



The Reformation
Messenger

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

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. Psalm 23:1-2

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

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Simon, the Angel and the Bibbulmun Track - Part 3

Standing there with all the shiny happy people who were safe in their knowledge of their own personal salvation, the people of God, God's chosen people who were without condemnation for themselves because they knew that they were worthy because they keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, this only added to my misery because I thought, "what is wrong with me? Why don't I feel like I am saved, why do I feel like I am burning in an oven? Why do I smell the stench of death oozing out of my pores? Why do I feel like a dead man? A stinking bloated corpse standing and singing songs among the redeemed."

Ashamed in the Presence of God

I began to feel ashamed in the presence of God and I started to pray less because I knew that my prayers were probably an abomination to Him. I fell deeper and deeper into despair. During this period I went up the coast to Cervantes to do a job. I planned to be home on the Friday but due to circumstances which were out of my control, I wasn't finished on the Friday and I had to stay there for an extra day. I debated with myself on the Sabbath morning. I came to a crunch. I thought, "should I just work? Why should I bother keeping the Sabbath? I'm lost anyway, who am I kidding?" Once again I remembered Jacob and said, "well, no, it's not for me to judge myself. It is Jesus and He has to deem me unworthy. He has to shake me off and I will cling to Him and keep the Sabbath; and I will work Sunday and drive back Sunday night to be at work Monday morning." I felt absolutely at my lowest ebb but I kept the Sabbath and I began to read the Bible. I said a short prayer, "Please God, please give me some comfort. I know I'm not worthy; but, please, just a shred of encouragement." I flipped open my Bible at random and I began to read Zechariah:

"And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: [is] not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy



garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Zechariah 3:1-7

I read that message and I broke down and wept because I realised what the Lord was trying to

tell me. This passage not only speaks of the literal high priest Joshua, it is our high priest in heaven—Jesus. He stands before the accuser stained in filthy garments that are soiled with my iniquity, not His.

I'm Destined to Be Burned

He is admonished by the angel of the Lord and the angel of the Lord speaks to Joshua who represents me and my sin. He says to me, "keep my ways and I will give you a place to walk among these." Even though I am filthy with sin and transgression, Jesus was crushed, beaten and murdered and stood before the angel of the Lord and was admonished for my sin and the accuser is told, "See! A brand can be plucked from the fire!" and that is what I am, a brand, as I'm destined for the burning. That is my fate. Yet I am plucked from the fire through Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour and His direct intervention.

Back at Church

The next week I was back at church and the President of the West Australian Seventh Day Adventist church was there giving a sermon on how Jesus has talked to him through the Bible. And he asked if anyone else had a testimony regarding that kind of thing. I gave my testimony about what happened to me in Cervantes with Zechariah chapter 3. He said to me when I had finished, "but you are worthy."

I said, "No, I'm not worthy." He said, "Yes you are." I said, "you don't know me, I am not worthy." And the whole church laughed and said "Oh Simon, he is such a character." He said it again, "you are worthy."

"We are not worthy of God's love, but Christ, our surety, is worthy, and is abundantly able to save all who shall come unto Him. Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness." —*God's Amazing Grace*, p. 9

That God's dear Son should have to come to our world to fight our battles for us that we might have strength to conquer in His name, should ever humble our proud hearts. If we look to the cross of Calvary, every boast will die upon our lips, and we shall cry, 'Unclean, unworthy of so great suffering, of so rich a price paid for my redemption.'" — *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 316

[Not looking to Calvary is the assumption that we are worthy]

Super Christians!

During this period I started to become critical of the character of the church. There seemed to be a lot of pride and a pharisaical attitude. It seemed to be that the church was an entertainment spectacular and not a true house of worship. There was no meat and potatoes or spiritual food. It was a pleasant way to spend your Saturday morning promenading in your nice, fine clothes, listening to some nice songs and sermons regarding us Seventh Day Adventists and how fantastic we are. Yes, we are the chosen people. We can all pat each other on the back because we have the Sabbath truth and all those other poor Christians out there are okay, but they are not like us as we are Super Christians! We are the elite of Christianity because we have the Sabbath truth.

It started to stick in my gullet and grate on me, all this pompousness. It exaggerated my own feelings of unworthiness as all these people seemed to have these perfect lives. They didn't seem to be getting torn apart spiritually like I was and they didn't seem to have a battle raging inside of

them. **They were not a poor and afflicted people.** They were a justified people and I didn't belong. I felt like a beggar at a banquet. My mind and my spirit began to yearn for a little company of people that I had visited on two occasions. A company so poor they didn't even have a building, they didn't even have a church. A company in opposition to that company with whom I had been worshipping, a poor and afflicted, humble company. A company poor in wealth but not poor in doctrine. A company that would never refuse a hungry man the meat and potatoes of God's word. A company that allowed you to eat your fill and expect nothing in return.

The Lunatic Fringe

I had originally been introduced to this company by a woman I had met online at an Adventist forum who had given some insights, which, at the time I thought were extreme and puritanical. It made me think that they were trying to justify themselves by their strict adherence to Scripture. Even so I visited them on her invitation and found them to be amiable, less stuffy and less uptight than normal mainstream Seventh Day Adventists. They could laugh at themselves which was a quality that endeared them to me. In fact I christened their church "Extreme Adventists--the Lunatic Fringe," and they enjoyed the joke. I determined to leave mainstream Adventism and join this band of outcasts.

There I found a people who are not secure in their justification nor sanctified in their own minds, not proud, arrogant or boastful but humble and contrite and who cling to one another earnestly as they follow the light that leads them along the narrow path, and move forward step by step as one lest anyone be left behind. There I found peace and solace, for now I know the reason that there is a battle raging inside of me. I am on the narrow path. For if there were not a battle raging inside of me I would be on the broad road of destruction; for Satan has no need to torment those who are in his will.

The Publican and the Pharisee

The first Sabbath I returned to the little company the sermon was concerning Luke 18:9. I had returned downcast and miserable from the mainstream church but lo! God in His wonderful way gave me the panacea for my pain through that sermon because I realized through the parable of the miserable and afflicted publican that I was indeed on the narrow path. The church I had attended was full to the rafters of Pharisees not concerned with the weightier matters of their salvation but rather saying in their hearts "Isn't God lucky to have us, we who are such sticklers for the law!" They were content that their lives are blessed with material wealth but never thought to reflect why there was no spiritual warfare in their lives. One

of the first passages from the Bible that I read on the Bibbulmun track that night after my journey with the “stranger” was this Proverb:

“My son, attend unto my wisdom, [and] bow thine ear to my understanding: That thou mayest regard discretion, and [that] thy lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of a strange woman drop [as] an honeycomb, and her mouth [is] smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, [that] thou canst not know [them].” Proverbs 5:1-5

At the time I was filled with the wonder and awe of its truth. It spoke to me of my own experience. “Her ways are movable thou canst not know them.” Me who had driven myself nearly mad trying to know those ways that were movable. Now further on in my journey, I read the lines beneath the lines. I read the Proverb and I see not only the strange woman literal, but also the strange woman spiritual. The Lord now says to me:

Son, attend to my wisdom, do not go near the harlot who gives you doctrine sweet as honey comb. Her words are smooth and easy on the ear but are a two edged sword. Her way leads to destruction. Her truth is movable and thou canst not know it.

Not Everyone That Says Lord, Lord

To me the most disturbing Scripture in the Bible is contained in Matthew: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Matthew 7:21-23

These words of Jesus are directed, not at the unbeliever or the ungodly, but at the Christian nation itself. How are we to avoid being part of that group who although acknowledges the kingship of Jesus Christ and do works in His name yet is denied entry into the kingdom? How do we set ourselves apart from that group?

I, for my part, given the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ would rather be found among the humble, contrite and afflicted on His return than amongst the proud, boastful and self sanctified Pharisees.

May the Lord have mercy on me, a sinner.

AMEN



Nuts for Health

It's no secret that eating nuts is good for you. Researchers have been proving their cancer-fighting, brain-enhancing, weight-reducing and cholesterol-lowering capacity for years. As long as you avoid eating them with salt and enjoy them in moderation as part of a healthy diet, you could also help reduce your risk for coronary heart disease. Nuts can help you feel full, which helps to cut down on cravings for sweets, too. But are some nuts better than others? Here is a list of which nuts you should be eating and why. (The nutritional information provided is for raw, husked nuts)

Almonds

Definitely a chart-topper, almonds have less fat than many nuts and are jam-packed with nutrients, including magnesium, potassium, zinc, iron and fibre; and disease-fighting antioxidants, which includes high levels of Vitamin E. A quarter cup of almonds provides 70% of the daily requirement for Vitamin E. They contain more calcium than any other nut, with 94 mg of calcium per quarter cup, making them a great bone-builder. They are a good source of healthy monounsaturated fat. Plus, eating almonds has been proven to lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. A handful of almonds a day can lower bad cholesterol by 10%. They can also help decrease blood sugar levels, providing protection against diabetes.

What's in them: 206 calories, 18g of fat, 1.3 g saturated fat, 4 g fiber and 7.5g of protein in one quarter cup

Hazelnuts

Also known as filberts, hazelnuts, of all nuts, contain the highest source of Vitamin E. Folic acid is useful for growing babies and for adults. It plays a vital role in the production of red blood cells which are essential for oxygen transport across the human body. To ensure the health of the fetus and prevent certain defects, pregnant wom-

en need a daily supplement of folic acid. A half cup of hazelnuts provides 25% of the daily recommended amount of folic acid for pregnant women. They boast a healthy supply of B vitamins like B6, which can help combat the effects of autism, eczema and possibly hypertension. And hazelnuts contain tryptophan, an amino acid that helps treat insomnia and depression.

