



The Reformation **Messenger**

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 6, JUNE 2011

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

“Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.”

Hosea 10:12

“For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.”

Jeremiah 4:3

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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BREAK UP THE FALLOW GROUND

Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you. Hosea 10:12

For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Jeremiah 4:3

WORKING THE HEART'S SOIL

“Let every church member consider the breaking up of the fallow ground, the careful cleansing of the soil, and the depositing and harrowing of the seed, which is the laborious work of the husbandman. It is a rough and searching process. The harrowing of the seed is not always pleasant to the receiver, and sometimes disabling to him because he does not sense the virtue of the Word and become submissive under the tilling process in spiritual life. The sins committed require the sincere repentance that needeth not to be repented of, but when the hard soil is broken up and the stubborn clods are broken to pieces then the precious seed can be sown and harrowed into the soil. This represents the severe discipline of God. Often rebellion is manifested, and the discipline of God must continue until the determined will is broken and the end is gained.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 281

“In things spiritual as well as natural this work must be done. Often severity is needed to bring in the spiritual harvest. It is God's great law that without the proper sowing of seed and the tillage there will be no harvest in sheaves. An experience is lacking. Divine blessings wait only for human spiritual working of the soil of the heart and the industry to care for the soil while the Lord is sowing His seed.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 281

“As a man soweth he shall also reap. All who study the Word with full purpose to cleanse away from the life all sin, and who search the Scriptures to learn what is truth, will welcome the truth of the Word as a Thus saith the Lord. They will repent under the sharp reproofs of Bible truth. . . . If a man sow true repentance he will reap the reward of sound good works. If he continues in the faith he reaps peace. If he becomes sanctified and cleansed from his appetite for cheapness and folly he shall . . . reap righteousness and perfect love. . .

A continuance in the well doing in overcoming makes him a daily victor because he keeps the mark of Christ's perfection ever before him.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 281

“The garden of the heart must be cultivated. The soil must be broken up by deep repentance for sin. Poisonous, Satanic plants must be uprooted. The soil once overgrown by thorns can be reclaimed only by diligent labor. So the evil tendencies of the natural heart can be overcome only by earnest effort in the name and strength of Jesus. The Lord bids us by His prophet, ‘Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.’ ‘Sow to yourselves in righteousness; reap in mercy.’ Jeremiah 4:3; Hosea 10:12. This work He desires to accomplish for us, and He asks us to co-operate with Him.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 56

“We want men who are willing to go into new fields, and to do hard service for the Lord. I remember visiting in Iowa when the country was new, and I saw the farmers breaking the new ground. I noticed that they had heavy teams, and made tremendous efforts to make deep furrows, but the laborers gained strength and muscle by the exercise of their physical powers. It will make our young men strong to go into new fields, and break up the fallow ground of men's hearts. This work will drive them nearer to God. It will help them to see that they are altogether inefficient in themselves. They must be wholly the Lords. They must put away their self-esteem and self-importance, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. When they do this, they will be willing to go without the camp, and bear the burden as good soldiers of the cross. They will gain efficiency and ability by mastering difficulties and overcoming obstacles.” —*Review and Herald*, October 8, 1889

Ellen G. White



The Precious Truth— New and Old

**“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”
Proverbs 4:18.**

To the just, every day that passes leaves them more enlightened. Fresh light keeps coming until it brings total brightness to the soul.

One of the solemn lessons we learn from the inspired writings is that history is repeating itself. This is a proven fact and will continue to be manifest until the close of time. This, however, does not suggest that God acts according to a preestablished formula, but rather on divine principle. One area where history is being repeated in the Christian world in general “and among the professed people of God” is the continual failure to reconcile the old and new truths. Some hold on only to the old while others hold on only to the new.

“There are those who profess to believe and to teach the truths of the Old Testament, while they reject the New. But in refusing to receive the teachings of Christ, they show that they do not believe that which patriarchs and prophets have spoken. ‘Had ye believed Moses,’ Christ said, ‘ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me.’ John 5:46. Hence there is no real power in their teaching of even the Old Testament.

“Many who claim to believe and to teach the gospel are in a similar error. They set aside the Old Testament

Scriptures, of which Christ declared, ‘They are they which testify of Me.’ John 5:39. In rejecting the Old, they virtually reject the New; for both are parts of an inseparable whole. No man can rightly present the law of God without the gospel, or the gospel without the law. The law is the gospel embodied, and the gospel is the law unfolded. The law is the root, the gospel is the fragrant blossom and fruit which it bears.

“The Old Testament sheds light upon the New, and the New upon the Old. Each is a revelation of the glory of God in Christ. Both present truths that will continually reveal new depths of meaning to the earnest seeker.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 128

God has been giving special truths to His people in every age and there is need to live up to the light given at a specific time.

“In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of His resurrection, He began ‘at Moses and all the prophets’ and ‘expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.’ Luke 24:27. But it is the light which shines in the fresh unfolding of truth that glorifies the old. He who rejects or neglects

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the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 127-128

“Christ in His teaching presented old truths of which He Himself was the originator, truths which He had spoken through patriarchs and prophets; but He now shed upon them a new light. How different appeared their meaning! A flood of light and spirituality was brought in by His explanation. And He promised that the Holy Spirit should enlighten the disciples, that the word of God should be ever unfolding to them. They would be able to present its truths in new beauty.”—*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 127

The people living in the period of the seventh church of Revelation 3 (Laodicea) find it hard to understand and put into practice a message which sounds new to them. This message is that which forms the right arm of the everlasting gospel—the third angel’s message. This is the area where the precious principle of the truth—new and old—will be illustrated.

“The health reform, I was shown, is a part of the third angel’s message and is just as closely connected with it as are the arm and hand with the human body.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 486

“One important part of the work of the ministry is to faithfully present to the people the health reform as it stands connected with the third angel’s message as part and parcel of the same work. They should not fail to adopt it themselves, and should urge it upon all who profess to believe the truth.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 469–470

Often the question is asked: “If fish is bad to eat, why did Jesus give it to the multitude to eat?” Why is it that some of God’s people used to eat it (or flesh)? The answers to these questions lie in the above established fact, namely: (a) in every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation; (b) failure to reconcile the truth—new and old.

The truth of health reform is of special importance to those who are preparing themselves for life in heaven where even the slightest smell of meat and all types of harmful articles of foods (e.g., junk food, etc.) will not be present. This important message was first given to the Adventists on June 6th, 1863 through the prophet

Ellen G. White. Apparently it appears new, but it is virtually an old truth. In fact such a diet in biblical history was present since man came into existence.

If we want to know the truth of anything—the original stand—we need to remember to go back to the beginning. Health reform may be taken as a new truth only in the sense that for a period of time it had almost become extinct because of the hardness of people’s hearts, just as divorce and remarriage was tolerated in the time of Moses, “but from the beginning it was not so.” Matthew 19:8

“The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world’s history.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 148. We have been called by God to be the reformers in the Laodicean church. To this cause, we need to stick to the truth, regardless of what it will take. One of the great reformers the world has ever known (apart from our Lord Jesus who is the greatest) is John the Baptist. We ought, both in precept and example, to emulate him. We need to restore all things just as he did (Matthew 17:11). One truth he restored is clear in the following testimony: “John separated himself from his friends, and from the luxuries of life, dwelling alone in the wilderness, and subsisting upon a *purely vegetable diet*. The simplicity of his dress—a garment woven of camel’s hair—was a rebuke to the extravagance and display of the people of his generation, especially of the Jewish priests. His diet also, of locusts and wild honey, was a rebuke to the gluttony that everywhere prevailed.”—*Temperance*, p. 91 (emphasis mine)

In the church of God (IMS SDA Church, Reform Movement), there is no controversy over truth—new and old. God has helped His church to reconcile these truths and has faithfully laid them down in the Principles of Faith. Health reform is part of these principles. When real reformers ponder on this subject, through the Holy Spirit, they discover that it is the old truth of Genesis 1:29; 3:18 (last part). Then by the unction of the same Spirit they present this theme in its new light and thus it remains fresh and new.

