

ELDER'S DIGEST

A Quarterly Resource for local Church Elders Vol. 10 No. 3



God
is
Love,

is written upon the petals of
every flower. . . and the thorns
are hidden by roses.

E. G. White

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RESTORING THE POWER OF WORDS



Joel Sarli

Jesus in the sermon on the mount raises the troublesome question, "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?" (Luke 14:34). The same predicament exists with words in today's world. "Words are good, but when words have lost their power, how can they be empowered again?"

Some Christians live with the disposition that being a Christian is a matter of saying the right words. Their Bible teaches, "**Well said**, good and faithful servant . . . Come and share your master's happiness."

Others with different orientation emphasize the importance of understanding God's truth and embracing right doctrine. Their Bible teaches, "**Well understood**, good and faithful servant . . . Come and share your master's happiness."

In the parable of the talents, Jesus assesses the record of the five-talent and two-talent men and announces, "**Well done**, good and faithful servant . . . Come and share your master's happiness" (Matt. 25:21).

When deeds are wedded to our words, our preaching and witness are more believable.

It is like the salt that makes good food taste even better. It brings out the flavor. Salt also

makes a person thirsty. Seeing the Christian life lived out in a servant style will not only make people thirsty for the "water of life," but also our words will be empowered again.

Pastor Frank Tillapaugh, in his book *Unleashing Your Potential*, comments on the church that understands this principle and on the one that doesn't. "If a church retains an average atmosphere where people are expected to pray, read the Bible and live holy lives . . . not much is likely to happen." On the other hand, when the gospel is understood as both words and deeds, and God's people are stimulated to dream, then the gospel streams into life. Over the years our pioneers have been used by God to conceive, establish and run a host of ministries. In that freewheeling climate, schools and universities, medical clinic boats in the Amazon and other places, health food factories, and so on, were established. Christian ministries like stop-smoking programs, prison ministry, van ministry for street refugees, single adults, senior adults, physically disabled, alcoholics and more have been developed.

As an example the Toronto Portuguese Seventh-day Adventist Church ministered to a multicultural community and understood that the way to empower words was to combine them with acts of service. While respecting and accepting what others teach, the people of God who had fruitful ministries among immigrants specialized in hospitality.

They began by meeting their new foreign friends at the airport and helping with the heavy suitcases.



(Continued on page 6)



COMMUNICATING WITH GOD

From *Elder's Digest*, South America Division edition.

Interview with João Antonio de Almeida

João Antonio de Almeida is 46 years old and has been an Adventist for 20 years. He has been the first elder of the Central Church at Tatui since 1991. He is married to Professor Sonia. They have two daughters: Ellen, 15 years old, and Erica, 13. Jama, a name composed by himself with the letters of his own name, in his Professional life, is the owner of a financial counseling office in Tatui, a city in the state of São Paulo. In this interview, he speaks about his involvement in church activities, and evangelism in particular.

Question: What's the difference between the activities of the elder and those of the Pastor?

Jama: The pastor has a district as his field of labor. But, in the end, I notice that there is not much difference. Within the church itself, the pastor is the spiritual leader and the elder must try to adapt himself to the profile of the pastor. The difference would be in the administration of some rites such as marriage or baptism.

Question: What are the greatest needs of the elders?

Jama: In my opinion it's spiritual help. He must be in close communion with God. Secondly, he must know the membership. He must have empathy for the needs of the church. In order to do that he must get involved.

Question: When the elders meet with the other elders, what do they discuss?

Jama: The interests and needs of the church. Bearing in mind always that the church is not the property or the furniture, but the people who assemble there. We always take care in reaching a decision if it's in the best interest of the church.

Question: Please explain.

Jama: During the meeting we discuss among the elders the different departments of the church, such as Sabbath School, social welfare, junior department and administration. They oversee those departments, and solve the everyday problems. Those needing more thoughtful decisions are brought to the committee for discussion. That meeting is convened once a month. First, we try to solve the problems during elders' meetings and when the church or the church committee needs to be notified we proceed accordingly.

Question: Why does your church begin each New Year with a Week of Prayer?

Jama: To take advantage of the climate. At the beginning of the year everybody is ready to have a good start in life, they want to grow spiritually. The Week of Prayer helps us move ahead; besides, it's one way to prepare the church for future programs. At year's end there seems to be a slow down due to a transition of responsibilities, but in a different

way. All are more willing to do the work with a Week of Prayer.

Question: How often have these Weeks of Prayer been conducted and what has been the secret of your success?

Jama: Attendance has been almost 100%. Everything helps: the willingness to start the New Year properly, school holidays, the climate, the summer schedule. Planning for the Week of Prayer is done one year in advance, with a lot of advertisement and fervent prayer.

Question: What other activities are promoted in your church?

Jama: Evangelism on Sunday night. Modern evangelism, projecting videos and songs—taking advantage of what this generation is used to seeing and always presenting current topics. The method that I have used is going from the known to the unknown. Last year, we engaged in evangelism of the Third Millennium. It had a double objective, which was to retain the church membership, mainly the young people, and to bring in the outsiders. I began with that approach. I would bring something known, for example: I would present a scene from *Ghost-The Other Side of Life*, a film of great success, enjoyed by everybody, but is it that way? Does the Bible teach that there is life after death? I would go from the known to the unknown. The attendance was very good. The church membership was also present. I kept that up from March to October of last year, but because of exhaustion I discontinued the program.

Question: How did you present the Spirit of Prophecy?

Jama: Something interesting took place during the first studies. I spoke on the Spirit of Prophecy. One Sunday I spoke on modern prophets and the next one on Ellen G. White as someone who fulfilled the characteristics of a modern prophet. I spoke on the prophecies fulfilled in the past and others that are to be fulfilled. At the end I did something that offended the church. I said that whoever didn't believe in the Spirit of Prophecy should not continue attending the meetings because I would be using her writings more frequently. It is true that the Bible would be the main book, but E. G. White writings would be of great help. And to our surprise, the following weekend the attendance of those who wanted to know more about the Spirit of Prophecy and what she had to say, doubled. Sometimes some people are afraid to use the Spirit of Prophecy during evangelistic campaigns. I find that the Bible is the main book, but if you know how to use the Spirit of Prophecy to enhance the Bible and clarify some things, mainly prophecies,

that awakens the curiosity and the church becomes more interested in reading about it.

Question: What will be the topic this year?

Jama: This year we are going to begin a seminar on the New Age. I'm already preparing the seminar in the same style and promoting an interest, announcing it since last year. Also the personnel is getting ready.

Question: How do you work with the Pentecostals?

Jama: The best material on the Holy Spirit that we have had until today was a lesson in Sabbath School on spiritual gifts. I have made copies and distributed them to many people of other churches. That material should have been bound in books. It's didactic material, accessible, understandable, pleasing, calling the attention of outsiders. People awaken the interest of such individuals by using common beliefs, never disregarding or criticizing, always attracting through curiosity. We arrive at a common point and show that sometimes a person believes in a contradiction. Using the Bible, the individual begins to perceive that he believes a contradiction and naturally he desires to know more about it. Never try to proselytize. Don't make people cry. I prefer to make them think and as they think they begin to mature and thus choose their course.

Question: How does your church prepare candidates for baptism?

Jama: We prepare our candidates for baptism very carefully and assuming great responsibility. My church is a missionary one. We have elders and sisters who enjoy teaching the Bible, and the evangelism on Sunday night helps us to give Bible studies. When the interested is a female, we try to send a lady to give the study, and when it's a young man we send a man to do the teaching. The objective is to create a sound atmosphere within the church so that those who are coming feel at ease and accept the message. Things take place in a natural way. Our strategy is that we make the call without "pleading." We tell the truth such as it is. The Holy Spirit persuades the individual; then, the person comes to church and is baptized, becoming a blessing in the church.

Question: What is your church's strategy to open new fields?

Jama: We have our field of labor, and we try, before beginning our work to acquire a building lot. Normally, I try to do that when real estate is being subdivided into building lots because one has the opportunity to get a good piece of land, well located and at an affordable price. Then I let the lot be. When the moment arrives we see people converging on the place. It begins normally with a small group during a night meeting, at a brother's home. People

work mainly for the children during Holy Week. If you convince the children, they will bring their parents, the number of baptisms increases and later a field Sabbath School is begun on Sabbath afternoon. Afterward we have a group. Since the lot has been purchased they get together to build the temple with the mother church. All catch the spirit of enthusiasm and the project moves on.

Question: How does the elder prepare the Holy Week program?

Jama: We use Christ-centered topics. Always showing that God places a high value on man. He is interested in us and that can make a difference on everybody's life.

Question: What is your membership and how many are baptized every year on an average?

Jama: We have approximately 350 members. Last year we baptized 64 new members.

Question: What is your secret to keep in the faith the recently baptized members?

Jama: Great emphasis is placed on sowing. In order to keep the members, more friendship and love must be shown. Sunday night evangelism contributes much toward this end. There is a repetition of certain things. The person heard, accepted and repetition helps to fix it in the mind. We are careful when choosing the preachers. To preach is something very serious. The church member spends a week taking care of his struggles, difficulties, problems, needs, and when he goes to worship he wishes to listen to a message from God's point of view. Positive messages, full of love; likewise when calling attention, do it with love.

Question: How do you reconcile your profession with your church work?

Jama: The ill-conceived idea is that to be involved with the church is detrimental to the profession and to the church. Quite the contrary. Getting involved with the church helps to better understanding between the family and the profession. During the week I give Bible studies every day. They are no longer than 45 minutes each. I absent myself from my job or my family for only 45 minutes, and that will not make much difference to my family or my job. It's all a matter of planning and discipline. **E**

(Continued from page 3)

Restoring the power of words

They helped to find apartments, gave city tours, stood in registration lines, interpreted what is meant by strange sayings and generally cultivated the art of helping people feel comfortable in a foreign land. Their acts of love and service were not a set-up for Bible study, retreats and prayer meetings. They were acts of unconditional love for the sake of lifting the level of life in the name of Christ for people who had specific needs. Later some asked who are these people? And an opportunity to introduce them to the Advent message was created.

Multicultural evangelism has its own challenges. For example, penetrating the Muslim world with the gospel has been a tough task of the Christian church. Much has been said about the 10-40 window as a challenge for the Christian mission today. Ray Bakke details the experience of a businessman who became a missionary in Indonesia. After moving his family into a slum area in Surabaya and building his home out of crates like everyone else, he figured out that deeds had to precede words.

