



The Reformation
Messenger

VOLUME 19, NUMBER 9, SEPTEMBER 2012

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

Hebrews 12:12-13

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.

ABOUT THE COVER

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Volume 19, Number 9, September 2012

- 3 "Wherefore lift up the hands . . ."**
- 4 The Corinthian Connection**
- 8 What Then Shall I Do With Jesus Who is Called Christ?**
- 11 The Pearl of Great Price**
- 14 What was the Sin of Moses?**
- 16 Walking on Water**
- 18 2012 Canadian Field Conference**
- 23 A Visit**
- 24 Children's Corner: The Evil and the Good**

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Messenger

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“Make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. Keep the warning message of truth before the people; for the end is at hand. We are to cry aloud and spare not. Some will pay no heed, but others will repent and be converted.” –*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 174

“Satan's angels are wise to do evil, and they will create that which some will claim to be advanced light, and will proclaim it as new and wonderful; yet while in some respects the message may be truth, it will be mingled with human inventions, and will teach for doctrine the commandments of men. If there was ever a time when we should watch and pray in real earnest, it is now. Many apparently good things will need to be carefully considered with much prayer, for they are specious devices of the enemy to lead souls in a path which lies so close to the path of truth that it will be scarcely distinguishable from it. But the eye of faith may discern that it is diverging, though almost imperceptibly, from the right path. At first it may be thought positively right, but after a while it is seen to be widely divergent from the way which leads to holiness and heaven. My brethren, I warn you to make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way.” –*Evangelism*, p. 590

“Any crooked path the leader may take, prepares the way for the weak to be turned aside from the path of safety.” –*Gospel Workers*, p. 438

“You will need to make straight paths for your feet, lest the lame be turned out of the way. We are surrounded by the lame and halting in the faith, and you are to help them, not by halting yourselves, but by standing, like men who have been tried and proven, in principle firm as a rock. I know that a work must be done for the people, or many will not be prepared to receive the light of the angel sent down from heaven to lighten the whole earth with his glory. Do not think that you will be found

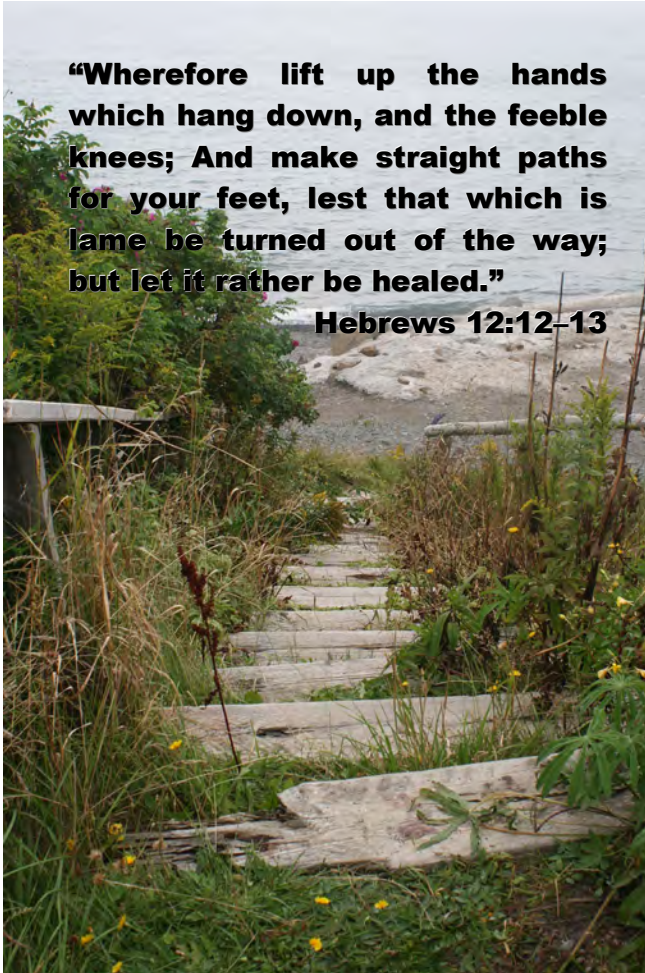
as vessels unto honor in the time of the latter rain, to receive the glory of God, if you are lifting up your souls unto vanity, speaking perverse things, in secret cherishing roots of bitterness. The frown of God will certainly be upon every soul who cherishes and nurtures these roots of dissension and possesses a spirit so unlike the spirit of Christ.” –*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 468

“It is essential that every soul that names the name of Christ should make straight paths for his feet. Why? Lest the lame be turned out of the way. It is a terrible, terrible thing to give a soul a wrong example, and to lead him in a crooked course by the way in which you may walk. . . . Whatever you may see others doing that your judgment convicts you as being unseemly for a Christian, see to it that you never do the same things yourself. . . . Just as long as you will follow in the footsteps of Jesus, you will walk securely.” –*Our High Calling*, p. 185

“We must look on the faults of others not to condemn, but to restore and heal. Watch unto prayer, go forward and upward, catching more and more of the spirit of Jesus, and sowing the same beside all waters.” –

Our High Calling, p. 185


“As long as we are in this world we must be linked with one another. Humanity is interlaced and interwoven with humanity. As Christians we are members one of another. The Lord has made us thus, and when disappointments come, we are not to think the worse of one another. We are individual members of the general body. In helplessness and disappointment we are fighting the battles of life, and the Lord designs us, as His sons and daughters, whom He calls His friends, to help one another. This is to be a part of our practical Christian work.” –*Signs of the Times*, February 7, 1900
Ellen G. White



“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”

Hebrews 12:12–13

The Corinthian Connection



"O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." 2 Corinthians 6:11–12

CESSPOOL OF INIQUITY

Corinth, a wealthy commercial center, to which the apostle Paul sailed, was the then capital of Southern Greece, which formed the Roman province of Achaia. Forty miles by road, which separates it from Athens, was situated on the narrow isthmus that connected the mainland of Greece and the Peloponnesus. Under the shadow of the rocky Acrocorinthus, overlooking the double seas that separated it, it was destined that Paul should spend nearly two busy years of his eventful life here.

It sprang into fame and wealth when Julius Caesar, alive to the beauty and importance of its position and to call attention to the goddess for whose worship it had been made famous, and whose descendant he professed to be, rebuilt its foundation in 46 B.C. It instantly attracted the commerce of the east and west, north and south. Its population was a mixed character—Roman, Greek, and Oriental. Corinth was a strategic center.

Corinth was the Vanity Fair of the Roman Empire, at once the London and the Paris of the first century after Christ. In fact, it has been called "the Empire in miniature—the Empire reduced to a single State." A message heralded and heard in Corinth might find its way to the distant regions of the inhabited earth. It is no wonder, then, that Paul was constrained by the Word (Acts 18:5) to testify in Corinth.

LOST IN A CARELESS CROWD

It was into the midst of this mongrel and heterogeneous population of Greek adventurers and Roman bourgeois, Phoenicians, hucksters, slaves, sailors, mer-

chants, philosophers, an enterprising mass of Jews with a keen eye to the profits of merchandise, Greeks attracted by its reputation and glory of the Isthmian games, ex-soldiers, freemen, and agents of every form of vice that the toilworn Jewish wanderer made his way; a stricken and lonely worker, lost in the low and careless crowd.

How little we know of what is going on around us, and that the wealthy magnates of Corinth would ever suspect that the historic significance of their city would be centered in the disputes conducted in a petty synagogue, and thoughts written by that bent and weary Jew. He was solitary, wretched, stained with the dust of travel and worn by the attacks of sickness, weakness, anxiety, and persecution from outward opposition and inward agonies. How often the living world knows nothing of its great men!

East and West mingled their dregs of foulness in the new Gomorrah of classic culture. Moreover, the heathen temple at Corinth (Acrocorinth), a rocky citadel, was a cesspool of iniquity (Romans 1:18–32). A thousand Hierodouloi (temple prostitutes) were consecrated to the service of Impurity in the infamous Temple of Aphrodite Pandemos, and made available to its cultists. The Greek word "Korinthiazomai," meaning literally, "to act the Corinthian," came to mean "to practice fornication."

DELIVERY!

Corinth was a city noted for everything depraved, dissolute, and debauched. It was providential that Paul was in Corinth when he was writing the Epistle to the Romans. In no other city could he have received more of

an incentive to write of the sin of man, and from no other city could he have seen more apt illustration of it—there arose his epistle of sanctification. It is as if one today were to address an epistle of holiness to a group of believers in Paris, or Singapore!

