

# The Sabbath Watchman

November-December 2013

## **A Call for Reverence**

page 3

## **The Inner Conflict**

page 12

# Famine, Disease, Death

“Know ye that the Lord (YHAOVAH) He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.” Psalm 100:3.

There was a comment about what I wrote on page 2 of the September-October 2013, issue of *The Sabbath Watchman*, in which the downward progression of sin is seen by reading the Ten Commandments backward: “I can see the first seven as logical [10. Selfishness, 9. Lying, 8. Stealing, 7. Adultery, 6. Murder, 5. Treason, 4. War], but the last three relationships [3. Famine, 2. Disease, and 1. Death] I don’t understand how to get those from reading the first three commandments backward.” Let’s look at this again.

Psalm 100:3, above, is an echo of the first three commandments. The first part of the verse tells us that Yhaovah’ God is our Originator, Deliver, and Saviour. We exist at His will. The end of all who deny Him as God is eternal **death**.

The second part reminds us that it is He who has made us in His own image, implying that we are not to attempt to make anything in God’s image or try to worship and connect with Him through icons or images. Spiritual life cannot be maintained through dead idols or any human source. We **MUST HAVE** a living connection with the living God. **Disease** of spirit, mind, and body results if we do not have this connection.

The third part of the verse tells us that, since we are His people, He takes personal responsibility for sheltering, protecting, guiding, sustaining, and feeding us, as any loving earthly father would do. When we are born from above, we are given His name and a place at His table. But if we live in denial of His name, we take His name in vain and lose our place at His table (His pasture), which results in **famine**.

Thus, looking into the Ten Commandments, we see that the positive principles behind each one reveal the two alternatives—the path of life and the way of death. “True godliness will elevate the thoughts and ennoble the life.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 310.

“If men choose any other path than that of strict obedience, they will find that ‘the end thereof are the ways of death.’ Proverbs 14:12.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 360.



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## The Sabbath Watchman

Vol. 88, No. 6

**Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.**

We believe:

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

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# A Call for Reverence

*"But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple." Psalm 5:7.*

In the Sabbath School Lesson for October 5, 2013, we studied "The Second Cleansing" of the temple in Jerusalem by Jesus. That makes this the right moment to present a request for greater reverence in God's house. Our attitude toward this is extremely important. Do we want the sanctuary to be filled with Jesus' holy presence, His Word, and praise to God, or with common thoughts and talk of food, drink, and business?

The leadership of the Southeastern Field in the U.S. is urging all of our fellow believers in the Word of God to be active in seeking for His presence to fill us and His holy sanctuary. Therefore, we ask every believer to conduct himself or herself in the sanctuary in such a manner that the angels will want to join us in offering praise and thanksgiving to Heaven. Let the children and youth also have a part in praising the Lord.

"True reverence for God is inspired by a sense of His infinite greatness and a realization of His presence. With this sense of the Unseen, every

heart should be deeply impressed. The hour and place of prayer are sacred, because God is there. And as reverence is manifested in attitude and demeanor, the feeling that inspires it will be deepened. 'Holy and reverend is His name,' the psalmist declares. Psalm 111:9. Angels, when they speak that name, veil their faces. With what reverence, then, should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!"

"Well would it be for old and young to ponder those words of Scripture that show how the place marked by God's special presence should be regarded. 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet,' He commanded Moses at the burning bush, 'for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' Exodus 3:5. Jacob, after beholding the vision of the angel, exclaimed, 'The Lord is in this place; and I knew it not.... This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Genesis 28:16, 17....

"The humility of Solomon at the time he began to bear the burdens of state, when he acknowl-

*By Lisbeth Hunger*

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*"Angels, when they speak that name, veil their faces."*

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“Christ’s followers today should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear.”

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edged before God, ‘I am but a little child’ (1 Kings 3:7), his marked love of God, his profound reverence for things divine, his distrust of self, and his exaltation of the infinite Creator of all—all these traits of character, so worthy of emulation, were revealed during the services connected with the completion of the temple, when during his dedicatory prayer he knelt in the humble position of a petitioner. Christ’s followers today should guard against the tendency to lose the spirit of reverence and godly fear. The Scriptures teach men how they should approach their Maker—with humility and awe, through faith in a divine Mediator. The psalmist has declared: ‘The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.... O come, let us worship and bow down: Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.’ Psalm 95:3-6.” —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 48, 49, 47.

With these testimonies in our minds and hearts, we ask all the churches to do everything in their power to maintain reverence and solemnity, especially as follows:

- Begin the church service on time without waiting for people to appear, as explained in the following testimony: “Meetings for conference and prayer should not be made tedious. All should, if possible, be prompt to the hour appointed; and if there are dilatory ones, who are half an hour or fifteen minutes even behind the time, there should be no waiting. If there

are but two present, they can claim the promise. The meeting should open at the appointed hour, if possible, be there few or many present.” —*Review and Herald*, May 30, 1871.

“Singing, as a part of religious service, is as much an act of worship as is prayer.” —*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594.

- “Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering.” —*Evangelism*, p. 505.
- Turn cell phones off before entering the church.
- Do not bring food, water, or drinks into the meeting place.
- Do not speak or carry on conversation in the chapel.
- Parents, take care of your children after their Sabbath school classes as well as during and after the church service.
- Make every necessary effort to participate in the afternoon church activities in addition to the morning services.

May God help each individual to feel and reverence the presence of the Lord. May our thoughts, words, and actions testify that we worship Him wholeheartedly. —Written at the request of the Southeastern Field Committee. **SW**



# Organization and Discipline

By James White



The various forms of organization and church government existing in the several religious bodies of our time is evidence that church organization and discipline are subjects upon which great and good men have differed. The testimony of the Bible, therefore, especially of the New Testament, must be allowed to decide these subjects of vast importance to the prosperity of the church. In no one chapter or book of the New Testament has Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, or Jude written out a complete system of Christian discipline, giving the positions and duties of the several officers of the church.

But that there should be order in the church of God is evident, not only from the declarations of the apostles, and the record of what they did, given in the Acts of the Apostles, but from the great facts relative to organization and order found in the Old Testament. The Jewish church

was disciplined by a thorough system of organization. God is the same in all ages. The freedom of the gospel of the Son of God does not consist in laxity and confusion.