Surrounded by devout Muslims, the businessman began asking his well-off friends for donations and then he called the men of the community together. "My Christian friends want you to have this money to build your mosque" was his surprise offer. He then spent the next six months helping them to build the mosque. He began a Bible study with the people with whom he worked, and eventually thirty adult believers had been baptized with thirty teenagers coming to afternoon classes.

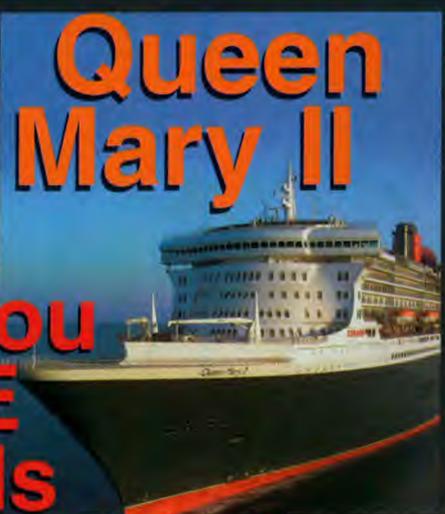
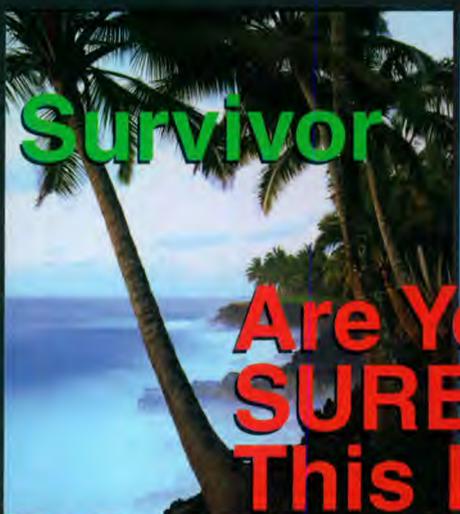
Doing the will of God in today's world will seed the possibility that God exists in ways that really matter. Members of the church who not only talk the faith but walk the faith will be perceived as plausible people.

They will be a threat to the conventional conclusions in the modern world that God is unnecessary. Without making verbal announcements, the way they live will make people around them wonder why they are different. When people see tangible evidence of the influence of God in those who make religious faith claims, some who see the fruit of faith will be compelled to search for God themselves.

Telling God's truth and doing God's truth are meant to be two parts of a whole. And when they do stand together, the church of Christ is not only built up, it has credibility in the eyes of the world.

This is what we must see happening in our churches all over the world if we want to make this year of emphasis on evangelism a success. Let us work together to restore the power of the words. **E**

The Brazil Publishing House publishes Elder's Digest in Portuguese. More than 25,000 elders in this country are receiving the quarterly publication free of charge by the initiative of the local conferences.



Survivor

Queen Mary II

Are You SURE This Is

McDonald's

Church News?

Do you know what's going on in your church?

TAKE THIS QUIZ and find out.

1. True False Andrews University is conducting a nationwide health study of Seventh-day Adventists.
2. True False Sow 1 Billion is a plan to distribute 1 billion invitations for Bible studies.
3. True False An Adventist couple on the Pearl Islands hosted members of the production crew for the television series *Survivor*.
4. True False The *Queen Mary II*, the world's largest passenger ship, commissioned an Adventist artist to paint ocean liners.
5. True False Pitcairn Island experiences population increase.
6. True False Wal-Mart stores in Greater Atlanta will stock their stores with an illustrated version of *Child Guidance*.
7. True False McDonald's Australia serves vegeburgers.
8. True False Winterfest is an ice-carving competition for Adventists in Minnesota.
9. True False The Adventist Church sponsors an annual film festival.
10. True False Students and teacher at Union College discover possible cure for cancer.

Score:

- 9-10 You're as informed as a *Review* subscriber.
- 6-8 You're a few toppings short of a good haystack. Maybe you should get the *Review* every week.
- 3-5 You're almost as bad off as those who think Choplets are karate classes for small children.
- 1-2 Wake up and smell the Roma. Subscribe to the *Review* and find out what is happening in your church.

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Answers:
 1. False. Lerna Linda University is conducting the study. See the February/March 2004 issue.
 2. True. See the January 8, 2004, issue.
 3. False, but it would make a great story.
 4. True. Gordon Bauwens, an international marriage artist, created the original paintings. See the December 18, 2003, issue.
 5. True. The first baby to be born in 17 years was delivered on September 14, 2003. See the December 11, 2003, issue.
 6. False.
 7. True. See the Newsbreak story in the November 6, 2003, issue.
 8. False. Winterfest, held in Colorado, is an annual festival for skiing, winter sports, spiritual growth and other activities for youth and young adults from around North America.
 9. True. Screenshot is a film festival for young Christians in media, sponsored by the Adventist Communication Network (ACN). See the December 18, 2003, Newsbreak.
 10. True. See the December 25, 2003, Newsbreak.



The Congregation and Finances

Jonas Arrais

Does your church have money? Is it financially healthy? Does it have the necessary funds to maintain and finance projects? I have observed different attitudes concerning money. It is true that each church has its own history. Nevertheless, each one shows its posture when it comes to finances. Where does your church stand?

An attitude of economics

To be economical with the finances of the church is good up to a certain point. The problem is that in some churches there is an exaggerated moderation concerning the expenses that are essential. When thrift is considered a great virtue we run the risk of giving it a greater value. In the spiritual context exaggerated thrift could become the symbol of avarice or lack of confidence in God. When the church lacks that which it should have, the mentality of the membership develops a mentality as well as a culture of poverty.

An attitude of poverty

An environment of frustration is created and discouragement is presented when a treasurer is confronted with a request and says: "There is no money in the safe." A church might be small, the members humble, but God still places there the necessary funds for its survival. When the need of funds becomes a constant in the congregation, it reveals the weakness of the leaders to provide the

necessary means through the plan indicated by God. Each Christian must be a generous person. Ellen G. White underscores in the book *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 14, that "The spirit of liberality is the spirit of Christ." It is amazing how God works with a church that has the same spirit.

An attitude of fear

Here we find those church members who give offerings and return the tithe because they are fearful God will punish them if they don't do it. We include here some leaders who administer the church finances with dread and don't investigate in the least how to remodel or build, because they think there will not be enough funds. Do you know of any church that was built with an abundance of funds in the treasury?

An ill-will attitude

Everything we do for God should be done willingly. Some members have not discovered the blessings of being faithful, and continue to contribute financially as

an obligation. We need to help them. Ellen G. White says: "It would be better not to give anything than to give grudgingly." - *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 199.

An attitude of faith

These churches inspire me. They are generally small and young. Sometimes they lack sufficient means to realize all they wish, but that does not become a hurdle for advancement. Many times they ignore where the means will come from, but they move ahead with their programs and projects. Nothing withholds them. Their members are always united and ready to do their best and the Lord's work grows as if in fertile soil.

An attitude of thankfulness

The members of this church recognize that the Lord is the giver of every good gift. They always find a reason to give of their best to God. A church where members and leaders practice the spirit of gratitude, as well as those that maintain an attitude of faith and generosity, are spiritual, happy, and blessed congregations.

What's the attitude of your church? One thing is certain. You, as a spiritual leader, have a great influence on your congregation and the characteristics it develops. **E**

Jonas Arrais is the Associate Ministerial Secretary of the South American Division.

Translated by Antonio A. Ríos.



ACTS 100



ACTS 100

acknowledgement • communion • training • service

WHY WE DON'T PRAY

What keeps us off our knees?

- ◆ We don't believe God hears us.
- ◆ We're just **too busy**. We let the tyranny of the urgent control us.
- ◆ We're too caught up in our scientific, natural world to believe God truly cares and is there for us.
- ◆ We just don't know how or what to pray for, so we don't.

Author, Terry Glaspey (*Homecoming*, Jan/Feb, 2003) says, "If you want prayer to flourish, get a better picture of who God is."

He is not a genie granting our wishes. He is not a distant mirage. He's not one whom we can manipulate with our requests.

Instead He's a personal God who loves us and doesn't ask us to go through myriad physical and spiritual machinations to get His attention. We don't have to use flowery language when we talk to Him and our heartfelt cries won't offend Him.

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Two kinds of influence

Edimar Ribeiro

People's answers may be based on fear or consideration.

In the world in which we live, we influence someone or are influenced by somebody all the time. Sometimes, as leaders, we have to assume a position of command over other individuals. However, we must think over what kind of influence we wish to exert in different occasions. Or what will happen if they listen to us. Do they listen just because we are in a position of leadership?

It is well known that in human communication there are two basic ways of interpersonal influence: Personal influence or positional influence. When we act with an "iron hand," despotism or arrogance in treating others, mainly with those who are under us, the only mechanism we employ so that they may obey our orders is the power of the position we hold. "We are their superiors we think, and they have to obey us." In this case we are using our positional influence, in other words, the authority of the function we exercise.

That type of leader generally obtains what they want, but they will also gain scorn and isolation. That person will become more and more unwanted and malevolent.

When we use our personal influence we are making use of that particular ability to make others feel satisfied to perform what we have suggested. In that case, we must treat each person with much respect and dignity in order to gain their loyalty. It

behooves us to understand that human beings correspond to the treatment they receive, "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7:12). That means that the leader must use his influence and not his position when leading in order to be obeyed.

To use influence correctly is the same as having someone perform a task with pleasure considering the person with whom he or she is associated and not for fear of being discredited.

When we lead properly, the sound of our voice and our facial expression determine our type of language. Specialists in the matter affirm that our tone of voice represents 38% of communication, the facial expression 55% and the word only 7% of all the process. Nevertheless, if we use the word, the tone of voice, and facial expression correctly, the power to influence others will be very great.

Therefore, it is concluded that it will depend wholly on us to use the correct tool when dealing with other people and then we wait for negative or positive results. As Shakespeare put it: "It is easier to obtain what is desired with a smile, than with the sword." **E**

Edimar Ribeiro is district pastor of Humaitá, Amazonas, Brazil.

Translated by Antonio A. Ríos.