Those who desire to be in eternity will not hesitate to join this work of Reform not just in health, but in numerous areas where God is looking to us to preserve His precious truth—new and old. AMEN.

Joel Jungubawa Msiska
Malawi



SEED TIME

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

PEACE

In these last days there is a common notion that when Jesus Christ returns, that He will set foot on earth, and He will reign supreme on planet earth. At that time the nations and man will be bound into a federation of religions and nations in which there will be no more distinctions, and that there will be a grand and universal brotherhood of perfect peace for 1000 years.

Yet, the Apostle Peter is says, “God is longsuffering towards us.” (2 Peter 3:9). God is now giving every opportunity for man and the nations to reform and for man to realize that his plans and efforts are all in vain – trying all human values, goals and endeavours to express his own will and views of the future as one of prosperity, peace, and safety.

But, God is blatantly allowing us to prove that it cannot be done any other way than what Jesus said, that is, by a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ who is God and Man. Here is our “peace,” our “seedness” (def: the state of being sown; seedtime). (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 5:1-6; Matthew 28:19)

POOR IN SPIRIT

We are coming to the end of the journey. Jesus Christ said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Matthew 5:3. This seems like a strange blessing – like the many others – a

paradox! But, Christ puts this first among the graces and is the most comprehensive of all the beatitudes; here holiness and happiness are fully described. Why? And what’s the relation to our “seedness” time?

Well, self-denial is the first lesson to learn in His school! The poor in spirit are happy! What’s the most comprehensive character of the blessed? They are pure in heart! Uh-oh? Yes! But first, there is a secular, or layman poor-spiritedness, that is so far from making men blessed that it is a sin and a snare – cowardice and base fear, and a willing subjection to the lusts of men, the scourge of sinful speech, a portrait of the godless.

Yet, “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.” Psalm 14:2. This poverty of spirit (Matthew 5:3) is a gracious disposition of soul, by which we are emptied of self (a vacuum), in order for us to be filled with Jesus Christ.

To be poor in spirit is to be contentedly poor, willing to be emptied of worldly wealth (to sit loose to all worldly wealth, and not set our hearts upon it), if God orders that to be our lot; to bring our mind to our condition, when it is a low condition. In fact, members of Christ’s church are called the “congregation of the poor.” (Psalm 74:19). But, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” Hebrews 10:25

Simply, “poor in spirit” is to be humble and lowly in our own eyes – or as little children in our opinion of ourselves, weak or insignificant. (Matthew 18:4; 19:14). You see, we are His little ones.

BEGIN LOW!

Ah! But many are poor in the world, but high in spirit, poor and proud, murmuring and complaining, and blaming their lot. But we must accommodate ourselves to our poverty, and must know how to be abased. “I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” Philippians 4:12. Here is the believer’s sufficiency through Christ!

If we be rich in the world, however, we must condescend to the poor and sympathize with them, as being touched with the feeling of their infirmities; we must expect and prepare for poverty, must not inordinately fear or shun it, but must bid it welcome, especially

when it comes upon us for keeping a good conscience. Look, moreover, with a holy contempt upon ourselves, to value others and undervalue ourselves in comparison. It is to acknowledge that God is great, and we are lowly; that He is holy and we are sinful; that He is all and we are nothing, less than nothing, worse than nothing – nothingness, and to humble ourselves before Him, and under His mighty hand.

It is, furthermore, to remove all confidence in our own righteousness and strength, so that we may depend upon the merit of Christ for our justification and His spirit and grace for our sanctification.

Those who would build high must begin low; and it is an excellent preparation for the entrance of gospel-grace into the soul. It prepares THE SOIL TO RECEIVE THE SEED!

WAR!!

Yet, the outworking of the new life in Christ Jesus is masked and impeded by the insanity of warring nations, full of ruinous mistakes of a blind and carnal world – revolting in a disdainful, dispassionate manner, unheralded as never before in the dark history of mankind. The earth is shaking and rocking on its pivotal axis, both literally and figuratively!

It is as a runaway freight train without an engineer, careening on the purgatorial rails to imminent destruction. The wild, restless, calloused nations are ceaselessly warring in fickle manners, enslaving their subjects in barbarous enclaves, deluding one another in their shallow quests for power.

In spite of this, the Apostle Paul says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6: 12. It is this wrestling against spiritual wickedness in high places which prevent us from seeing God.

Paul tells us to “take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13. Ah! But having put on the armor, then stand (hold the position – manifesting the full power of God). “The nature of God is the armour!” The naïve world does not see this! Remember, the enemy is unseen and supernatural! (see Daniel 10, 12)

NEW LIFE

Meanwhile, while the hollow-hearted world is racing on its path of destruction, Daniel 11 and 12 are being fulfilled! What, therefore, or how is the outworking of the new life in Christ Jesus to be manifested and realized in our lives?

When you see terrible men committing terrible, heinous acts, remember, it is not just them alone; they are marionettes in the hands of the evil one. Concentrate on the more difficult wrestling feints of the spiritual hosts of wickedness. (see Ephesians 1:3; 2:6; 3:10)

As the Christian’s life in the Spirit is unified in purpose and direction in contrast with the life in the flesh, with its inner conflicts and frustrations, what then, in view of the above, is excusing ourselves from doing our present duty – the present truth and scope of our quest to seek the rewards of His promise? We opened with the verse from Galatians 6:7, with a caution to take heed not to mock God, or by deceiving ourselves by imagining that He can be imposed upon by mere pretensions or profession.

But, our new life, can be changed, enhanced, embedded in the truth, henceforth, and can continue in force and outworking as a **stewardship!** It is a new direction – a key! That’s it! It is needed to help advance God’s cause in new fields; we are entrusted with the care of God’s household (sheep), and interests; and of God’s truth.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 147–148; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 24, 37). Furthermore, God will give greater trusts to the faithful. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 529) (see Luke 16:1-13)

Christians need to be reminded, however, that all Christians who hold responsibility over others, that the persons under them belong, first of all, to Christ! Pastors, ministers, elders, workers, missionaries, teachers, and parents are but “undershepherds” to whose care Christ’s sheep are committed. (Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:3). Our duty to Christ should depend, not upon the strength of our subjective feelings, but upon our realization of what He has done for us. To Peter, “Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep” John 21:17

SEEDNESS

But, it is no time to be idle, for we are the stewards of truth, and must cooperate in advancing God’s Kingdom. (*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 269; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 448). Furthermore, we shall be called

upon to give account of our stewardship and the believer's duty regarding stewardship and the means entrusted to them; we are placed under obligation **both to God and man**. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 155; *Education*, p. 139)

Returning again to our opening message, for emphasis and clarification, that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7), or that according as we behave ourselves now, so will our account be in the great day. **Therefore, our present time is seedtime**. In the other world there will be a great harvest; and, as the Husbandman reaps in the harvest according as He sows in the "seedness," so we shall reap then as we sow now.

Ah! And he further informs us (v. 8), that, as there are two sorts of "seedness," sowing to the flesh and sowing to the spirit, so accordingly will the reckoning be hereafter. If we sow to the flesh, we "shall of the flesh reap corruption." Galatians 6:8. If we sow the wind, we shall reap the whirlwind. (Hosea 8:7). Those who live a carnal, sensual life, who, instead of employing themselves to the honour of God and the good of others, spend all their thoughts, and care, and time about the flesh, must expect no other fruit of such a course than corruption – **a mean and short-lived satisfaction at present, and ruin and misery at the end**.