It was from this brutal and sin-stained city that Paul made his frightful sketch of Paganism; a pure and honest life was well unknown; a city also known for its drunkards, extortioners and cheats. But, the worse the city the deeper was the need for his labours, and the probability that many in it would be yearning for delivery from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (*The Life and Work of St. Paul*, F. W. Farrar, vol. 1, E. P. Dutton & Co., N.Y., 1902; p. 553–559).

THUNDERHEADS

The Apostle Paul's relations with the church at Corinth are perhaps the most pertinent application for us and to the church of today, corresponding to the modern ideas of growth and development. Certain crises had arisen in the church—ominous thunderheads were lying along the horizon of the church life at Corinth.

Paul had to act quickly and sternly. He had to do three things: 1) present the gospel more clearly to the Christians; 2) put pressure on them for the completion of their promised contribution; 3) pulverize all opposition by an unparalleled defense of his apostolic ministry and authority. Paul's thoughts are like the movement of a mighty army advancing over rugged terrain still inhabited by pockets of stubborn resistance.

Paul, the great evangelist, never lays his armor down while such resistance to his ministry exists. In fact, he calls for an ultimatum, calling for unconditional surrender to the authority of Christ's apostle. Ah, but in spite of his ruggedness, he is as a beautiful mountain flower—carrying far more spiritual fragrance.

A striking insight into the apostle's method of preaching is afforded by the text of Acts 18:4, which reads, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." In other words he preached Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy (Luke 24:27). Paul continued to preach, as, for the most part, Paul's listeners did not burn with interest in the truth; they burned with opposition to the truth. In spite of this he continued to preach in weakness and trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3).

LAND OF PAUL

Furthermore, in spite of the subtle and insidious attacks

of "the superlative apostles" who sought to free the Corinthians of his influence, he reveals his very soul and adds many details about his life that would otherwise be unknown. Paul's personal account of his suffering of mind, heart, and body are expressed in an unusual accumulation of words as overwhelming evidence of his sincerity in serving God, and an example indeed for us, as many are destined to suffer or are experiencing now: affliction, anguish, beatings, distresses, fastings, fightings, labours, perils, persecutions, "sorrow," stripes, sufferings, tears, tumults, weak, and weakness. Ah! But at the same time Paul offers encouraging words of: comfort, comforted, joy, rejoicing, and triumph!

No other Christian, however, could match the sufferings and achievements Paul endured and accomplished—often under the most extreme duress. His extensive travels in Greece are of noted importance and subsequent scriptural writings engage our attention and faith by authoring the inspirational books of Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. I like to think that the present Church of Greece in Athens should be endearingly designated as the "Church In The Land of Paul"—by "adoption."

A PRACTICAL LIFE

Paul, however, vital and inspired, was more than a match for everything that is exalted against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:5). Paul, moreover, was a consistent man, whether dealing with hostile Jews (Acts 26:22) or with recalcitrant Christians. Paul's aim was to bring the Corinthians' practical life into more definite conformity to their position in Christ—an aim for the Christian today.

There were serious disorders in the church, and the absence of discipline. The Corinthian believers, rather than mourning over their state, were perhaps proud of their liberty and compromising walk (1 Corinthians 6:12); "puffed up" (1 Corinthians 5:2); a significant and unhealthy trend in the nominal churches of today and amongst many professed Christians.

EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

Paul's opening words, therefore, to the Corinthians came as an explosive force to the itchy ears of the serene Corinthians, coolly relaxing "at ease in Zion." The principle back then of the need for discipline was there and is direfully needed in many churches of today! Inflated by false liberty, the Corinthian church was puffed up. Their obedience, however, was Paul's primary con-

cern (2 Corinthians 2:9).

Now, a church can never prevent evil absolutely, but it should always practice discipline! Discipline is needed in the Christian warfare (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 314); in the church (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 26); is necessary for solidity and strength of character (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 73); “all have to meet stern discipline” (*Education*, p. 295); discipline supplies the little things of life (*Messages to Young People*, p. 202); and God designs life to be disciplined (*The Great Controversy*, p. 67).

Ah! But, although discipline is needful, many people are unwilling to submit to it! In fact, the prevailing moral laxity in the discipline of the Greeks and Romans may have prompted the apostle’s emphasis to the Corinthians upon unnatural vice. For example, Socrates, as well as fourteen of the first fifteen Roman emperors, practiced (undisciplined) unnatural vice.

Paul, nevertheless, appeals to the Corinthians, mostly Gentile members, surrounded by idolatry and sensuality, and who fell into dangerous practices, caused by Judaizing teachers:

- **CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS ME!**
(2 Corinthians 6:11–13)

The apostle Paul, therefore, in addressing himself to the Corinthians, in particular about discipline, cautions them, also, against mingling with unbelievers! But, in spite of their sinful, undisciplined state, Paul first introduces the caution in a pathetic manner, of the most tender affection to them, even like that of a father to his children (2 Corinthians 6:11–13); saying, yet our speech is open unto you, and our heart is enlarged unto you, in a special manner (2 Corinthians 6:11). And, because Paul’s heart was thus enlarged with love to them, therefore he opened his mouth freely to them in kind admonitions and exhortations: “Ye are not,” says he, “straitened in us.” 2 Corinthians 6:12

In essence, his warm affections were as “we would gladly do to you all the service we can, and promote your comfort, as helpers of your faith and your joy; and, if I be otherwise, the fault is in yourselves, as it is because you are “straitened” in yourselves, and fail in suitable returns to us.” The word “straitened” is from the Greek “stenochorea”—meaning “to crowd, cramp, confine, restrict!” It pungently describes how the Corinthians were “tight” in their affections for the virtuous apostle.

In fact, many were slow to learn (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 271); reproof was rejected by some (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 684); they suffered a deplorable spiritual condition, caused by false teachers (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 300).

What the church really wanted was the old stringency of the Mosaic Law; some one from Jerusalem, some true apostle, with his wife, who could rule them with a real supremacy, or at least some emissary from James and the brethren of the Lord, to preach “another gospel,” more accordant with the will of Jesus Himself (*Hausrath*, p. 420).

Yet, there was a Jewish plot to murder Paul at Corinth (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 389–390).

As amplified read it thusly, “(Grant me) the same requital—as to children I am speaking—do you also open wide (your hearts).” Ill feelings against Paul had given the Corinthians a bad case of spiritual hardening of the heart. “Through some misapprehensions concerning us, and all we desire as a recompense is only that you would be proportionately affectioned towards us, as children should love their father.” In essence Paul is saying, “change your attitude towards me!” It is quite evident that the Corinthians did not share these affirmations.

Ah! But from this discussion we can see a multicoloured rainbow glowing with the graces of Paul working together (Greek *sunergeo*), a “synergism” after salvation! You see it is desirable that there should be mutual good affection between ministers and their people, and this would greatly tend to their mutual comfort and advantage to all concerned in advancing the gospel, motivated by rejuvenation and reconciliation to promote the spiritual and eternal welfare of all to whom we preach and minister to—yet, with an open mouth, enlarged heart and a convincing love!

- **CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WORLD!**
(2 Corinthians 6:14–16)

The command, caution or exhortation itself may be rendered for us—not to mingle with unbelievers, stop becoming heterogeneously yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14). This principle goes way back to Mosaic legislation (Leviticus 19:19; Deuteronomy 22:10). Moreover, Christians are “new creatures;” they must not be united spiritually with dead unbelievers (Ephesians 2:1). Furthermore, all believers are regarded by God as having died with Christ (Romans 6:6). We must, therefore, count upon this as being so, and live accordingly (Romans 6:1):

1) IN OUR RELATIONS:

It is wrong for good people to join in affinity with the wicked and profane; these will draw different ways, and that will be galling and grievous. Those relations that are our choice must be chosen by rule, and it is good for those who are themselves the children of God to join with those who are so likewise, for there is more danger that the bad will damage the good than hope that the good will benefit the bad!

2) IN OUR COMMON CONVERSATIONS:

We should not yoke ourselves in friendship and acquaintance with wicked men and unbelievers. Though we cannot wholly avoid seeing, and hearing, and being with such, yet we should never choose them for our bosom-friends.