What's in them: 212 calories, 20.5 g of fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 3g fiber and 5g of protein in one quarter cup

Walnuts

Who knew walnuts were so good for you? They're one of the best plant sources of essential fatty acids such as Omega 3's. They can help reduce the effects of aging on your brain, improve your cardiovascular health, lower blood pressure and decrease LDL (bad) cholesterol. That's a lot for a little nut. A quarter cup of walnuts (about 14 shelled walnut halves) is all that is needed to meet the daily dietary recommendation for omega-3 fatty acids.

What's in them: 164 calories, 16g fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 2g fibre and 4g protein in one quarter cup

Pecans

In addition to providing essential vitamins and nutrients like folate and Vitamin A, these tasty treats are high in manganese, a mineral that helps promote healthy bones and regulates blood sugar levels. One quarter cup of pecans provides 64% of the daily requirement for manganese. Pecans are also high in Vitamin E. They contain mostly healthy monounsaturated fats.

What's in them: 171 calories, 18g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 2g fibre and 2g protein in one quarter cup

Cashews

Cashews are better for you than you might think. Most

of their fat content comes from the healthy, unsaturated kind and most of this fat is from oleic acid, a heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. One quarter cup serving of cashews contains 10 percent of your daily requirement for iron and they're also high in magnesium, which works with calcium to support healthy muscles and strengthen bones, and lower blood pressure. High levels of copper provide blood vessels, bones and joints with greater flexibility, helping prevent heart disease, osteoporosis and arthritis. A quarter cup of cashews supplies 38% of the body's daily need for copper. Cashews spoil quickly at room temperature, so they should always be refrigerated. Cashews have a lower fat content than most other nuts.

What's in them: 155 calories, 12g fat, 2g saturated fat, 1g fibre, 5g protein in one quarter cup

Nuts to eat in moderation:

The following nuts, although they also have health benefits, should be eaten in moderation.

Brazil nuts

Highest of the nuts in saturated fat (5g per ¼ cup serving), these are last on the list of healthy nuts. They are packed with nutrients like zinc, magnesium and selenium. Brazil nuts have 2,500 times the amount of selenium compared to any other nut. Selenium especially is a powerful antioxidant that helps protect against cancer and heart disease, and is good for thyroid health. Most North American diets are deficient in selenium. Because the total fat content of Brazil nuts is very high compared to other nuts, (218 g per ¼ cup) you should limit your portion to a few nuts at a time. The daily requirement for selenium is between 55-75 mcg/day. Fortunately, this amount of selenium can be obtained by eating just one Brazil nut a day.

What's in them: 186 calories, 23 g fat, 5g saturated fat, 4g protein in one quarter cup

Peanuts

Peanuts are not actually a nut, but a legume.

Peanuts are rich in nutrients, providing over 30 essential nutrients and phytonutrients. Peanuts are a good source of niacin, folate, fibre, magnesium, vitamin E and other antioxidants, manganese and phosphorus. They help in preventing heart disease, as well as improving bone health. Peanuts contain a phytochemical called resveratrol, which has shown to improve blood flow to the brain by 30%, greatly reducing the risk for strokes. They also are naturally free of trans-fats and sodium, and contain about 25% protein. The drawback to peanuts is that they are implicated in high levels of allergies. Because the peanut is not actually a nut, those who are allergic to peanuts may be able to eat other nuts instead. Experts are also not keen on peanut butter. Most commercial brands of peanut butter include unnecessary sugar, salt and fat, making them an unhealthy choice. Try to buy peanut butter that is salt and sugar-free.

What's in them: 206 calories, 14g fat, 2g saturated fat, 2g fibre, 20g protein, in one quarter cup

To make it easy for those who want to measure the amount of nuts to eat in a day, instead of trying to measure cups, how many nuts should we eat? The recommended daily requirement of nuts in our diet is one serving. One serving of nuts is about 1/3 cup. To break it down into numbers, one serving of nuts equals about 28 peanuts, 22 almonds, 20 pecan halves, 18 cashews, 14 walnut halves, 7 brazil nuts, 20 hazelnuts, or two tablespoons of peanut butter.



Believers in Mt. Kenya, Africa



Mrs. Grace James sighed for the umpteenth time as she sat in her wheelchair, pondering over what had become of her family within such a short time. If anyone had told her some years back that she could ever be in this condition, she would have disbelieved it. She, who lived in mansions and was controlling a retinue of servants. She, who used to be the toast of any gathering that mattered in the society. A hostess par excellence. To think that she was the one now confined to a moving chair in a low-cost, two bedroom apartment. How pitiable. As much as she tried to block them, memories from the past years kept coming back

She remembered her student life in that reputable university abroad. She thought of the whirlwind courtship she had with her heartthrob, Mr. Ben James. They had met at the very first social get-together she attended in a friend's apartment after she got back to the country. Ben James was all that a woman could desire in a man. When he strolled into her friend's house that day, she knew he was meant for her. She sought for them to be introduced and things took off from there. Ben happened to be a made man. He was one of the top executives of a multinational company. He was very successful and highly respected.

When they married, her greatest surprise was to find

that the company was responsible for all the needs in the home. In essence, there was so much money with very little things to do with it. For her, working was out of the question. There was simply no need. And so she went to town buying and acquiring everything and anything that caught her fancy.

Servants in different categories were at her beck and call. Whenever Ben raised objection to her way of life, she made him understand that that was what was expected of their status. She became the perfect hostess. She was not the one to spare expenses in throwing parties. Any party she hosted was a yardstick for other parties and those always fell short of her own. Her husband's entreaties that the social events were not improving their savings fell on deaf ears. Her response when she bothered to give any was that so long as the company existed, there would always be money.

Then suddenly Ben took ill. After a few months, the company's management retired him saying his post was too sensitive for the management to leave vacant for too long. With the support from the company gone, the family's little savings went into settling medical bills. Ben became broken-hearted and lost the will to live. By the time he died two years after, there was little left for Grace to fall back on. The friends she thought would help her stayed away from her and the children. She found it very difficult to cope with the trauma and sudden burden of becoming the breadwinner. Before she knew it, she had developed very high blood pressure and, a few months after, had a stroke. She has since been confined to a wheelchair.

In these times of global financial meltdown, the world's economy seems to be standing on its head. Many countries owe so much money that it is doubtful they can ever pay up their debts. Natural resources are dwindling, the money market is in disarray and human life is threatened by famine, ecological and atmospheric disasters. In all of these, families are the hardest hit because families are what make up a nation. These realities call for everyone's hands to be on the spindle. It is no longer advisable for anyone to be a full-time spouse. Times are tough and both men and women must work and contribute their quota to the family's income.

The need to give the children sound education and provide for both immediate and extended family members under the weight of dwindling resources has necessitated women especially to engage in means of livelihood so as to complement their husband's earnings. It is indeed inconsiderate, almost wicked, for any believer to

abandon all financial responsibility of the home to the other partner alone. In every aspect of a marital relationship, two are always better than one, "because they have a good reward for their labour." (Ecclesiastes 4:9)

Steps To Productivity

The scriptures say God created man in His own image (Genesis 1:26). And since God is a Creator, it means that, at creation, He implanted His creative ability in man. Therefore, man, like God, was made to be creative and productive.

Man, however lost this "Godlikeness" when he sinned (Genesis 3: 9-10). He lost God's image (Romans 3:23). He lost God's nature and His unlimited riches and became poor. His poverty was, in one way, a poverty of idea, for his mind became darkened, devoid of divine ability, potentiality and vision. Man's creative power was painfully diminished. This is why the first step towards receiving unlimited creative and productive power is seeking reconciliation with God. Man must repent of his sin and seek pardon by appropriating the redemptive work of Christ on the cross (Acts 3:19). Then his soul and mind will be revived and revitalized.

After reconciliation with God, the man necessarily experiences a transformation of his inner being, producing a God-like conduct and great creative ability (2 Corinthians 5:17). This ability is fed by visions and inspirations from the Holy Spirit. The man may, if he so desires, tap into this creative nature; you must not sit idle. Prosperity comes only to hardworking visionaries

Secrets Of Productive People

From the successful stories of prosperous people in the Bible and contemporary times, we can deduce many principles which every born-again Christian can apply in his or her effort to live a prosperous life.

Be Innovative: Genesis 30:27,37; 41:33-44. Introduce new ideas to do a work better and easier so as to bring new products out of the existing ones. The Christian artisan can pray for a new vision in his or her work and get fresh ideas. So pray, dream and create!