Children's story

1 The Bible in the pillow

Lesson: *"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."* Jeremiah 15:16.

The Judsons' were sitting down to supper the evening of June 8, 1824, when Burmese soldiers walked into their home and arrested them. Adoniram Judson persuaded them to release his wife, Ann, but he was bound with rope and dragged through the streets of Ava to the filthy prison.

Meanwhile, Ann ran about the house destroying letters and papers that might be used against her husband. The Judsons' most precious possession was the translation of the Bible into Burmese that Adoniram had been working on for more than ten years. Somehow she must save it. Wrapping it carefully, she buried it in the corner of the garden.

Soon afterward the soldiers came back to search the house, but they did not find the translation of the Bible. As soon as possible Ann dug it up and sewed it into a hard pillow. This she took to the prison.

"It's your Burmese Bible!" she whispered.

"Bless you, Ann!" Adoniram whispered back. Every night he slept with the manuscript under his head. No one bothered to steal such a dingy-looking hard pillow.

Nearly a year later the prisoners were moved to a different jail. This time they were not allowed to take any possessions. The old pillow was left behind.

Meanwhile, one of the Judson's Burmese converts went to the old cell to see if there was anything he could take as a souvenir of his friend. He saw the dirty pillow and took it home. Inside he discovered the precious manuscript. As he read, the words spoke peace to his heart and he knew that he must keep the Bible safe so that someday all Burmese could know its wonderful message.

After almost two years of imprisonment, Adoniram Judson was released. Imagine his surprise to find the manuscript of the Bible still safe in the home of his friend! He immediately resumed work on the translation. Fifteen years later the Bible was ready to print. Because of it, thousands of

Burmese Christians today know the happiness that only God's Word can bring.

You, too, can discover this joy by reading God's Word.

2 Better than gold

Lesson: *Psalm 19:9, 10.*

James Marshall rushed into John Sutter's private room and stretched out his hands.

"Look!" he whispered, excitedly.

"Gold!" exclaimed Sutter in a hushed voice.

"Where did you find it?" "At the sawmill," replied Marshall.

This news, whispered at Sutter's Fort on January 24, 1848, was soon on everyone's tongue. From around the world gold seekers arrived by ship, horseback, and covered wagon to seek their fortunes. The California gold rush was on! The lure of gold brought nearly 100,000 prospectors to California during the first twelve months. Accommodations were so scarce and gold so plentiful that a tumbledown shack rented for 100 dollars a week and a copy of an old New York newspaper sold for a dollar.

Men lived recklessly and fought over claims. Far from civilization, bedraggled prospectors with tattered clothes and scrubby beards roamed over the Sierras behind their mules, hoping to strike it rich. Day after day they panned in the streams, looking for those precious nuggets that would bring them a fortune.

Across the continent another search was in progress—a search for something far better than gold. A group of about fifty "prospectors" met at Albert Belden's farm near Middletown, Connecticut, to begin their digging. Led in their search by Captain Joseph Bates and James White, the people dug deeply into the Word of God, comparing scripture with scripture, until they had in their possession the precious nuggets of truth. By the time the first forty-niners reached San Francisco, the early Adventists had already mined their treasure of truth.

The California gold rush came to an end long ago, but the search for truth goes on and on, for the Bible is a mine that is never exhausted.

Around the world thousands are still discovering the gold of God's Word. For the precious nuggets of salvation—such as the Sabbath, and the second coming of Jesus—they are willing to risk all. For them the truths of the Bible are "more to be desired than gold." Have you made this discovery? **E**

These children's stories were selected and edited by Margarida F. Sarli.

The Task of the Church

Introduction

Ecclesiastes 11:6: "Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well."

"The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to 'the principalities and powers in heavenly places,' the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10"— *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

A. The great commission

Just before His ascension what commission did Jesus give to His disciples? Matt. 28:19, 20 and Mark 16:15.

How extensively did He say that the gospel should be preached? Matt. 24:14 and Matt. 28:18-20. "Not that all are called to be ministers or missionaries in the ordinary sense of the term; but all may be workers with Him in giving the 'glad tidings' to their fellowman. To all, great or small, learned or ignorant, old or young, the commission is given." — *Education*, p. 246.

What Gospel have we been ordained to preach? — Rom. 1:16.

How are we reconciled to God? — 2 Cor. 5:18, 19. Christ was the instrument through which He could bestow His infinite love on a fallen world, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ." — *Steps to Christ*, p. 13.

2 Cor. 5:19. God suffered with His Son.

B. Heaven's ambassadors

How are those who accept the responsibility called? — 2 Cor. 5:20.

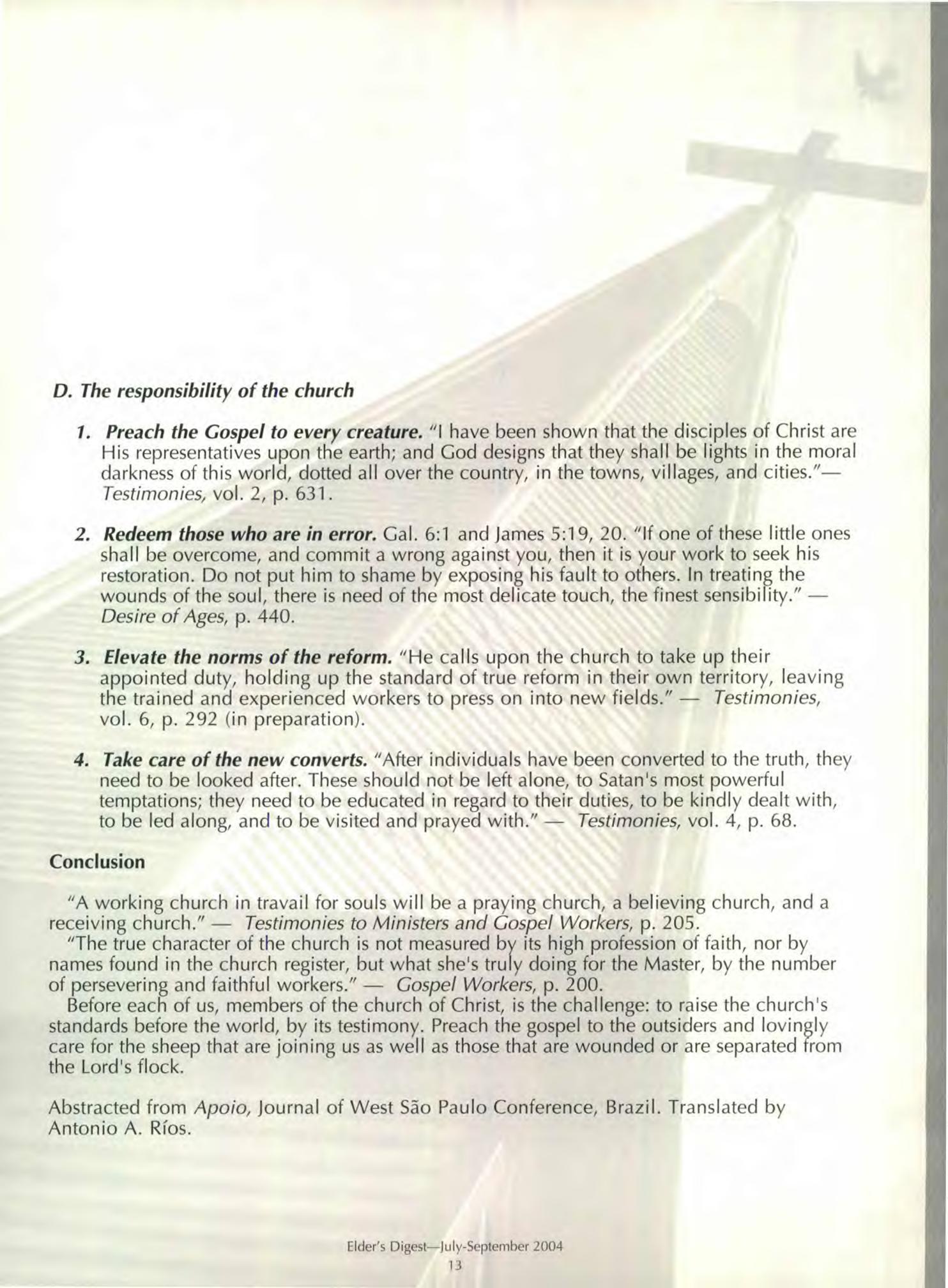
Definition of the word *ambassador*. "The highest level of a representative in the diplomatic corps from one State to another or anybody having to do with public or private mission, emissary" (*Portuguese Aurelio Dictionary*).

What the genuine Christians are to this world. — Matt 5:13, 14.

C. Needed preparation

Why did He tell His disciples to wait in Jerusalem? — Luke 24:45, 49 and John 20:22.

What followed the outpouring of this power on the believers? — Acts 2:47; 4:4; 6:7.



D. The responsibility of the church

- 1. Preach the Gospel to every creature.** "I have been shown that the disciples of Christ are His representatives upon the earth; and God designs that they shall be lights in the moral darkness of this world, dotted all over the country, in the towns, villages, and cities." — *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 631.
- 2. Redeem those who are in error.** Gal. 6:1 and James 5:19, 20. "If one of these little ones shall be overcome, and commit a wrong against you, then it is your work to seek his restoration. Do not put him to shame by exposing his fault to others. In treating the wounds of the soul, there is need of the most delicate touch, the finest sensibility." — *Desire of Ages*, p. 440.
- 3. Elevate the norms of the reform.** "He calls upon the church to take up their appointed duty, holding up the standard of true reform in their own territory, leaving the trained and experienced workers to press on into new fields." — *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 292 (in preparation).
- 4. Take care of the new converts.** "After individuals have been converted to the truth, they need to be looked after. These should not be left alone, to Satan's most powerful temptations; they need to be educated in regard to their duties, to be kindly dealt with, to be led along, and to be visited and prayed with." — *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 68.

Conclusion

"A working church in travail for souls will be a praying church, a believing church, and a receiving church." — *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 205.

"The true character of the church is not measured by its high profession of faith, nor by names found in the church register, but what she's truly doing for the Master, by the number of persevering and faithful workers." — *Gospel Workers*, p. 200.

Before each of us, members of the church of Christ, is the challenge: to raise the church's standards before the world, by its testimony. Preach the gospel to the outsiders and lovingly care for the sheep that are joining us as well as those that are wounded or are separated from the Lord's flock.