Our Christian conduct, therefore, in the light of the times in which we live is to be **exemplary**. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter 4:10

DECEPTION

But, on the other hand, those who sow to the Spirit, who, under the guidance and influence of the Spirit do live a holy and spiritual life, a life of devotedness to God and of usefulness and service to others, may believe that they shall reap life everlasting – they shall have the truest comfort in their present course, and eternal life and happiness at the end of it. But, those who go about mocking God do but deceive themselves.

Hypocrisy in religion is the greatest folly as well as wickedness. The God we have to answer to can easily see through all our disguises, and will certainly deal with us hereafter, not according to our profession but our practices. Woe unto us! A life of deception is fatal. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 336). It will be

one of Satan's greatest weapons in the end. Ministers must guard the flock against deception. (*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 16)

EXCUSES!

Another caution to take heed of, in mocking God, or in reality – deceiving ourselves, is by imagining that He can be imposed upon by mere pretensions or professions. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." Galatians 6:7. In reality, the design of this exhortation is to warn, or convince, those wary ones of their sin and folly; those who endeavored by any plausible pretences to excuse themselves from doing their duty in supporting their ministers. Or it may be taken in a more general view, as respecting the whole business of religion, and so designed to dissuade men from entertaining any vain hopes of enjoying its rewards while they live in the neglect of its duties. (see Exodus 20) (Ecclesiastes 12:13)

The Apostle Paul has supposed often that many are apt to excuse themselves from the work of religion, and especially, the more self-denying parts of it, though at the same time they may make a show and profession of it. But he assures them that this, their way, is their folly, for though, hereby, they may possibly impose upon others, yet they do but deceive themselves if they think to impose upon God Himself, who is perfectly acquainted with their hearts. (see the parable of the wedding feast – Luke 22)

WEARINESS

There is another caution we are to soberly take heed of, that is, not to be weary in well doing. (Galatians 6:9). As we should never excuse ourselves from any part of our duty, so neither should we grow weary in it. We are all prone to this; we are very apt to tire in duty, yes to fall off from it, particularly that part of it which should be a special regard for us all – that of doing good to others! This, therefore, we are to carefully watch and guard against. There is a very good reason for this, "For in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9), where He assures us that there is a recompense of reward in reserve for all who sincerely employ themselves in well doing. In other words, this reward will certainly be bestowed on us in the proper season – if not in this world, yet undoubtedly in the next, an ardent hope!

Ah! But, then that is on the supposition that we faint not in the way of our duty. If we grow weary, however,

we shall not only miss out of this reward but lose the comfort and advantage of what we have already done. But, if we hold on and hold out in well-doing, though our reward may be delayed, yet it will surely come, and will be so great as to make us an abundant recompense for all our pains, efforts, and constancy. Perseverance in well-doing is our wisdom and sincere interest as well as our duty for these times, for only those who do this is the reward promised. (Revelation 14:12)

A further exhortation to all faithful Christians is to do good, to be generous in their "**seeding**" places, which states, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:10. The latter group is especially the obligation of the children of God. If one neglects to care for his own (believers are the family of God), he is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)

Ah! It is not enough that we be good to others if we would approve ourselves to be Christians in deed. The duty here, you see, and recommended to us is the same that is spoken of in the foregoing passages and verses; we are exhorted to sincerity and perseverance in doing it – good to others!

So Here We Are Directed Both As To The Objects And Rules Of It: (Doing Good – Sincerity And Perseverance)

RULE 1:

1) The objects of this duty are more generally to all men. We are not to confine our charity and beneficence within too narrow bounds as the Jews and judaizing Christians were apt to do, but should be ready to extend it to all who partake of the same common nature with us, as far as we are capable and they stand in need of us.

2) But, yet, in the exercise of it, we are to have a special regard to the household of faith, or to those who profess the same common faith, and are members of the same body of Christ with us, though others are not excluded.

3) The charity of Christians should be extensive–generous charity; but, remember, God does good to all, but in a special manner He is good to His own servants, and we must, in doing good, be followers of God as dear children.

RULE 2:

1) The rule which we are to observe to doing good to others is also, "as we have opportunity," which implies that we should be sure to do it when we have opportunity, or while our life lasts, which is the only season wherein we are capable of doing good to others. If, therefore, we would behave ourselves aright in this matter we must not, as too many do, neglect it in our lifetime, and defer it until we come to die, under a pretence of doing something of this nature then; for we cannot be sure that we shall then have an opportunity for it.

So, we have no grounds to expect that what we do will be so acceptable to God, much less that we can atone for our past neglects if we leave something behind us for the good of others at a time when we can no longer keep it or use it ourselves. But nevertheless, we should take care to do good in our lifetime, to make this the business of our lives!

2) That we be ready to improve every opportunity for it: we should not content ourselves in having done good already, but whenever fresh occasions offer themselves, as far as our capacity reaches we should be ready to embrace them too. For we are directed to "give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." Ecclesiastes 11:2. As God has made it our duty to do good to others, so He takes care in His providence to furnish us with opportunities for it.

Remember, too: the poor we have always with us. (Matthew 26:11). Whenever God gives us an opportunity to be useful to others, He expects we should improve it, according to our capacity, ability, and spiritual state.

Finally, we have need of godly wisdom and discretion to direct us in the exercise of our charity, or beneficence, in our seedness journey. None who stand in need of us are to be wholly overlooked; for "**SEEDTIME**" is upon us!

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever." Romans 16:27

A hearty Amen!

John Theodorou
U.S.A.





The church of God is compared to a vineyard in the Bible. "My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress

therein: and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." Isaiah 5:1-2

Who can we blame if the church is producing wild grapes and not the fruit that God is expecting? Whose fault is it if some members in the church will be lost in the end? Can we blame God for not doing enough for our salvation?

In the following verses, Isaiah continues, "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt Me and My vineyard. What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isaiah 5:2-3

God loves His people; He gave His Son to come and die for them. He has given the Holy Spirit to them to lead them, to strengthen them and to comfort them. He has sent His angels to help and to protect them, and He also listens to their prayers and answers them.

Yet with all this help, they produced wild grapes. Instead of the fruit of the Spirit, they produced selfishness, pride, covetousness, jealousy, and love of the world.

Jesus spoke of the same condition. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year

also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bears fruit, well: and if not, then cut it down." Luke 13:6-9

On another occasion Jesus looked for fruit on a tree and found none. "Now in the morning as He returned into

the city, He hungered. And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away." Matthew 21:18-19

The tree looked good with plenty of leaves on it, but it benefitted no one because it had no fruit on it. The connection to God was broken. The Holy Spirit left the person and spiritually he withered away, never to bear fruit anymore. He looked like a good Christian but for the lack of fruit, he was cut down. He did not hurt anyone, he did not steal or lie, he followed all church ceremonies, but he did nothing good for others.

The rich young man came to Jesus and asked, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Matthew 19:16. He did not ask what sin or bad thing he must stop doing, because in his view he had kept all the commandments from his youth up.

There are many unfruitful trees in the Lord's garden which will eventually be cut down.

Jesus made it clear to us what salvation and eternal life depends on. "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." Matthew 25:35-36

Because they did all these good things, the Lord said, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34

There was a rich man, chief among the publicans, named Zacchaeus, who met Jesus and talked with Him. "Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house." Luke 19:9. What did he do to prove that now salvation had come to him? "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Luke 19:8

He became a fruitful tree in the Lord's vineyard. Jesus did not have to ask him to help the poor; the Holy Spirit did the prompting and he obeyed.

God is patient with us. He does everything possible to save us from selfishness and covetousness. If all His doings fail and there is no good fruit, finally He has to give up on us. Then the Holy Spirit leaves us, and we fall into spiritual darkness and confusion. The truth that we loved before now suddenly makes no sense to us.

Before we can start bearing good fruit we must learn to hate sin. A person who loves sin can only produce wild grapes, and God can do nothing for him. But as we learn to hate sin, the love for purity and holiness will be aroused and we start hungering and thirsting for righteousness; then the good fruits will be produced, and we will remain in the vineyard of the Lord forever.