3) IN OUR RELIGIOUS COMMUNION:

Much less should we join in religious communion with them; we must not join with them in their idolatrous services, nor concur with them in their false worship, nor any abominations; we must not confound together the table of the Lord and the table of devils, the house of God and the house of Rimmon. The apostle gives several good reasons against this corrupt mixture:



a) It is a very great absurdity (2 Corinthians 6:14–15). It is an unequal yoking of things together that will not agree together; as bad as for the Jews to have ploughed with an ox and an ass or to have sown divers sorts of grain intermixed. What an absurdity is it to think of joining righteousness and unrighteousness, or mingling light and darkness, fire and water, together! Believers are, and should be, righteous, but unbelievers are unrighteous. Believers are made light in the Lord, but unbelievers are in darkness; and what comfortable communion can these have together? Christ and Belial are contrary one to the other; they have opposite interests and designs, so that it is impossible that there should be any concord or agreement between them. It is absurd, therefore, to think of enlisting under both; and, if the believer has part with an infidel, he does

what in him lies to bring Christ and Belial together.

b) It is a dishonor to the Christian's profession (2 Corinthians 6:16); for Christians are by profession, and should be in reality, the "temples of the living God"—dedicated to, and employed for, the service of God, who has promised to reside in them; to "dwell and walk in them," to stand in a special relation to them, and take special care of them, that He will be their God and they shall be His people. Now there can be no agreement between the temple of God and idols. Idols are rivals with God for His honour, and God is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another.

c) There is a great deal of danger in communicating with unbelievers and idolaters, danger of being defiled and of being rejected; therefore the exhortation is (2 Corinthians 6:17) "to come out from among them" and keep at a due distance, to be separate, as one

would avoid the society of those who have the leprosy or the plague, or AIDS, for fear of taking infection, and "not to touch the unclean thing, lest we be defiled." Who can touch pitch or tar and not be defiled by it? We must take care not to defile ourselves by converse with those who defile themselves with sin; so is the will of God, as we ever hope to be

received, and not rejected, by Him.

d) It is base ingratitude to God for all the favours He has bestowed upon believers and promised to them (2 Corinthians 6:18). You see, God has promised to be a Father to them, and that they shall be His sons and His daughters; and is there a greater honour or happiness than this? How ungrateful a thing then must it be if those who have this dignity and felicity should degrade and debase themselves by mingling with unbelievers!

Do we requite or repay the Lord this way, O foolish and unwise ones? ?

This is **THE CORINTHIAN CONNECTION** for us to manifest in our daily walk in Christian conduct! Amen! <><

John Theodorou
U.S.A.



What Then Shall I Do With Jesus

Who is Called Christ?

July 11, 1997 was the day when my beloved Grandma died at the age of 80. This was the day I started thinking, what then shall I do with Jesus? As I was raised in a Christian family in the Orthodox Church, my Mother always taught me to go to church, to keep Sunday sacred, to try to fast all Wednesdays and Fridays, confess my sins to the priest, and so forth. I was not so religious in my heart at that time and many times I did it just because I loved and respected her. As time went by, I started thinking, “but wait a minute—how can a man, even if he is a priest, forgive me? How can that man wash away my sins?” As much as I did these things, the more empty and powerless I felt. Not a few times I wanted to get rid of my bad habits in my life, as smoking, gambling, going to the discothèque and sometimes keeping bad company, but without results. I couldn’t shake these bad habits. When I wanted to do it by myself I could only do it for a few days and then I turned back to the old routine. I was 24 years old at that time and I really wanted to change my life. It was the first time in my life that I asked myself, “Why was I born into this world? What is the purpose of life? Must I do only bad things? How and where do I find happiness?”

My Grandma was lying in a coffin, and as she was there I asked, “Lord, where will she go? Heaven or Hell?” “You know, Lord, she was a good woman,” I said, “she made many sacrifices in her life. You also know how she raised my father, the only son she had, remaining a widow from the age of 19, never getting married again, and how she searched for her husband for so many years because he was captured in the 2nd World War and never came back. She lived with her husband for only for few months. He was on the list of missing ones. Asking myself those questions I remember that I went to the tomb where my Grandma was to be buried, and seeing her for the last time there, I couldn’t stop myself from crying; my heart was broken and I went home. I felt guilty because while she was alive, many times I disappointed her by my

wrong actions. I loved her because she took care of me from my childhood and I was the one who stayed and lived with her, although my mother’s house was only a few meters distant. Many times when I did something wrong she reproved me with love and kept those things away from my mother. As my father went to work he was away most of the time, so my mother was the one I feared most when I did something wrong.

Once my Grandma came from a youth meeting at the SDA Church, Reform Movement. The church I was born into was situated only a few meters from our house. It was summer 1994, while the students, some of them from the 1st graduating class at Bethel Institute in Hungary, the place where I studied, by God’s grace, from 1998–2000, came for the occasion of the dedication of that house of prayer. As she came home she told me something about how impressed she was with these youth; it was the first time she witnessed such a spiritual program. When she came home she said, “Oh, if you only knew how much I wish you could one day be among these people. I said, “what?” “Adventists. . . you know about these people that they keep Saturday, they are strange because they believe in a woman. . . and in fact, no one from our family believed like this.: “So, give up this thought; I won’t make it,” I told her.

Two thousand years ago there was a man, a Roman governor named Pilate, although he was convinced of the innocence of Jesus, as we read in the Bible in Matthew 27:18—“For He knew that they had handed Him because of envy,”—he had a question: “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” Matthew 27:22. And this question, my friend, is repeated again and again through the centuries until our time. There are people who say the same: “what shall I do with Jesus?” although they know what the answer should be. Our sinful nature rejects good things and we have the tendency to go in a wrong direction, making wrong decisions, and finally at the end of it, ruin comes upon those souls that are taken

in a trap by Satan and his temptations. Sin is attractive for unconverted souls and many times lives are destroyed by it; very few people are ready to give up sin and renounce the pleasures of this world to change to the things of heaven.

Do we know what to do with Jesus?

Well, God helped me in my wonderings to realize that without Jesus, life has no sense or meaning. I just started thinking this in 1997, at 24 years of age. Life seemed to be short and I just wanted to take advantage of it, thinking that doing your own pleasure, no matter what another person might think, thinking that is life, because at the end of it we all will die. I didn't study the Bible until that age; I just kept praying from time to time a short prayer taught by my Grandma. One night I had a very turbulent dream, just a few months after my Grandma's death. I dreamt I was on the top of a deep valley, very well known by me. I used to go there in my childhood with my cousin during summer time, while I was on vacation at my aunt's house. The valley was deep, and as I looked down I saw a thick, thick darkness under my feet. I was afraid and then I looked up. From there a hand reached out to me and at the same time a voice was heard saying, "If you continue on this way, you will die." That short sentence troubled me that night. It was three o'clock in the morning. I woke up that morning; I couldn't sleep. Throughout the next day I tried to understand what this dream meant.



Now as I was going to visit one of my best friends named Christi, on a Saturday afternoon, and, as I said, the church is very close to my house, I looked to the right and to the left to cross the street. I saw George, one of my neighbours and the brother of another good friend of mine, coming from the church, and having under his arm, a Bible, and another book that caught my attention, *The Great Controversy*. I was smoking and a little bit nervous, seeing him with a Bible and coming from this church. The truth was that I had a very bad conception of Seventh Day Adventist people at that time. People gossip about their beliefs, and for me, to be a part of it was considered closing your life, no happiness; and to make the story short, no future for a young man to start with this belief.

So, because of it I stopped to ask George what he found there, what made him change his belief. He was born in the same Orthodox Church as I was, and as he was only a friend of the truth, visiting the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement church only few months before, I

waited for an answer from him. I remember I asked him about his book, *The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White. Do you study this book instead of the Bible? He told me, "Oh no, we study the Bible, but this is a historical book and it is very interesting what you find there." "Really?" I asked, and it caught my attention to see what is so interesting, so I asked him if he wanted to lend it to me. George said, "Of course I will." I was so glad. Then he said, "Look, I would like to invite you to come with me next Sabbath and visit the church." That seemed a good idea to me. Then I said, "Well, should I dress differently? I mean a suit, tie and so forth?" He said "Yes, it is nice to be dressed like that."

George told me many other things regarding his faith in Jesus and the things he discovered in his experience with the Lord. I was really surprised and amazed to listen from the lips of George that Jesus died for me, personally for me; and not only that Jesus died for me, but also that Jesus is my personal Saviour if I accept Him being able to

redeem me from my sins. We talked for about two hours. I completely forgot where I was going to go, so I went home with the book from George, *The Great Controversy*, happy that I discovered Jesus and His love towards me.

It was wintertime in 1997. I went into my room and I started reading from that book, chapter after chapter. There I discovered people who gave their lives for the truth and Jesus' sake. I said, "Oh Lord, there should be something more in this Christianity than a simple going and

coming from a place of meeting." If these people were willing to die for the truth, I said, "Lord, You have enough power to release me from my style of living. I have a lot of bad habits in my life which keep me enslaved; please Jesus, make me free." I wanted so much to know how to pray.

