answered by the longest prayer in the Bible, as Jesus, in part, devoutly prays for Himself in John 17:3, “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” So, how well do you know God? Do you really know Him? It is not merely an experience of the head or mind, but a purifying experience of the heart! You see, it is not merely a fleeting experience, as in dire situations, but an honorable, living and unrestricted experience. The heart becomes restored, regenerated! Just think on this for a moment. Wait! It gets better!

Tasting and knowing God, moreover, majestically means, being in the glorious presence of God! Well, what does this mean? Well, it means being in His power, His forgiveness and assurance; His resplendent presence! Yet “...you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence for the judgment is God’s.” (Deut 1:17). When Moses was standing at the burning bush at Mt. Horeb, “the mountain of God,” “God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is Holy ground.” Furthermore, “He told Moses to go to the Pharaoh that you may bring my people out of Egypt.” “And Moses said to God, Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and if they say to me, ‘What is His

name? What shall I say to them?"

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM, and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.' (Exodus 3:5, 10-14) Ah! The Lord also said to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." Ex. 33:14

We can understand from this that the presence and knowledge of God, the "I AM" is a mind and heart borne experience; they work together! Furthermore, it answers the question that in the I AM is the reassuring presence and knowledge of God—power in the presence of God! Moses startlingly tasted of God! We, too, can also cultivate this taste with the aroma of our rising prayers. What is it to you?

Although the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed a heartbreaking message to the stiff necked people of Judah as they mourned in judgment, he bathed the harsh prophecies in tears of compassion saying: "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Jeremiah 9:23, 24

You Did Not Do It!

Ah! We have another sweet benefit when tasting of God: here is the purpose of life – knowing God! We are in His favor. Oh! That is why we are here! A young believer in the faith related to his scholarly pastor of an adventurous and sentimental journey to the Holy Land. He reiterated his ascent to Mt. Sinai. After an arduous climb he stated, "After reaching the peak of the mountain, I took out my Bible and read the Ten Commandments. It was an awesome experience! Although exhausting, it was profound and very inspiring!" After reflectively and patiently listening, the respective pastor paused for awhile, gazed upward and then stated rather blandly, "You could have saved considerable money and effort by just reading the Ten Commandments in the peace and comfort of your home."

You see, tasting of God – knowing God is not merely a filling of the mind. It is a process, a movement in which when you receive the power of God you step into His presence. It is not just a task. You know you are in the presence of God – His aura. You see, there are times when we can quietly enter into His presence; while reading the Word—the Scriptures, when praying, hearing the Word, fellowshiping on the Sabbath Day. On the other hand, there are times that are plainly hectic, time consuming, fruitless, exasperating – when the personal activities of the day conjure thoughts which drive the presence of the Lord away. But as eternal life, however, is knowing God, it would behoove us also to "search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which





A survivor of Haiti's devastating earthquake. United Nations Photo, flickr.com

testify of Me." John 5:39 "Take no man's explanation of Scripture, whatever his position, but go to the Bible and search for the truth yourselves." (TM 155)

The time will soon come when the Son of Man will judge the nations; probation will be closed; when many will hear, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Matt. 25:42-45

In the Lord's message to the Laodiceans, the lukewarm church, He stated, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." Rev. 3:15-19

Reluctant Door

The abominations continue to abound! The Lord's presence can diminish and vanish like "vapor." Ah! But, the invitation is residing in the Lord's call, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev 3:20. He is calling us, pleading with His people to open. Do you hear His voice? Are you listening? He is calling us – you and me! But, how does the Lord knock? The Holy Spirit "knocks" on our conscience. Convictions begin to surface. A still small voice is emitted. Ah! That voice is the Bible speaking to us every time we open its holy pages. Well, are you listening?

The Eternal Word speaks to us: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." John 1:14. You see, the Word (Jesus Christ) becomes flesh; and the Word (Jesus Christ) speaks to us. We hear His voice, are satisfied and rejoice as we taste of His love for us. He wants us to open the door. Mentally accepting Jesus is not enough. Jesus Christ needs to come into our hearts. This is the tasting of God – knowing God! You see, only you can experience it, face to face. To sense that love is to taste of God – knowing God – awakening and

illuminating understanding in His presence. Are you slumbering?
Are you still a reluctant door?