Use Your Talent: Matthew 25:14-30. Many Christians do not make use of their God-given talents. They are always afraid of venturing into a new business. They dread taking risks. Instead of looking for a way of applying their talents to create a means of livelihood they embark on a futile search for greener pastures in other professions. You have artistic talent? Use it and improve on it. You have a fertile imagination? Write books. You

are gifted in money management, business transactions? With a little money and God's help, you can start a business. "**Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it.**" (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

Work Hard: Proverbs 10:4-5; 6:5-11; 24:30-34; Genesis 26:12-14. "**Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.**" (Genesis 26:13). Supposing Isaac did not sow, what would have yielded an hundredfold for him? Some people have all the resources at their disposal but because of their laziness they sow nothing and reap nothing. There are jobs for them to do, there are people who could (and are willing to) help them, yet they fold their hands in long deep sleep or sweet tale-bearing

Have Fear Of God: The fear of God has always been the beginning of wisdom. Creative minds have always demonstrated piety, fearing the Lord and doing justice. The Bible defines true religion as supreme love for God (Deuteronomy 10:12), obedience to God's commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13), showing mercy (Hosea 6:6), doing justice (Isaiah 56:1), loving one's neighbours and remaining unspotted from the world (Romans 12:10; James 1:27). This is more than the piety of the Pharisees. A life willing to prosper must demonstrate, in practical ways, true piety, purity and undefilement.

Be Humble: Genesis 39 and 40; Daniel 2:46-49. Some people are not willing to start low. They want to take off from the pinnacle. But many lowly unrecognized jobs are more lucrative than the big name jobs. Humility leads to greatness. Joseph and Daniel started as servants (slaves) but ended as governors. Ruth chose to glean at Boaz's field rather than stay at home to bemoan her widowhood. Not only did she end up finding favour and exaltation but also became a key figure in the ancestry of Christ.

Be Determined: Those who reach the goal of excellence are not the quitters. They are not those who are easily put off or discouraged. They are not lazybones. They have a will of iron and a spirit that never gives up. They know that the times can be tough but are determined to be tougher. They have the guidance of God to know when to hold on and when to let go. Slothfulness does not lead to creativity but to decay and waste (Proverbs 24:30-31; 18:9; Ecclesiastes 10:18). For a meaningful existence there must be industry and drive. The Bible directs us to take examples from the ants. (Proverbs 6). Further exhortations fill the Bible (Proverbs 10:5; 12:11; 13:11; 20:13)

Be Prayerful: Luke 18:1; 1Thesalonians 5:17. Prayer is

the master key. Obtaining visions and dreams for creative life means receiving the best from God. The secret things belong to God (Deuteronomy 29:29) It is for God to reveal them to those who are worthy (Daniel 2:22,28). The secrets were revealed to Daniel after a praying session with his colleagues and brethren (Daniel 2:18,19). Esther, too, received wisdom to avert a national disaster because she prayed along with her people (Esther 4:15-17). For life to be meaningful, for a creative and productive existence, one must be prayerful. The Bible recommends all types of prayer (Ephesians 6:18). Prayer has stood the test of time as a proven principle for creativity and productivity for meaningful life.

Settling For A Productive Life

What more can we say? The Bible is replete with stories of men and women who made their lives meaningful and left their footsteps in the sands of time. If it is so, then you must not be timid. You must commit yourself to a meaningful venture. And in case you need to upgrade your academic/professional qualifications, then you should enroll in any of the appropriate learning centres or institutions.

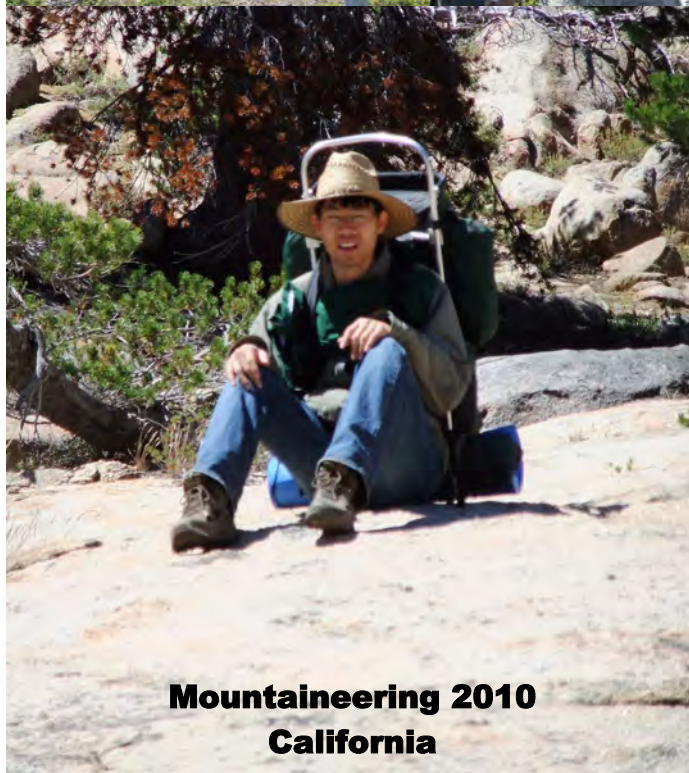
The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work. In reality, work must come before success, labour must come before enjoyment and toiling must come before rest. So, every man and indeed woman must learn to work, and work hard, in order to earn a decent living and provide for himself and his family.

The reason many men and women complain of not finding the right opportunity to use their talents and abilities is because opportunity often wears the garb of hard work. And this is where many tend to miss it. Opportunity is an element you must look out for every time and you must take advantage of it however it appears (Ecclesiastes 9:10). Only then can you discover the secret to living a productive and prosperous life.

Do not court idleness. Remember, Eve, the wife of Adam, fell into the temptation of eating the forbidden fruit in her moment of laxity. She gave opportunity for the devil to enter into a conversation with her and that led to something regrettable. Many other people too have brought misery and regret upon themselves because of idleness. Make up your mind not to be one of them. Keep your hands on the spindle!

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**Mountaineering 2010
California**



*What Must I **NOT** do to be Saved?*

Do you occasionally find yourself thinking, “Oh I shouldn’t do this, or I shouldn’t do that?” As a Christian, I am prohibited from doing this or indulging in that.

This is the focus of the religion of some Christian people. They focus on the “Taboos” – things to be avoided in order to gain entrance into the Kingdom of God. They are good at compiling long lists of things to avoid. Wrong kinds of TV shows and entertainments; wrong types of books and magazines to read; wrong kinds of dress to wear... and the list gets especially long when they mention foods that should be avoided.

When we raise our children, there is a tendency to use the word “no” a lot. “No, don’t put that in your mouth;” “No, don’t touch that hot stove;” “No, leave my papers alone;” “No, don’t eat between meals;” “No, don’t go out in winter without a proper coat on;” “No, don’t throw your clothes on the floor;” “No, don’t leave your bicycle on the driveway;”... the list goes on and on. Is it any wonder that people grow up focusing on things they **should not** do because that is all they have been taught – what is unacceptable behavior? To lead a moral and an acceptable life in society they have been told it means to avoid certain unacceptable activities. While many of these things mentioned are good prohibitions, for the benefit of the child, unless there is some positive attention, children start to disobey because the only attention they seem to receive is negative attention.

This mindset has made its way into religious circles, so much so that in the days of Christ the Pharisees had come up with some 600 rules for the keeping of the Sab-

bath alone. The entire focus was what should **not** be done on the Sabbath. We are in danger of falling into the same trap of a legalistic religion, of focusing on what we should **not** be doing, and what we need to avoid in order to be accepted by God. As Christians we **should** be asking, “What must I **do** to be saved ?” Not, “What must I **not do** to be saved?”

In the Bible we find some examples of people who asked this question, “What must I do to be saved?” We will look at a few of these examples and analyze the response they received.

RICH YOUNG RULER

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” Matthew 19:16

This was Jesus’ response. “ And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?” Matthew 19:17-20

When the rich young ruler asked this question, he was pointed by Jesus to the Law of God, to the Ten Commandments. Let’s take a closer look at the Ten Commandments. What do we notice about them? Do they

have a positive focus? Proactive? The words, “Thou Shalt Not” appear ten times in the Commandments and in addition the first commandment reads, “*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*” Can we agree that there appears to be a negative focus in the Commandments? While people have asked what must I **do** to be saved, they were told to do something... to **keep the Commandments**. However, the commandments are full of “thou shalt not’s...” (Negative - prohibitory).

The Rich Young Ruler had kept the letter of the law. He obeyed all these “Thou Shalt Not’s” as had many of the



Jewish leaders in the days of Christ. We see it in the Christian world also today. But is this enough? Is it enough to sit at home, on your own, day after day, faithfully staying away from the vices that are prohibited in the Ten Commandments? No, it is not enough. The Rich Young Ruler had not found salvation. He was keeping the letter of the law, but this was not enough. Jesus now pointed him to the spirit of the law.

“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” Matthew 19:21,22. This the young man could not do. It was too humbling. He could sit and do nothing... avoid the evils, but he could not be proactive in helping other people (the spirit of the law). Thus it appears he may have lost

his salvation.

LAWYER

Then a lawyer came to Jesus with a similar question.

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, what is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.” Luke 10:25-28

Jesus points the lawyer to the law and asks the lawyer what is written in the law. This man appears to have had some understanding of the spirit of the law.

Rather than just focusing on the prohibitions, he could see that the law equated to love. Love both to God and to his neighbor. This lawyer answered correctly according to the spirit of the Law. Not only was love to God important but love to our fellow man. Still the lawyer was a prominent man in Israel and possessed the prejudice of the Pharisees towards other races, so when he inquired, “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus went on to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. He took it one step further... not only is it important to be a help to **some** other people; true religion is to help **all** people in need, regardless of family ties, race, culture, or religion. Some people are so focused only on their own family circle, church and race, being very helpful and generous to them, but have little interest in helping those outside their circle. This is not true religion. True religion has no boundaries. Love and help is for anyone who needs it.