Abstracted from *Apoio*, Journal of West São Paulo Conference, Brazil. Translated by Antonio A. Ríos.

Sermon #2

Watch for His Coming

Walter Romero

Introduction

As Christians we know that the signs of Christ's coming indicate that He is at the door. As the time approaches for the fulfilling of this blessed hope of meeting Christ it is also true that the enemy is looking for ways to separate us from God and so prevent us from getting ready. Thus, the Lord warns us and counsels us so that we may be ready for His coming (Luke 21:34-36).

Christ's warning

Luke 21:34 says to the Christian to "be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life."

Christ's first warning is to take heed to ourselves. The greatest danger is not outside of us, but inside due to our human and sinful nature.

Satan has access to us through the defects of our character and personal weaknesses. He employs the taste, passions, our thoughts and feelings as a means to control our mind and finally to cause our fall.

Therefore, our Lord warns us of three great dangers that we as Christians must confront:

1. *The danger of gluttony*

May your heart never be overcharged with the results of revelry, and drunkenness. The Greek term "drunkenness" means someone who's going through a hangover, dull, hesitant. The Greek writers use this medical term to refer to nausea or discomfort produced by the constant use of wine.

This mental dullness is not the result of only drinking alcoholic beverages. It can also be caused by other factors such as nutrition. Thus, Satan is able to have access to our mind and so we lose our spiritual perception making it easier to fall.

2. *The danger of drunkenness*

From the Greek word *methé* to become drunk. To what is Jesus referring when He talks about drunkenness? As we analyze the biblical term note that it doesn't necessarily refer to alcoholism, but to something worse. Let's find the answer in Isa. 29:9.

Verse 9: "Be drunk, but not from wine" in other words, a person can be drunk but not necessarily with wine.

Verse 13: "These people come near me with their mouth . . . but their hearts are far from Me", referring to the believers who live a double life; they know and believe the truth but do not practice it.

In the Gospel of Luke we notice that Christ used the same figurative expression to refer to this pitiful spiritual condition. Luke 12:45-48 emphasizes that "to drink" or "become drunk" is the attitude manifested by that servant who knowing his master's will, was not prepared nor proceeded according to his will.

Spiritual drunkenness is today the sad condition in which many who profess to be Christians live.

3. The danger of the cares of this life

The Greek word *merimnás* means "anxiety", "preoccupation." Perhaps this is the danger that affects human beings. Christ is not saying that we will never have any worries, since in our life there are moments when we cannot be but worried, but it is one thing to worry for a few moments and another to live a life constantly worried.

Always praying

In the same way that God speaks to us through His Word to show us the way in which we should go, it is also indispensable that we daily elevate our lives in prayer.

It is important that we analyze our prayer life and with God's help make the necessary changes in order to enjoy His blessings and be daily prepared for His coming.

"No man is safe for a day or an hour without prayer. Especially should we entreat the Lord for wisdom to understand His Word. Here are revealed the wiles of the tempter and the means by which he may be successfully resisted. Satan is an expert in quoting Scripture, placing his own interpretation upon passages, by which he hopes to cause us to stumble. We should study the Bible with humility of heart, never losing sight of our dependence upon God. While we must constantly guard against the devices of Satan, we should pray in faith continually: 'Lead us not into temptation.'" — *The Great Controversy*, p. 530.

Conclusion

Due to His imminent return, our Lord Jesus Christ warns us against the three more subtle dangers that, as Christians, we are facing and can make us lose eternal life.

- 1) Allowing in our life habits that will benumb our mind, and cause us to lose our spiritual perception.
- 2) The temptation to live a "double life." Or to know the truth but not to live according to God's will.
- 3) To speak about God and go to church every week, but live separated from Him.

Therefore, Christ's counsel is to be ready at all times and help others get ready. Pray always, in order to be in constant communion with our God. And thus be prepared to meet Him at His Second Coming.

Walter Romero is a pastor in Argentina.
Translated by Antonio A. Ríos.

Kenneth Osier

The HARVEST and the

Is a rich harvest waiting where we have feared to go?

Driving through the deserts of the Middle East, you suddenly come upon a beautiful, verdant valley with a treelined village surrounded by lush vineyards, orchards and gardens. The government has favored this village with a deep well that supplies all the water needed for their agricultural and domestic needs.

On the edge of the village you pass a lovely melon patch surrounded by a thick, bushy hedge. The fertile soil, plenty of water and constant painstaking care have brought the luscious fruit to fruition. The hedge does fairly well in keeping out the rabbits and dogs, donkeys and goats but Oh, the birds! How to protect the crop? That's the gardener's big worry. One thing helps—a scarecrow. The gardener dresses it, puts it up on a stake in the center of the patch, holds out its arm with a stick fixed in one hand, and puts his hat on the scarecrow. That will be a threat to all the fainthearted!

But as you quietly pass by, you can't help but notice with glee that—of all things—a wise old crow is perched on the outstretched arm of the scarecrow, deliberately feasting on a portion of a juicy melon! You look a bit more carefully and notice that fearful little magpies, excited and nervous, twitter about under the hedge, lusting after the thirst-quenching melons, but afraid to partake. The *scarecrow* is there!

Outside the village and beyond its fields and orchards is the desert. Here you drive for hours, seeing no water, no trees, no gardens, no melons, and *no scarecrows!* No crows or magpies, either. The thought strikes home: *the scarecrow is where the harvest is!*

Fear of scarecrow?

Twenty percent of the world's population is Moslems. We have come to believe that work for

Moslems is very difficult, rarely fruitful, and often dangerous. Can it be that as a church, for over a century, we have been trying to find melons in the desert? Like the ignorant, timid magpie, have we been twittering around the edge of the melon patch, not realizing that the scarecrow is immobile, powerless, unobserving, impervious and dead? Oh, it may *look* formidable. It may have a stick propped in its hand. It may wear the hat of a frightfully powerful and avaricious authority, but it is there only to *scare*, not to punish. It cannot hurt anyone. In the words of Jeremiah, "Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good" (Jer. 10:5 NIV). Actually, *the scarecrow marks the most valuable spot where the harvest is greatest!*

Fear of insecurity, of traditionalism, hesitancy to try new things and methods and places, restrictive policies, doubtful hearts, distrust of the Lord's omnipotent power, and disbelief in his unfailing promises all reflect our magpie-like dread of the scarecrow.

Defeated foe

Though Satan appears to be a "roaring lion" (often through his specially trained agents), he is nothing but a scarecrow! This fact was amply demonstrated at the cross. Till Jesus comes, our battle is with this defeated foe. We will never gain decisive victory over him by intermittent efforts. "It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place."¹

SCARECROW



"True Christian principle will not stop to weigh the consequences. It does not ask, What will people think of me if I do this? Or, how will it affect my worldly prospects if I do that?"¹²

Government regulations and edicts notwithstanding, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrated a faith that ennobled their lives and beautified their characters. Ellen White, commenting on these three worthies, challenged God's representatives of today in these thought-provoking words: "What a lesson is here given to the fainthearted, the vacillating, the cowardly in the cause of God! What encouragement to those who will not be turned aside from duty by threats or peril!"

"Christ identifies His interest with this class: He is not ashamed to call them brethren. There should be hundreds where there is now one among us, so closely allied to God, their lives in such close conformity to His will, that they would be bright and shining lights, sanctified wholly, in soul, body, and spirit."¹³

The prophet Jeremiah was one such! He received a very undesirable call. Even before his birth he was ordained to perform a certain task. Of him it is written, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5).

What was he to accomplish? "Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you! Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them" (Jer. 1:17). Further instruction came to him as to what God could do with the impenitent people to whom he was to bring God's message—God could even change the most unpromising situation in the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. And he told

the story of the potter who could change the clay vessel that was marred into a different jar (Jer. 18:1-10). So God can take the most discouraging situation and bring about a glorious result.

Greatest victories

The secret of power and the strategy of victory are spelled out in the writings of Ellen G. White: "The greatest victories to the church of Christ or to the individual Christian are not those that are gained by talent or education, by wealth or the favor of men. They are those victories that are gained in the audience chamber with God, when earnest, agonizing faith lays hold upon the mighty arm of power."¹⁴

Is anyone of us ignorant of God's expectations? Have we not read the gospel commission in the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel? Have we not read and re-read the Apostle Paul's advice to a young minister, Timothy, in which he warns, "There will be terrible times in the last days . . . Preach the Word; . . . do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 3:1; 4:2, 5).

"God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them."¹⁵ Has God, the Creator of the universe, ever given His people an impossible task? When He commands, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15), is it for our destruction? Has He ever made a mistake? To have tried and failed is honorable. To have tried nothing is inexcusable!

We are now living in those "terrible times" of which Paul wrote. "We are living in the most solemn period of the world's history. The destiny of earth's teeming multitudes is about to be decided . . . We

(Continued on page 28)

Satan's plans Exposed

Mel Rees

One of the devil's most carefully laid and well-executed plans has been to destroy the sovereignty of God. His rebellion in heaven was designed not only to overthrow God's government but also to place himself in a position of power equal to that of God. "I will ascend into heaven," he boasted to himself. "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most high" (Isa. 14:13, 14).

Two of his most subtle and successful efforts to erase the image of God from the minds of men and women have been in the substitution of a false Sabbath and in the adulteration of the tithing principle.

False Sabbath substituted

By instituting a false Sabbath he has almost obliterated man's belief in God as the Creator. This unbelief has resulted in the fantastic, man-made theory of evolution. Mankind, through science so-called, has been willing to accept the most preposterous deductions in order to erase the image of God, the Creator. So well has the devil's plan succeeded that some self-styled Christians have even proposed the theory that God is dead.

The attack on the tithe

Another, but not quite so obvious, attack on God has been through a false concept of the tithing principle. By distorting the true principles involved, the devil has nearly eliminated the concept in people's minds of God as the owner of the world. His attacks have been subtle and tireless. In the past, his two most successful methods were conformity and compulsion. Today his attack is centered in creating strange attitudes regarding both the tithes and the offerings.

To really understand why these incorrect opinions are prevalent today, one must study the history of church finance. This will show how and when these concepts were adulterated.