Sovereign Vine

The True Vine speaks, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:1, 2.

Pruning is a serious, painful experience to bear. The answer to us is - to be pruned of our excesses and feeble character. Ah! Although it is painful, he comes to us and tastefully, exquisitely prunes us. This process cannot be manipulated or hindered, for it is an outflowing of the Holy Spirit. We need to abide in Him, for "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7). When we abide in Jesus Christ, in essence we are standing in the presence of God. We can therefore, through the Word, His Word, and His Words, keep our minds always focused on the presence of God. When? Always! When we are walking, driving our car, traveling, talking with the brethren or a troubled soul, praying, or preaching; God works in us to produce copious, genuine fruit. Our minds become focused always in the presence of Jesus Christ, speaking the right words at the right time and being in the right place at the right time! It becomes inherently natural, refreshing to taste of God - to know God! Cling to that flaming sovereign Vine! "We must know why we believe as we do, why we are on the Lord's side." E.W., Rev. & Her. April 29, 1884

Mystery Revealed

Furthermore, we learn the mystery of God and its purpose in our lives, "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Ephesians 3:9, 10. Moreover, we learn to appreciate the mystery, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19

You see, "In order to endure the trial before them, God's people must understand the will of God as revealed in His word; they can honor Him only as they have a right conception of His character; government, and purposes, and act in accordance with them." Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 4, p. 411 (1884). "Between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah will come the last great conflict of the controversy between truth and error. Upon this battle we are now



entering..." Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 4, page 398

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins unfolds and portends of the second coming of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven; no longer a mystery. The oil of the ten waiting virgins denotes the Holy Spirit; five had adequate oil, five had no oil; the oil being the Holy Spirit. Those with the precious oil in their lamps were always in the Holy presence of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit (oil) cannot be shared with anyone else. The wise virgins experienced the presence of Jesus Christ and were ready for the coming of the Bride Groom. The five foolish virgins were shocked, lacking the Holy Spirit (oil) at His sudden coming. The door to Jesus was closed; "afterward the other virgins came also saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But He answered and said 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'"(Matt. 25:1-13). Why? The foolish virgins didn't spend time in the presence of Jesus! They were not only foolish but... stupid! Remember, too, "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear!" Genesis 4:13,16

But, many today say and staunchly believe much of the same, "but we believe in the second coming of Jesus, faithfully attend church, keep the Law, faithfully pay the tithe, and pray!" But, the answer is the same, "I do not know you." "Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith.... Where faith is, good works appear." 1SM, pp.397-8. The Apostle Paul was praying for the Ephesians for the spiritual wealth they had, but they were living as beggars, ignorant of their wealth; not willing to learn the spiritual walk rooted in their spiritual wealth: adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, the seal of the Holy Spirit, life, grace, citizenship, presence – in short every spiritual blessing. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.... that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 4-6). The labyrinthine shrouding mystery, however, for many still prevails!

God wants to fill us with His power, His goodness and – "to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ah! But, many say, "it's impossible to be cleaned." No! No! No! One can be cleaned with the power of the Holy Spirit. When in the presence of God we can then taste of God – know God and are filled with the holiness of God. I often questioned in the past why one has to go to the foot of the Cross, or to the Garden of Gethsemane. Well, I found that by doing so, we can identify with Him by seeing the value of the human soul, and the agony of man's passing life. By this experience one's heart acquires the capacity to taste of God – to know God, "from which all power flows."

This is the triumphant victory in life one achieves... and can be assured of when we taste of God – and know God. Furthermore, our vile character is transformed into that of Jesus Christ. "There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. This

is our only opportunity to form characters..." COL, p. 319. When temptations come, we are filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and are victorious in the presence of God... fending off temptations. "No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement." GC, p. 510

Nicodemus, born a Jew, a devout Pharisee, and Ruler of the Jews, had all the facts, but as millions before and after him have been surprised and puzzled, asked the same question – "how can I taste of God – know God?" No longer parry or brood over it! Let Go!!