I have a neighbour lady who used to go to the Evangelistic Church; I asked her to teach me how to pray and she did, writing down a short prayer for me on a piece of paper. I then started learning that prayer, but I couldn't say many words when I prayed, so I gave up and then went to the Bible. I just opened it up in Psalm 51. I read that whole psalm and I began crying, identifying myself with the person from that psalm. Then I went to 1 John 1:7-9 and there I found a remedy for my sins. I found that if I confess my sins, Jesus pardons them. If I walk in the light, I have fellowship with Him.

Jesus touched my heart, my friend, and He can touch yours too, if you let Him. I believe there are people in this

world, willing to come to Jesus. I believe they are there, and they will know what to do with Jesus when they are offered an invitation to follow Him. What about you, my friend?

Are we following Jesus?

The Bible says that life has only two roads, and we are on one of them. One leads to eternal death and the other to everlasting life. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13–14. The most important decision we make in this life is to follow Jesus; when we have made that choice, we are not only prepared to die. . . we are finally ready to live!

Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the One equal with the Father, the One worshipped by the angels and the entire universe, humbled Himself and came down to reach sinners—people like you and me, identifying with us and giving us a perfect example of obedience. The Creator of all things in heaven and on earth came to call sinners to follow Him, giving us a chance to be co-workers in this great battle, and today when Jesus is about to come again as He promised, when we are at the verge of the end of the world, the question for us is: are we prepared to meet Jesus? Am I prepared to answer when Jesus comes to ask me: Where are those whom I have entrusted to you? I am referring to your families and to the church. Let us think about it deeply, and where there is deficiency, let us come boldly to the throne of grace and we will find mercy. Each one of us is unique and equally as important to God; there are no two persons who are the same in this world. You are unique, and if God loses you He loses something very precious in His sight. The Bible says that God gave His only Son for every single person in this world. There are no exceptions. Everyone who wants to accept Jesus as his personal Saviour can be saved. My friend, you are not your own. We are twice God's property—once by creation and second by redemption. Would you be willing to accept Jesus' invitation today? If you have accepted Him already, I ask you, would you be willing to renew your covenant with God and follow Him closely? Let us open our hearts and minds and let Jesus guide our lives and prepare us for this great event, Jesus second coming in glory. Our dear Saviour is calling us just as He called His disciples two thousand years ago. John 1:35–51. What is your answer? Jesus wants us to be His disciples, to give to other people the glad tidings.

Do you remember when you first received Jesus and that first love moved you, when people were listening to the

words God put in your mouth, and how you didn't get tired of speaking the words of life? Do you remember that time? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings of good, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Isaiah 52:7

My dear friend, I invite you right now to recommit your life to Jesus. If, in your spiritual life, it seems that you don't enjoy church fellowship anymore, maybe prayer doesn't exist in your life, Bible study is boring you, or when you are called to deliver a message and you find excuses. . . I know there is a remedy with Jesus; He has the solution to all our problems.

In the Bible we find people that made mistakes in their walk with Jesus. And what is also remarkable, Jesus was with them all of the time. Moses made great mistakes and he is in heaven today; Ezra, Nehemiah and Paul passed through real trials in their lives. Jesus was with them and they could say, "He never left me nor forsook me." He was there, and today, for you and for me, God is there. He is there to bring us healing and hope and to open our eyes. His promises are sure, He reaches out; you are too valuable for Christ to lose. Deep within my heart I cried out just when I needed Him the most. Friend, do you need Jesus right now? Do you have a burden you would like to give to Him? Do you need forgiveness? Do you desire comfort or cheer? Remember, Jesus promised to stay by your side and be your Friend forever. Why not pray with me right now and ask Jesus for new joy and new hope in your life? He says in John 14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." And in Hebrews 13:5, last part, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

When we are lost, He keeps us on His shoulder. When we drift away from Him He comes after us. When we don't care for Him, He cares for us. When we turn our back on Him He doesn't turn His back to us. When we run from Him He doesn't run from us. Even when we slap Him on the face He doesn't slap us back; He loves and cares for us. Today I want to ask you, "What are you going to do with Jesus, who is called Christ?" There are only two answers to this question. You either accept Him as Lord and Saviour of your life or you reject Him as Lord and Saviour. There is no "I'll think about it later" option. If you choose to "think about it later," then you have rejected Christ. May our loving Father help you to make the right choice in your life is my wish and prayer. Amen!

In Christ,
Nicholas Anca



The Pearl of Great Price

Jewelry consists of ornaments such as bracelets, necklaces, rings and earrings, all created with precious metals like gold and silver and set with expensive diamonds, emeralds, rubies, zirconia and pearls. Pearls are unique and have been used as a symbol of the moon, modesty and purity. After doing some research I found that interestingly enough, the pearl is the only gem that is created by a living organism. The smooth, lustrous, round, structure inside the shell of a clam or oyster is also the birthstone for June. It also symbolizes a happy marriage.

A jewelry artist from the jewelry company once wrote a letter to his wife describing his love for her. Pearls are created by an oyster; when an oyster swallows a grain of sand it feels the discomfort, so it begins to ease the pain by applying a coat of pearl. It is during the healing process that a beautiful pearl is created. It is rather ironic to think that something so beautiful can be created out of so much discomfort. This is like life itself. It is easy to love in the good times, but it takes courage to love through the discomfort of our lives. The pearl represents courage, love, and healing.

These jewels are one of the oldest known to man, with the oldest-surviving pearl necklace dating back to over 2000 years ago in 520 BC, which was discovered in the sarcophagus of a Persian princess.

In ancient times it was a declaration of wealth and power and often adorned to bring good fortune, ward away evil and to cure illnesses. In the civilized Middle East and Asian societies, pearls were worn as early as 3500 BC, and continued to grow in popularity during Roman times. In ancient Rome, only persons above a certain rank were allowed to wear pearl necklaces, pearl pendants, pearl earrings, pearl bracelets and oth-

er pieces of pearl jewelry. The Latin word for "pearl" literally means "unique", attesting to the fact that no two pearls are identical.

In the Bible the world pearl is mentioned nine times. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking beautiful pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matthew 13:45-46

In ancient Rome, only persons above a certain rank were allowed to wear a pearl, but in the book of Matthew, God is telling us that all of us can have this pearl. When we started our personal journey in finding the Pearl of Great Price, God gave us some advice. He said, "look, search, and you will find." While we are on the journey, we need to be going through a process; in other words we need to be purified in the furnace. We need to deny ourselves, take our cross, and be afflicted.

"Jesus said to 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." Matthew 19:21. If we want to reach the pearl we have to let go of things. An unknown author wrote, "Giving up doesn't always mean you are weak; sometimes it means you are strong enough to let go." Are you ready to enter into the furnace and be transformed? From weakness we will become strong, from our darkness we will be able to shine, from our pride we will receive humility, a new heart, and we will become a new person.

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6. God also gives us beautiful promises that are mentioned in the Bible. In the book of Malachi

chapter 3: 17 God says, "And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Isn't that nice that God calls us His treasure?

If we let God work on us, we are no longer going to be an unclean thing. Just imagine for a moment that we all are in a big jewelry box, and each one of us is gold, silver, a diamond, pearls, emeralds or maybe zirconia. Although zirconias are not real, they are a very good imitation of diamonds; to the naked eye it can be hard to see which one is real. But God knows His jewels; we are the apple of His eye. If you want to be real gold or diamonds, let the great Creator take the dust from you and let Him put you in the furnace. You will have discomfort, and troubles will come, but do not worry, Jesus will be with you. Don't be a zirconia; even though they look like they are real, they are fake. They are not created by God, but by man.

When Alberto and I got married, he made me a promise. Since he was not able to buy me my engagement ring, he told me that on our 7th anniversary he was going to give me a diamond ring. To add more value I said to him, please put a diamond for each year. So Alberto agreed that on our 7th anniversary, the ring was going to have seven diamonds.

I used to love jewelry. My favourite flyers were the ones that came from the jewelry stores, and when I was in the mall I would stop in the jewelry stores and look at the rings, bracelets, and necklaces. Our sixth anniversary arrived, with lots of problems also. I was not sure if it was worth to have a ring with seven diamonds, since our marriage was going through a very difficult time. I was very upset. I thought that Alberto had broken his promise. It was at that time when Alberto brought Br. Timo Martin to give us Bible studies.

It was then, when I was in so much pain, that Jesus came to me, and it was then when I learned to love in the discomfort. It takes courage to forgive and forget. By our seventh anniversary I learned that God had something different for Alberto and for me. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD." Isaiah 55: 8. Not long ago I

realized that Alberto didn't break his promise; he gave me something better than my ring with seven diamonds, and perhaps he didn't even realize that he gave me my best gift—my first Bible.