The epistles of Paul and of Peter distinctly speak of officers of the church, and of their duties. The New Testament clearly defines the relation which Christ sustains to the ministry and to the church, and also the proper relation of the ministry to the church and to one another. But the system of Christian organization is not given as fully in the New Testament as the system of Jewish organization was given in the Old Testament. Having, however, the benefit of both the record of the system of the former and the declarations and acts of the first apostles of the latter, we have all that Infinite Wisdom saw necessary for the Christian church.

The relation which Christ sustains to the ministry and to the church is stated in the following

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Christ is the great Shepherd of all, while His ministers are undershepherds.

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They surrender their  
own judgment and  
will to Him who has  
sent them.

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words of our Lord and of Paul: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matthew 23:8. "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:3. Christ is the great Shepherd of all, while His ministers are undershepherds.

And Paul would impress the church with her duty to the ministry in these words: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God." Hebrews 13:7. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Verse 17. And yet it was not the design of God that any system of organization should exist in the Christian church that would take the leadership from Christ.

Organization was designed to secure unity of action, and as a protection from imposture. It was never intended as a scourge to compel obedience, but, rather, for the protection of the people of God. Christ does not drive His people. He calls them. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." John 10:27. Our living Head leads the way and calls His people to follow.

Human creeds cannot produce unity. Church force cannot press the church into one body. Christ never designed that human minds should be molded for heaven by the influence merely of other human minds. "The head of every man is Christ." His part is to lead, and to mold, and to stamp His own image upon the heirs of eternal glory. However important organization may be for the protection of the church, and to secure harmony of action, it must not come in to take the disciple from the hands of the Master.

All true ministers are Christ's ambassadors. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20. In their ministry, they are to represent the doctrine of Christ and the interests of His cause in this world. They surrender their own judgment and will to Him who has sent them. No man can be Christ's ambassador until he has made a complete surrender of his right of private judgment to Christ. Neither can any man properly represent Christ who surrenders his judgment to his fellow man.

But the subject must not be left here, with the truth partly expressed. The words of Christ and His apostles relative to unity and the ordained means to secure it, and proper discipline, must have a qualifying bearing upon the subject, lest unsanctified men, who do not submit their will and judgment either to Christ or to church authority, assume the gospel ministry, and divide and scatter the flock of God.

But here we wish it distinctly understood that officers were not ordained in the Christian church to order or to command the church, or to "lord it over God's heritage." 1 Peter 5:3. In the case of difference of opinion that arose in some of the primitive churches relative to circumcision and the keeping of the law of Moses, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem acted as counselors in a manner to give room for the Holy Ghost to sit as Judge.

The report of that blessed meeting at Jerusalem to settle a festering difficulty, commences on this wise: "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." And the brethren who were from among the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia, "rejoiced for the consolation." Acts 15:28, 31. Differences settled in this way frequently seem more than settled, and generally remain settled; while those disposed of by the exercise of mere church authority are seldom really settled at all.

Between the two extremes of church force, and unsanctified independence, we find the grand secret of unity and efficiency in the ministry and in the church of God. Our attention is called to this in a most solemn appeal from the venerable apostle Peter to the elders of his time: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God

resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." 1 Peter 5:1-6.

Those who drafted the form of organization adopted by Seventh-day Adventists labored to incorporate into it, as far as possible, the simplicity of expression and form found in the New Testament. The more of the spirit of the gospel manifested, and the more simple, the more efficient the system.

The General Conference takes the general supervision of the work in all its branches, including the State Conferences. The State Conference takes the supervision of all branches of the work in the State, including the churches in that State. And the church is a body of Christians associated together with the simple covenant to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

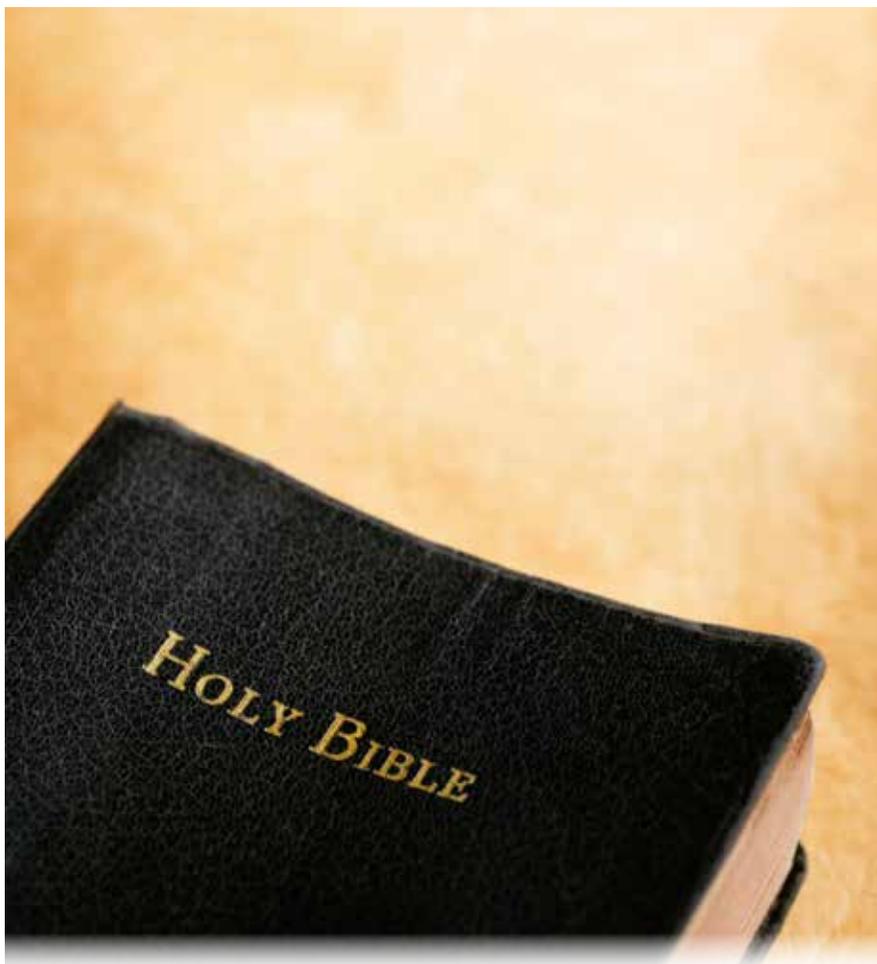
The officers of a local church are servants of that church, and not lords to rule over it with church force. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." Matthew 23:11. These officers should be examples of patience, watchfulness, prayer, kindness, and liberality to the members of the church, and should manifest a good degree of that love to those they serve exhibited in the life and teachings of our Lord.