Bronze Serpent

When the people of Israel journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, they became discouraged and rebelled against God. "Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it shall live." "So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived."(Num 21:1, 8, 9). Now, why did God make a bronze serpent and not a gentle lamb? Certainly, Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God. Well, Jesus Christ hung on the cross... as a serpent... changing from a Lamb to a serpent; becoming sin for us... for mankind in its fullest manifestations. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."(1 John 3:1). "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." John 3:14

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Isaiah 30:21

You see, we come to the Kingdom of God when in the presence of God – walking in His way – the upward way! He took on our sins and became sin for us on the cross – for mankind. We can then taste of God – know God when we understand this, acknowledge it... believe in it! What a privilege this is – what A TASTE OF GOD - what a God we have! **Amen and Amen!**

John Theodorou, USA



Br. Oscar Oviedo baptizes Br. Eduardo Galande in Calgary, Canada.





Australian Conference 2009

The Australian Mission Field Camp Obadiah 2009 Spiritual Conference.

The Theme of the conference “**Wilderness Wanderings**” based on 1 Corinthians 10:11 was carefully and prayerfully chosen due to the urgency of the hour in which we live. “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” It was our earnest desire to carefully study these experiences in order to understand our duties and to accept the warnings that the LORD has given us.

We were challenged on a personal basis and encouraged to apply these messages to our personal walk. The word of God calls for a reaction. In the time of Christ, Jesus was wondering how He would compare this generation. He said it was like the market place when the piper piped and the people did not dance and the mourners mourned and the people did not lament. This is our condition today.

Our conference opened with a welcome to those to whom the end of the world has come. Jesus says in Revelation, “Surely I come quickly.” To God 2,000 years is “quickly” but to us it is many lifetimes. Through the book of Daniel we found our position in history and discovered that the end of all things are at hand. We also discovered who Israel is. The sons of Jacob were only a type of the Israel of God. Gal 3:27-29 explained that if we are Christ’s we are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise. We were taken down through the history of God’s church and saw how the people had wandered through the wilderness and now the remnant of her seed like Caleb and Joshua has arrived at the Jordan River. We who are the Joshua’s and Caleb’s need to learn from the type to the reality if we are ever to make that crossing.

The Passover showed the mighty hand of God in delivering at least 2.4 million people. God is mighty to save. It didn’t take Him two attempts to deliver His people. None of the plagues or even the angel saved them from their bondage. It is only the blood of the Lamb that can release us from bondage. Without strictly following the leading of the Lamb we cannot be delivered. This is a solemn lesson for us. The Lamb of Isaiah 53 was uplifted. The parallels of the Lamb were very powerfully made with the year-old lamb they had to take into their homes for five days before they were to sacrifice it. They were to make friends and become attached to this little lamb. Jesus is offering His friendship to us.

The actual **coming out of Egypt** was then considered. We learned that Egypt was the world. Israel went into Egypt on their own accord. Adam and Eve entered into the world through submission; ever since then we have been born into the world. Therefore it seems normal to us. We do not feel like we are in bondage; there seems to be no apparent bondage.

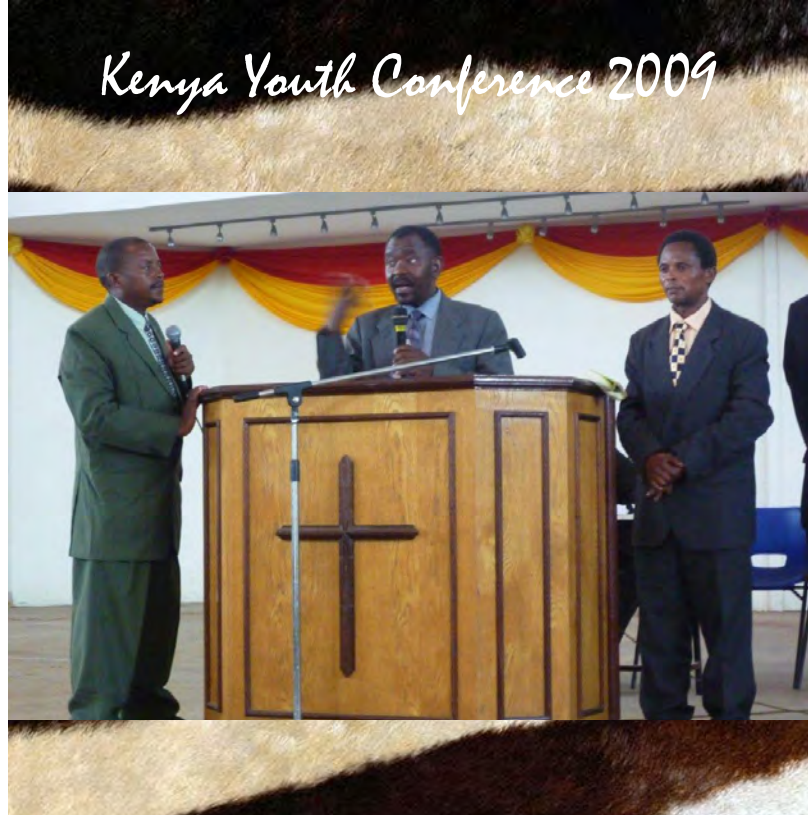
Pharaoh, the king of Egypt is the equivalent to Satan, the king of this world. Pharaoh’s purpose for the Israelites was for them to build