Adam understood God's ownership

God impressed upon Adam His ownership, by giving him only the dominion over the earth. As a constant reminder, a tree was planted in the midst of his garden home that he was forbidden to touch on penalty of death. After the entrance of sin, God gave men and women another reminder of His ownership—the tithing system and the requirements regarding freewill offerings.

Patriarchs understood

The Bible clearly shows that the patriarchs understood these requirements. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, "priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14:18). Jacob vowed that he would be faithful in this requirement and asked God to provide for his necessities. He recognized that his daily sustenance was entirely dependent on God, that he was incapable of providing these things for himself. But as one of God's managers, he had every right to request and expect them.

To keep the Owner-manager principle in the minds of the Israelites so that they could have the certainty of God's favor and protection, the divinely-ordained plan of tithes and offerings was brought to their attention. As they faithfully set apart one tenth of their increase and gave freewill offerings to God, they would be constantly reminded of His ownership.

Somehow, as time passed the people gradually began to consider themselves as the owners of the houses and lands that God had given them; they forgot that they were only tenant farmers. As God's

managers they were guaranteed fertile soil, freedom from pests, and the right amount of rain at the right time. But when they started considering themselves as owners they released God of His responsibility and proved themselves to be very poor rainmakers!

After a time they lost their dignified position as managers and became slaves, serving a cruel people in a foreign land.

The swing to conformity

After their return from captivity, the pendulum swung completely to the side of conformity, but they lost sight of the significance of the requirements that God had given solely for their protection. The Sabbath became a day of minute exaction, the tithe an oppressive burden. Peter referred to these when he said, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10). The religious leaders of Peter's day laid down arbitrary rules that were so complicated that no one knew when his obligations were met. The freedom that God had provided in every requirement was buried under stern regulations. The great lessons that He designed these ordinances should teach were completely lost sight of in the sanctimonious rubbish of man's interpretation.

Jesus sets the record straight

Jesus taught that in God's sight motive was more important than conformity. He explained that love for God was the only basis for doing God's will. Conformity was only the fruitage of this love. He emphasized the spiritual rather than the material aspects of life and taught that material things were important only as they were used to advance the kingdom of God.

He said that a changed heart was the prerequisite for a changed life. He unloosed the chains of oppression with which the enemy had enslaved men and women. He set the record straight, showing that God is a loving Father who looks after His children with tender care.

He made the Sabbath beautiful again by saying that it was made for man and was to be a delight. He placed the tithe back in its true perspective, calling attention to some of the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith. For all the legalism He substituted a divine message of love.

Early church follows right principles

After Pentecost the believers who had been indoctrinated with these principles faced an unusual situation. Many of them were cut off from their families and incomes and were in dire need of the bare necessities of life. All believed in the imminent return of Jesus.

In order to relieve the suffering of the believers and spread the good news of the gospel, men and women

were willing to sacrifice everything they possessed. Their motive was a pure, unselfish love for God and for their fellowmen. This unusual situation was met in an unusual way, not practiced in any other great religious center.

Paul continued in the early churches the education that Jesus began. He reemphasized that all giving must be a heart experience. "As he purposed in his heart," he wrote to the Corinthian believers, "so let him give; not grudgingly or of necessity" (2 Cor. 9:7).

This was a restatement of God's instruction to Moses in the Old Testament. "Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Ex. 25:2).

For the first three centuries after Christ, tithes, freewill offerings, first fruits, and gifts of property supported the church, most of which were given from the right motives. The Didache, a Christian manual of the second century, instructed the Christians to give from principle, not because of specific needs. They "first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8:5). Paul had taught the believers well.

Heresy makes adulteration possible

Eventually, as heresy came in to adulterate the doctrines of Christ, the great principle of man's responsibility as God's managers was lost sight of in the demands for more and more money to support in idleness those who had tainted these doctrines. The church's rapidly expanding structure became a mammoth fund-raising institution. In its insatiable desire for personal gain, the gospel commission was forgotten and every kind of abuse came into being.

Tithing became first a law of the church, then of the state. Offerings lost their freewill nature in the revenue, producing doctrine of salvation by works; the significance of first fruits was lost in the money-hungry demands of the clergy. The property of deceased members found its way into the hands of unscrupulous priests.

When the church and state united under Constantine, secularization became complete and the original purpose of the tithes and offerings was once more obliterated. For centuries Christendom was not only compelled to follow the dictates of an apostate church but was forced to support it, as well. The devil nearly succeeded in completely blotting from men's minds the eternal truth that God is the owner of all.

With the legal powers to enforce its demands, the hierarchy instituted every form of compulsory support that the evil minds of men could devise in order to satisfy its unquenchable hunger for more and more wealth. As it became top-heavy in administration, its demands for money became its primary objective, materialism its main aim.

Reformation reverses the tide

Luther spoke out against the abuses of the church. He taught that salvation is free; it cannot be bought or sold. Countless thousands who had been chained in religious darkness eagerly sought to escape their shackles and reached out toward this first glimmer of the light of freedom. God had allowed sufficient time for Satan to demonstrate to the entire universe the evil results of apostasy; now He was about to bring His great truths back into prominence.

Tithes still buried in error

The reformers taught the great principles of New Testament stewardship but failed to put these into practice, accustomed as they were to the traditional methods of church support. England, during the time of Wesley, imposed one of the most rigorous systems of tithing in history. With the power and resources of a state-controlled church, an entire nation was enslaved in a vast, complicated tithe-tax structure. The laws were so complicated it was practically impossible for anyone to really understand them or to fulfill their requirements. As a result there were tithe lawyers and tithe courts.

Men and women suffered martyrs' deaths for refusal to comply with these laws. Others were thrown into prison for failure to pay unbelievably small sums. In order to escape from this and other abuses in the church, dissenters such as the Quakers, Puritans, and Pilgrims left their native lands, their homes, and their livelihood. Suffering extreme hardship, they eventually made their way to the wilderness shores of the New World.

Church finance in early American history

The financial needs of the early churches in America were limited for the most part to new buildings, their maintenance, and the support of the minister. Foreign missions were not a factor, and offerings for other than local needs were uncommon.

After their unfortunate experience with the tithing system in their native lands, it is little wonder that it was rarely mentioned. Tithing, to the people and to the ministry, was something to be avoided. John Smyth, an early American preacher, is reported to have said, "We hold that tithes are either Jewish or Popish." Once more the devilish plan to erase this reminder of God and His ownership from the minds of otherwise honest believers was accomplished. In this land where they could have followed God's instructions without opposition, they once more resorted to the inventions of men.

After having seen the evils resulting from a state-controlled church, it is amazing that many of these churches turned back to compulsory support. Some of them held the view that to have a good government and a pure church, the two must be combined. This church-

state combination compelled men by law to support the church. Dissenters were dealt with harshly. Thus many found themselves under the same oppressive system from which they had so recently escaped.

Writing on the subject of compulsory support, Benjamin Franklin once said, "When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself, and God does not take care to support it so that its professors are obliged to call for help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one."

People rebelled — other means sought

Eventually the people rebelled against compulsory support, and other means had to be sought if the church was to survive. Incredibly, one of these methods was an excise tax on rum and wine! Other means included ministers' fee, church fines, and pledges and assessments of flour, corn, lard, tallow, hides, tobacco, and whiskey!

Many large churches were built by funds received from lotteries, and their ministers were paid from pew rent. Fancy fairs, bazaars, and many other forms of amusement and entertainment were employed to secure the funds necessary for their operation. Instead of following God's plan for church finance, they persisted in using methods of their own devising and never found a satisfactory solution.

Out of the multitude of fund-raising schemes, one of the most successful was the every-member canvass. These were conducted by trained "outside" specialists. Regardless of their success, there must be something lacking in the spiritual life of any church when hired professionals, using high-pressure methods, have to be employed to get the members to give money to their church that they would not otherwise have given.

Results of these methods

For centuries erroneous ideas regarding the tithes and offerings have poisoned people's minds and are responsible for some of the strange attitudes that are commonplace in the church today. To illustrate, one day a middle-aged Christian secretary stopped by the door of my office. After wishing me good morning, she surprised me by saying: "I resent every dime of the tithe I pay, because it keeps me from buying the kind of clothes I would like to wear. I resent every cent of the offerings, too, because it keeps me from going to really nice places to eat."

Somehow the thought had never crossed my mind, as I saw her going quietly and efficiently about her duties each day, that she had an inner longing for fashionable clothes or a desire to dine in some exclusive restaurant.

When I recovered from the initial shock, I replied, "If you really feel that way, then I think you should take your tithe and buy the kind of clothes you want."



Ellen G. White. INSPIRED WOMAN

Herbert E. Douglas

Can you name the North American woman whose writings have been translated into 148 languages? She wrote mainly on the topic of spiritual life. But her works discuss also a variety of themes such as education, social relations and nutrition. The amazing thing is that even though she died in 1915 and science has had a tremendous progress since then, what she wrote about it is still true.

As early as 1848, Ellen G. White warned on the harmful effects of tobacco, tea, and coffee. This happened in a moment when smoking was recommended to heal tuberculosis and when the impact of caffeine had not been considered. By 1865, Ellen G. White was talking about health principles that included subjects such as psychosomatic medicine, nutritional health and the value of exercise.

By that time the typical North American diet was full of fats and sugars. Usually the diseases were blamed on God's will, the imbalance of body fluids, pungent smells or even the nocturnal air. The homemade methods to treat diseases included "laxatives, induced vomiting and drugs."

So when Ellen G. White started to point out certain dangers in the prevailing notions for the causes of diseases and the medical practices of the time, her warnings were startling to almost every one, including her family members!

"Worse for the fishes"

For example, Ellen G. White said that the majority of "medicines" used at that time killed more people than all the other causes of death combined. The medical theory then was that creating body tension would induce a "defense" and as a result "fight" against the disease. So the preferred drugs of the time were: strychnine, opium, calomel, mercury and quinine, which were really poisons. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, professor of Anatomy at Harvard University (and later judge of the Supreme Court) agreed with Ellen G. White's position. He wrote: "If the total medical literature, as is now used, should be sent to the bottom of the sea, it would be better for humanity but worse for the fishes."¹

Other teachings that shocked the people of the XIX century were: the dangers of eating pork (this was before trichinosis was discovered), that tobacco is a poison, that foods rich in fat and sugar are harmful, and that one should allow time between meals, for

good digestion. Pure water should be used frequently to preserve health and heal diseases (at a time when baths were rarely recommended); that outdoor exercise is important for the mental and physical health and that the will power is closely related to resistance to disease and is a stress reliever.