Our State Conference Committees should be men of God, with liberality and breadth of views and feelings that will lead them to have a fatherly care of all branches of the work in the Conference. It is their duty to counsel together in the fear and love of God, and regard themselves as a board of counselors to all the ministers and churches under their supervision, and not a board of directors. Our great leader and director is Christ.

The labors and duties of the General Conference Committee are still more extensive and important than those of the State Conference Committee. They should be men of experience, of breadth of views, and divested of sectional feelings, whose minds and hearts of love can take in the best good of the cause in all its branches, and in all parts of the field. They should be regarded as a board of fathers to the cause in the highest sense.

In the fulfillment of the duties of their office, in taking the general supervision of the entire work, their strength is in so counseling with their brethren in the spirit of tenderness and love as to bind the hearts of all the laborers to their hearts, and give room for the voice of the Holy Ghost, as was manifested in the days of the apostles. They should ever bear in mind that the head of every man is Christ.

They may counsel with the State Conference Committees in reference to ministers laboring here or there, but should never direct. "The head of every man [every minister] is Christ." The minister who throws himself on any Conference Committee for direction, takes himself out of the hands of Christ. And that Committee that takes into its own hands the work of directing the ambassadors for Christ, takes a fearful responsibility. "One is your Master [Leader], even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Matthew 23:8. May God preserve to us our organization and form of church discipline in its original simplicity and efficiency. —*Review and Herald*, January 4, 1881. Brackets [ ] are in the original. **SW**



# The Communion Service



*By Joseph H. Waggoner*

**W**e speak now especially of that which we consider the third gospel ordinance—the Lord’s Supper. Many seem to suppose that, whatever may be their church relations, or if they have no relation to any church, they are entitled to the privilege of “communion” by virtue of their conversion; by reason of what they “feel” or have “experienced,” rather than by virtue of their conformity to the rules and regulations laid down for the guidance of the church and of church members. Against their claim we enter our hearty protest.

We deeply regret that such loose views have so largely obtained as they have, throughout the land. It is to be lamented that the obligations of church membership are so lightly regarded as

they are by multitudes of professed Christians; but we can expect nothing else where individuals claim, and are often allowed to receive, the benefits and privileges of church membership without taking upon themselves its obligations or showing a willingness to bear its responsibilities. They profess to be followers of Christ, but they lightly regard His teachings in regard to His church—His body. To such His words appeal, “And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” Luke 6:46.

And we go farther. We may admit all that these individuals claim in regard to their conversion; we may admit that they are truly converted, and are accepted of God as believers in His Son, and yet not admit that they are entitled to the privi-

leges of church members, unless they formally and properly become church members. This we cannot admit without breaking down every rule of church government and denying that the church has any control of its membership, or that it has any right of discipline and of determination as to who are and who are not members.

Let it then be distinctly understood that evidence of good Christian character is not, of itself, evidence of a right to the privilege of sacramental communion. Were this to be received as sole or sufficient evidence of such right, it would become the means of breaking down all church authority, and of destroying all the safeguards which the Lord has seen fit to set around His church. We think this proposition cannot be controverted. True, it may be quite contrary to the *feelings* of many well-intentioned Christians; but feelings are no argument, no test of duty. It cannot be denied that every Scripture ordinance has been changed or entirely ignored under the guise of *pious feelings*. There is no security in these matters except in strict conformity to the divine instructions.

An individual is not a member by a vote of the church, without baptism; neither is he a member by baptism, without a vote of the church. And to baptize a person with the understanding that he shall be voted into the church at some future time, is irregular. Baptism, being an initiatory rite, must be under the control of that authority which accepts or rejects members, and not under the control of a minister, the pastor, or the officers of the church. The church alone can authorize the elder or pastor to administer baptism.

These remarks on baptism are made in this connection only because it is a prerequisite to partaking of the Lord's Supper. That it is so has been the opinion of the church in all ages. Some opinions which are now popular have become so by a struggle; but as far as we know there has never been a question raised on this point. It is not possible to draw a contrary view from the Scriptures.

But this directly involves the subject of communion with all denominations. Many charitably-disposed brethren, in the kindness of their hearts, consider themselves under obligation to admit to our communion, or to go to the

communion of, those who appear to be honest, pious people. It is then pertinent to inquire of such, Would you admit those same people, on the ground of their piety, to membership in your church? To be consistent with the Scriptures, and with their own faith of the Scriptures, they would have to reply, We could not admit them to our church as members unless they should first be baptized, and should conform to the requirements of our church. But then the inquiry further arises, Is it consistent to admit to the privileges of church members, those who have not the qualifications to become church members? If you cannot fellowship them as *members*, how can you fellowship them *not being members*?

In order to make our investigations practical, it will be proper to answer queries and objections which have actually been raised on the subject. Thus it is said, It is the Lord's Supper—the Lord's table—not ours, and we have no right to exclude any who wish to come and who profess to be the Lord's servants. But that is the very reason why we would be careful, and even exclusive. If it were our own table, we would admit many who we cannot now admit. If the church were our own arrangement, we would accept many on the score of kindness, sympathy, and favor, whom we cannot now accept. And it is indeed the Lord's church, and the Lord's table, and as those to whom the truth and the ordinances are committed, we are in duty bound to keep the church as pure as may be possible, and admit to the Lord's table those only whom we would admit to the Lord's church. We might with equal propriety argue that baptism is the Lord's ordinance, and we have no right to deny it to any applicant who professes a desire to follow the Lord. And the church is the Lord's church, and we have no right to deny admittance to any who profess to be the Lord's servants. But to follow out this rule would soon make the table *a common table*, and bring the church and its ordinances into contempt. We cannot believe that any person will put forth claims which lead to such results, if he will use reason, and examine the Scriptures as to our obligations to the Lord and to His house. —*The Church, Its Organization, Ordinances, and Discipline*, pp. 106-110. SW

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It is indeed the Lord's church, and the Lord's table, and as those to whom the truth and the ordinances are committed, we are in duty bound to keep the church as pure as may be possible, and admit to the Lord's table those only whom we would admit to the Lord's church.