PHILIPPIAN JAILER

The above mentioned people were two well-respected persons in Jewish society, but here we see now the Philippian Jailer, being a Gentile, asking this question of Paul and Silas when he saw their integrity. He wanted what they had. He had heard them singing in prison while they suffered. He heard no word of complaint through all the mistreatment. Now when they had opportunity to flee, they would not, since they wanted to do what was true and right. At first the jailer was going to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped following the earthquake... “But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed [their] stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." Acts 16:28-33

What was Paul's answer to this request? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." He did not start by saying "Keep the commandments", which were full of "thou shalt nots" like Jesus did to these prominent Jewish men. He began with belief in Jesus. Once a person falls in love with Jesus, then they are ready for the next step of keeping the commandments. Belief is Justification, Keeping the commandments is Sanctification. Both are necessary for salvation. While one cannot exist without the other, justification must precede sanctification.

There was once a sister in the church who was so excit-



ed about her faith, and after her baptism she was so happy and joyful. She went to her neighbor and told her all about her faith. She failed to mention the peace and joy she found in Christ, but she did tell her neighbor how she now kept the Sabbath, was a vegetarian, paid her tithes and she told her neighbor about all the other commandments. The neighbor simply told this sister, "If this is your religion, I want nothing of it." The neighbor was not ready for the law. She didn't know Jesus. You cannot have sanctification before justification.

When working with those new in the faith and they ask this question, we need to point the people to Jesus.

Believe in Jesus. Once they fall in love with Jesus they

will want to do more. Much like two people in love; they will find ways and means to do things to make the other happy. Love is shown in actions, not words alone, however, the words come first and the actions follow. We say we believe in Jesus... If we are sincere it will be seen In our actions that will naturally follow.

THE SHEEP

When Jesus comes again to take the redeemed home to heaven, Matthew describes the event as the King separating the sheep from the goats-- the sheep being the obedient ones. What were they commended for? Were they commended for, "not stealing," "not killing", "not breaking the Sabbath", "not coveting," "not lying," "not committing adultery," "not worshipping idols?" In other words distancing themselves from society to keep themselves pure. Was that the life of the model Christian? Although this is the extreme and may sound ridiculous, many Christians do this. They go to church; they go to work; the rest of the time is spent at home alone or with immediate family around them. They are rarely found elsewhere, except perhaps at the shopping centre when supplies are needed.

Let's read what the King said to those on His right--the sheep. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed [thee]? or thirsty, and gave [thee] drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took [thee] in? or naked, and clothed [thee]? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me." Matthew 25:34-40



Here we see a proactive religion. Here we see Christians keeping the spirit of the Law. Here we see where the rich young ruler failed. Here we see where the lawyer was unsure of what to do. Here we see Paul and Silas, sacrificing all to go and preach the gospel. Paul suffered much in his ministry at the hands of the “religious leaders”, however he never uttered a complaint.

“Jesus here identifies Himself with His suffering people. It was I who was hungry and thirsty. It was I who was a stranger. It was I who was naked. It was I who was sick. It was I who was in prison. When you were enjoying the food from your bountifully spread tables, I was famishing in the hovel or street not far from you. When you closed your doors against Me, while your well-furnished rooms were unoccupied, I had not where to lay My head. Your wardrobes were filled with an abundant supply of changeable suits of apparel, upon which means had been needlessly squandered, which you might have given to the needy. I was destitute of comfortable apparel. When you were enjoying health, I was sick. Misfortune cast Me into prison and bound Me with fetters, bowing down My spirit, depriving Me of freedom and hope, while you roamed free. What a oneness Jesus here expresses as existing between Himself and His suffering disciples! He makes their case His own. He identifies Himself as being in person the very sufferer. Mark, selfish Christian: every neglect of the needy poor, the orphan, the fatherless, is a neglect of Jesus in their person.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 25

MISSIONARY WORK

Missionary work with zeal is proactive. It is created from love to God; a love that we want to share with others. True missionary work is done, not through drudgery or some form of toil and penance required for salvation, but through a deep sense of love to God. It will be seen in the true Christian. The light of the love of God cannot be hidden.

“With the calling of John and Andrew and Simon, of Philip and Nathanael, began the foundation of the Christian church. John directed two of his disciples to Christ. Then one of these, Andrew, found his brother, and called him to the Saviour. Philip was then called, and he went in search of Nathanael. These examples should teach us the importance of personal effort, of making direct appeals to our kindred, friends, and neighbors. *There are those who for a lifetime have professed to be acquainted with Christ, yet who have never made a personal effort to bring even one soul to the Saviour.* They leave all the work for the minister. *He may be well qualified for his calling, but he cannot do that which God has left for the*

members of the church.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 141 (emphasis mine)

“There are many who need the ministration of loving Christian hearts. Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed. In the very family, the neighborhood, the town, where we live, there is work for us to do as missionaries for Christ. If we are Christians, this work will be our delight. No sooner is one converted than there is born within him a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.” —*ibid*, p. 141

“All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. His promise is, ‘I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.’ Ezekiel 34:26.” —*ibid*, p. 141

SABBATH

One final point I want to bring out is about the Sabbath. My husband spoke with a Christian gentleman years ago who asked him how he could keep the Sabbath. Was it not such a yoke of bondage? Focused on all these things we cannot do? Is this how children sometimes view the Sabbath? The Sabbath will be an unpleasant time for children and youth who have been taught in a similar fashion as the Pharisees, although with not near so many rules. Yet still we often raise our children teaching them what they are **not** to do on Sabbath. They are not to play with their toys, not to play with their worldly friends... and it goes on and on. However, we need to change this.

It is the duty of parents to make the Sabbath a delight for the children, so that they look forward to it every week.

“The Sabbath school and the meeting for worship occupy only a part of the Sabbath. The portion remaining to the family may be made the most sacred and precious season of all the Sabbath hours. Much of this time parents should spend with their children.

“The Sabbath--oh!--make it the sweetest, the most blessed day of the week. . . .

“Parents can and should give attention to their children, reading to them the most attractive portions of Bible history, educating them to reverence the Sabbath day, keeping it according to the commandment. This cannot

be done if the parents feel no burden to interest their children. But they can make the Sabbath a delight if they will take the proper course.

The children can be interested in good reading or in conversation about the salvation of their souls. But they will have to be educated and trained. The natural heart does not love to think of God, of heaven, or of heavenly things. There must be a continual pressing back of the current of worldliness and inclination to evil and a letting in of heavenly light.

"I have found that on the Sabbath day many are indifferent and do not know where their children are or what they are doing.

"Parents, above everything take care of your children upon the Sabbath. Do not suffer them to violate God's holy day by playing in the house or out-of-doors. You may just as well break the Sabbath yourselves as to let your children do it, and when you suffer your children to wander about and suffer them to play upon the Sabbath, God looks upon you as Sabbathbreakers.

"The parents may take their children outdoors to view God in nature. They can be pointed to the blooming flowers and the opening buds, the lofty trees and beautiful spires of grass, and taught that God made all these in six days and rested on the seventh day and hallowed it. Thus the parents may bind up their lessons of instruction to their children, so that when these children look upon the things of nature, they will call to mind the great Creator of them all. Their thoughts will be carried up to nature's God-- back to the creation of our world, when the foundation of the Sabbath was laid, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Such are the lessons to be impressed on the minds of our children.

"We are not to teach our children that they must not be happy on the Sabbath, that it is wrong to walk out-of-doors. Oh, no. Christ led His disciples out by the lakeside on the Sabbath day and taught them. His sermons on the Sabbath were not always preached within enclosed walls." –Child Guidance, p. 532

Be proactive. Do not teach children only what they **can-not** do on Sabbath, but what they **can** do. Teach them the benefits of Sabbath keeping. As they have your undivided attention in the afternoon, they will learn to delight in the lessons you are teaching them. Then they will not miss all those prohibitions.

CONCLUSION

Religion should have a positive focus. While the Ten Commandments are full of "thou shalt not's", focusing

on this only is the letter of the law. We need to go one step further in understanding the spirit of the law; the spirit within the Ten Commandments. Think of how you can love your neighbor. Be proactive. If they are hungry don't let them starve to death (Thou shalt not kill). An understanding of the spirit of the law will, in turn, enable us to see the positive nature of the Ten Commandments.

Jesus said, "And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man according as **his work shall be.**" Revelation. 22:12. He did not say He will reward people according to their abstinence; no, according to their work.

Pure religion is defined like this in the Bible, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." James 1:27. Notice two elements are described here as pertaining to pure religion. Helping others **and** keeping yourself unspotted from the world. You need both. Some only feel that the second half is important (as the rich young ruler did), but that was not pure religion.

While it is true that "Religion does not consist in works," however... "religion works; it is not dormant... The pure religion of Jesus is the fountain from which flow streams of charity, love, self-sacrifice." –*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 935

Read your Bible. Pray. Ask God every day what He wants of you.