In 1905, in her clear teachings about a healthy diet, she concluded what she emphasized during decades. She wrote: "Cereals, meaty fruits, nuts and legumes constituted the foods chosen for us by our Creator."² About the treatment of diseases she wrote: "Pure air, sunshine, abstinence, rest, exercise, a healthy diet, water and trust in the divine power are the true medicines."³

Not all these concepts were new. Writers who mixed them with other ideas that soon disappeared when investigated promoted many of them in conferences. What was extraordinary about the writings of Ellen G. White on health was that only that which was true was promoted.

Dr. Kellogg

One of the first promoters of the principles of Ellen G. White was the young Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who became worldwide famous as director and principal surgeon of the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Michigan. The list of patients, the largest health institution of its time, included presidents of the United States, industry tycoons, famous inventors and other world leaders: people like Thomas Alva Edison and Henry Ford.

In 1897, Dr. Kellogg said: "It is impossible for any man who has not had special medical studies to appreciate the marvelous character of the instructions received through the writings of Ellen G. White. It is extraordinary when you examine retrospectively her writings given thirty years ago, and then pick up a scientific magazine and find some new discovery made with the microscope in the chemical laboratory; to see how exactly both harmonize . . . there is not one principle related with the healthy development of our bodies and minds, exposed in these writings of Ellen G. White, that I'm not ready to prove conclusively based on scientific evidence."⁴ Closer to our time, we have Dr. Clive M. MacCay, professor of Nutrition at Cornell University (where he taught for 37 years: 1925-1962). Dr. MacCay was recognized as a pioneer and an authority in history of nutrition, theory and research.⁵

One of the advance students of Dr. MacCay presented to him the writings of Ellen G. White on health principles, particularly her book *Counsels on Diet and Foods*, a compilation of her writings on a healthy diet and its relation to the physical, mental and spiritual health. MacCay believed that anything written before 1900 was not scientific, so he was surprised when he saw the date on the material that appeared scientifically correct. When someone said that there were rumors that Ellen G. White was a plagiarist, that she had copied her material from contemporary health reformers, Dr. MacCay responded: "Nonsense! I can't accept that explanation, it creates a bigger problem than it solves. If she limited herself to copying her contemporaries, how did she know which ideas to borrow and which ones to reject of the confused collection of theories in use during the XIX century?"

The majority of them were irrational, and today are condemned. She had to be an exceptional person of knowledge superior to that of the people of her time, to know what ideas to take and which ones to discard.⁶

In July of 1980 the departments of Agriculture and Health, Education and Social Welfare, united to publish her "Dietary Guide for North Americans": (1) Eat a variety of foods. (2) Maintain your ideal weight. (3) Avoid too much fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. (4) Eat foods with enough carbohydrates and fiber. (5) Avoid too much sugar. (6) Avoid too much sodium. (7) If alcohol is consumed, use in moderation.⁷

In 1995, the same offices published an updated version of the same "Dietary Guide" emphasizing that "vegetarian diets (another of Ellen G. White's recommendations) coincide with the Dietary Guides for North Americans and can provide the recommended amount of nutrients."⁸ The Pyramid of the Nutrition Guide that was part of this revision in 1995 placed greater emphasis in foods coming from plants.

The revised guide also recognizes that grains are associated with a substantially lower risk of many chronic diseases, including certain types of cancer. That antioxidant nutrients play a potentially beneficial part in reducing the danger of cancer and certain other chronic diseases, and that folic acid reduces the possibilities of serious types of birth defects.⁹

A diet that prevents cancer

Twenty years ago nutritionists began studying the connection between the ideal diet and the disease worst feared by the American people: cancer.

In June 1982, the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council published a joint report entitled "Diet, Nutrition and Cancer." Their results indicated that it is possible to greatly reduce the risk of developing cancer by introducing changes in the diet. They specifically urged the consumption of fruits, whole grains, and vegetables, and to reduce the intake of fats, sugar, salt and alcohol.¹⁰ In

February of 1983 the publication of the American Cancer Society, *News on Cancer*, published an article entitled, "At Last, an Anticancer Diet." The first paragraph pointed to the California Seventh-day Adventists as having a smaller proportion of rectal and colon cancer compared with the population in general. Further on in the article, studies revealed that breast cancer, colon and prostate cancer, "occurs significantly less among individuals who eat large quantities of vegetables." This "amazing discovery," says Walter Troll, Professor of Ecology Medicine at New York University suggests that vegetables contain substances "capable of inhibiting cancer in man."¹¹

Therefore, in July 1988, Dr. C. Everett Koop published the first report on nutrition by a Surgeon General of the United States. Based on more than 2,500 scientific papers, his prescription for better health was: "Less fat, more vegetables, and fruits."¹² And in recent years lead articles in outstanding magazines such as *Times*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report* have reported the latest results: studies that validate the findings of more than a century of Ellen G. White's writings. Not one of her surprising counsels has been discarded. What she said about prenatal influence; that cancer is of a viral origin and in many other areas related to mental and physical health, have been proven as much as her teachings on nutrition.

The members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church believe that their knowledge about spiritual and physical health are more than just good guessing. They see in it a fulfillment of the biblical promise of prophetic guidance shortly before Christ's return. Those who abide by E. G. White's inspiration will improve in all aspects of their lives. **E**

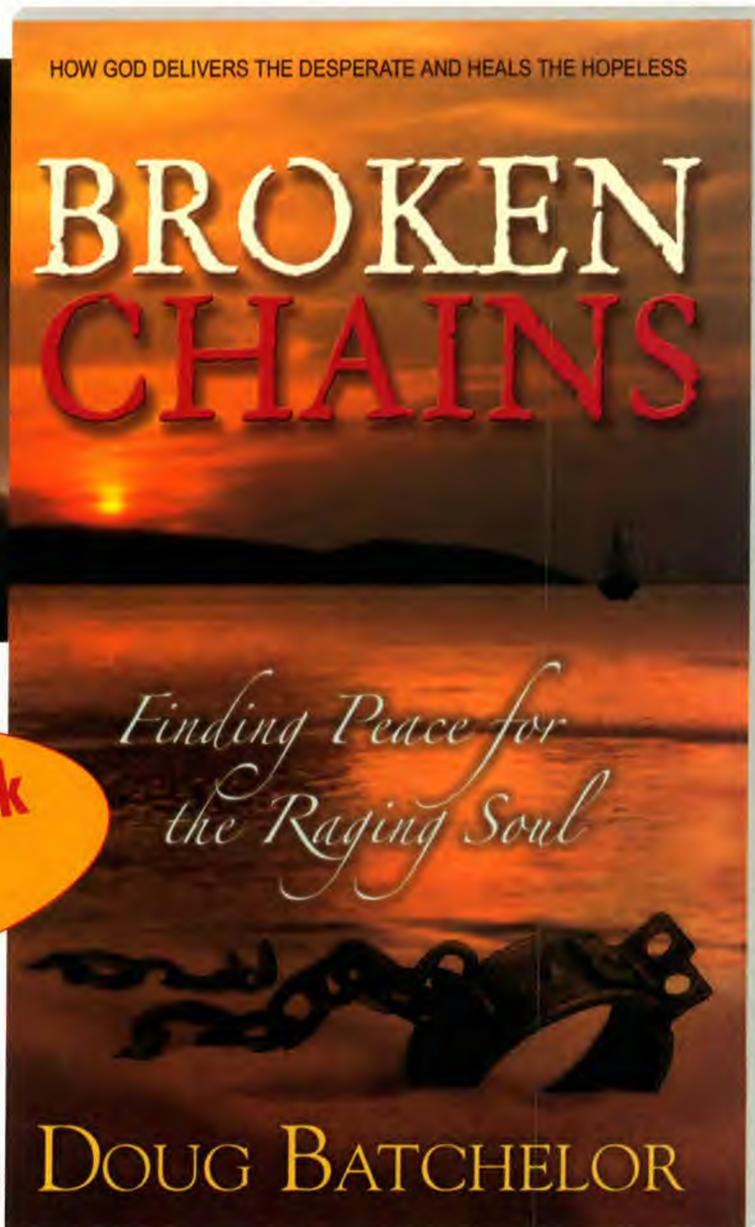
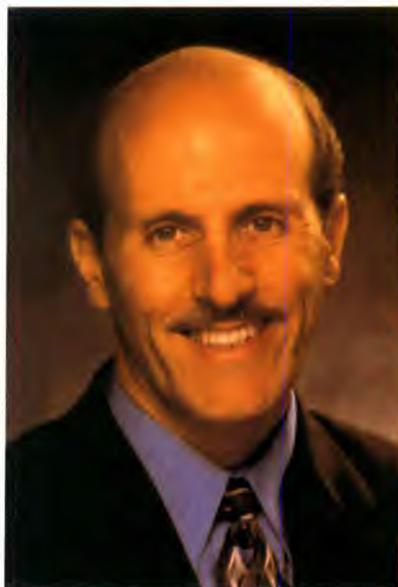
Herbert Douglas writes from Weimar, California.

Reference:

1. Ronald L. Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, p. 49.
2. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 228.
3. Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 89.
4. Herbert E. Douglas, *The Lord's Messenger*, p. 283.
5. Dr. MacCay wrote more than 150 scientific articles and was cofounder in 1942 of *The Archives of Biochemistry*.
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7. *Home and Garden Bulletin*, N. 231, 1980, p. 1.
8. *Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, fourth edition, December 1995.
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12. A Call to Get the Fat Out, *U.S. News & World Report*, August 8, 1988, p. 59-61.

Translated by Antonio A. Ríos

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For weeks I have not been able to sleep after half past three o'clock. My mind is deeply exercised in regard to our condition as a people. We ought to be far in advance of any other people on the earth because we have greater light and greater knowledge of the truth, which lays us under increased accountability to advance that light and not only to profess to believe the truth but to practice it. When we do practice the truth we are then following Jesus, who is the light of the world; and if we as a people are not constantly elevating, becoming more and more spiritual minded, we are becoming like the Pharisees—self-righteous—while we do not the will of God.