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# Paul's Method of Preaching



NIKOLAI K. BODAREVSKI (1850-1921)

By Ellen G. White

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Hiding self in the Saviour, they exalted the great plan of salvation, and the life of Christ, the Author and Finisher of this plan.

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Every true minister feels a heavy responsibility for the spiritual advancement of the believers entrusted to his care, a longing desire that they shall be laborers together with God. He realizes that upon the faithful performance of his God-given work depends in a large degree the well being of the church. Earnestly and untiringly he seeks to inspire the believers with a desire to win souls for Christ, remembering that every addition to the church should be one more agency for the carrying out of the plan of redemption.

Having visited the churches in Pisidia and the neighboring region, Paul and Silas, with Timothy, pressed on into "Phrygia and the region of Galatia," where with mighty power they proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation. The Galatians were given up to the worship of idols; but, as the apostles preached to them, they rejoiced in the message that promised freedom from the thralldom of sin. Paul and his fellow workers proclaimed the doctrine of righteousness by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. They presented Christ as the one who, seeing the helpless condi-

tion of the fallen race, came to redeem men and women by living a life of obedience to God's law and by paying the penalty of disobedience. And in the light of the cross many who had never before known of the true God, began to comprehend the greatness of the Father's love.

Thus the Galatians were taught the fundamental truths concerning "God the Father" and "our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." "By the hearing of faith" they received the Spirit of God and became "the children of God by faith in Christ." Galatians 1:3, 4; 3:2, 26.

Paul's manner of life while among the Galatians was such that he could afterward say, "I beseech you, be as I am." Galatians 4:12. His lips had been touched with a live coal from off the altar, and he was enabled to rise above bodily infirmities and to present Jesus as the sinner's only hope. Those who heard him knew that he had been with Jesus. Endued with power from on high, he was able to compare spiritual things with spiritual and to tear down the strongholds of Satan. Hearts were broken by his presentation of the love of God, as revealed in the sacrifice of His only-begotten Son, and many were led to inquire, What must I do to be saved?

This method of presenting the gospel characterized the labors of the apostle throughout his ministry among the Gentiles. Always he kept before them the cross of Calvary. "We preach not ourselves," he declared in the later years of his experience, "but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:5, 6.

The consecrated messengers who in the early days of Christianity carried to a perishing world the glad tidings of salvation, allowed no thought of self-exaltation to mar their presentation of Christ and Him crucified. They coveted neither authority nor pre-eminence. Hiding self in the Saviour, they exalted the great plan of salvation, and the life of Christ, the Author and Finisher of this plan. Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever, was the burden of their teaching.

If those who today are teaching the word of God, would uplift the cross of Christ higher and still higher, their ministry would be far more successful. If sinners can be led to give one earnest look at the cross, if they can obtain a full view of the crucified Saviour, they will realize the depth of God's compassion and the sinfulness of sin.

Christ's death proves God's great love for man. It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved.

Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. From it shines the light of the Saviour's love, and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain.

Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Galatians 6:14. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness....

The Spirit is given as a regenerating agency, to make effectual the salvation wrought by the death of our Redeemer. The Spirit is constantly seeking to draw the attention of men to the great offering that was made on the cross of Calvary, to unfold to the world the love of God, and to open to the convicted soul the precious things of the Scriptures....

And today God is still using His church to make known His purpose in the earth. Today the heralds of the cross are going from city to city, and from land to land, preparing the way for the second advent of Christ. The standard of God's law is being exalted....

It was the cross, that instrument of shame and torture, which brought hope and salvation to the world. The disciples were but humble men, without wealth, and with no weapon but the word of God; yet in Christ's strength they went forth to tell the wonderful story of the manger and the cross, and to triumph over all opposition. Without earthly honor or recognition, they were heroes of faith. From their lips came words of divine eloquence that shook the world. —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 207-210, 52, 53, 54, 77.

The cross of Christ—how many believe it to be what it is? How many bring it into their studies, and know its true significance? There could not be a Christian in our world without the cross of Christ. Then keep it before the schools as the foundation of all true education. Turn from the examples of the world, cease to extol the professedly great men; turn the mind from the glory of everything save the cross of Christ.... Let all, from the highest to the lowest, understand what it means to glory in the cross of Christ. That cross is to be bravely and manfully borne. Christ declares, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." And to all who will lift it, and bear it after Christ, the cross is a pledge of the crown of glory that can never fade away.

The most essential lessons for students to obtain are those that will point them to straight paths which lead, not to the world, but from the world, to the cross of Calvary. Their studies should be of that character which will make them most successful in the service of God, and enable them to walk in the footsteps of Christ.

This is the highest science that we can learn—the science of salvation. The cross of Calvary, rightly regarded, is true philosophy, pure and undefiled religion. It is eternal life to all who believe. By painstaking effort, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, it should be impressed upon the minds of students that the cross of Christ is just as efficacious now as in Paul's day, and should be as perfectly understood by them as it was by the great apostle, who could declare, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." —*The Youth's Instructor*, July 7, 1898. SW