To those who love the world, religion is a heavy burden; they do not enjoy it. But to all who love God, the world is a burden to them, and they do not enjoy it, but rather turn away from it.

Solomon sought happiness in worldly things and was disappointed. He said, "Then I looked on all the works that my hand had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." Ecclesiastes 2:11

Jesus said the same thing, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26

Satan offers beautiful things of the world to the people, but they are only a mirage. They look good, like the tree of knowledge did to Eve, but in the end they bring along misery and death.

Like a fisherman who has caught a fish, he will not use lures on it anymore but leaves it to die. The same with Satan – he often does not waste his time on many who are lost, but leaves them to their misery, and goes after souls who are struggling for victory over sin.

Paul writes, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Romans 2:4. When we see His goodness and love towards us, we begin to love Him and to obey Him. But often the goodness of God leads people to carelessness and disobedience, trusting that God is gracious and forgives always, and does not punish them for their sins.

Another deception of Satan's is to tell people to obey God later. He is always ready to accept us when we decide to serve Him. But God's goodness has a limit. After patiently waiting for the good fruit from a tree, He finally gives the order to cut it down if it does not produce good fruit.

Jesus beheld the city of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, and wept. He saw the Roman armies coming and destroying the city and killing the people 39 years later. He tried to prevent this disaster, but could not. The Jewish people became martyrs of sin. They chose death for themselves.

There is nothing in this world that is dear to God except His vineyard. He bestows His supreme regard on it. He is constantly cultivating it, planting new trees into it and cutting down old dead trees.

Sister White saw a vision of two crowns – one heavenly, the crown of life – and the other an earthly crown, riches and honour of this world. A vast multitude were rushing forward to obtain the earthly crown, trampling upon each other. Some tried to obtain both, but the feeble effort toward the heavenly crown was not sufficient to obtain it, while they eagerly were reaching toward the earthly crown, the earthly treasure. (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 349)

We do not know how many times the Lord has said about each one of us, "Let it alone one more year." Suddenly it may be the last year for us, and then the limit of mercy has been reached. May the Lord help us to produce good grapes, good works, and then the Lord will be pleased with us. AMEN.

Timo Martin



“The clouds, the sunshine, the dews at night—these are heaven's most precious provisions. But all these favors graciously bestowed of Heaven will prove of little worth to those who do not appropriate them by diligent, painstaking effort on their part. Personal efforts must be put forth in agriculture. There is the plowing and reploting. Implements must be brought in and human skill must use them. The seed must be sown in its season. The laws which control seedtime and harvest must be observed, else there will be no harvest. . . Thus is presented the copartnership of the human and the divine. . . Then how many hours is it safe for us to try to work alone? All the glory proceeds from God and should flow back in all possible ways to God, through our cooperation with God.”— *This Day With God* p. 276

I Thank God

For everything I have: When the weather is extremely cold I thank God for that, for the mornings when the sunshine comes through my window and it keeps me warm in winter time.

I thank God when my children go to school and my husband goes to work and they come back home safely.


I thank God for the daily bread and the water that I drink, for the air and the trees and for the freedom that we still have.

I thank God for the years passing by. I thank God for the good days we have and even the struggles to fight.

I thank God when night comes and I have my family safe and we pray for the next day to come.

And when heaven looks so far, I thank God that His son Jesus Christ one day will come for us.

Lucy Flores



Secret Sins and Their Consequences Upon the Church

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

1 Corinthians 10:11

Do you have a longing for Jesus to return? Do you believe He is returning for a church without “spot or wrinkle”? Ephesians 5:27

His return will be delayed if there are secret sins among God’s people; and these secret sins will prevent the power of Jesus from being manifested within His church. Therefore, let us consider three interrelated results of secret sins and how to combat them.

First, what are secret sins? Simply put, they are cherished sins that are practiced by an individual or group within the church and which are hidden from the church body as a whole.

In order to recognize three consequences of secret sins, let us look at an event which occurred during the days of Joshua. In Joshua chapter six we see that the children of Israel had just crossed the Jordan River after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and it was time for them to possess the Promised Land. Prior to them entering Jericho, the Lord gave them a clear command as to what they were to do with the inhabitants and their possessions. In Joshua 6:17 –19 we read, “And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And you, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord.”

What did Israel do? “And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; . . . And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.” Joshua 6:23–24. Yes! Mission accomplished! Praise God for His faithful people, right? Well, the story takes a bitter turn, and Israel is in for an unpleasant surprise because of the secret sin of one man.

In Joshua 7:1 we read, “But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.” Now in this passage it was Achan who took of the accursed thing. However, who was God’s anger aroused against? It was the entire camp of Israel. This brings us to the first consequence of secret sins.

Not only is the perpetrator of the sin affected but the secret sins of one individual will arouse the displeasure of God against His entire church.

As we consider this, we can look at various times and places in the Scripture and see that this is displayed on various levels. For example, Adam transgressed in the beginning. In those days there were only two souls who composed God’s church on earth. However, on whom is the judgment of God placed as a result of Adam’s

sin? It was on all humanity. We have all inherited the result of Adam's sin. In Romans 5:18 Paul states, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation." And in 1 Corinthians 5:6 Paul says that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump."

In light of this, here is what the Lord's prophet says: "Achan's sin brought disaster upon the whole nation. For one man's sin the displeasure of God will rest upon His church till the transgression is searched out and put away." —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497. "No man lives to himself. Shame, defeat, and death were brought upon Israel by one man's sin. . . . Various sins that are cherished and practiced by professed Christians bring the frown of God upon the church." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 493

Now the questions for all of us to consider are: how much do you truly love the church of God? Do you love the church of God in private, when no one else is around or looking? Do you love the church so much that you will do nothing in secret to cause the frown of God to rest upon it?

Let us now look at the second consequence of secret sins. Israel had destroyed Jericho, and it appeared as if all was well. God granted them victory and it was time to press forward. Unknown to them, however, was the



fact that there was secret sin in the camp. They went forth ready to take the next city, little Ai. Joshua sent out spies to view the city, and they reported to him that the city was too small to send the whole army of Israel. Joshua consented and sent only 3,000 men. As they went to dispossess the city, the men of Ai came

out and chased Israel away. In this pursuit, thirty-six Israelites were slaughtered. Now this may appear as a small defeat, but to Israel it was so great a defeat that their hearts melted and became like water.

In response to this, Joshua fell down before the Ark of the Covenant and began to mourn. Perplexed, he says, "Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan!" Joshua 7:7.

When he ended his complaint, God responded. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed." Joshua 7:10–12.

This brings us to the second consequence of secret sins. That is, the secret sins of one individual will cause the church to lose her battles and fall before her enemies.

Now, is the church engaged in warfare? Yes! And who is her enemy? In Revelation 12:17 we read, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Satan and his legions are undoubtedly at war with the remnant church. And what is Satan's main strategy? How does he effectively war against the church? Well, his main strategy is to work through false disciples, who enter the sheepfold over the fence and destroy the church by sowing strife, teaching falsehood, casting doubt, and trampling upon our faith. We are told by inspiration that, "The great deceiver has many agents ready to present any and every kind of error to ensnare souls— . . . It is his plan to bring into the church insincere, unregenerate elements that will encourage doubt and unbelief, and hinder all who desire to see the work of God advance and to advance with it." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 520

Now, this only addresses the battlefield that Satan

attacks us on as a church body. But what about the battle that each individual member has against the enemy called “self”? Since the secret sins of one individual will cause the church to lose her battles, could it be that the secret sins of professed brethren have a weakening effect on those who are earnestly trying to overcome? Consider these inspired words: “The influence most to be feared by the church is not that of open opposers, infidels, and blasphemers, but of inconsistent professors of Christ. These are the ones that keep back the blessing of the God of Israel and bring weakness upon His people.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 497

Let us move to the third consequence of secret sins. Now that the Lord had told Joshua the cause of their defeat, notice the warning He gave: “Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you [plural] any more, except ye [plural] destroy the accursed from among you [plural].” Joshua 7:12.