up Egypt. He that is a friend of the world is an enemy of God. Do we want to help build up this world? Pharaoh set taskmasters over the Israelites. Satan has set taskmasters over us. We discovered these taskmasters were things like the lust of the flesh and the eyes, the pride of life; these things are in us. We must get these things out of us as they cause us to build up the world. Much greater detail was given on these points. We were given much to think about as to what these taskmasters are and how they affect our lives. Many points we had not recognized as taskmasters because we think everything in this world is normal.

The “**Bread of Heaven**” symbolized by the manna was lifted up. The manna was a daily sign that He was leading them. Unfortunately the Israelites did not appreciate the bread of heaven as they should and looked back with gluttony to the leeks and onions of Egypt. One of the lessons we must learn from the manna is temperance. He gave them a specific quantity per day, which was to strengthen them and supply their needs. The lessons God designed for us to learn from the manna are very important, as the health message is the right arm of the Gospel and the Three Angel’s Messages. Never is there an occasion to let go of temperance. We read, “The prosperity of a nation is dependent upon the virtue and intelligence of its citizens. To secure these blessings, habits of strict temperance are indispensable. The history of ancient kingdoms is replete with lessons of warning for us. Luxury, self-indulgence, and dissipation prepared the way for their downfall. It remains to be seen whether our own republic will be admonished by their example, and avoid their fate.--*Review and Herald, Nov. 8, 1881.* As the manna represents Jesus we must “eat His flesh and drink His blood” if we are to be one with Him.

It is the duty of every Gospel preacher to point out the way to heaven and to point out the turns and bends and what the Christian will experience along the way so there will be no surprises. Therefore we also considered their experiences and **disappointments along the way**. We found that the Egyptians pushed Israel out. And so it is our sins that are the catalysts that push us to the Saviour. The scriptures say, “The Law entered that sin might abound and where the offense abounds Grace does much more abound.” We often think we can’t make it into the Kingdom of God, but if we consider that God made the universe there is no reason why we must lose hope and begin to murmur. The murmuring is a mental issue more than a verbal. There is a difference between a cry and a murmur. There is a difference in acknowledging ourselves as a weak worm and crying out for help and acknowledging yourself as a weak worm and thinking God can’t help you. It is possible to hold on to the happiness we had when we first came out of Egypt. Murmuring is a sign of not listening to God and not knowing His ways. Murmuring is a sign of unbelief. It causes us to lose our hope and joy. Believe that all things (the good and the bad) work together for good to them that love Him.

Friday evening the topic was **True Sabbath Keeping**. While Israel had been imperceptibly brought into idolatry while in Egypt, God



brought them out to sanctify them. The keeping of the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification. It was a sign between God and His people forever, therefore the Hebrew wilderness wanderings were a lesson for God's people forever. As idolatry came imperceptibly upon the Israelites in Egypt so it is with us.

"But little by little a change came. The church lost her first love. She became selfish and ease-loving. The *spirit* of worldliness was cherished. The enemy cast his spell upon those to whom God had given light for a world in darkness, light which should have shone forth in good works. The world was robbed of the blessings that God desired men to receive. Is not the same thing repeated in this generation?" Test. Vol. 8, p. 26

The Divine Sermon presented to us the allegory of the "**Rock that Followed Them**". The rock can be either a positive or a negative experience. In Isaiah He is referred to as a rock of offence to both houses of Israel. Jesus will become a negative experience to many. As the scriptures say, if we don't fall upon the rock it will fall on us. We learned in detail what it means to fall upon the rock.