This summer it is going to be 12 years since Alberto and I got baptized. Before I got baptized I went through a very difficult time in giving up jewelry. I still have some earrings with the necklace that has some pearls with little diamonds. I still have my wedding rings and some gold pins. When I decided that I was going to be baptized, I put them in a little jewelry box and I put it in one of my drawers and it has been there for almost 12 years. Not long ago when Sister Leila showed us the pictures from Africa, I realize all the needs that our brothers and sisters have to go through, and I thought, "I don't need these and I can exchange it for money and

send it to Africa." I remember that at the start it took me courage to show my ears without earrings. I felt strange. One day a girl, the daughter of a visitor came to me and she said, "why do you have the marks of earrings?" And she said, "didn't you know Jesus?" I was speechless, but I answered "yes, I knew Jesus, but I didn't know Him the way I know Him now."



These little marks that I have in my ears mean a lot to me; it means that once I was in the world and now I'm very happy to show that I no longer belong to the world and that I was able to give up something for Jesus. The same day that I took off my earrings I took Nidia and Elaine's earrings too. They were very little girls and they agreed immediately without any question. Two months later my mother come to visit us from Mexico and the present that she brought to my daughters was a pair of nice gold earrings. I couldn't explain to her why we were not wearing earrings because to my mother it was very important that girls and women alike wear earrings. So I lied, telling her that Nidia and Elaine had an infection and that is why they were not able to use them. She told me that we can wait, but my mother was very persistent; and two weeks later she asked me to bring Nidia and Elaine to her and that she was going to put the earrings in their ears. I didn't know what to do, so I went upstairs and began to pray about how I could explain it to my mother so that she could under-

stand why I took this decision. Then I remembered the pictures from my baptism; I brought it to her and said, "I want to show you something." I told her that I got baptized and that I don't need jewelry anymore, or my little girls; my mother didn't understand for a while and she got upset with me for not accepting her present for her granddaughter s. It was a really hard time for me, since it was not easy for me to take the jewelry, and for my mother, but later she understood. And thank God I stood firm and I did love my mother very much, and I will always remember all the sacrifices that she made for my siblings and I.

Like I said, before I was ready to let go of my jewelry, my precious diamonds and pearls were sold in a jewelry store in a Newmarket mall on June 12th. And before I sold them I asked for a better price since I wanted to

send them to Africa for an offering; I wanted to send the best, but I didn't realize that gold is like dollars and I was not able to sell them as though they were new. It was very difficult to understand when they told me that the pearls and diamonds didn't have any value; it was the gold that they were looking for. I tried to get back the pearls and my little diamonds since they were not of value to them, but the answer was



that it takes time to take them apart and it isn't easy to separate them; it is easier just to crush the gold and pearls with the diamonds together. That day and the day after I was very upset and I cried when no one was around. I didn't want to upset my children; I didn't cry because I gave up my jewelry, I cried because I realized what the pearl of salvation truly means.

My pearls and diamonds were real and I took good care of them. I received them with a lot of love; to me my jewelry was perfect and unique. I remember that I used to wear my pearls and diamonds only for special events. During this time I remember a lesson that we often forget. God gave His Son, the only One. Jesus is perfect and the only Son of God. He is the pearl that we should always invite with us for every occasion and everywhere we go; He wants us to share with everybody His love, His sacrifice, that through Him we can have salvation and be able to meet the Father. Many times I don't value His love, and like the vendor in the

jewelry store who didn't value my pearls and diamonds, I do the same to Jesus with my attitude, my resentment because others have done something wrong to me. How many times have I crushed Jesus, crucifying Him again and again? Who am I to question this? I should rejoice when trouble comes. I cry when I hear the sermons and the hymns because I recognize that there is still a lot of work for me.

The prophet Isaiah had declared that the Lord would cleanse His people from their iniquities "by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." *-Desire of Ages*, p. 107

"For our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29. Fire is used to purify gold and silver. The fierce heat burns up all the impurities from the metal and leaves only the pure gold or silver behind. Before placing the metal

into the fire you cannot see the impurities in it, but once you start the heating process, the dross (impurities) is revealed and then consumed (burned). In the same manner, the Holy Spirit shows us our sins. If we accept His calling and put the sins away, the Holy Spirit cleanses us from sin and gives us power to become the children of God.

"I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isaiah 41:10. The process is not easy, and Jesus doesn't want to us to be separated from Him, but we are the ones that forget His promises. Now my jewelry box doesn't have my jewelry. It seems that it is empty, but it is not. It is full of memories, and my memories don't have a price. I am very happy that I let it go completely for our family in Africa.

In the book of Revelation is a beautiful promise "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Revelation 21:21. It is my wish and prayer that that we may enter into the furnace to purify ourselves and one day we can walk in this amazing city. Amen.

Lucy Romero



What was the Sin of Moses?

Many brethren and sisters, not to mention those outside the church, have a wrong understanding of what the sin of Moses was and its implication(s). Often when asked or giving comments on the matter, they say that his sin was in smiting the rock twice instead of once. They think that, since at first God told Moses to take the rod and smite the rock, and the next time He also told him to take the rod, therefore, he was also instructed to strike once. Such an understanding erodes the whole essence that God had designed in the type that would later be seen in the antitype. As it will soon be clear, striking the rock even once [that second time] would have been sin on the part of Moses. In view of this, therefore, it is important for us to possess the true facts on this matter.

To begin with, we need to know that there were two instances where the children of Israel on their journey to Canaan drank water from the rock. The first was at a place known as Rephidim which would later be called Massah (temptation) and Meribah (strife). The second was at Kadesh. The water here was also called water of Meribah. "This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and He was sanctified in them." Numbers 20:13

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go." Exodus 17:5–6

But we know that the Rock from which they drank wa-

ter is Christ. "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Corinthians 10:4. Psalms 78: 15–16 says "He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers." Jesus Himself testifies to this by saying, "He that believeth on Me," as the scriptures say, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John 7:38

The first instance therefore quoted above (Exodus 17: 5–6), symbolized that Christ Jesus was to be smitten or die once. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28

"The smitten rock was a figure of Christ, and through this symbol the most precious spiritual truths are taught. As the life-giving waters flowed from the smitten rock, so from Christ, 'smitten of God,' 'wounded for our transgressions,' 'bruised for our iniquities' (Isaiah 53:4–5), the stream of salvation flows for a lost race. As the rock had been once smitten, so Christ was to be 'once offered to bear the sins of many.' Hebrews 9:28." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 411

Then came the second instance now at a place known as Kadesh. The Children of Israel again murmured for water, against the Lord and His servants, Moses and Aaron. It was this time that the servant(s) of God sinned, having been very faithful in the time past.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and **speak** ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth **His** water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the Rock: so thou

shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." Numbers 20:7–12 (emphasis mine).

Moses was told to speak to the rock, not to strike once, as many suppose.

"By his rash act Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach. The rock, being a symbol of Christ, had been once smitten, as Christ was to be once offered. The second time it was needful only to speak to the rock, as we have only to ask for blessings in the name of Jesus. By the second smiting of the rock the significance of this beautiful figure of Christ was destroyed." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 418

"Our Saviour was not to be sacrificed a second time; and it is only necessary for those who seek the blessings of His grace to ask in the name of Jesus, pouring forth the heart's desire in penitential prayer." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 411. See also Luke 11:9–10

Of course further to that sin was the sin of anger, i.e. "Hear now, ye rebels" and taking the glory and/or power of God, i.e. "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" as if they had the power themselves.

"Had Moses and Aaron been cherishing self-esteem or

indulging a passionate spirit in the face of divine warning and reproof, their guilt would have been far greater. But they were not chargeable with willful or deliberate sin; they had been overcome by a sudden temptation, and their contrition was immediate and heartfelt. The Lord accepted their repentance, though because of the harm their sin might do among the people, He could not remit its punishment." –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 419

Moses was so beloved by God, but when he sinned He still punished His servant's sin. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). Yet it is because he repented, and confessed his sin, that God forgave him. Not long after his death he was resurrected and taken up into heaven (Jude 9)

May the Lord help us not only to understand this truth about Moses' sin alone, but also possess the true facts of the Bible in every aspect, which comes as a result of prayerful study of His Word, remains my wish and prayer. Amen.