The Spirit of Prophecy states that this text is applied to the church as a whole, but more importantly to the leaders. The Lord said that He would no longer be with Joshua and the Israelite nation unless they destroyed the accursed thing.

The third consequence of secrets sins is this: the secret sins of one individual will eventually fall upon the leaders of the church and they will be held accountable for those sins. Surprising? This is what inspiration says: “If the leaders of the church neglect to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God upon the body, they become responsible for these sins.”

“God’s displeasure is upon His people, and He will not manifest His power in the midst of them while sins exist among them and are fostered by those in responsible positions.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 269–270. Are you a leader in the church? Are you being faithful to your duty?

Let us review the three interrelated consequences of secret sins:

1. The secret sins of one individual will arouse the displeasure of God against His entire church.

2. The secret sins of one individual will cause the church to lose her battles and fall before her enemies.

3. The secret sins of one individual will eventually fall upon the leaders of the church, and they will be held accountable for those sins.

Now consider the most subtle secret sin that exists within the church —covetousness.

After the Lord warned Joshua that He would depart from him and the Israelite nation unless they removed the accursed thing, He tells him to sanctify and assemble the people (Joshua 7:13–14). Joshua then conducted an investigation by the process of elimination. In the morning, all the tribes of Israel appeared before the Lord, and the tribe of Judah was taken. Out of Judah, the family of the Zarhites was taken. Out of the Zarhites, the household of Zabdiwas taken. And out of this household, Achan was singled out. In Joshua 7:19–21 we read Joshua’s plea: “My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.” (By the way, when we confess our sins to God, we are giving Him glory. We are recognizing that His law is just and that He is righteous.) Achan answers, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw . . .” Notice that he saw. Brethren, we must be careful of what we see. There are three evils of this world, and one of these is the lust of the eyes. Achan says, “When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them.” Notice that he coveted and then took of the spoils. Covetousness was the root of Achan’s problem, and it led him to practice deceit and theft. We must beware of covetousness.

We often stress the importance of all of the Ten Commandments. We proclaim that they have not been abolished and that we are still obligated to keep them. It is easy for us to recognize when murder occurs or when someone is being disobedient to their parents. It is even easy for us to recognize when the fourth commandment is broken; we see this all over the Christian world. But how often do we recognize and reprove covetousness, the tenth commandment?

So what does it mean to covet? Well, one way to covet is to wish for something earnestly. This can be a positive action. But, in a negative sense, to covet means to have a strong desire for what belongs to another. On a basic level, therefore, covetousness means to have a strong craving for possessions. We want so many

things. We want and want until our wants are out of control.

In spite of this, coveting in itself is not evil. What makes it evil is the object of our desires mingled with our ambition to gain that object. For example, Achan coveted evil because his desire was for that which the Lord commanded to be destroyed or consecrated to Him. On the better side of coveting, the apostle Paul exhorts us to “covet earnestly the best gifts.” 1 Corinthians 12:31. We are told to covet spiritual things; we are to covet heaven; we are to covet after treasures that will last forever.

Why is it that covetousness is so subtle? Well, as humans we have desires; God has created us with the capacity to want. However, because of our lack of self-control, we allow our desire to overpower our ability to reason and make moral decisions. As a result we find ourselves thinking that our strong desires are legitimate when, in reality, we are being greedy and covetous. Inspiration says, “The deadly sin that led to Achan’s ruin had its root in covetousness, of all sins one of the most common and the most lightly regarded. While other offenses meet with detection and punishment, how rarely does the violation of the tenth commandment so much as call forth censure.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 496

On top of this we have an astonishing quote from the Spirit of Prophecy: “The greatest sin which now exists in the church is covetousness.” –*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 236. This was written in 1860, and only God knows how it is in the church today.

In conclusion, I wish to make an appeal to all our brethren. I want you to consider a possible solution for secret sins. Do you realize that there is no institution more precious to God than His church? It is the church of God that receives the affections of the entire universe, and all the angels of God are working on her behalf. With intensity they are working to bring the church into perfect unity, but their labours are limited if there are secret sins. What is needed in the church to bring her into that condition whereby she will be ready to receive the Latter Rain? Yes, we have evangelists, we have pastors and teachers. We have Bible workers, colporteurs, and medical missionaries. What we need in the church also are **true living prophets**. Not necessarily prophets who have visions and dreams, but prophets who rightly proclaim the truth in the context of their

community. Now not all are called to be prophets. However, let those who have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit says. The apostle Paul says, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” 1 Corinthians 14:1. And just as every other gift comes through constant prayer and obedience, so the gift of prophecy will be revived if you earnestly pray for it and obey Christ. Indeed, the only way to obtain this gift is to learn what it means to truly love—to love God with all your heart, and to love your neighbour as yourself. I leave you with these final words of inspiration: “God would have His people disciplined and brought into harmony of action, that they may see eye to eye and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. In order to bring about this state of things, there is much to be done. The carnal heart must be subdued and transformed. God designs that there shall ever be a living testimony in the church. It will be necessary to reprove and exhort, and some will need to be rebuked sharply, as the case demands.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 360

Once again I ask: do you have a longing for the return of Jesus? And do you believe He is returning for a church without spot or wrinkle? “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” 1 Corinthians 10:6. AMEN

Nicholas Anca

LOOKING FOR YOU...

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EDEN RESTORED

It is spring time in the Northern countries of the Northern Hemisphere. Spring is a time when nature comes alive and plants begin to grow and to bloom again. It is a beautiful time of the year. After the snow and cold has laid the trees, grass and flowers dormant, to see them come to life, and to smell their aromatic fragrance, is invigorating.

It is a time when we can see the early flowers bloom in all their vivid hues, beginning with the tulips and the daffodils. Then the fruit trees blossom and begin to emit their rich fragrance. One rejoices in the new birth seen in the natural world.

It is also a time when those who have a little piece of land start to plan their vegetable garden. To have a vegetable garden is a lot of work. The very first work is to till the soil, to break up the fallow ground that has been lying dormant all winter. This dark mud will soon be full of vibrant green vegetable plants after many weary hours of tilling and planting. Then comes the pulling of the weeds, watering and pruning, until there is finally a harvest in the fall time. Then the cycle begins all over again.

Deep inside every soul is an appreciation of a beautiful garden. A well-ordered, well-maintained and designed garden is appreciated by all. We can read in the Bible how many kings have spent time and wealth to secure a beautiful garden. Solomon and Cyrus built many gardens so they would have a place to enjoy and retire. The famous gardens of Babylon which king Nebuchadnezzar enjoyed were remarkable. And the wicked King Ahab killed an innocent man in order to secure his vineyard.

There are different types of gardens. There are forests, flower gardens, vegetable gardens, orchards, and vineyards.

God knew the necessity of working in the open air in order to bring vigour and strength to mankind and, therefore, He made the very first garden and gave it to Adam and Eve to live in as their first home.

“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” Genesis 2:8

In the Bible, two significant gardens are mentioned, which will be discussed in relation to salvation.

GARDEN OF EDEN

The first one is the Garden of Eden. “And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:9. The garden was beautiful, perfect, with no sign of curse or decay.

The first Sabbath on this planet was spent admiring the beauty of this garden. Adam and the Creator were there and they enjoyed the experience. In this garden there was no winter chilling breeze or summer heat burning the flowers. The Lord had come to commune with Adam in the cool of the day.

Then the Lord gave Adam and Eve work to do in the garden. “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Genesis 2:15. On the brow of Adam was no sweat like we experience on a hot summer day. Adam was happy to keep this garden.