"Do you ask, What shall I do to be saved? You must lay your preconceived opinions, your hereditary and cultivated ideas, at the door of investigation. If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth. Search in order to learn what the Lord says. If conviction comes as you search, if you see that your cherished opinions are not in harmony with the truth, do not misinterpret the truth in order to suit your own belief, but accept the light given. Open mind and heart that you may behold wondrous things out of God's word." –*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 112

May God help each one of us to focus on the positive will of God. Open your eyes to see the needs of others around you. There are many people out there who need help, yet many Christians blindly go on with their lives oblivious to the needs of others. Read, then Look, Ask God and Pray. Then you will be one of the sheep, who has helped, "one of the least of these my brethren." And you will hear the words of Jesus say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." AMEN.

Wendy Eaton



SIGNS OF THE END OF THE WORLD

God has given us clear signs of the end of the world, which is coming closer. These signs are as the voice of God telling us to get ready for the judgment and for the time of trouble.

WARS

We have witnessed two great world wars, and the troubles between the nations have not ceased. Jesus said, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars." Matthew 24:6

Sister White wrote several testimonies about the wars in the end times.

"We shall see troubles on all sides. Thousands of ships will be hurled into the depths of the sea. Navies will go down, and human lives will be sacrificed by millions." *—Messages to Young People*, p. 89

FAMINES

We hear reports that every day thousands of people die from hunger. Jesus said, "There shall be famines." Matthew 24:7

"I saw desolate, despairing families, and pinching want in many dwellings. Even now many families are suffering want, but this will increase. The faces of many looked haggard, pale, and pinched with hunger." *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 260

PESTILENCES

We have seen new diseases entering the world that were never heard of before; AIDS, Mad Cow Disease, swine flu, and several others. Jesus said that there would be pestilences. (Matthew. 24:7)

"Pestilences will sweep away thousands." *—Last Day Events*, p. 27

EARTHQUAKES

Scientists say that there are about 1,000 earthquakes daily. So far in the year 2010, 250,000 people have died in earthquakes.

Jesus said that there will be earthquakes. (Mathew. 24:7)

"The time is now come when one moment we may be on solid earth, the next the earth may be heaving beneath our feet. Earthquakes will take place when least expected." *—Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 421

BE OFFENDED

Jesus said, "Then shall many be offended." Matthew 24:10

Many will fall away and apostatize. Looking at old conference pictures, we see how many were in the church and later went away. In the future we will see more members falling away, when the wise and foolish virgins separate.

SHALL HATE ONE ANOTHER

Jesus said, "Brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and father the child: and children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake." Matthew 10: 21–22

This happened in the First World War when apostatized brethren gave to the authorities the names and addresses of their faithful brothers to be punished by the governments.

The faithful members of the church will be hated most by their former brethren.

PERSECUTION

Jesus mentioned also that His followers will be persecuted especially in the last days. The Sunday law will be the main reason for it.

"Many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ's sake in standing in defense of the truth." *—Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 397

GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM PREACHED

Jesus said, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in

all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14

There are few corners of the earth left where the gospel has not been preached yet, but soon every human being will have heard the message.

FALSE CHRISTS AND PROPHETS

Other signs Jesus mentioned once, but this one He repeated three times. "For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Matthew 24:5

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Matthew 24:24

According to statistics, there are about 2,700 different Christian organizations, and all are teaching something different, and deceiving many people out of salvation.

KNOWLEDGE INCREASES

Daniel 12:4 reads, "Knowledge shall be increased."

This is a clear sign. The knowledge in every field has increased. The Bible knowledge certainly, but also the knowledge of technology and science have increased more in the time of the end than in the thousands of years before.

FAST TRAVELLING

We read in Daniel 12:4 that, "many shall run to and fro."

With airplanes, travel has been made easy.

LABOUR TROUBLES

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." James 5:1

"Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." James 1:5

The frequent strikes and other labour troubles are signs of the end times.

SUN BE DARKENED

This sign was fulfilled on May 19, 1790.

"Fear anxiety, and awe filled the minds of the people. Women stood at the door, looking out upon the dark landscape; men returned from from their labours in the fields; the carpenter left his tools, the blacksmith his forge; the tradesman his counter. Schools were dismissed, and tremblingly the children fled homeward. Travelers put up at the nearest farmhouse. 'What is coming?' queried every lip and heart. It seemed as if a hurricane was about to

dash across the land, or as if it was the day of the consummation of all things." –*The Great Controversy*, p. 306-307

MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT

"The moon shall not give her light." Matthew 24:29.

"Though at nine o'clock that night the moon rose to the full, 'it had not the least effect to dispel the deathlike shadows.' After midnight the darkness disappeared, and the moon, when first visible, had the appearance of blood." GC 308

FALLING OF STARS

Jesus also said, "The stars shall fall from heaven." Matthew 24:29

This sign was fulfilled on November 13, 1833. "I witnessed this gorgeous spectacle and was awe-struck. The air seemed filled with bright descending messengers from the sky. It was about daybreak when I saw this sublime scene. I was not without the suggestion, at the moment, that it might be the harbinger of the coming of the Son of Man; and in my then state of mind I was prepared to hail Him as my friend and deliverer. I had read that the 'stars shall fall from heaven,' and they were now falling." Frederick Douglass

AS THE DAYS OF NOAH

Jesus said, "As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Matthew 24:37.

The same kind of condition exists today as in the days of Noah. People heard the warnings of the flood and were called to repent and prepare themselves for it. But people were occupied in their usual round of activities and the flood came as a surprise upon them. The same is true today. People have had time to get ready for the end, but this solemn preparation time is neglected and the end will come upon them also as a surprise.

Many other signs are written in the Bible, and also in the writings of Sister White. Some time ago we counted about 50 different signs that clearly indicate that the time of the end is near, and Jesus will soon come. Seeing the fulfillment of these prophesied signs of the times should wake us up and make us to begin an earnest preparation. How terrible a disappointment would it be if some one of us would not receive the seal of God and be lost eternally.

May the Lord help us to know what may be lacking in us, that every fault and neglected duty would be corrected before it is forever too late. AMEN

Timo Martin



HEROINE

Here are the courageous words spoken by Esther; a profile of courage... a classic statement of heroism! What makes a hero? If someone were to ask a hero, they might nonchalantly respond, "I'm sure other people would have done exactly the same thing." Or, also, "I was just in the right place at the right time." You see, people become heroes because they take quick action at that "right time" without hesitating while others just watch in horror; too fearful to act. The true hero recognizes the crisis and moves quickly to meet it without regards for "self". This is the kind of courage that made Esther great and is now an important lesson for us today in a world that has gone entirely mad! The Book of Esther could be, moreover, the most important book for our time! Why? Read on!

But, firstly, who was Esther? Esther was a Benjamite girl, a Jewish exile, whose name was immortalized in the book that bears her name. Her older cousin, Mordecai, adopted her, his uncle's daughter, on the death of her parents, thusly an orphan, and took her for his own daughter and guardian. Her Hebrew name is equated with Hadassah, meaning, "Myrtle." The turning of this name, Hadassah, into Esther might have been done by her Persian playmates, who did not understand Hebrew, but, who, in the manner of children down the ages, approximated a strange name to one with which they are familiar. Even some Jewish exiles, such as Daniel and his friends, bore Babylonian names.

Furthermore, Esther could have been connected with the Persian word for "Stara" with the meaning of "Star", or even with the Babylonian goddess "Ishtar". The Greek title for the book is "Esther", and the Latin title is "Hester". Perhaps American children, ah, confronted with a playmate named Hadassah, might rename her as "Dusty".

WILD MAN

Ahasuerus (Hebrew) (KJV); (Artaxerxes – Xerxes I) (Greek) (NIV), was King of Persia, who ruled over 127 provinces, stretching from India to Ethiopia (486-465 B.C.). Historical sources portray King Xerxes as a wild man; a dangerously impulsive king! When a bridge he had ordered built was destroyed in a storm, he commanded that the sea receive 300 lashes, then had the bridge builders beheaded. When one of his loyal subjects contributed a huge sum toward a military Expedition, Xerxes was so enraptured that he returned

*"IF I PERISH,
I PERISH."*

*"...and so will I go in
unto the king, which is
not according to the
law: and if I perish, I
perish."
Esther 4:16 (KJV).*

the money, along with a handsome gift of his own. But when the same man asked Xerxes to let just one of his sons go free from the military draft, Xerxes, enraged, ordered the son cut into two and the army to march between the pieces.

INFLUENCE OF WINE

For a full 180 days (6 months) Xerxes the King of Persia displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty, (Esther 1:4) showing off his wealth to officials from all corners of the realm; civil servants, princes, and armies of the Medes and Persians. Couches of gold and silver on a mosaic floor of marble, mother of pearl, and other costly stones were throughout the banquet hall. Wine was served in goblets of gold, and the royal wine was abundant in keeping with the king's liberality.

At the same time Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes. On the seventh and last day of the royal party, drinks were flowing freely and in a drunken stupor, the King commanded his seven eunuchs to bring him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was very lovely to look at.

She, however, refused to be paraded before his drunken guests. To the king's embarrassment, she simply said, "no!" Her response shook the palace. According to the king's advisors, the queen must go; be deposed! If such insubordination is tolerated, women all over the empire will follow her example. They will see the queen's example and look with contempt on their own husbands. So Ahasuerus issued an edict that served notice to women everywhere. Vashti was to be dethroned and banned from the king's presence. Men are to be the masters of their own homes. The king's command became a law of the Medes and the Persians.