Joel Msiska, Malawi

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"Speak gently to ministers who are seeking, fully as earnestly as your own self, to do their duty under difficulties. They are but men, with all the clamoring of Satan to discourage them." – Spalding and Megan Collection (1985), p. 61

"Happy the minister who has a faithful Aaron and Hur to strengthen his hands when they become weary, and to hold them up by faith and prayer. Such a support is a powerful aid to the servant of Christ in his work, and will often make the cause of truth to triumph gloriously." – Gospel Workers, p. 32

"Pray that they may be guarded from the snares of Satan and kept pure in thought and holy in heart. I entreat you who fear the Lord to waste no time in unprofitable talk or in needless labor to gratify pride or to indulge the appetite. Let the time thus gained be spent in wrestling with God for your ministers. Hold up their hands as did Aaron and Hur the hands of Moses." – Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 162



Walking On Water

One day, the disciples were in a boat on a stormy sea, struggling against the wind. Suddenly, they saw a person walking on the water towards them. "Is it a spirit?" they cried out for fear. Who was it? It was Jesus walking towards them. "Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come." Matthew 14:28–29

Immediately, Peter jumped out of the boat, and by a miracle he could walk on the water. But then, when he saw the wind and the waves, as he turned his eyes away from Jesus, he began to sink and cried out, "Lord save me."

Normally in life what we do once, then the next time we can do it better as we practice whatever it is. Later as we can do it alone, we do not need the teacher. But in religion it does not work this way.

E.J. Waggoner makes an example of Peter walking on the water in his book.

One time he could walk on the water and the next time he could not. In our Christian life the same thing happens often. Which is easier—to walk on water or to live a perfect Christian life? Both are impossible for us alone.

As soon as Peter turned his eyes away from Jesus he began sinking, and as soon as we stop praying we fall into sin.

"No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer." – *The Great Controversy*, p. 530

After walking with Jesus for many years and looking to Him, are we finally able to take a few steps alone, without looking to Him? Judas had been in the company of Jesus three and a half years, and then he decided to take a few steps alone and he ended up making terrible mistakes. Separated from Christ we would make similar mistakes as Judas did. Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5

This explains why some people have a dual personality. One day they are humble, pious, missionary-minded, and full of zeal for God, and the next moment they are

like the devil himself, the complete opposite.

Peter was like this. In Matthew chapter 16 Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (v. 16). This was spoken by the Holy Spirit through Christ. In the same chapter, verse 22, Peter said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou, art an offense unto Me." Matthew 16:22–23

God was speaking through Peter on the first occasion, and, shortly after, Satan was speaking through him to discourage Jesus. A little later Peter said to Jesus, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." Matthew 26:35

A few hours later he said three times that he did not know Jesus, even by swearing and cursing (Matthew 26:69–75).

Peter was walking on water and the next moment he started sinking and lost his faith. Many are like Peter. They say that when the Sunday Law comes, they will go to prison and to death—they will not give up their Sabbath keeping, but they will be the first ones to give up the Sabbath and start worshipping on Sunday rather than suffer the penalty. Why? Because they will not look to Jesus every hour. They take their eyes away.

Walking on the water over the stormy sea is a miracle of God which we all need to do.

"So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper; and it is by meeting these in the right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations." – *Ministry of Healing*, p. 487

To remain calm and patient when irritated is a similar miracle as Peter walking on water. It can be done; the power of God is so great, but we need Christ to dwell in us.

Sister White writes, "There is a noble majesty in the silence of the one exposed to evil-surmising or outrage. To

be a master of one's spirit is to be stronger than kings or conquerors." —*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1160

Satan is tempting all of us. He knows our weak points and as long as we live, he is attacking us on them.

One brother who had been faithful in the church for many years, now he was very discouraged. He had been walking on water but now he was sinking like Peter. He had been jostled, misunderstood and misrepresented. He had been carrying a heavy load, but it had not been appreciated. Sister White sent him an encouraging letter.

"I want you to have heaven. I know of no one who would appreciate heaven more than you, who have worked so untiringly to relieve suffering humanity, depriving yourself of sleep, neglecting to take food, bringing but little enjoyment into your life. At times there does not seem to be much sunshine in your path, only one long, continuous shadow. The afflictions you see, the dependent mortals looking and longing for help, your contact with depraved, corrupted human beings—this experience is of a character to undermine your faith in humanity.

"You must, indeed, look to Jesus, keeping your eyes fixed on the glory at the top of the ladder. Through Christ alone can you make sure of heaven, where all is purity, holiness, peace, and blessedness, where there are glories that mortal lips cannot describe. The nearest we can come to a description of the reward that awaits the overcomer is to say that it is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It will be an eternity of bliss, a blessed eternity, unfolding new glories throughout the ceaseless ages.

"You must be there. Whatever you lose here, be determined to make sure of eternal life. Never become discouraged. Many times I have seen that the everlasting arms were round about you, when you did not seem to realize or appreciate the great condescension of heaven. Live for Jesus." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 130–131

"When temptations assail you, when care and perplexity surround you, when, depressed and discouraged, you are ready to yield to despair, look to Jesus, and the darkness that encompasses you will be dispelled by the bright shining of His presence. When sin struggles for

the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin. Let your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, turn to Him. Lay hold on the hope set before you. Christ waits to adopt you into His family. His strength will help your weakness; He will lead you step by step. Place your hand in His, and let Him guide you.

"Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 85

"My husband was just before me. Large drops of sweat were falling from his brow, the veins in his neck and temples were increased to double their usual size, and suppressed, agonizing groans came from his lips. The sweat was dropping from my face, and I felt such anguish as I had never felt before. A fearful struggle was before us. Should we fail here, all the difficulties of our journey had been experienced for naught." —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, p. 192



Dear brothers and sisters, should we fail now so near to the end? Satan comes with fierce temptations in the last desperate effort to separate us from God.

He is attacking the faithful brothers and sisters, who have been like pillars in the church. Great ministers, spiritual leaders have fallen, bright stars have gone out in darkness. When you took your first step in the Christian way, you needed Christ, and when you take your last step you still need Christ to guide you.

Do not turn your eyes away from Jesus even for a moment.

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Isaiah 45:22

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

If you hunger and thirst for His righteousness, you will be filled with it. When you are tempted by Satan, cry to Jesus like Peter, "Lord, save me," and He will lift you up. Look to Him and He will save you. Amen.

Timo Martin



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“This is Life Eternal”
John 17:3

Our annual Canadian Field conference was held, for the first time, away from the city out in God's nature. Surrounded by towering pine trees, with lovely trails, a flowing river, and a beautiful beaver pond where the baptism was held, it was a peaceful and serene setting. Despite the rain that fell on and off throughout the conference, we were all blessed by the opportunity to praise God surrounded by His glorious handiwork. Many of the attendees stayed at the conference site, sleeping in rustic cabins, reminiscent of days gone by. Our meals were prepared by the staff at Edgewood, which took the burden off the members from providing food, allowing our full focus to be on hearing the words of our Lord from the various speakers.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 9

By the grace of the Lord, our Canadian Field Conference began by singing the hymn, "We Praise Thee, O God."

Brother John Bescec opened the conference with a service based upon John 17:3. Understanding that we are getting closer and closer to the second coming of Jesus, he asked us, "How close are we to the coming of the Lord today compared to the previous conference?" He invited us to take advantage of this conference to come closer to Jesus (Hebrews 3:15).

It is important for us to determine what has hindered us from connecting with Jesus in a deeper sense. He outlined four crucial elements we need to consider to advance in our Christian walk. The first is prayer. It is the breath of the soul. It is through prayer that we

open our hearts to God. We need to understand that intense prayer will not guarantee that our prayer will be answered as we expect. It is instead the attitude in which we pray. Jesus is our example in all. His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was not merely to try to have the cup passed from Him, but to allow God's will to be done. The more we focus on our problems and issues, the bigger they get. It is by focusing on positive things that we advance. The more we focus on Jesus the better our prayer life will be.

The second element is Bible study. The Bible is a treasure-book, full of knowledge, but it should not only be that. Its spiritual food nourishes our souls with the proper ingredients for a healthy and well-balanced life.

Thirdly, working for God. We are called to be "fishers of men" rather than keepers of an aquarium. The field is the world; we need to look for souls for the kingdom of heaven at all times.

The fourth element is daily surrender to God. We need to surrender to Jesus in every aspect of our lives.

Brother Nicholas Anca continued with the first workshop entitled, "What will be the result of knowing God?" Eternal life is a gift. It can only be received by faith in Jesus. Sin will keep us from the Bible and the Bible will keep us away from sin.

It is through the word of God that we are led step by step to eternal life. We need to accept our condition, believe in Jesus and His sacrifice, and confess our sins

to Him. It is vital that we always remember that there is nothing in us to make us deserve salvation, but it is only by God's amazing grace.

As we live godly lives let us focus on God's love. Love is an eternal principle, just as God is eternal; after all, God is love.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10

Sister Rose Powell led the morning worship based on the story of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16–22). Are we looking for a secret element to gain eternal life, just as the young ruler was? The principle is clear: Love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind, and your neighbour as yourself. This love should lead us to a full surrender to God on all levels of our lives.