Then God planted two trees in the midst of the garden. One was the tree of life and one was of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There were thousands of trees that Adam and Eve could enjoy eating the fruit of, however, we know the familiar story of how Eve’s curiosity led her to the tree of knowledge. As Eve was standing there, she was looking at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the more she looked the more her desire grew until finally she ended up partaking of it. A little girl was asked as to whether she would eat of the tree and she responded by saying, “I would look and look at it but I wouldn’t take it.” Is this not so true with many Christians?

They only want to look, but if they keep looking at what is forbidden, finally it does not appear so sinful any longer and they end up partaking of it, which is what Eve did.

THE RESULT

There were thousands of trees but the one they were not to have caught Eve's curiosity. She partook of it. The perfection was now marred. Although she didn't die immediately, a curse was pronounced on the ground and they had to leave their perfect and peaceful Eden home.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:17-20

After sin, much more was involved in the maintenance of a garden. The work was not the same as it had been in Eden. In the sweat of their brow, man was to work and the yield would never be the same as before. In fact it would continue to deteriorate as sin increased and pollution increased. However, there is still some beauty to be seen and lessons to be learned, but the perfection of Eden was lost. Because of sin they lost their Eden home, therefore God had a plan in place to restore mankind to Eden once again.

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The other significant garden mentioned in the Bible was quite different from the Garden of Eden. In this garden the Lord also came in the cool of the day to rest. This is the Garden of Gethsemane. In this garden there were thorns and a winter chill and the burning heat in the summer. There were also thieves and robbers.

In this garden, the Saviour went through a most difficult experience.

We read of how the forces of evil were using all their energy to try to destroy Him just prior to the final conflict. "He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. In the wilderness of temptation the destiny of the human race had been at stake. Christ was then conqueror. Now the tempter had come for the last fearful struggle. . . . In His agony He clings to the cold ground, as if to prevent Himself from being drawn farther from God. The chilling dew of night falls upon His prostrate form, but He heeds it

not. From His pale lips comes the bitter cry, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' Yet even now He adds, 'Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' . . . As the agony of soul came upon Him, 'His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' The cypress and palm trees were the silent witnesses of His anguish. From their leafy branches dropped heavy dew upon His stricken form, as if nature wept over its Author wrestling alone with the powers of darkness. . . . The Saviour trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him. But God suffered with His Son. Angels beheld the Saviour's agony." —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 686–687, 689, 693. That agony was a necessary preparation for the struggle ahead. After the struggle, we see the strength He gained that led to victory. "The storm had in nowise abated, but He who was its object was strengthened to meet its fury. He came forth calm and serene. A heavenly peace rested upon His bloodstained face." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 694

Will the forces of darkness focus their energies against God's people at the end of this world's history? Yes, they will. We need to learn to trust and yield to our Heavenly Father as Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane.

After this struggle, it was in this garden Jesus was arrested. Later the crown of thorns was pressed into His holy temples and He was nailed on a tree; a tree that grew in the vicinity at one time. He died not far from this garden.

Although a garden is often thought of as a place of beauty, this garden is associated with the arrest of our dear Lord and Saviour after His night of struggle with His Father.

These two gardens were vastly different. We can compare these two gardens to the heart of man. Eden was a place of peace and happiness while Gethsemane is associated with Jesus' struggle. He gained the victory when He submitted 100% to His Father's will. Jesus needed to go through this experience in order for the possibility for Eden to be restored for mankind. We need to follow the footsteps of Jesus and also go to the Garden of Gethsemane figuratively and yield to the working of God if we wish to be restored to Eden once again.

THE GARDEN OF THE HEART

Christ's Word is the seed and that Word is placed by God into a person's heart. In the Garden of Eden all the plants were good for food, and only one was forbidden. Unfortunately Eve was fascinated with the plant that was forbidden. After this, briars and noxious weeds sprung up in their new home outside of the Garden of Eden. These were of the devil's planting. The Lord wants to plant His Word in a person's heart, but the devil plants his weeds.

Although the devil plants weeds, if we allow Him, Jesus has promised to come in and do some serious gardening and pull up those weeds. "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matthew 15:13

Unfortunately, some people like their weeds. However, in a garden the tender plant can't thrive amongst the thorns. It will eventually be choked.

What gives Jesus the right to do this gardening?

"For He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: . . . He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. . . . But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:2-3,5

Our Saviour has borne our curse; therefore He has claimed the right to do His horticulture. He wants us to grow also as a tender plant; however, it can't flourish in a garden that is full of weeds.

Ask yourself what sort of plants are growing in your heart. What sort of thoughts do you cherish and love? In the cool of the day the Lord is walking in your garden and, like Adam and Eve, have you hidden in the bushes the things you love and have grown to appreciate?

The weeds and thorns that the enemy has planted are a problem when they come out of your heart. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23

PLANTING

"He came unto his own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the *will of the flesh*, nor of the *will of man*, but of God." John 1:11-13 (emphasis mine)

There are different methods of planting here – either planted by God, or by the will of the flesh. Maybe you have some wild plants growing in your life; the drunkard, the one with corrupt language, the adulterer and those that live by stealing or cheating. All this, God did not plant. Nor were jealousy and envy planted by God. These must be rooted up out your heart, or you yourself will be rooted up and burned in the end.

There are many professors of religion that go to church but yet were never planted by God. They come but they continue to maintain their thorns and their weeds. There are some weeds that have beautiful flowers yet God didn't plant them. Some of the most admirable things about yourself may need to be rooted up. This is the work that will be done in the Garden of Gethsemane.

There is also the possibility to be planted by blood and not of God. Some say, "I am religious because my father is religious." That is to be admired but if you do not get planted by the Lord, following your parent's steps blindly will not achieve anything. Every plant that God did not plant will be uprooted.

There are some plants that have a vigorous root system that can be chopped down but will shoot up again quickly. You may have dug them down to the root but if one sliver is left behind the weed will grow again. Have you had a desire to change your life and been in a meeting thinking that God is speaking directly to you? You sense your depravity and wish to change but the next day you don't take heed to what you heard the night before. During the night the weed sprung up again.

A true Christian is only born by God; planted by God, and maintained by Him.

THE FIG TREE

There was a fig tree that was not producing and the dresser of the garden had a proposal for the owner, "And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it." Luke 13:8

He proposes to pull the weeds and turn the soil. This is the



Master Gardener at work in the Garden of Gethsemane. He proposes to work on many souls, uprooting their weeds and turning the soil. He is digging and chopping those roots until the heart bleeds. He allows circumstances to come about that may cause suffering and pain, all because He is trying to uproot a nasty plant.

What would happen if you didn't let the roots go? What would happen if you hung onto a cherished thought and said, "Lord, you can have everything but this?" The plant will grow again. Unless every sliver is gone it will grow again. God is drawing us out of the world by all sorts of suffering and sometimes turning things upside down.

Some Christians are hanging on to weeds, not thinking of the punishment. But we need to come into the Garden of Gethsemane if we wish to be worked and prepared for entrance to the Garden of Eden.

PURGING

If you love certain sins that you have grown up with that God would like to pull up and you refuse to come to Gethsemane to be worked, He will let you keep your sins; but in the end, you yourself will be rooted up. "And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me." Ezekiel 20:38

You are to loathe yourselves and hate these thorns growing in your heart. "And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed." Ezekiel 20:43

If you will come to Gethsemane and surrender your garden bed to the great horticulturist, God is going to do a work, not with the thorns we have planted. No, He will restore the peace of Eden once again. He wants to plant your garden with pleasant plants that tend to health and life. He is not coming to do the gardening in our way but His way. "And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought with you for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 20:44

Our gardener is not just proposing to turn the soil but to burn the weeds. If you do not allow Him to do it now, one day there will be a great fire around the city and He will burn every tree in you. "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched." Ezekiel 20: 47-48

It's not just believing doctrines correctly, but being a living, growing plant according to the tender pruning and training of the Master Gardener. He will restore Eden if you allow Him. You do not choose the circumstances and growing conditions; it is the Lord who does.