We must have a greater nearness to God. Much less of self and much more of Jesus Christ and His grace must be brought into our everyday life. We are living in an important period of this world's history. The end of all things is at hand; the sands of time are fast running out; soon in heaven it will be said: "It is done" (Rev. 21:6). "He that is holy, let him be holy still," "he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11).

Let our testimonies be sharpened up; let us have a firmer hold on God. I cannot refrain from prayer at one, two, and three o'clock in the morning for the Lord to work upon the hearts of the people. I think of heaven being interested in the work that is going on upon the earth. Ministering angels are waiting about the throne to instantly obey the mandate of Jesus Christ to answer every prayer offered in earnest, living faith. I

Let the individual members of the church be pure, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the love of **JESUS** and they will then be a light to the world.

think of how many that profess the truth are keeping it apart from their lives. They do not bring its sanctifying, refining, spiritualizing power into their hearts.

Living below our privileges

We are far from being the people God would have us to be, because we do not elevate the soul and refine the character in harmony with the wonderful unfolding of God's truth and His purposes. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). Sin is a disorganizer. Wherever it is cherished in the individual heart, in a household, in the church—there is disorder, strife, variance, enmity, envy, jealousy, because the enemy of man and of God has the controlling power over the mind. But let the truth be loved and brought into the life, as well as advocated, and that man or woman will hate sin and will be a living representative of Jesus Christ to the world.

The people claiming to believe the truth will not be condemned because they had not the light, but because they had great light and did not bring their hearts to the test of God's great moral standard of righteousness. The people who claim to believe the truth must be elevated by living it out. Real Bible religion must leaven the life, refine and ennoble the character, making it more and more like the divine model. Then will the home be vocal with prayer, with thanksgiving and praise to God. Angels will minister in the home and accompany the worshiper to the house of prayer.

Let the churches who claim to believe the truth, who are advocating the law of God, keep that law and depart from all iniquity. Let the individual members of the church resist the temptations to practice evils and indulge in sin. Let the church commence the work of purification before God by repentance, humiliation, deep heart searching, for we are in the anti-typical day of atonement—solemn hour fraught with eternal results.

Let those who teach the truth present it as it is in Jesus. Under the subduing, sanctifying, refining influence of the truth of God they are as clean vessels. Let them be leavened with Bible religion, and what an influence would go forth from them to the world! Let the individual members of the church be

pure, steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the love of Jesus and they will then be a light to the world. Let the men standing as watchmen and as shepherds of the flock proclaim the solemn truth, sound the notes of warning to all people, nations, and tongues. Let them be living representatives of the truth they advocate, and honor God's law by strict and holy compliance with its requirements, walking before the Lord in purity, in holiness, and a power will attend the proclamation of the truth that will reflect light everywhere.

Grieving the Spirit of God

God never forsakes people or individuals until they forsake Him. Outward opposition will not cause the faith of God's people, who are keeping His commandments, to become dim. The neglect to bring purity and truth into practice will grieve the Spirit of God and weaken them because God is not in their midst to bless. Internal corruption will bring the denunciations of God upon this people as it did upon Jerusalem. Oh, let pleading voices, let earnest prayer be heard, that those who preach to others shall not themselves be castaways. My brethren, we know not what is before us, and our only safety is in following the Light of the world. God will work with us and for us if the sins that brought His wrath upon the Old World, upon Sodom and Gomorrah and upon ancient Jerusalem, do not become our crime.

The least transgression of God's law brings guilt upon the transgressor, and without earnest repentance and forsaking of sin he will surely become an apostate . . . Let us as a people, as far as possible, cleanse the camp of moral defilement and aggravating sins. When sin is making its march upon the people who claim to be elevating the moral standard of righteousness, how can we expect God to turn His power in our behalf and save us as a



people that did righteousness? . . . If as a people we do not keep ourselves in the faith and not only advocate with pen and voice the commandments of God, but keep them every one, not violating a single precept knowingly, then weakness and ruin will come upon us. It is a work that we must attend to in every one of our churches. Each man must be a Christian.

Putting away sin

Let the sin of pride be put away, let all superfluities of dress be overcome, and repentance toward God be exercised for the highhanded robbery toward Him which has withheld money which should flow into the treasury to sustain the work of God in its mission fields. Let the work of reformation, of true conversion be set before and urged upon the people. Let our works, our deportment correspond with the work for this time, that we may say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Let us humble our souls before God by humiliation, fasting and prayer, repentance of sin and putting it away.

The voice of the true watchman needs now to be heard all along the line, "the morning cometh, and also the night" (Isa. 21:12). The trumpet must give a certain sound for we are in the great day of the Lord's preparation . . . There are many doctrines current in our world. There is many a religion current that numbers its thousands and tens of thousands, but there is but one that bears the superscription and the stamp of God. There is a religion of man and a religion of God. We must have our souls riveted to the eternal Rock. Everything in God's world, both men, doctrines and nature itself is fulfilling God's sure word of prophecy and accomplishing His grand and closing work in this world's history.

We are to be ready and waiting for the orders of God. Nations will be stirred to their very center. Support will be withdrawn from those who proclaim God's only standard of righteousness, the only sure test of character. And all who will not bow to the decree of the national councils and obey the national laws to exalt the Sabbath instituted by the man of sin, to the disregard of God's holy day, will feel, not the oppressive power of popery alone, but of the Protestant world, the image of the beast.

Satan will work his miracles to deceive; he will set up his power as supreme. The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place. None but those who have been overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony will be found with the loyal and true, without spot or stain of sin, without guile in their mouths. We must be divested of our self-righteousness and arrayed in the righteousness of Christ.

Arrayed in Christ's righteousness

The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth gather strength from the trying process, exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy. "All these he says, I have graven . . . upon the palms of my hands" (Isa. 49:16). They are held in everlasting, imperishable remembrance. We want faith now, living faith. We want to have a living testimony that shall cut to the heart of the sinner. There is too much sermonizing and too little ministering. We want the holy unction. We need the spirit and fervor of the truth. Many of the ministers are half paralyzed by their own defects of character. They need the converting power of God.

That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, and righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God helps us to render to Him all His law requires. We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice.

Dear brethren, the Lord is coming. Lift up your thoughts and heads and rejoice. Oh, we would think that those who hear the joyful news, who claim to love Jesus would be filled with joy unutterable and full of glory. This is the good, the joyful news that should electrify every soul, which should be repeated in our homes and told to those whom we meet on the street. What more joyful news can be communicated! Caviling and contention with believers or unbelievers is not the work God has given us to do.

If Christ is my Savior, my sacrifice, my atonement, then I shall never perish. Believing on Him, I have life forevermore. Oh, that all who believe the truth would believe in Jesus as their own Savior. I do not mean that cheap faith unsupported by works, but that earnest, living, constant, abiding faith that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God. I want not only to be pardoned for the transgression of God's holy law, but I want to be lifted into the sunshine of God's countenance. Not simply to be admitted to heaven, but to have an abundant entrance.

Salvation a union with Christ

Are we so insensible as a peculiar people, a holy nation, to the inexpressible love that God has manifested for us? Salvation is not to be baptized, not to have our names upon the church books, not to preach the truth. But it is a living union with Jesus Christ, to be renewed in heart, doing the works of Christ in faith and labor of love, in patience, meekness, and hope. Every soul united to Christ will be a living missionary to all around him. He will labor for those near and those afar off. He will have no sectional feeling, no interest merely to build up one branch of the work over which he presides and there let his zeal

end. All will work with interest to make every branch strong. There will be no self-love, no selfish interest. The cause is one, the truth a great whole.

Well may the question be asked with earnest, anxious heart, "Is envy cherished, is jealousy permitted to find a place in my heart?" If so, Christ is not there. "Do I love the law of God, is the love of Jesus Christ in my heart?" If we love one another as Christ has loved us then we are getting ready for the blessed heaven of peace and rest. There is no struggling there to be first, to have the supremacy; all will love their neighbor as themselves. Oh, that God would open the understanding and speak to the hearts of our churches by arousing the individual members.

Those who are at ease in Zion need to be aroused. Great is their accountability that bear the truth and yet feel no weight or burden for souls. Oh, for men and women professing the truth to arouse, to take on the yoke of Christ, to lift His burdens. There are wanted those who will not have merely a nominal interest but a Christ-like interest, unselfish—an intense ardor that will not flag under difficulties or cool because iniquity abounds.

I want to speak to the ears of our people in America in every church. Awake from the dead, and Christ will give you life. Souls are perishing for the light of truth as it is in Jesus. We are standing upon the very borders of the eternal world. Fair-weather Christians will not be wanted for this work. The sentimental and tasteful religion is not needed for this time. There must be intensity brought into our faith and in the proclamation of truth. I tell you, a new life is proceeding from satanic agencies to work with a power we have not hitherto realized. And shall not a new power from above take possession of God's people? The truth, sanctifying in its influence, must be urged upon the people. There must be earnest supplications offered to God, an agonizing prayer to Him, that our hopes as a people may not be founded on suppositions, but on eternal realities. We must know for ourselves, by the evidence of God's Word, whether we are in the faith, going to heaven or not. The moral standard of character is God's law. Do we meet its requirements? Are the Lord's people bringing their property, their time, their talents, and all their influence into the work for this time? Let us arouse. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1) – Letter 55, 1886. **E**

[From chapter 48 of *Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 376-383].

Ellen G. White, co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and messenger of the Lord.

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(Continued from page 17)

The Harvest and the Scarecrow

have not a moment to lose. Events of vital importance are taking place around us. We are on Satan's enchanted ground [in his melon patch, if you please]. *Sleep not.*¹⁶

Do you recall the experience of Peter and John? Though they had been strongly threatened if they did not stop preaching in the name of Jesus, the record says, "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, *they never stopped* teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 5:42).

Were the members of the early church afraid the "church would be closed"? Were they warned to avoid imprisonment? Were they to avoid persecution at all costs? Where in the entire Bible or in the writings of Ellen White do we find any admonition to "keep open the churches"? Where do we find advice to compromise the Message in order to carry on the Work? It is up to us to "preach the Word" and leave the results in the hands of the Lord of the Harvest.