"To those who believe, Christ is the sure foundation. These are they who fall upon the Rock and are broken. Submission to Christ and faith in Him are here represented. To fall upon the Rock and be broken is to give up our self-righteousness and to go to Christ with the humility of a child, repenting of our transgressions, and believing in His forgiving love. And so also it is by faith and obedience that we build on Christ as our foundation." DA 599

Sabbath Evening was spent considering "**arriving at the border, yet unready.**" It was concluded with a time for testimonies. One great mistake the Israelites made as they arrived at the border was sending the ten spies into the land. It was not God who directed them to do that. The spies only bought back negativity that caused discouragement. Only Caleb and Joshua came back with positive words. The spies were giving their testimony. The Israelites were provoked by a negative testimony. What type of testimony do we give? How do we communicate to one another? Do we bring discouragement to ourselves or do we bring positive hope of our entering the Promised Land? As they were, we are just on the borders. Our prayer meetings, testimony times and our general fellowship must be carefully guarded so as to provoke one another to love and obedience.

"They forgot their bitter service in Egypt. They forgot the goodness and power of God displayed in their behalf in their deliverance from bondage. They forgot how their children had been spared when the destroying angel slew all the first-born of Egypt. They forgot the grand exhibition of divine power at the Red Sea. They forgot that while they had crossed safely in the path that had been opened for them, the armies of their enemies, attempting to follow them, had been overwhelmed by the waters of the sea. They saw and felt only their present inconveniences and trials; and instead of saying, 'God has done great things for us; whereas we were slaves, He is making of us a great nation,' they talked of the hardness of the way, and wondered when their weary pilgrimage would end." PP 292.3

Let us not forget and give a negative testimony. Let us follow Malachi 3: 16, 17 "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another; and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son and serveth him."

In the account of the **Rebellion of Korah** we looked more at the understanding of what rebellion is rather than Korah himself. Deut 9:7 tells us that the rebellion did not start with Korah but from the time they left Egypt. At the time of Korah the rebellion came to a head but had been there all the time. What is rebellion? It's simply to resist authority. Leaders often refer to rebellion when they say, "if you don't obey me you are in rebellion. I am the leader (i.e Moses) therefore you must be Korah."

Acts 7:51 speak to those who sit in Moses seat. "Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost as your fathers did, so do ye." There is a distinction between Moses and the office of Moses. James 4:7 "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" shows us there is a good rebellion. It is good to rebel against evil. But we see in the time of Christ there were a people who resisted the HOLY GHOST as their fathers did. This tells us that the Israelites were really rebelling against the Holy Ghost. The carnal mind is enmity against God. In this context the word enmity is a noun. Enmity is not an attribute of our heart; it IS enmity against God. We are not corrupt; we are corruption. We are not rebellious; we are rebellion. This is our natural Egyptian condition we are in. But God gives gifts even to the rebellious. that He might dwell among men.

Reflect back on the Passover gift of Jesus Christ. "But to everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ". Eph. 4:7. Jesus is the gift to a rebellious world. In their travelling in the wilderness they forgot that Moses received all his directions from God. It was only the rebellious that were to die in the wilderness, not the faithful. We must be willing to submit to the death of the flesh. We must be willing to accept the reproofs and warnings from the Word of the LORD that will kill our flesh.

The Serpent on the Pole experience came at the end of their journey. So it is with us; it is at the end that we get tired and weary. When the snake bites it puts its fangs through your flesh and it injects poison. Who is the snake? The devil. What is this poison? "The lusts of your father the devil you will do." John 8:44. The poison is lust, the lust of the flesh, eyes and pride of life. Lust is the poison and the action is the symptom; as in the natural so in the spiritual.

As we studied the copperhead serpent we found there were five similarities between the bite of the copperhead serpent and the poison of sin. The first one is, when the copperhead bites, the first symptom is a neurological disorder, a hallucinating experience. In Genesis the serpent came to Eve and beguiled her. He brought confusion to her thinking. She saw that the fruit of the tree was good for her.

Symptom number two is paralysis. When God tells us to do something and we don't do it, what are we? Paralyzed. The foolish man was likened to hearing God's word but did not do it.