Other historical sources bear out the accuracy of this verse (1:7), "wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different than the other, and the royal wine was abundant." Greek historian, Herodotus wrote that the Persians "are very fond of wine, and drink it in large quantities... It is also their general practice to deliberate upon affairs of weight when they are drunk... sometimes, however, they are sober at their first deliberation, but in this case they always reconsider the matter under the influence of wine."

NATIONAL SECURITY RISKS

When the king's anger cools, he remembers Vashti and what he has lost. His advisors console him by coming up with a plan to find someone more worthy of the crown as his queen. They send messengers to the 127 provinces of Persia to bring the most beautiful young women of the land to the king's palace.

One of those drafted into the national search for a queen is a young Jewish woman named Hadassah. She was living under the care of her older cousin, Mordecai. But, at his insistence Hadassah has gone by a Persian name, Esther, so as not to call attention to her Jewish ancestry, but conceal it.

Esther's beauty destines her for the national spotlight. The eyes of the empire turn to her when she emerges from obscurity to wear the crown of the Queen of Persia. Chosen from a large number of virgins, she was the one that found favor with King Xerxes. But four years passed by before King Xerxes married Esther, as he was occupied collecting his armies for the Greek campaign, in which he was ultimately defeated by the Greeks at Salamis (Herodotus VII, 21). His father, Darius, had been defeated by the Greeks at Marathon in 490 (Herodotus VII, 8).

Mordecai, meanwhile, remains nearby. One day, while sitting at the palace gate, he overhears two guards (courtiers), Bigthan and Teresh, conspiring to kill the king. He gets word to Esther. She tells her husband, the king, and the two conspirators are arrested and hanged. As a result of his action, Mordecai is given a line of honorable mention in the national record of Persia. Mordecai's honor, however, is soon forgotten. Before long he lands in trouble for refusing to bow to Haman, the king's prime minister.

When Haman learns that Mordecai is a Jewish man who bows only to his God, he convinces the king that the Jewish people are a national security risk. He explains that they have their own laws and resist assimilation into the populace; in other words a "peculiar" people; "separate." Haman plans his revenge by massacring all the Jews in the empire, including Mordecai. He urges the king to solve the Jewish problem by signing a law calling for their elimination. Haman casts "lots" (pur) (Purim) to fix the lucky day for the extermination of the Jews, and a date is chosen eleven months in advance. Haman sends decrees for the massacre throughout the empire. The king goes along with the plan, not knowing

his wife is a Jewess!

When Esther discovers the plot, she finds herself in a difficult spot. To side with her people against the law of extermination would mean revealing her Jewishness. In all likelihood such disclosure would result not only in the loss of the crown but her life as well. Mordecai, however, gently urges her; "If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14).

Esther senses her destiny and the risk that is before her. However she insists that the Jews in the city fast and pray for three days for her; no food or water. She agrees to use her influence to come to the aid of her people, and says; "**If I perish, I perish!**"

FEAST OF PURIM - "lots"

But heaven helps the queen. The king has a sleepless night (suffering from insomnia) and asks that the national record be brought to him. As an attendant reads the routine details of the kingdom, they come to a line about a man named Mordecai who reported a conspiracy to kill the king. King Xerxes realizes he has done nothing to honor the man who saved his life! When the morning dawns, intrigue turns to irony. The king asks his second-in-command to honor Mordecai. Haman must sing the praises of the man he despises.

Esther, meanwhile, appears before the king unbidden, which would have meant immediate death for her, but the king receives her kindly. Soon afterward Esther invites the king and Haman to dinner prepared in her palace one evening, where she had evidently planned to expose Haman's schemes, but does not mention his plot. Can we assume that her courage failed her at the first dinner? She again invites the king and Haman to another dinner in her palace and on this occasion cleverly exposes Haman as the man who has conspired to kill her and her family. The king becomes angry and storms out of the room! When he returns he finds Haman leaning over Esther to beg for mercy, and the king thinks the worst. Haman was taken out and hanged at the gallows; a 75 foot scaffold prepared to hang Mordecai.

Instead of a Jewish ethnic cleansing, the exiles find the strength they need to overcome those who have been

intent on killing them. Esther and Mordecai foiled the plot of Haman. They then obtained the king's permission to avert the massacre. Since the original decree could not be directly reversed, they authorized the Jews to defend themselves on the day of the massacre on the 13th day of Adar. As a result, on 13 Adar, five hundred attackers, enemies of the Jews, and Haman's ten sons are killed in Shushan. In this way the edict of the decree was turned since it was unlikely that the local authorities would now support the massacre, as they would otherwise have done.

In Susa where Esther lived, she asked permission for the Jews to kill their enemies on the following day as well, and it appears that on this day the Jews took the initiative for revenge instead of merely defending themselves (Esther 9:15,16). Subsequently, 75,000 of the Jew's enemies were killed throughout the empire. Therefore, these days were called Purim from the word "pur"; a national feast day for the Jews today, commemorating the deliverance of the Jewish people and from being the victims of an evil decree against them.

They were instead allowed by the King to destroy their enemies, and the day after the battle was designated as a day of feasting and rejoicing--reading of the Book of Esther in synagogues, giving charity to the poor, sending food parcels, eating a festive meal. Like Hanukkah, Purim has more of a national than a religious character. Seeds and nuts are customarily eaten on Purim, as the Talmud relates that Queen Esther ate only these food-stuffs in the palace of Xerxes, since she had no access to kosher food.

Adolf Hitler banned and forbade the observance of Purim, and declared it a capital offense for Christians or Jews to possess a copy of the Book of Esther. Nazi attacks against Jews often coincided with Jewish festivals. On Purim 1942, ten Jews were hanged in Zdunska Wola to avenge the hanging of Haman's ten sons. On Purim eve that same year, over 100 Jewish doctors and their families were shot by the Nazis in Czestochowa. In a similar incident in 1943, the Nazis shot 10 Jews from the Piotrkow ghetto.

WHAT ABOUT GOD?

The Bible shows how God used Esther and Mordecai to deliver His people in an emergency. Ah! But the name of God is not mentioned once, especially in obvious places like this in the pages that bear the name of Esther.

Yet in the unfolding drama of the Bible, history shows us that God doesn't have to be mentioned to be present.

The story of Esther is a timeless tribute to the God who doesn't have to be announced or understood to be present. He is the God of the sleepless night and the surprise ending. He is the God who works for us in the darkness, confusion, fears, anxieties, and loneliness of our troubled lives. Many believe that God's name is omitted to emphasize the very point that God remained hidden throughout the story, but was nonetheless present and played a large role in its outcome. Throughout history, God's presence has been felt more at certain times than at others. God plays (and has played) an important role in everyone's lives.

What is inspiring about this story is that it is not all about Esther. It is a story about the God, who, while being our provider and protector, can use us to bring help to others in need. Who can say when we, like Esther, may find ourselves looking into the eyes of destiny as we contemplate the needs of a hurting child, a lonely neighbor, a frightened co-worker, or a disillusioned mate, or believer, a church! God is the invisible, unmentioned Protector. He lives!

A CERTAIN PEOPLE

Finally, I can just hear someone say, however, "yes, that was the deliverance of God's chosen ones, the Jews in the ancient days; of the wilderness Jews. It was a cruel age, cruel kings, cruel servants, a hated minority, racial discrimination! That scenario cannot repeat itself in a modern, developed, advanced age such as we live in today" Well, it is a sober lesson for us today, a warning of an impending conflict and trouble, "such as never has been" for God's chosen people, the Israelites of today! History most certainly repeats itself...the Spirit of Prophecy confirms it.

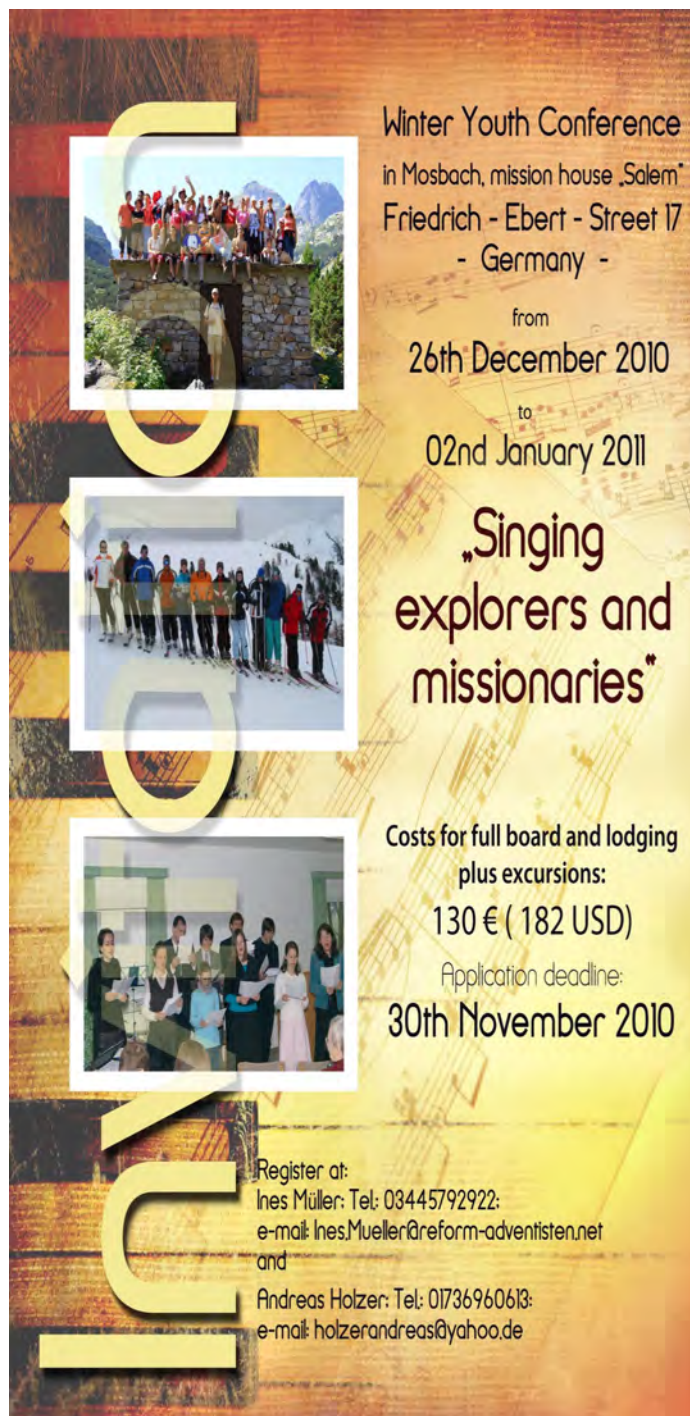
"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed." (Revelation 13:15)