Every action that you do that is not God's perfect will, will be plucked up whether by your permission now or by God, later, with no permission from yourself. The question is, does your soul long to be loosed from your sins? Do you long to change your life? Have you experienced the tilling of the garden in your life in your circumstances where everything was turned upside down?

Give God permission to take every sliver of weed out of your life. Do you long to reflect the image of Jesus Christ?

Long to have His disposition of character, sympathy and love? Do you thoroughly mourn over who you are? If this is what you are experiencing, the ground is getting soft and this is good soil.

If this good soil is being ploughed over, all the weeds are being pulled up and the garden bed is clean. Then when good seed is planted, it will spring forth and grow into a perfect plant. Eden will be restored. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, . . . And this will we do, if God permit." Hebrews 6:1, 3

It is good also to have every doctrine correct because then the plant will have nutritious soil in which to grow. These must come into action in your daily life and be manifested in all that you do. It is not enough to keep talking about the seeds, because they won't grow unless they are planted. Let's plant the seeds of truth and keep our soil nutritious by continually working on the lines of truth.

A WARNING

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Hebrews 6:4-6

Christ may have been planted in your heart; you may have tasted and become enlightened of the heavenly gift. You may even have been partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, and eaten of the tree of life but if you should fall away, you crucify the Son of God afresh. The plant may have grown into a tall cedar and borne fruit for awhile, but if it is not nurtured, it can die prematurely from lack of maintenance.

If you have partaken of the goodness of God and the seed has grown inside of you, be sure not to kill the plant. We may have had the most amazing experiences, but be not deceived; this side of glory, we need to keep our heart diligently for out of it are the issues of life. The good plants need to be nurtured, the weeds killed. If one sliver of weed is retained the seed that God has planted will eventually be killed. If it is killed, there is no hope.

We are not to trust our own thoughts or what is generated from our own being but that which comes from revelation by Jesus Christ. "Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked

forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” Isaiah 55:6–7

“The testimony borne to you by the Spirit of God is: Parley not with the enemy. Kill the thorns, or they will kill you. Break up the fallow ground of the heart. Let the work go deep and thorough. Let the plowshare of truth tear out the weeds and briars.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 53

EDEN RESTORED

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign [that] shall not be cut off.” Isaiah 55:8–13

God is proposing to renovate your garden. You need to forsake those weeds and give them to Him. Keep His perfect will and word ever before you saying, “Not mine own will but Thine be done.” That is how Jesus planted seeds in Gethsemane (submitting to His Father’s will). We need to be in the Garden of Gethsemane also, in order to have Eden restored.

The promise is that instead of the thorn and briar shall come up the fir tree. If God’s will is done, He will create Eden again. That plant will flourish into everlasting life. The weeds will die.

“The Lord is acquainted with us individually. Every one born into the world is given his or her work to do for the purpose of making the world better. . . . Each one has his sphere, and if the human agent makes God his counselor then there will be no working at cross purposes with God.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 228

CONCLUSION

Your life may be so confusing that you don’t know where you are going or what you are doing and everything seems to be a tangle, but you need to go to the Garden of Gethsemane and submit to the working of God. If you ask Him to do some vigorous gardening, He will. All the plants in His garden will be beautifully placed to complement each other. Each will continue to grow to add more beauty to the garden.

“He allots to every one a place and a work, and if we individually submit ourselves to be worked by the Lord, however confused and tangled life may seem to our eyes, God has a purpose in it all, and the human machinery, obedient under the hand of divine wisdom, will accomplish the purposes of God. As in a well-disciplined army every soldier has his allotted position and is required to act his part in contributing to the strength and perfection of the whole, so the worker for God must do his allotted part in the great work of God.” –*In Heavenly Places*, p. 228

“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified.” Isaiah 61:1–3. These are the trees and plants the Lord wants in His garden; in the Garden of Eden. It may need fire, “beauty for ashes” in order to burn the old, and create the new. Ashes from fire are an excellent fertilizer for soil. This garden that will spring forth is much more beautiful than that which was there before.

“For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.” Isaiah 61:11

The Garden of Eden will be restored. Will you be a part of it? You will if you go to Gethsemane yielding your life to the working of God, the Master Gardener, as Jesus did. You may have gone there in the past, but it must be done daily. Say, “Lord, take my life, I give it to you;” and He will turn it into something beautiful and you will be restored in Eden in the great hereafter. Amen.

Wendy Eaton



The APOSTLE WITH THE BLEEDING FEET

“Oh, all-pervading, impersonal, unknowable, incomprehensible, universal spirit, if you do exist, show me the right way, or I will kill myself.”

Fifteen-year-old Sundar Singh had come to the end of his despair and felt he could take no more. Having grown up a Sikh (the member of a sect of monotheistic Hindus) under the careful tutelage of his mothering a wealthy household, Sundar had been exposed to various religions to try to find the truth. In his studies his mother had not only guided him to master the Veda, the ancient sacred books of Hinduism, but he had also read the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, and attended a Christian missionary school. Though his religious path seemed carefully set before him to become a *Sadhu* (a Hindu who takes a vow of poverty and celibacy, forsaking all the worldly pleasures by devoting himself entirely to his religion) when Sundar’s mother died when he was fourteen, all that held his world together died with her. It had been she who had made God seem real to him, and without her he could no longer find any peace in his life. He turned his anger on the Christians and began disrupting their meetings and forming mobs to throw stones at their ministers. The final straw came as he ripped up and burned a New Testament, page by page, in front of his father and friends to show his contempt for Christianity.

Following this incident, he shut himself up in his room praying to the “universal spirit” for it to reveal the truth to him. On the third day he woke up at 3:00 a.m. and decided to end his life in front of the express train that passed through the village every morning at 5:00. Thus he prayed the desperate prayer to either know the truth or die. As a Hindu, he believed that if there was no answer to this prayer, at least he might be able to find peace in his next incarnation.

But the Truth did not leave him stranded. Shortly before 5:00 a.m., such a bright light filled his room that he thought it had caught on fire. For a moment he kept his eyes shut tightly hoping to die in the flames, but when nothing happened, he opened them to see what the source was: someone stood before him.

“How much longer are you going to persecute the Christians? Jesus wants to save you. You were praying for the right path. Why have you not followed it? Jesus is the way.”

Sundar fell to his knees before him and realized that what all the Christians had taught him about Jesus’ resurrection was true. How could it not be? Suddenly a peace beyond anything he had ever known flooded his spirit. *So this is what it is like to know the Truth!* When he looked up again, the person was gone, but the peace in his spirit was not.

The next morning he declared to his family, “I am now a Christian. I will no longer serve anyone else but Jesus.” Thus began a struggle in his home to get him to return to Hinduism that ended with his expulsion from the house and one of his relatives trying to poison him.

So on September 3, 1905, his sixteenth birthday, Sundar was baptized as a Christian at a local church mission and went into the hills for a month to seek God’s direction for what to do next. During this time he realized how uncomfortable he was with the Christianity that was practiced in the missions. It was more Western culture than Christian truths in many ways. Indians who became Christians changed their dress to match that of the English missionaries, sat in pews in Anglican Church buildings, spoke mostly English, sang English hymns in English services, and relied on Western mis-

sionaries for leadership. He felt that there was no way Christianity could ever be relevant to India unless it was present in an Indian way. So Sundar made the decision that he would return to the path that he had always been on, to become a Sadhu dedicated to Jesus. At this decision he put on the saffron robe of a Sadhu, gave away what few possessions he still had, and began wandering northern India with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The traditions of India and Hinduism were that a Sadhu would never own a home or carry any food or money, but would go from village to village relying totally on the hospitality of others. For this reason as Sundar entered a village, someone would take him in, thinking he was a Hindu holy man. Often when he would proceed to proclaim Jesus to them, they would become offended and throw him out. However, when this happened, Sundar showed them no malice and simply moved on again. This was strange to the villagers, as they were used to Sadhus throwing a fit and cursing those who rejected them. When Sundar simply walked away peacefully, many would often chase him down, ask for his forgiveness, and invite him back to their home. Through this, many of them came to know Jesus as Sundar did.