The third symptom is the inability for the blood to coagulate. When Satan has bitten us, can we endeavor to keep the unity in the bonds of peace? Can we be at peace with everyone? Unity brings healing. When the blood coagulates it forms a bond and covers the wound and healing takes place.

Symptom four is renal failure. It is the failure of the kidneys. What do the kidneys do? They filter impurities from the body and expel them. In our personal life we must cast down every imagination that exults itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. We must gather all the bad thoughts and cast them out. These bad thoughts and imaginations are the poison of Satan's bite. Spiritual renal failure is when we cannot discern between that which is holy and unholy.

The fifth symptom is rhabdomyolysis. This is when your structural muscles break down. When our muscles don't work we feel weak. God says we are to strengthen the hands that hang down, those who have been bitten by the snake. If we go to the doctor, he will usually treat the symptoms. But when we go to Jesus He will not only get rid of the symptom but also the poison.

The next study turned our attention to **Apostasy at the Border**. When the Israelites arrived at the borders the physical surroundings were very pleasant and lush. The lesson we explored in this study is found in 1 Cor 10:11, 12 "Now all these things happened unto them for examples....Wherefore let him that thinketh he stands take heed lest he fall." The Laodicean condition is the description given to the church right on the borders of the heavenly Caanan. So it was with the Israelites--all their battles over many victories gained, living in a luxurious tropical plain; their wanderings were over.

"But amid these attractive surroundings they were to encounter an evil more deadly than mighty hosts of armed men or the wild beasts of the wilderness. That country, so rich in natural advantages, had been defiled by the inhabitants. In the public worship of Baal, the leading deity, the most degrading and iniquitous scenes were constantly enacted. On every side were places noted for idolatry and licentiousness, the very names being suggestive of the vileness and corruption of the people.

"These surroundings exerted a polluting influence upon the Israelites. Their minds became familiar with the vile thoughts constantly suggested; their life of ease and inaction produced its demoralizing effect; and almost unconsciously to themselves they were departing from God and coming into a condition where they would fall an easy prey to temptation." PP 453

When Balaam saw the Israelites their customs manners and character were not familiar to him. They had remained a distinct people. So it must be with us; we must be a distinct people. We are sojourners whose citizenship is in heaven. We went on to learn how Satan used a man of God, Balaam, to curse Israel. Balaam yearned for earthly reward and decided to work out a strategy to

snare the people into Satan's hand. Many other solemn lessons were bought out.

Finally we came to the **Crossing of the Jordan**. This crossing is a type for us yet in the future. There was no way around the river; it was in flood. Without divine aid they could not go forward. We were reminded of the text that says "when the enemy comes in like a flood". Now so close to the Promised Land His people will encounter yet another obstacle. WE all look forward to the coming of the LORD but before that we will encounter the swelling of the Jordan. What is the daunting barrier for us? "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD to what end is it for you. The day of the LORD is darkness, and not light as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house. And leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? Even very dark and no brightness in it?" Amos 5:18-20

The book of Daniel says when Michael shall stand up there will be a time of trouble such as *never* was. This is the river we must cross. "At the appointed time began the onward movement, the ark, borne upon the shoulders of the priests, leading the van. The people had been directed to fall back, so that there was a vacant space of more than half a mile about the ark. All watched with deep interest as the priests advanced down the bank of the Jordan. They saw them with the sacred ark move steadily forward toward the angry, surging stream, till the feet of the bearers were dipped into the waters. Then suddenly the tide above was swept back, while the current below flowed on, and the bed of the river was laid bare." PP 484. This is a type of our very near experience when we must go forward in faith in the midst of the destructive forces of the evil one around us. Only for the ones carrying the ark (the 144,000) will the resistless flood be held back.

Many more precious lessons and details were brought out that cannot be shared in this brief report but for those who are keen to take up these precious lessons in order to be prepared to meet their LORD you will find this conference on YouTube. The first study is already available. The others will come as quickly as they are edited.

The LORD always uses these conferences as evangelistic outreaches. This year was no exception. On the Sabbath day we had 22 visitors with six of them staying for the whole conference. Praise God for the blessings He poured upon our conference. A very peaceful spirit-filled atmosphere surrounded us as we sat and drank in the pure truth and learned these important lessons so vital for our experience in these last days.

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Australian Conference 2009