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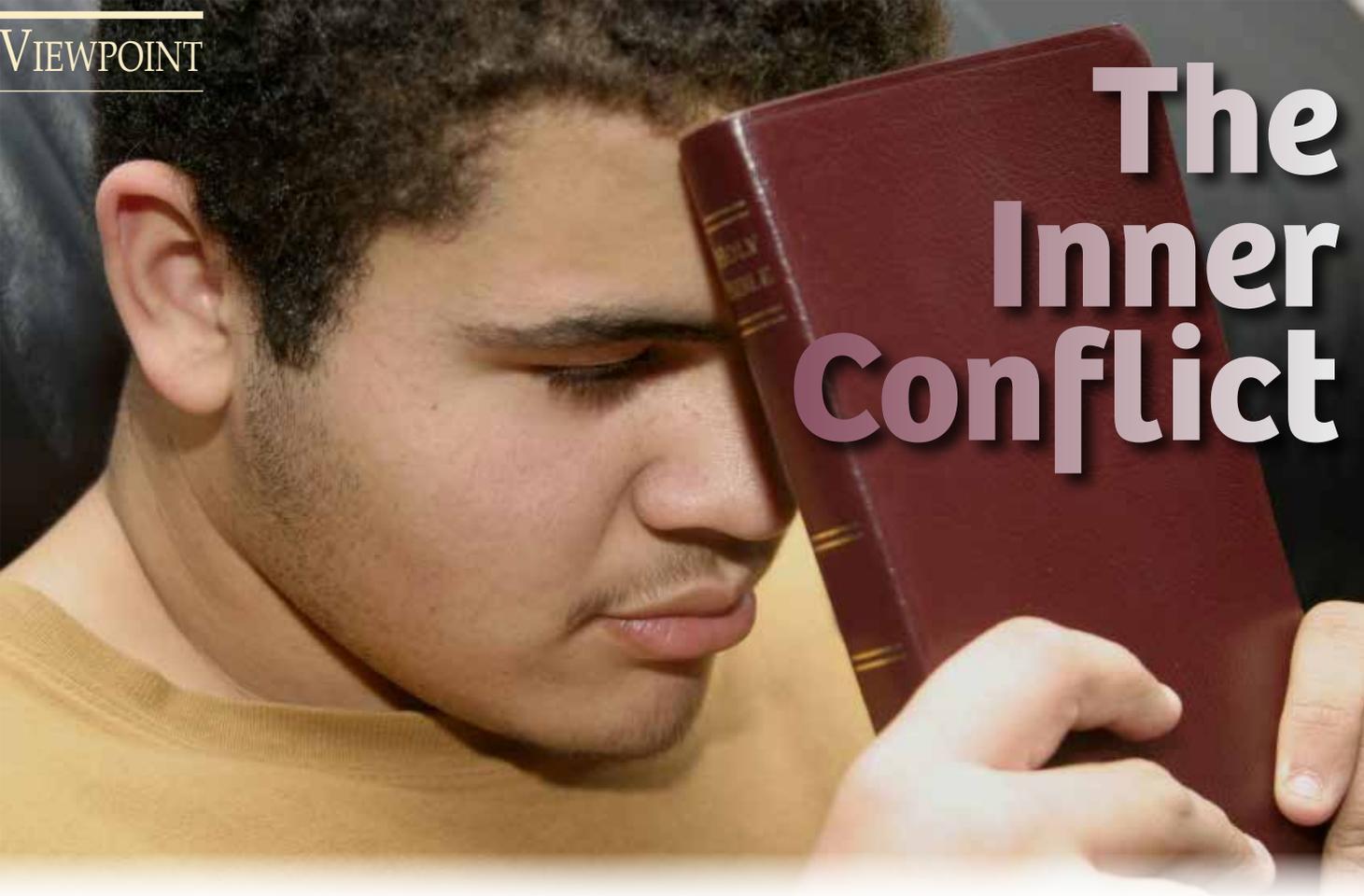
*"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Philippians 2:14-16.*

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The cross of Calvary, rightly regarded, is true philosophy, pure and undefiled religion.

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# The Inner Conflict

By Neptali Acevedo

*“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Romans 7:14-25.*

Many people sincerely believe that this text describes the personal experience of the apostle Paul after his conversion. Since the writer speaks in the first person, referring to a conflict that rages in his inner being, it is concluded that this is definitely the personal experience of the apostle.

The details of the conflict of the soul seeking a holy life, and the frustrating inability to find it, is the subject that occupies this portion of the seventh chapter of Romans. Paul depicts dramatically the anguish of a soul who, after striving for doing what is right, must exclaim: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Romans 7:24. This statement denotes the desperation of a soul who has fought hard but, at the failure of his best efforts, collapses defeated and hopeless. The writer does not leave the question in the air but immediately puts forward an answer that will be presented in depth in the next chapter. "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 7:25. At this point, the quoted sentence is a parenthetical precursor to the glorious vision of the man in Romans 8. In the last part of this verse, Paul resumes the course of his speech to close the description of the conflict of the conscience and the flesh.

The Epistle to the Romans was written around 58 A.D., and Paul's conversion took place in 35 A.D., which means that the apostle had 23 years in the faith as a believer and preacher when he wrote the letter.

Some support the idea that Paul is the person who lives the experience described in this chapter, quoting the words of Romans 7:22, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man." On the contrary, for the man alienated from Christ there is no pleasure in obeying the law; it is rather hateful to him. This does not seem to be the condition of this man.

From these assumptions it is concluded that in this chapter the apostle is describing his own conflict when he wrote the letter; and, by analogy, it must also be the experience of every Christian repentant believer.

This conclusion, however, raises a number of questions that cannot be ignored:

Was Paul a slave of sin, unable to keep the commandments, while pretending to be a servant of Christ?

Was Paul living in sin 23 years after his conversion?

Are all Christians tied to the same miserable condition?

Do we remain slaves of sin, no matter how deep our repentance and conversion are?

What is the meaning of conversion and freedom from sin if we cannot, by any means, be free from the bondage of sin?

### *The carnal man*

Very often the first statement of the apostle to introduce his speech on the conflict with the flesh is overlooked: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." Romans 7:14.

Paul builds his argument based on this premise. He speaks about a carnal person, that is, someone who is dominated and controlled by the flesh. We understand that the flesh is not the set of organs and systems that compose our bodies but rather the appetites and passions that are aroused in our bodies and demand prompt satisfaction, no matter how or when. A carnal person is one who is subject to and dominated by such appetites and passions and lives to satisfy their demands. The impulse or desire of the flesh, as opposed to the will of God, is expressed in the act of sin; and this in turn, through repetition and continuity, becomes the standard of conduct, ruling the person's life. This is the kind of person whom Paul is speaking about from this point on. The writer presents the frustrating failure of a carnal man trying to keep the law and then presents, in stark contrast, the victory of the spiritual man.

### *Slave of sin*

The understanding of the cause of the conflict becomes clearer when the apostle adds to the carnal condition of the described person his moral status: "sold under sin." This person is a slave; he is not free; he has a master who rules over him and controls his life. That master is sin.