Brother Elder Hernandez led the workshop on "The result of knowing God in our prayer life," by analyzing John chapter 17. He pointed out the context in which it took place. John 17:3 has three main elements. First: knowledge. It does not mean simply to have an intellectual knowledge. It points to a relational knowledge of God and Jesus Christ.

Second: Life. In Greek there are different words used for *life*. The main word is "*bios*" that refers to living creatures, including humans. But Jesus uses the word "*zoe*," which means "absolute fullness of life."

Third: Eternal. The Greek word is "*aionios*," which emphasizes the concept of quality as opposed to quantity. The relational knowledge of God and Jesus will give us absolute fullness of life on this Earth and guarantee us eternity, not only in the sense of endless time, but of the best quality of life we could ever have.

Brother Larry Watts presented the workshop titled, "Knowing God better in our relationships." He talked about the various stages in a human life. We start with the "I am here, feed me" stage. On this level, we find babies. Then comes the "I want to have that" stage. The mindset is to do that whichever feels "good". The third is the "why can't I have that?" attitude. It is a victim attitude when we look at the circumstances we find ourselves in throughout our lives. Fourth is the "What are the rules?" stage. This applies to people who want to know the rules so that they can create loopholes. This is shown in legalistic people. The fifth stage is the "Let's negotiate" attitude; this is the attitude of those who want to avoid hardship and is therefore the "compromise" principle. Last and most important is the "Verb me" attitude. It is only by God's grace that we move from being the "noun" and become the "verb".

This means we are in action, and not trying to be the center of everything. This is well expressed in the song entitled "Fade me away". We need to let Christ grow and self be faded way.

Brother Oscar Oviedo followed with the workshop entitled: "Knowing God in our witnessing." He presented the topic in which we were shown how our knowing God and Jesus will impact the way in which we present the present truth. We have been in charge of a great work of rebuilding the old paths. But we will not be able to finish our work if we push the cornerstone, Jesus Christ, to the side. In every doctrine Jesus should be the introduction, the development and the conclusion. We find Jesus in every chapter of the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation. Once we build our witnessing upon the cornerstone we will finish the spiritual temple and "the glory of the Lord" will fill our lives, our church and finally the whole earth.

After taking the afternoon to do our Sabbath preparation, Brother Morris Lowe presented "Knowing God In Our Church/Christian Life." Time is valuable and we should take advantage of every opportunity to know God and Jesus Christ. People often ask themselves: "How is it possible to know God? Is there a way to prove it?" Based on 1 John, we see that once people open their hearts to God and His word, there is a total transformation in their lives. The fruits of the Spirit are clearly manifested in their lives at home. Then those fruits will be also seen in the church family. Love is the only way in which we can prove that we have known God and Jesus.

Brother Clyde Russell opened the Sabbath hours with a meditation titled "Knowing Jesus as our Saviour." Since the entrance of sin into our world, our lives have been badly hurt. We can clearly see how traits such as selfishness, pride, hate and other negative things have shown the need for a solution. God, in His infinite wisdom, has prepared a solution: a Saviour. Jesus, our Friend, came to be our Saviour. He saved us from the condemnation of sin and gave us the power to live selfless, humble and loving lives, by the indwelling of Jesus in our hearts. In every occasion where sin shows its ugly face we have a Saviour to cling to, and to be victorious by His power.

SABBATH, AUGUST 11

On Sabbath morning, we had the privilege of studying our Sabbath School Lesson titled: "The Victory of Cross." This precious study lay down the foundation for the Divine service which was led by Brother Idel Suarez.

He compared John 17 with Leviticus 16. In Leviticus we see the high priest making an offering for himself, for his family and then for the congregation. In John 17 we see the same elements. Jesus starts by asking His

Father to glorify Him. He then prays for His disciples and then for the future believers.

Jesus prayed for us in that prayer. He prayed for unity, for a revelation of God in our lives and for a total victory over sin. As Jesus finishes His work in the Most Holy Place, let us always have in mind that He wants our lives to be fully cleansed from sin and death.

In the afternoon God's name was honoured by the youth and children's program. Children from the eastern and western parts of Canada presented many beautiful songs in praise to the Lord. The youth presented a program, describing what heaven will be like in both speech and song.

We also witnessed the ordination (being set apart) of two brothers for higher service in God's work. Brother Oscar Oviedo was ordained as a Minister, and Brother Clyde Russell as an Elder. May God's providence and grace continue blessing and guiding these brother's lives and ministries.



BROTHER OVIEDDO (ABOVE)
BROTHER RUSSELL (BELOW)



The congregation then had the opportunity to share testimonies and songs in a Testimony and Praise Meeting, led by Brother Timo Martin. We were abundantly blessed by those who showed what God has been doing in and through His people.

Brother Larry Watts closed the Sabbath hours by inviting us to consider our prayers. Are we Christ-centered or self-centered in our prayers? We need to be more grateful in our prayers and to ask God to make us a blessing in other people's lives.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12

On Sunday, Sister Raquel Sosa led the morning worship. She shared her experience of practical missionary work with less fortunate children. It is an excellent way to show God's love in a practical way. This will also bring a blessing to our lives and to our Christian experience.

Brother Evald Perdersen led the first workshop entitled: "Knowing God and church unity". Unity is a precious value. The Bible gives us various examples of unity. The friendship of David and Jonathan is an excellent one. Position never divided them. David could have been seen as a threat to Jonathan, but their God-centered friendship continued. Unity is possible only when we are Christ-centered, when our goal is to serve and not to be served. Knowing God will never lead us to disunity.

Brother Jerry Eaton presented the workshop entitled: "Knowing God and the Latter Rain." It is important to know what the latter rain is, and what it is not. It is a special power from above to finish God's work on earth. It was never intended to help us gain victory over our sins. He emphasized that the conditions for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are the same as for the early rain. There must be full repentance from all sins which would lead to unity among the believers and help us work together in evangelizing the world.

The experience in 1888 helps us see that the brethren hindered the Holy Spirit from being poured out at that time. Let us do our part in this work so that our hearts will be ready for that precious event.

Brother Idel Suarez brought to us the last workshop under the title: "The Loud Cry." It is important to understand what it is, and when it is to take place. Revelation chapter 18 has three phases: The first was the light, followed by the cry, and finally the power. The power is the Loud Cry. The light started in 1888, the cry began in 1914, and the power is to be manifested under the Latter Rain. We are to pray, overcome and work

in the power of the Holy Spirit in order for this precious experience to be accomplished in our time. In this way the Lord Jesus Christ's second coming can be hastened.

In the afternoon, we had the privilege of witnessing three young souls being baptized, surrounded by the marvels of God's creation, with the congregation watching from the shore. The three young people were James Bessec, Elaine Romero and Miguel Climaco. After the baptism the three of them shared words of thanks to God and to those who were instrumental in their lives, in bringing them to this important decision of giving their lives to God in baptism. Brother Miguel shared his experience, and he encouraged the young people who have been raised in the church but who had not made the decision to follow Jesus, not to wait any longer. The world has nothing to offer. It only has destruction and death. Only through Christ can we have life.

All too soon it was time for us, who had found so much joy and peace communing with the God of nature in the works of His hands, to separate from one another.

We had many precious opportunities to be uplifted by songs, testimonies and messages from the Spirit, not to mention the comfort of fellowship with meeting and getting to know new and old friends in a closer, spiritual way. We look forward to another camp meeting out in nature, if God permit, and if not here, then, when type meets anti-type, the great Reunion meeting in the sky.

Brother Larry Watts closed the conference by presenting the new Canadian Field Officers. He invited us to go and share the joy and blessing we received during the conference with those in our homes and cities. May God add His abundant blessing to those who attended this precious conference and to those who will be blessed by reading this report. Amen.

Oscar Oviedo
Canadian Field Secretary



**LEFT: (L TO R)
ELAINE ROMERO,
MIGUEL CLIMACO,
JAMES BESSEC**

**RIGHT: ELAINE AND
HER
MOTHER LUCY**



List of New Officers (2012-2014)

President: John Bescec

Vice President: Morris Lowe

Secretary: Oscar Oviedo

Treasurer: Wendy Eaton

Other Committee Members:

John Formosa, Errol Fletcher, Clyve Russell

Missionary Leader: Clyve Russell

Worker Supervisor: Jerry Eaton

Publishing House Leader: Timo Martin

Publishing House Treasurer: Helen Marttinen

Publishing House Secretary: Nicholas Anca

Literature Committee: Timo Martin, Jerry Eaton, Rose Powell

Health Leader: Jerry Eaton, Assistant: Helen Marttinen

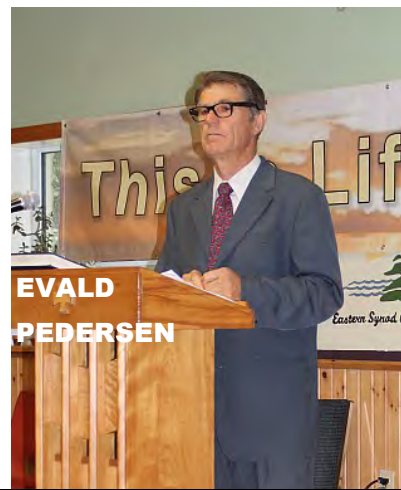
Press Media: Jeff Ho

Good Samaritan: Tina McTavish. Assistant: Leila McTavish

Finance Committee: Wendy Eaton, Don Ho, John Formosa, Evald Pedersen



SOME OF THE SPEAKERS



A Visit

T'was early this morning that my journey began; it was a visit that would take me up to yonder land.