"And Haman said unto king Xerxes. There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them." (Esther 3:8) (KJV); "tolerate them" (NIV). "If it

pleases the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed and I will pay 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasury." Here is the decree of extermination of the Jews. Who are you worshipping?

"Who can say that heaven has not brought us to this place – for such a time as this?"(Esther 4:14). Amen.

John Theodorou
USA



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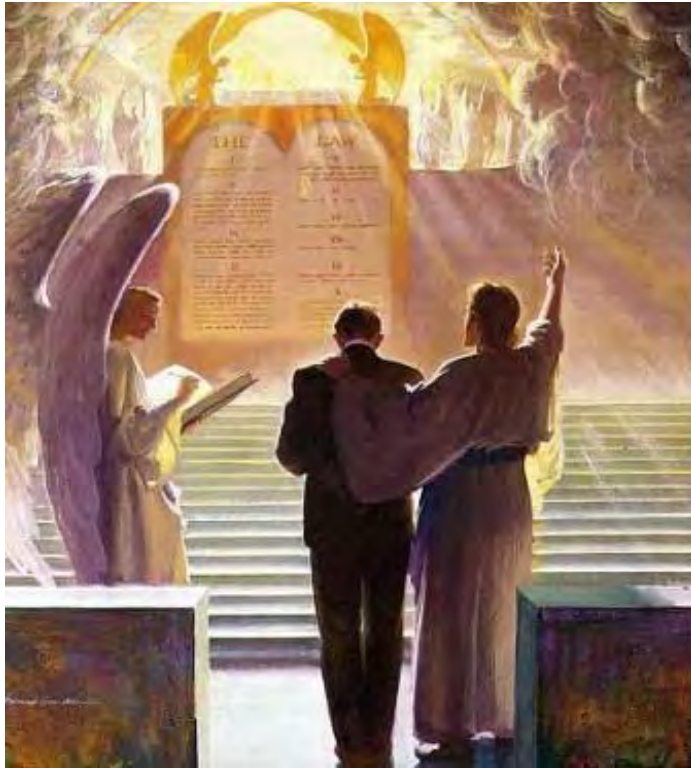
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COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE, PART 14



Last month in closing we studied from *Early Writings* page 15, a couple of quotes in reference to the 144,000, that they were all sealed and perfectly united, that on their foreheads was written GOD, NEW JERUSALEM, and a glorious star containing Jesus' new name.

1. Who are the 144,000?
2. At what age of the world are they developed?
3. Is the number to be taken in a literal sense?
4. Is the number a representative number?

We all need to have a very clear understanding of just who are the 144,000, because, if we do not, then we will see no point in becoming part of the 144,000. And if we are not part of this number who are all sealed and perfectly united, having written in our foreheads GOD, NEW JERUSALEM, with the glorious star containing Jesus' new name, then we will be forever eternally destroyed with the wicked. So, while probation still lingers, and our precious Lord Jesus is still officiating in the Most Holy Place, we need to understand, and take extremely seriously, this vital subject, especially now when Jesus is soon to return and Revelation 22:11 is being fulfilled.

This number is first mentioned in Revelation chapter 7, and the circumstances under which they are brought to view furnish a very clear indication, in a general way, to the correct application. They are a certain class who are sealed out of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; and they are sealed at a certain time, when the four winds are about to blow upon the earth, to hurt, or cause desolation, of the earth and sea (verses 2-3); and the blowing of the winds is restrained until this number, which the angel calls the servants of our God, are sealed.

It will hardly be called in question that the "four winds" of which this prophecy speaks, are the same as "the great whirlwind" prophesied in Jeremiah, and that the same scene is brought to view in both these passages of scriptures:

Jeremiah says: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from [one] end of the earth even unto the [other] end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25:32-33

This scene is certainly in the future; for nothing like it has ever yet occurred since the prophecy of Jeremiah was written; and no such scene will be witnessed until this earth's final time of trouble shall come. (Daniel

12:1) Now, if the blowing of the four winds of Revelation. 7:1 is the same scene, (and what would the four winds blowing from “the four corners of the earth” produce but “a great whirlwind”?) the scene of Revelation 7:1-8 applies in the last days, and is a work preparatory to the closing up of all earthly scenes.

The 144,000, must therefore be found in the last generation of “the servants of our God” on the earth, and the sealing of them must be the last special religious movement among men... It is the closing Christian movement of the Christian age.

The sealing implies protection and salvation. It is a work of the gospel through which all who effectively share in it will secure everlasting life. The threatened condition that is restrained, in order that the sealing work may be accomplished is such that when it takes effect, no further work of the gospel can be accomplished; hence, with the sealing of the 144,000, probation ends; the winds of destruction blow from every quarter, and the great whirlwind of God’s indignation, His last testimony in this mortal state against sin, will sweep the world into its final aspect of ruin and desolation.

The number, 144,000 must mean a definite number, composed of just so many individuals. It cannot stand for a larger but indefinite number, for in verse 9, another company is introduced, which is indefinite in its proportions, and hence is spoken of as “a great multitude”, which no man could number . . . The innumerable multitude of verse 9 represents the whole host of the redeemed, who will have part in the “first resurrection”; and the 144,000 are the Christians who will be alive on the earth when Christ appears.

And that the 144,000 are the ones who will be thus alive and meet Christ at His second coming, appears from the prophecy where they are next mentioned; that is, Revelation. 14:1-5. Here they are represented as coming triumphant out of the last religious conflict in this world. (Revelation 13:12–18), and as being “redeemed from the earth,” and “redeemed from among men.” (Revelation 14:3-4).

1. Will there, then, be only 144,000 saved from among the living when the Lord appears?
2. Do the 144,000 represent only those who have never passed through death?
3. Will many who are in their graves now be included in the 144,000?
4. Looking over the condition of the world, and marking the rapid religious decline of these days, the won-

der is, where so many as 144,000 will ever be found, who will be ready for the Lord, when He shall appear.

The third message of Revelation chapter 14 is the sealing message of Revelation chapter 7. Though in different chapters and presented under different circumstances, they are not two messages, but one and the same thing.

The third message will therefore result in fitting the 144,000, for the coming of the Lord. This is called, in Revelation 7, “sealing them with the seal of the living God in their foreheads,” which is invisible to the people.

The visible sign of God, being the Sabbath, the work brought to view, is the message that involves the Sabbath reform of these last days.

Then all those who have a genuine religious experience, terminating in this movement, must of course be included in the number of those who are sealed by the message. Their connection with the message results in their being sealed; and being sealed, results in their salvation. They will be saved because of their experience. But the message seals only 144,000; therefore, such must come up from their graves and be counted among the 144,000.

The record of the sealing message goes upon the books above. Those whose experience has led them into that message have their names there. If they die in that message when their names come up in the judgment, they are written among those sealed by the message. This explains what the voice from Heaven commanded John to write: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,” (that is, from the beginning of the third message): “Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” Though resting quietly in their graves, they are numbered at last among the 144,000, just the same as if they had lived all the years of their slumbering, and passed through all the toils and trials and conflicts which the LIVING have to endure.

Further, all who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb GLORIFIED, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His Law. They also which pierced Him, those that mocked and derided Christ’s dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory, and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.

It has been suggested that those who die in the message cannot be part of the 144,000, that this company

comes “out of great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14), which would not be those who sleep in the grave till six of the seven plagues are fulfilled. This conclusion should not be accepted without a little further consideration. *Mark the Situation*.

Raised at the beginning of the seventh plague, they pass through the whole period of that judgment, and witness ALL its accumulated calamities. From certain passages of scripture it is to be concluded that the plagues will cover the space of one year. This would give nearly two months after the vial began to be poured out, before the end. But the plagues are cumulative.

The first does not cease when the second begins; but the second adds its horrors to the first, the third adds to the others, and so on to the seventh. In the seventh is, therefore, found the climax of them all. And thus, whatever degree of inconvenience and suffering falls to the lot of the saints on account of the plagues (and they will not be free from this, though the plagues themselves do not touch them) (*The Great Controversy*, p. 629), whatever sounds of anguish the others hear, and whatever sights of woe and desolation and despair the others see, those who are raised at the voice of God will hear and see and pass through the same as those who have not been through death.