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The writer presents the frustrating failure of a carnal man trying to keep the law and then presents, in stark contrast, the victory of the spiritual man.

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“Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” John 8:34. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Romans 6:16.

**The carnal man cannot obey**

“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Romans 8:7.

This is precisely what prevents the carnal man of Romans 7 from obeying. Having a carnal mind and being sold under sin, this man has to obey the instructions of his master; and consequently his life is in open conflict with the requirements of God’s law. That condition implies a permanent enmity against God. Sin sets its own law and does not accept submission or obedience to God’s law. It is impossible to establish harmony between the carnal man, subject to the law of sin, and God’s law, because it condemns and rejects all forms of sin. For man to be able to obey and have friendship with God, the old master must first die. One cannot serve two masters at the same time.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Matthew 6:24.

The law of sin is the law of the ego; it is the law of human selfishness that separates and makes him distinct and alien from God’s kingdom. When self reigns, it demands to be pleased in all things, and it becomes a tyrant that rules everything in one’s life. Such a man lives only for himself.

**The carnal man is under the death sentence**

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6. “For the wages of sin is death;...” Romans 6:23, first part.

The slave of sin will never be saved. He must first be free to attain salvation. Living as a slave of sin, no soul can be saved.

“Jesus came to this world to save His people from their sins. He will not save us in our sins, for He is not the minister of sin.” –*Signs of the Times*, February 15, 1892.

“Christ came not to save men in their sins, but from their sins.” –*Signs of the Times*, January 7, 1897.

“Men may have excellent gifts, good ability, splendid qualifications; but one defect, one secret sin indulged, will prove to the character what the worm-eaten plank does to the ship—utter disaster and ruin!” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 90.

**God is not pleased by the service of the carnal man**

“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:8.

Assuredly all who are under the rule of the flesh will yield the fruits of the flesh. That is precisely the conflict in the man of Romans 7; he wants to bear fruits of righteousness to please God; but instead, because he is carnal, he only yields the fruits of the flesh. Needless to say, the fruits of the flesh (Romans 7 man) are hateful in the sight of God.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21.

This cannot be the life of Paul when he wrote the epistle nor the life of those who have been born again. Paul could say: “Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1), because his life was in harmony, not in conflict, with the life of Christ.

**The man of Romans 8**

In chapter 8 Paul presents another kind of person. The description of the spiritual man is presented in sequence and as a contrast to the previous case. This is the response to the anguished question of the man in Romans 7 (“who shall deliver me

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It is the law of human selfishness that separates and makes him distinct and alien from God’s kingdom.

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from the body of this death?"). This case presents a spiritual person who reveals an experience diametrically opposed to the first one. Paul seeks to show that the religion founded on human efforts, even when those efforts are honest, does not bring peace to the soul or achieve freedom from sin.

### *A spiritual person*

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1.

Christ is the great solution for the human conflict. He breaks the chains of slavery to sin and opens the door that gives access to a world of freedom, joy, and eternal life.

The carnal man is doomed and lost; in contrast with him, the spiritual man is free from condemnation. Paul dedicates most of this chapter to the difference between the carnal man in conflict with his conscience and the freedom and triumph of the spiritual man.

The spiritual man is obviously a person who has died to the old man, that is, the carnal man in slavery to sin, and has been born again to walk in newness of life.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:6, 11. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians. 5:17.

### *The spiritual man is free*

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:15, 2. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36.

The liberation from the yoke of sin is the great theme that is projected from the cross of Calvary as the essential work of the redeeming Messiah, who came to free the captives of Satan and sin.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4:18, 19.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Romans 6:22.

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin." *-Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 419.

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"When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin."

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## The man of Romans 8 is under the control of the Holy Spirit

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:9, 14.

The fulfillment of Christ’s promise to give His Spirit to all who would receive Him as the Messiah was the test of discipleship in the days of the apostle. But the Spirit was not only going to perform miracles through them; His most important work was to develop and shape the character of Christ in the lives of all who accepted Him. As the natural result of that work of transformation, the fruit of the Spirit would be produced and manifested.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22, 23.

## The spiritual man meets the requirements of the law

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Romans 8:4; 6:18.

“He that abideth in Christ is perfected in the love of God, and his purposes, thoughts, words, and actions are in harmony with the will of God expressed in the commandments of His law. There is nothing in the heart of the man who abides in Christ that is at war with any precept of God’s law.” –*Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1895.

### COMPARATIVE TABLE

THE MAN OF ROMANS 7	THE MAN OF ROMANS 8
Carnal man	Spiritual man
Slave of sin	Free from sin
Unable to obey	Meets the law’s requirements
Yields fruit of the flesh	Yields fruit of the Spirit
Under condemnation	No condemnation
Death sentence	Everlasting life

## Conclusion

There is still a question to which we need to pay attention: If the man of Romans 7 is not the apostle Paul in his present condition at the time of writing the letter, why did he write in the first person, leaving the impression that it was his personal conflict?

In the first place, his words are a very beautiful expression of the sinner’s personal feelings. It makes us participants in the action. Reading in the first person makes me feel that it is I who is going through that experience. This arouses alarm in the conscience of the reader, causing him to meditate and examine the spiritual reality.

On the other hand, Paul is writing to Christians, mostly converts from Judaism. Like him, many of these Christian Pharisees had sought to achieve righteousness through the observance of the demands of the law. While externally they could achieve a form of godliness, those who were honest with themselves felt the uneasiness of a double-sided religion, a hypocritical system that was never able to meet the requirements of the ordinances but was always ready to condemn those who dared to declare their failure.

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone.” Romans 9:30-32.

In the man of Romans 7, the experience of a Pharisee or a professed Christian who knows about Jesus, but has not allowed Him to possess him, is personified with raw realism. It is the struggle of the soul trying to achieve righteousness by himself using his own efforts. It is actually the ego wanting to be good.

“It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love. Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, ‘I consent unto the law that it is

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While externally they could achieve a form of godliness, those who were honest with themselves felt the uneasiness of a double-sided religion.

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good.' 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' But he added, in the bitterness of his soul anguish and despair, 'I am carnal, sold under sin.' Romans 7:16, 12, 14. He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and cried out, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Romans 7:24, margin. Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' John 1:29." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 19.