Strengthen faith

To strengthen your faith and confidence in God's leading, read about the witness and stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 and of their results in Acts 8 and 9. Recall the victory of David over Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. Build up your faith by reading about the victory of God's people over the Egyptian army in Exodus 14. Be strengthened in your trust in God by reading about the deliverance from Assyria's 185,000-man army in 2 Kings 19 and about Elisha and the chariot of fire in 2 Kings 6. Be admonished also that not all were delivered, but many suffered as recorded in Hebrews 11. "What we want most is . . . heart power, prayer to God in faith for His converting power . . . It is not brain power or purse power, but heart power, that the people need now."¹⁷

"To every one who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of *measureless results*."¹⁸ What more can we, His servants, ask for? Or in the plaintive appeal of the Lord, "What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it?" (Isa. 5:4).

Work only among Christians and not the Moslems? Leave the unchurched and the unreached to their woeful destiny? Listen: "When we bring a stream of water into a garden to irrigate it, we do not provide for the watering of one place only, leaving the other parts dry and barren, to cry: 'Give us water.' And yet this represents the way in which the work has been carried forward in a few places, to the neglect of the great field. Shall the desolate places remain desolate? No. Let the stream flow through every place, carrying with it gladness and fertility."¹⁹

Do you question the counsel of God? When Moses was in trouble, he went to God for the solution of his problem. The Lord, as though surprised at Moses' lack of faith, asked, "Is the Lord's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you" (Num. 11:23).

Daniel's example

We can't help but remember Daniel and the trying experiences that came to him. Though Nebuchadnezzar had decreed the death sentence upon all the wise men and astrologers, the soothsayers and their students in the University of Babylon, Daniel was not troubled. He slept well that night, leaving his life and his future in the hands of the Lord. And it was in that very faith and trust that God spoke to him in a dream. Had he been so worried about his life that he couldn't have slept, would he have been given a dream? Dreams come only when one is asleep.

Daniel had made a habit of trusting God. He had a clear conscience, for everything was right between him and his Maker as well as with his fellowmen. He "did not hesitate. The approval of God was dearer to him than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate—dearer than life itself. He determined to stand firm in his integrity, let the result be what it might."¹⁰ Here we have an example for God's present-day witnesses. "As God called Daniel to witness for Him in Babylon, so He calls us to be His witnesses in the world today. In the smallest as well as the largest affairs of life, He desires us to reveal to men the principles of His kingdom . . . There is need of men who like Daniel will do and dare for the cause of right. Pure hearts, strong hands, fearless courage are needed."¹¹

Remember: "*The battle is not yours, but God's*. Take up your positions; *stand firm* and see the deliverance the Lord will give you. Do not be amid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you" (2 Chr. 20:15-17). When we follow the example of Jehoshaphat and do "what was right in the eyes of the Lord" (2 Chr. 20:32), we will succeed because there is a greater power with us than with all the combined forces of the world (see 1 John 4:4).

God's power

The power of God is moving already. We have been thrilled to learn that almost one-third of the membership of the West Indonesian Union are former Moslems! And in Bangladesh and in some parts of Africa, work among Moslems is meeting with success. Still, amazing as it may seem, almost nothing has been done for the Moslems of the Middle East, in the very cradle of Islam.

We praise God for what has been done. But much more needs to be done! With courage in the Lord, trust in His promises and obedience to His commands, let us recognize the futility of the *scarecrow* and work where the harvest is, where the *scarecrow* is the biggest and most formidable! Let us go forth to victory in the dark corners of the world. If some of us cannot go to the population centers of the Moslem world, perhaps God is calling us to the plot of ground with a house full of Moslems right next to our own homes! "May God forgive our terrible neglect in not doing the work that as yet we have scarcely touched with the tips of our fingers."¹²

Could it be that the Lord's servant is referring to our Moslem neighbors and friends?

By launching out into the deep, we will be accomplishing that for which the Lord has been waiting patiently so long. Our Lord's final injunction was: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20). He will be with us, even as we go to, the Moslems! And when His work is completed, He will fulfill His other promise: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to *all* nations, *and then the end will come*" (Matt. 24:14). **E**

Notes

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 560, 561.
2. *The Sanctified Life*, p. 39.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 41.
4. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 203.
5. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 486.
6. *The Great Controversy*, p. 601, emphasis mine.
7. *Reflecting Christ*, p. 121.
8. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 30, emphasis mine.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
10. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 483.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 487, 488.
12. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 35.

(Continued from page 20)

Satan's Plans Exposed

I also think you should use the money you give in offerings to dine in some really nice places."

It was her turn to be surprised. She hesitated for a moment, a look of utter disbelief on her face, then replied, "How can you, of all people, say such a thing! Paying my tithe and offerings is my duty-and I'm going to do it if it kills me!" What a strange attitude from one who seemed so mature and satisfied in her religion. Where had her education into the beauties of God's plan in the tithes and offerings been neglected?

It was in the paneled office of a businessman that I received another shock. He began our conversation by saying, "I pay an honest tithe, but as far as I'm concerned it is just a tax, like income taxes . . . and the offerings, they're taxes too."

Why do these unfortunate attitudes regarding this Christian practice exist in this enlightened age? Could it be because today's professing Christians are the descendants of the people who fled the persecution of a tithe-tax system? Has this warped attitude been inherited from generation to generation?

Results of this attitude

One has only to look around to see the unhappy results of this erroneous thinking. Churches face a constant struggle to match their incomes with their maintenance costs. Mission programs are restricted for lack of funds. People, considering themselves owners of the goods that they possess, show reluctance in parting with other than token amounts. Many feel themselves generous to a fault when giving amounts far below their potential. People are praised for their philanthropy. God is left out of the picture.

But even more serious than the limiting of church and mission programs is the lack of spirituality within the sacred confines of God's house. The result is a spiritually dead church in a dying world. God has such a simple, workable plan for financing His work here on the earth, but Satan has repeatedly tried to destroy it by inducing men to use methods that actually encourage selfishness rather than counteract it. This has been the devil's carefully executed plan to erase the image of God, the Owner. **E**



James A. Cress



The Power of a Visit

Ron and Sue Carlson are pastoral heroes to Sharon and me. Several years ago we learned that a dear friend had moved to their area.

As a young, discouraged widow, our friend had left the church and we were eager for her to experience a renewed and supportive contact. Hoping that she might respond to a friendly visit, we prayed that Ron's busy pastoral schedule might include a contact with our friend.

Sure enough, soon after receiving our message, Ron and Sue stopped by our friend's home to introduce themselves as Jim and Sharon's friends. Without exerting pressure, they extended a gracious invitation to attend services. That brief visit prompted our friend to consider her own desire for fellowship, and she began to attend.

Soon our friend sent us a letter describing her appreciation for "her pastoral family" and the kindness of the congregation. As her renewed relationship with Christ grew, she formally reestablished membership and rejoiced in the acceptance and nurture she was experiencing. Later we learned that she had met a man, also a member, and that they had married.

You can imagine why we think such pastoral care is heroic! We have learned some important insights from this redemptive process:

Never give up. You may not know how the Holy Spirit works to woo a loved one back. Distance from the church is never distance from God's love.

Value one soul. Remember the worth that Jesus places on the individual. It is one thing to reflect that "God so loved the world." It is another to proclaim that God still loves the world and wants the very best for each person He died to save. The gospel emphasizes the significance of one individual. Consider Jesus' parable of the importance of one lost sheep out of a hundred total. Preach the present reality of God's grace and help

people realize that they can return to faithfulness. Emphasize the potential that Heaven sees in every soul. God sees my sinfulness, but He promises that I can return just as I am.

Prioritize personal contact. Ron and Sue introduced themselves as "our friends." The apparent agenda of their visit was motivated by mutual friendship, and, thus, they found ready acceptance. Seek to learn as much as possible about those you hope to win. Remember, every person is someone's loved one. Others are praying for the success of your endeavor.

Seek opportune moments. Pray that God will move in advance of your visit. By praying and planning specific times to make evangelistic contacts and invitations, you enable the Holy Spirit to prepare hearts and minds for your visit.

Make short visits. A first contact need not be everlasting in order to have eternal results. A friendly introduction, a gracious invitation, and informative details of location, time, and program features are sufficient. Offer your availability for when they need a pastor.

Await results patiently. God's timing is not our timing. The seed you plant today may bear fruit on a schedule different from what you envision.

Preach grace-based, hope-filled messages. When our friend began to attend church services again, she told us of her appreciation for the powerful messages and the emphasis on Jesus' love, power, and righteousness.

Extend gospel invitations. Our friend was so impressed that Pastor Ron opened the doors of his church, thus encouraging people to act on what they had heard from God's Word and to make spiritual decisions in response.

Meet returnees halfway. Don't create difficulties for those desiring to return. The prodigal's father ran out to meet his son and accompanied him home

rejoicing. If people start toward home, make it easy for them to return and smooth the path for troubled souls. Protect them from those who would impose private opinions or scold them for what they may lack or may have done while they were gone.

Restore the past. Treat those who come to church as children of the King, which Christ's forgiveness and acceptance assures them they are. You cannot actually restore the lost years, but you can make their forgiveness real, build their faith, help them discover their spiritual gifts, and utilize their deepening love by deploying them to reach others.

Involve gracious members. Fellowship was an important factor in our friend's newfound relationship with her church family. She felt that others accepted her and their interaction encouraged her desire to grow spiritually. Ultimately, Jesus even led her to a life-partner right there in the church family.

Rejoice. Jesus says one returning sinner causes all heaven to rejoice. When backsliders return, the least the church can do is host a potluck lunch!

Commit now. Intentionally design time in your schedule for making visits. They are so powerful, they can affect eternity! **E**



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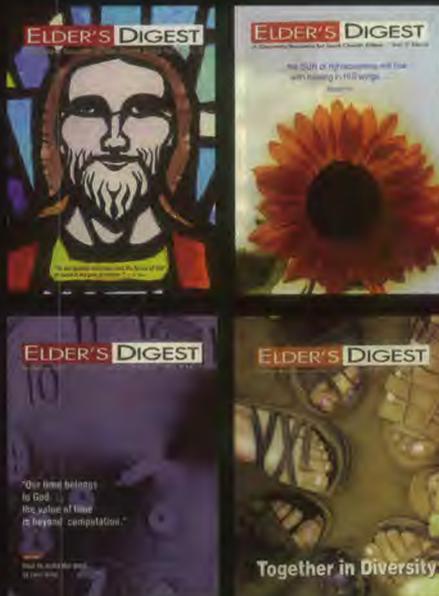
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