The accumulative horrors of the seventh plague will overbalance all the others; and those who are delivered from it may be said to have come “out of great tribulation” though having no experience with the other six plagues.

Thus, the evidence seems clear and conclusive that the 144,000 are gathered from the last generation before Christ comes; that they are brought out by the third angel’s message; that even those of them who die in the message are blessed, being restored to the number by resurrection, before Christ appears; and that all crowned at last, with the peculiar privilege of composing the cabinet of the KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS, to follow the Lamb “withersoever He goeth” (Revelation 14:4), joyful in His constant presence, and sustained by His unailing grace.

Brethren, and Sisters... We have a duty to proclaim the good news of Christ’s soon coming to a confused and dying world. Ellen White wrote “Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people.”- *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 336

Ellen White also wrote, “Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.” -*The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

and that, “The invisible world is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of this world’s history.” -*Prophets and Kings*, p. 148

In a matter of such great importance as the experience of God’s people in the last days ahead, when everyone will have to stand alone, “as though there were not another person in the world.” -*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 983. It is essential that all Christians have their own convictions, based upon their own study, and their own personal relationship with the Lord.

Over the past fourteen months, we have studied revelation 18:1-4, giving us a foundation of the meaning of the final message ever to be given to this sin-sick world. In this part (14) we opened a door into this last message, and briefly found the 144,000.

Next month, after examining the SEALING OF THE 144,000 a little further, we will open more doors, and with great pains, “keep the closing scenes of this world before the people.”

In Revelation 18:4, we are counseled to “Come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins,” and we have covered this over the past 14 months.

We will next be studying the remainder of this verse, “and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Then we will open more doors right up to and into Christ’s return, and the inheritance of the saints.

John Warncken, Australia

LOOKING FOR YOU...

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CHILDREN'S CORNER



The Prayer Closet

It was just another ordinary day in autumn when Sue, an ordinary woman, drove to work. Each year she exulted in the colours, smells, and the clear crisp days of fall, yet she also could see the melancholy side of autumn. The dark cloud of a looming winter plagued her. Winter in her home in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho can be beautiful, with snow blanketing abundant evergreens and mystical fog hovering over the lovely lakes surrounding the city. It loses its beauty for Sue, however, because winter means day after long dreary day, commuting in often-hazardous driving conditions.

On one ordinary workday, the conflicting emotions associated with autumn and winter were on her mind as she drove the sixty kilometers to her job in Spokane, Washington. It was a good job, and she enjoyed the stimulating, rewarding work. The job was not her problem – her problem was the daily trip she abhorred. In fact, her commute was frequently the subject of her morning prayer. She whined to God, declaring in no uncertain terms that she wanted to be delivered from commuting. She often tried convincing Him to see things her way. That day was no different. She told Him to change her circumstances.

Prayer had always been part of Sue's life. She never doubted God's availability to her through the avenue of prayer. But her requests were often self-centred, "give me, please" prayers. Prior to that morning, she had never developed a consistent and disciplined prayer life.

On that ordinary autumn workday, she imagined that God may have said, "It is time I reveal to My child that while she may be ordinary, I am not."

The Old Testament prophet Elijah described hearing God in a "still, small voice." That morning, while driving to work on the Interstate highway somewhere between Idaho and Washington, she also heard that still, small voice. The message was unmistakable. She knew in the depths of her spirit that God was saying, "I want you to

work in Coeur D'Alene; I want you to work in Spokane; and furthermore, I want you to turn this car into your prayer closet."

To many the term, *prayer closet* would seem strange, but it was familiar to Sue, hearing it often while growing up in church and Sabbath School. She knew it was a special place where one retreated to pray seriously. The still, small voice giving her the prayer-closet instruction was unmistakable, credible and convincing. Accepting His direction, she said, "Okay, God. I can do that."

As well as being ordinary, Sue was also inclined to be a project person. She approached tasks in the beginning, assuming each had a middle and ending. Somehow she knew her new commitment to prayer must not become another project. Never before had the still, small voice prompted her to pray. She knew that a life of prayer was not merely a process – another project. This was a special, unique journey. That it began during her daily commute was only symbolic of a greater life journey that she knew was beginning.

She determined that since God had taken the time to speak to her, He also wanted to be her travel companion. She confessed that she had been haphazard in her relationship with Him. She told Him she wanted to learn to be an obedient, godly woman and confessed that she had let the noise of the world and her own thoughts drown out His voice. She wanted to quiet down and learn to listen. For too many years she had tried to be what she thought she should be or what she thought someone else thought she should be. Now, she wanted to be an absolutely authentic woman. God's approval was all that mattered.

Remaining focused on prayer presented a distinct challenge. A word or thought easily triggered her active imagination. Before long, a prayer took on a life of its own. She needed a plan to keep her on track, so she determined to pray according to the exit markers on the high-

The journey continued – day after day – week after week – month after month. Instead of detesting the commute, she looked forward to it. Her circumstances didn't change, and she continued to drive on the same freeway with the same road conditions. Yet, she was changing. It was through a sincere transformation occurring from the inside out. Her traveling prayer closet became a haven where intimate soul talk occurred. She spent less time focusing on her preferences and focusing more time thinking about the awesome wonder of God. She whined less and worshipped more.

After several months Sue felt she needed a partner to support her new spiritual journey, so she asked her friend Jackie if she could routinely check in with her. They began meeting weekly. One week they discussed her surgeon husband's request that Jackie accompany him on his next short-term trip to Africa. While Duane spent long hours in a Cameroon mission hospital, Jackie joyfully conducted Bible studies for hungry, native women. She kept Sue up to date with e-mail messages that provided glimpses into rich African culture.

One message of Jackie's altered Sue's life.

After writing about teaching a study on The Lord's Prayer, as an aside Jackie shared the story of how her friend in the United States prayed according to the exit markers while commuting to work. Afterwards an excited woman approached Jackie, sharing that she too prayed according to the markers along the road as she trekked one hour a day to work. She told Jackie that because she didn't think another person in the world prayed like she did, her story encouraged her.

Tears welled up and splashed down Sue's cheeks as she re-read Jackie's e-mail. God in His loving wisdom linked the hearts of two ordinary working women who lived continents apart. A plethora of emotions erupted as Sue pondered the African woman with whom she shared an unusual bond. She felt humbled recalling the times she complained to God. While she commuted in her comfortable car, with heat in winter and air-conditioning in summer, the woman of Cameroon walked unprotected during dreadful summer heat and torrential monsoon rains.

The African woman's story reinforced a sense of God's

divine love for Sue. In turn she felt greater love for Him and a deep love for this woman, whose skin colour was different than hers, whose culture was unfamiliar, and whose name she did not know. She knew He understood when she added her commuting friend from Cameroon to her freeway prayer agenda.

An awareness of a larger meaning for her existence dawned. As she prayed for her Cameroon friend, she felt a deep sense of global connectedness even though she had never travelled internationally. The next year, after sending her new friend a letter and bookmark with a poem she'd written, Jackie returned with a letter and a family picture. Her friend now had a name--Pauline, a husband, and three sons about the same ages as her grandchildren.

Sue often prayed for Pauline and her family right after praying for her married daughter and her family. She became not only her commuting friend, but also her spiritual daughter in Africa. Each year since, Jackie and Duane have taken pictures of Sue's family, gifts for each family member, plus a cheque to help with the boys' education expenses. Pauline tells Sue that the little boys ask when they will see their "Grandmom from America." The journey of prayer, begun in her car when she said, "Okay, God. I can do that," had miraculously spanned the globe.

Several years have passed since Sue's journey began. Her "prayer closet" now with over two hundred thousand miles often feels like a sacred sanctuary where her spirit joins with the God of the universe. Looking in the mirror, Sue realizes that she is still a very ordinary woman, but she is intimately and miraculously connected to an extraordinary God who knows her name. He cares so much about her that He whispered gently and convincingly, inviting her to take a journey with Him... an exciting and a lifelong journey.

What do you do in your car on your commute? Get anxious about arriving at your destination? Listen to the radio to "kill the time?" Why not turn your car into a prayer and worship closet also? From prayers to sermon CD's, you can have a daily worship service with God while in the sanctuary of your vehicle. God is there with His still small voice to whisper His messages to you.



SISTER ALICIA AND HER HUSBAND



SISTERS IN TAMPA BAY



BARNEDO FAMILY AND SOME FRIENDS



SHARON AND MAIYA



DAVID AND RUTH MORENO



MARGIE SEELY WITH RUDI AND ATTA GONI



ERIC AND BROTHER BARNEDO



JEWELS FOR MY CROWN

ELIZA H. MORTON

When searching for God's jewels bright,
Mid rubbish of the years,
I often toil on bended knee,
And wet the soil with tears:
The gems are there though "in the rough,"
And some day they will shine,
Perfected by a hand of love –
The hand I feel on mine.

And so I'll work, and never think
Of recompense or gain;
'Tis sweet to feel the impulse come,
Though it is fraught with pain:
'Tis sweet to know the angels watch
And have a care for me.
The beauty of their shining wings
At times I almost see.

The veil is thin that hides the face
Of Jesus by my side;
He gives me strength to labor on
And by and by He'll take the gems
He's polished with such care,
And place them in a diadem- -
A crown for me to wear.