The experience of Romans 7 is not the end of the story. It is just a sad chapter in the life of those who, deceived by their egos, seek holiness without dying to the old man. The end of the story is found in Romans chapter 8. There the

triumph of the spirit over the flesh is shown to be the end of the inner conflict in man's life. It is the final triumph of Christ in the life of man and over the kingdom of Satan.

"Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, 'O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day.' Psalm 119:97. And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Romans 8:1." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 63. **SW**

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"... Where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith...."

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## Triumph of the Cross

**T**ime is precious. The destiny of souls is in the balance. At infinite cost a way of salvation has been provided. Shall Christ's great sacrifice be in vain? Shall the earth be entirely controlled by satanic agencies? The salvation of souls is dependent upon the consecration and activity of God's church. The Lord calls all who believe in Him to be workers together with Him. While their life shall last, they are not to feel that their work is done. Until the time comes when Christ shall say, 'It is finished,' His work for the saving of souls will not decrease, but will grow in importance.

"The mercy of God is shown by His long forbearance. He is holding back His judgments, waiting for the message of warning to be sounded to all. There are many who have not yet heard the testing truths for this time. The last call of mercy is to be given more fully to our world...."

"The terrible condition of the world today would indicate that apparently the death of Christ has been almost in vain, that Satan has triumphed. The great majority of the earth's inhabitants belong to Satan's kingdom.... Christ has not yet set up His kingdom. 'We see not yet all things put under Him.'"

"But we have not been deceived. Notwithstanding the apparent triumph of Satan on the earth, Christ is carrying forward His mediatorial work in the heavenly sanctuary.... As we see the fulfillment of prophecy, our faith in the final triumph of Christ's kingdom should be increased. We should go forth with courage to do our appointed work.

"By the fragrance of our speech and the nobility of our characters, let us make it clear that in the great conflict between good and evil we are on the side of Christ. Let us express our faith in the triumph of the cross of Calvary. Let all our people decide that in their life truth and righteousness shall be magnified." —(Manuscript 57, 1903) *Christ Triumphant*, p. 360.

# My Irish Experiences

By *Manuela Di Franca*

One day I read an article in a magazine about Ireland and was fascinated to read about this country. The “green island,” as it is also called, was known to me only from my geography lessons and some Irish blessings on postcards. I cut out the article and put it on my desk. Every day I admired the awesome pictures of the Irish landscape, and this awoke in me the desire to travel to this country on my own. This dream was soon to become reality.

I study English and German in my secondary education, and the English Department of my university organizes internships abroad every year. I found out that they offered such an opportunity in Ireland in September 2008. I could feel my heart beating faster, and I eagerly told my parents about it. After clearing up some points, it was confirmed that I would travel to Ireland with five other students and teach German in an elementary school for four weeks. I could hardly believe that I was really going to start on this journey and thanked God from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity!

The day of my departure came quickly, and we boarded the flight from Munich to Dublin. We arrived in the capital late at night and were very tired. We still had to take a bus to get to our hotel in the center of the city. I had a suitcase and a large travel bag with me and was glad to put my luggage down in the bus.

When we got off at the bus stop, I looked forward to going to bed. But all of a sudden I realized that something was missing. In the heat of the moment, I had forgotten my travel bag on the bus, which had already driven on. How

would I ever find it again in such a huge city? In that piece of luggage I had some of my clothes for a month and school materials! I prayed to God to help me in this difficult situation. In the meantime, it was about midnight when we arrived at our hotel, where a friendly hotel clerk welcomed us. I told him about my misfortune, and he promised to take care of this matter. He made some phone calls and then took me in his company car to the bus terminal where the buses were parked at night.

When we got there, we entered a building, probably the lost and found office, and within a short time I had my travel bag back. I thanked the kind man, and he told me with a laugh: “In Ireland nothing is impossible!” But I knew better. With God nothing is impossible! Totally exhausted, but with a happy and thankful heart, I finally fell asleep in bed. My stay in the “country of blessings” started in this unusual way, and I was sure that God would not leave me alone in this place.

“My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.” Psalm 121:2.

The weekend in Dublin passed by quickly, and the other students and I spent a wonderful time together. I also had the opportunity to talk with them about my faith and God’s day of rest, because I didn’t participate in their activities on Saturday. They were open and understanding.

During my stay in the country, I discovered something interesting concerning the Sabbath which I didn’t know before. I did some research on early Christianity in Ireland and Scotland and learned about the Celtic Church. I found out

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With God nothing  
is impossible!

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that early Christians there kept the Sabbath as the day of rest. Professor James C. Moffatt states in his 1882 book, *The Church in Scotland*, p. 140: "It seems to have been customary in the Celtic Churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labour. They obeyed the fourth commandment literally upon the seventh day of the week."<sup>1</sup>

However, Rome eventually attacked the Sabbath-keeping Celts. Many of them resisted, but the Celtic Church suffered a lot of persecution and step by step gave up its apostolic teachings and accepted Sunday as the day of worship along with other Catholic beliefs. Historian A.C. Flick writes in *The Rise of the Medieval Church*: "The monks sent to England [in 596 A.D.] by Pope Gregory the Great soon came to see that the Celtic Church differed from theirs in many respects.... Augustine himself [a Benedictine abbot] ... held several conferences with the Christian Celts in order to accomplish the difficult task of their subjugation [submission] to Roman authority.... The Celts permitted their priests to marry, the Romans forbade it. The Celts used a different mode of baptism [i.e., true baptism: immersion] from that of the Romans.... The Celts held their own councils and enacted their own laws, independent of Rome. The Celts used a Latin Bible [i.e., the *Itala*] unlike the [Roman Catholic's Latin] Vulgate, and kept Saturday as a day of rest."<sup>2</sup>

Back to my trip. On Monday we had to go to different places, because each student was to teach in a different school. Therefore, I got on a train and set off for Cork, which is 250 kilometers away from Dublin, and was picked up by my host family. My school was located in Clonakilty, a small town on the south coast of Ireland.