As he wandered, a growing passion to penetrate the barrier of the north, Hinduism, and Buddhism began to develop in Sundar's heart – he wanted to take the Gospel to Tibet. As he traveled in the foothills of the Himalayas, he began to realize the enormity of this task. However, roughly a year and a half after his baptism, Sundar made his first trip into Tibet after two missionaries had taught him some of the language and loaned him a young interpreter to travel with him. Though he found little success in his initial ventures, Sundar returned to Tibet every summer for the rest of his life. Some incredible miracles have been recorded about Sundar's visits to Tibet. He was imprisoned or beaten and left for dead on more than one occasion during these trips.

On one trip through Nepal, Sundar was attacked by four bandits in the middle of a jungle. Rather than

putting up a struggle, Sundar knelt and bowed his head, expecting the one thief with a sword to end his life then and there. The bandits were so surprised by this that they refused to kill him. Seeing the only thing he had of value was his blanket, they took that and told him to leave, yet his behaviour still so perplexed them that one of the robbers called him back and asked him his name. Sundar turned back to the man, introduced himself, and opened his Bible and began reading him the story of the rich man and Lazarus from the book of Luke. When the robber saw how miserable the rich man was in the end, he asked Sundar what would happen to a man such as himself. Sundar took this open door to preach the Gospel to him and tell him of the forgiveness won for him by Jesus on the cross. The thief repented and took Sundar home to stay in his house.

During another instance, he was captured by a group of monks and sentenced to die by the local Grand Lama for spreading a foreign religion. He was thrown naked into a well used to discard the remains of murderers and criminals who had been killed or left to die. The well was then locked. The Lama had the only key. Sundar spent two days without food or water among the putrefying corpses but was miraculously rescued on the third day. A stranger had come, released him, and then simply relocked the well and walked away. When Sundar was later recaptured by the same monks, the Lama was perplexed to see him, knowing no one else could have released this man without the key he kept hidden. They became fearful of Sundar's God because of this and begged him to leave them.



As a wandering Sadhu, Sundar traveled all over India and Ceylon during 1918 and 1919, as well to China, Malaysia, and Japan. Between 1920 and 1922, he was invited to speak in Western Europe, Israel, and Australia. However, his heart was always for India and Tibet, so he always returned to continue his work there. Everywhere he went he dressed in the simple robes of a Sadhu and walked barefoot. Often he would arrive in villages with his feet blistered and bloody from the journey. For this he became known as "the apostle with the bleeding feet."

Sundar always lived a literal Christianity, taking his actions directly from the Scriptures. Once while preaching in a marketplace, a man came up and struck him across the face. In response, Sundar turned to him his other cheek. The man left ashamed and later that evening sent Sundar a note asking for his forgiveness.

On another occasion, Sundar met some harvesters in a field and told them the parable of the wheat and the tares. They considered him a nuisance and told him to leave them alone, but he continued to preach to them. Finally one of them threw a rock and hit Sundar in the head. At this, the assailant was struck with a painful headache and lay down on the ground, unable to work. Sundar immediately took the man's place and helped them finish their harvesting. This action so turned their hearts that they invited him home to share their hospitality that evening. In return, he shared the Gospel with them and won a harvest of his own for Jesus.

Despite growing risks, poor health, and warnings from friends and other missionaries, Sundar left on his annual trek to Tibet in the summer of 1929. He was never seen or heard from again, and no one has ever learned what happened to him.

Sundar Singh wanted to discover a Christianity that was not Western, but Indian. Clothing styles, language, etc., were all being transferred over with belief in Jesus so that becoming a Christian seemed to also mean becoming British. What Sundar did to cut away the culture and preach only essential Christianity was a countercultural revolution that enabled Christianity's first firm foothold in India. People such as Watchman Nee did the same in China. When the church becomes indigenous and is preached by nationals rather than foreigners, it takes on an entirely new dimension.

"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you." 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Seedtime and Harvest

"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Genesis 8:22

"As we are continually receiving the blessings of God, so are we to be continually giving. When the heavenly Benefactor ceases to give to us, then we may be excused; for we shall have nothing to bestow. God has never left us without evidence of His love, in that He did us good. He gives us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, providing us abundantly with His bounties, and filling our hearts with gladness." —*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 248

"Surely goodness and mercy attend us at every step. Not till we wish the infinite Father to cease bestowing His gifts on us, should we impatiently exclaim, Is there no end of giving? Not only should we faithfully render to God our tithes, which He claims as His own, but we should bring a tribute to His treasury as an offering of gratitude. Let us with joyful hearts bring to our Creator the first fruits of all His bounties—our choicest posses-

sions, our best and holiest service." — *To Be Like Jesus*, p. 248

"Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church. . . But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man." — *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 317

"I appeal to the members of our churches not to disregard the fulfilling of the signs of the times, which say so plainly that the end is near. O, how many who have not cared for the salvation of their souls will soon make the bitter lamentation, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!'" — *Maranatha* p. 39
Ellen G. White

ASLEEP IN JESUS

Andrew Shirima



On Monday, May 9, Andrew, the young teenage son, of Vice President Brother Shirima passed away from a lengthy illness. Andrew was very active in the church and sang in the choir in Tanzania. He will be missed greatly by his church family and his biological family. Please pray for them in this time of sorrow. The family can take comfort from the fact that he died with a heavenly hope and they look forward to the resurrection morning to a time when they can be reunited once more, never more to part.

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“The gospel of Christ lies at the foundation of all true education and progress. To diffuse light is the great work we are now to do. The truth that Christ is a personal Saviour is to be taught so clearly that souls will submit to be led and taught by God, and in their turn win other souls to Christ.” –(Letter 34, February 24, 1900) *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, p. 157.

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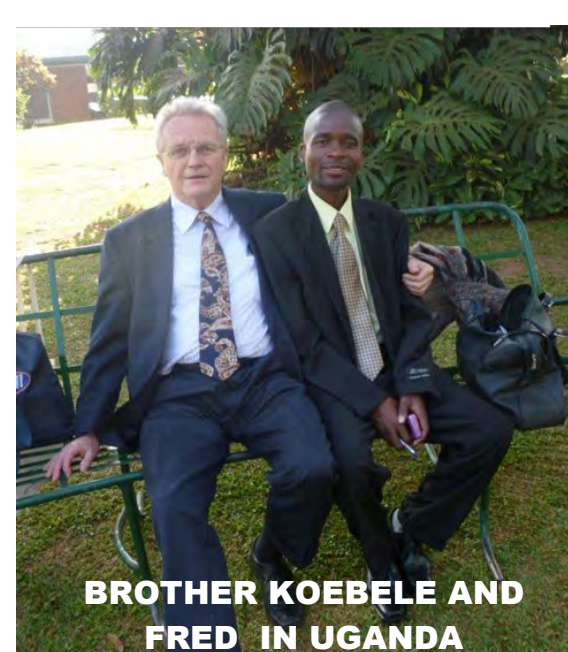
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**“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”
Psalm 133:1**



“Christian unity is a mighty agency. It tells in a powerful manner that those who possess it are children of God. It has an irresistible influence upon the world.” – *My Life Today*, p. 276



**EASTER YOUTH CONFERENCE IN PRACHT/GERMANY.
(April 22–24, 2011)
Photo by Jens Müller.**

A close-up photograph of a cornfield during harvest. The corn stalks are golden-brown and dry, with some husks still attached. The background shows a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the image in white, bold font.

“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

Genesis 8:22

“Unless the members of God's church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55