The Trees swayed and said: please don't leave us as we too are in a visiting mood.

As I went along the way I heard the Birds call: wait for us, we too are going to visit.

Then beyond me I heard the Sea roar and said, please don't leave without me.

As I sought to take my flight, Wind said: I will take you higher. Then Sun said: I will take you in.

We passed through the Orion, and the entire starry host winked at me and said: we too are going to visit.

Together we all went in and clasped our hands in awe. Then the Waters clapped their hands as they beheld the glorious scene. The Trees swayed in much appreciation of the sight that they saw. The Birds clad in choir-like gowns prepared for their anthem song.

Suddenly, flew open was a great door, out of which marched an angelic throng.

In their magnificent array they led the way from which we fell in line. They passed from one glory to the next. We watched in awe as they gracefully trooped along.

The Wind whispered: be still! The Sea replied: Can I be still when I am about to behold He who stills the storm; yea, He who causes me to flow? I must roar; it is likened unto this angelic song.

Awe struck I was about to speak when one who looked like the Son of Man came forth in shining glory.

Then I awoke out of my sleep.

Rose Powell



Left: Michael

Right: Stephen

CHILDREN'S CORNER

The Evil and the Good

Jezebel

Jezebel was a very evil woman, probably the most evil woman in Bible history.

Jezebel married Ahab, the king of Israel. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians and high priest of Baal. Under her influence, Ahab built a house for Baal in Samaria and they both worshipped idols. Eventually the people of Israel also turned away from God and became idol worshippers. "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table." 1 Kings 18:19

Can you imagine this? There were so many false prophets in Israel at that time and only because of the wickedness of one woman. Her evil influence had reached so many that Sis. White writes in *Prophets and Kings*, p. 116 that "never before had the chosen people of God fallen so low in apostasy."

Elijah lived during this time and he went to see Ahab once and foretold of a drought that would fall upon the country because of the apostasy that prevailed. Jezebel refused to recognize the drought as a judgment from God. She urged Ahab to search for Elijah and convinced many that he was the cause of all this misery. When Elijah couldn't be found, Jezebel decided to avenge herself by killing all the prophets of God in Israel. But God never abandons His people completely. Obadiah, the governor of Ahab's house, took one hundred prophets and hid them by 50 in a cave and fed them with bread and water.

When the time came that God would put an end to the drought, Elijah commanded fire to come down from heaven and consume the offering on the altar on Mount

Carmel. All of Jezebel's false prophets also perished that day on Carmel. Ahab returned to the palace that night and told her all that had happened but she hardened her heart and disbelieved. She became so angry at the news of her prophets that she sent Elijah a message, threatening him with death.

Jezebel's wickedness and apostasy continued throughout her life. One time, Ahab looked out his window and saw a vineyard next to his palace which he greatly desired. The owner, Naboth, refused to sell it to him, but Jezebel planned to get it one way or another. She boldly wrote letters in the name of the king and sent them to the elders and nobles of Naboth's city, telling them to place Naboth before the people and get two false witnesses to accuse him of blasphemy. They were then to take him and stone him to death. God did not overlook this evil deed. He sent His prophet Elijah to pronounce upon Ahab a terrible judgment. The house of Ahab was to be utterly destroyed and of Jezebel God said, "And of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." 1 Kings 21:23



And it came to pass as Elijah had foretold years earlier. "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, Who is on my side? who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now, this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of

her hands. Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which He spake by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel." 2 Kings 9:30–37

Jezebel was one woman, one person in the entire country, but her influence affected so many people, her husband, her children, and the people of Israel. Her daughter, Athaliah following her example, also killed all the descendants of David, except one, Joash.

In this story, we see the power of influence. God has given us this talent but it is up to us to put it to good use. Every person we meet is affected by our words, our acts, our dress, even by the expression on our faces.

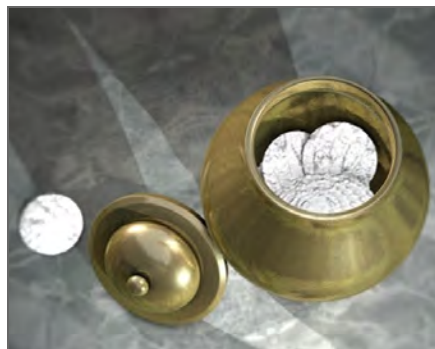
"It is only through the grace of God that we can make a right use of this endowment. There is nothing in us of ourselves by which we can influence others for good. Never should we begin the day without committing our ways to our heavenly Father. When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, prompting us to a better course, choosing our words for us and influencing our actions." – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 147

It is my wish and prayer that we may let God guide our lives so that we may be a good influence upon everyone we may come in contact with. Amen.

Stephen Newby

Manna

"And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents." Exodus 16:14–16. Manna is often described as bread from heaven. When God first sent manna to the Israelites they did not know what it was so they called it manna. The word "Manna" in Hebrew literally means "what is it?" Manna is described as small as a coriander seed, round,



white and tasted like wafers or cookies made with honey. Manna could be baked, grinded, made into cakes or beaten into mortar.

Moses told the Israelites not to leave the manna overnight. Despite his warnings, many of the Israelites left it until morning to find that it had bred worms and was starting to rot. On the 6th day God told Moses to tell the children of Israel to gather twice as much manna as any other day as He also rested. Nevertheless, some Israelites went to collect it on the 7th day of the week and were greatly disappointed. What was God's command? "Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." Exodus 16:26

After the Israelites broke God's command, God rebuked them, telling Aaron to take a pot and fill it with an omer full of manna, and put it in the sanctuary to be kept for the generations of Israel as a remembrance of God's blessing to those who will obey Him.

When Elijah was being chased by Queen Jezebel, an angel gave him a baked cake and a cruse of water that gave him a 40 day and 40 night supply of strength. No other food but heavenly food could give him that much strength. Perhaps it was manna? Manna could be made into cakes. "When all means of sustenance failed, God sent His people manna from heaven; and a sufficient and constant supply was given. This provision was to teach them that while they trusted in God and walked in His ways He would not forsake them." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 121. When Elijah went to Mt. Horeb and all means of sustenance had disappeared, God provided him with food and drink to provide him strength and to encourage Elijah to trust more in Him. The manna that God gave the Israelites could sustain only this earthly existence; it did not prevent the approach of death, nor insure immortality, but the bread of heaven will nourish the soul unto everlasting life.

"The life giving spirit, flowing from the infinite fullness of God, it is the true manna." – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 386

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Revelation 2:17. It is my wish and prayer that we may trust and rely upon God, knowing we too shall receive an endless supply of this heavenly manna. Amen.

Michael Newby

Baptism in London, Ontario

By God's help a soul made her covenant with God and joined our little group here in London. Just as the Bible speaks of there being joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:10), likewise, we may say there is joy among us when we see people taking their stand for Jesus. He is coming soon with great glory to take us home and our dear sister, Yohana Monsalve, gave her heart to Jesus making her covenant with God our Father through baptism, receiving Jesus as her personal Lord and Saviour.

The baptism was officiated by Brother Morris Lowe at Sharon Creek. Members and visitors gathered to witness this great and important event. The day was beautiful and it reminded me of the day when I was baptized. Baptism is the most important day of one's life. It is the day when the person confesses publicly that they have accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour promising to follow and to witness for Him. I want to thank God and everyone who joined us at this event. May our Father in heaven continue to guide us to precious souls who are searching for truth and may we direct them to the cross where Jesus died for them is my wish and prayer. Amen!

In Christ,
Nicholas Anca



BELIEVERS IN GERMANY & AUSTRIA





SPECIAL MUSIC AT CANADIAN FIELD CONFERENCE



CANADIAN FIELD CONFERENCE



CAMP EDGEWOOD, EDEN MILLS, ONTARIO