My host family was a young couple with three children who welcomed me in a very kind manner. Their house was just five minutes away from the school where I was to teach and was surrounded by lots of green pastures. From my window, I had a fantastic view of the coast and the sea! At school I immediately became attached to the students and teachers and felt at ease. I had a lot of fun teaching them a little German and sharing some German culture. I was able to

improve my English and gain some ideas and suggestions for school life. There was plenty of time to explore the country alone, with my hosts, or with my fellow students. I enjoyed the beauty of Ireland very much—the endless green pastures and hills, the lonely shores, the colorful houses and doors, the beautiful architecture of the castles and mansions.

During this time, I often thought about God and my life. Deep inside I had the desire to speak with Him and saw that my relationship with Him became closer. Before leaving for Ireland, I had experienced something painful, for I had broken off a relationship and still had to come to terms with it. I struggled with God and couldn't understand His ways, but now I could feel how He was talking to me and wanted to heal my wound. The words in 2 Kings 20:5 became very important to me and gave me comfort: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee." It became clear to me that God would heal me only if I gave Him all the pieces of my heart. Maybe He had made this trip to Ireland possible so I could make sense of it all and get closer to Him!

It was also my wish to pray for an opportunity to speak with my host parents about God, because I had noticed that church and faith were just a tradition for them. One afternoon my host father was mowing the lawn. All of a sudden he called all of us and asked us to help him look for something. While working in the yard, he lost a little screw from the lawn mower; it disappeared in the grass. How would we ever find such a tiny piece? It was like looking for a needle in a haystack! I prayed silently, and the words of Jesus crossed my mind: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Luke 11:9. We had been searching for some minutes, and all at once my host father shouted: "Yippee!!" He had been successful in finding the screw!

I was very happy and told him: "You know, I was praying that we would find the screw."

He looked puzzled and then replied: "Well, apparently your prayer worked!" **SW**

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God would heal me only if I gave Him all the pieces of my heart.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p122.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.truthseek.net/stpatty.html>



### Genetically modified organisms

**Q** Do you have any information where it is written about GMOs in the Spirit of prophecy books? –RG

**A** “Christ never planted the seeds of death in the system. Satan planted these seeds when he tempted Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge which meant disobedience to God. Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord’s great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the master, ‘Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?’ The master answered, ‘An enemy hath done this.’ Matthew 13:27, 28. All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares.” –*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 288.

“Those who honored and feared to offend God, at first felt the curse but lightly; while those who turned from God and trampled upon His authority, felt the effects of the curse more heavily, especially in stature and nobleness of form. The descendants of Seth were called the sons of God—the descendants of Cain, the sons of men. As the sons of God mingled with the sons of men, they became corrupt and, by intermarriage with them, lost, through the influence of their wives, their peculiar, holy character, and united with the sons of Cain in their idolatry. Many cast aside the fear of God, and trampled upon His commandments. But there were a few that did righteousness, who feared and honored their Creator. Noah and his family were among the righteous few.

“The wickedness of man was so great, and increased to such a fearful extent, that God

repented that He had made man upon the earth; for He saw that the wickedness of man was great, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

“The curse did not change at once the appearance of the earth. It was still rich in the bounty God had provided for it. There were gold and silver in abundance. The race of men then living was of very great stature, and possessed wonderful strength. The trees were vastly larger, and far surpassing in beauty and perfect proportions anything mortals can now look upon. The wood of these trees was of fine grain and hard substance—in this respect more like stone. It required much more time and labor, even of that powerful race, to prepare the timber for building, than it requires in this degenerate age to prepare trees that are now growing upon the earth, even with the present weaker strength men now possess. These trees were of great durability, and would know nothing of decay for very many years.

“A heavy, double curse, first in consequence of Adam’s transgression, and second, because of the murder committed by Cain, was resting upon the earth; yet the mountains and hills were still lovely. Upon the highest elevations grew majestic trees, rising to a lofty height, their branches spreading to a great distance on every side, while the plains were covered with verdure, and appeared like a vast garden of flowers. Some of the hills were covered with trees of beauty, and vines climbing the stately trees were loaded with grapes, while beautiful flowers filled the air with their fragrance. But notwithstanding the richness and beauty of the earth, yet, when compared with its state before the curse was pronounced upon it, there was manifest evidence of sure and certain decay.

“The people used the gold, silver, precious stones, and choice wood, in building houses for themselves, each striving to excel the other. They beautified and adorned their houses and lands with the most ingenious works, and provoked God by their wicked deeds. They formed images to worship, and taught their children to regard these pieces of workmanship made with their own hands, as gods, and to worship them. They did not choose to think of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and rendered no grateful thanks to Him who had provided them

all the things which they possessed. They even denied the existence of the God of Heaven, and gloried in, and worshiped, the works of their own hands. They corrupted themselves with those things which God had placed upon the earth for man's benefit. They prepared for themselves beautiful walks, overhung with fruit trees of every description. Under these majestic and lovely trees, with their wide-spread branches, which were green from the commencement of the year to its close, they placed their idols of worship. Whole groves, because of the shelter of their branches, were dedicated to their idol gods, and made attractive for the people to resort to for their idolatrous worship.

"Instead of doing justice to their neighbors, they carried out their own unlawful wishes. They had a plurality of wives, which was contrary to God's wise arrangement. In the beginning, God gave to Adam one wife--showing to all who should live upon the earth, His order and law in that respect. The transgression and fall of Adam and Eve brought sin and wretchedness upon the human race, and man followed his own carnal desires, and changed God's order. The more men multiplied wives to themselves, the more they increased in wickedness and unhappiness. If any one chose to take the wives, or cattle, or anything belonging to his neighbor, he did not regard justice or right, but if he could prevail over his neighbor by reason of strength, or by putting him to death, he did so, and exulted in his deeds of violence. They loved to destroy the lives of animals. They used them for food, and this increased their ferocity and violence, and caused them to look upon the blood of human beings with astonishing indifference.

"But if there was one sin above another which called for the destruction of the race by the flood, it was the base crime of amalgamation of man and beast which defaced the image of God, and caused confusion everywhere. God purposed to destroy by a flood that powerful, long-lived race that had corrupted their ways before him. He would not suffer them to live out the days of their natural life, which would be hundreds of years. It was only a few generations back when Adam had access to that tree which was to prolong life. After his disobedience he was

not suffered to eat of the tree of life and perpetuate a life of sin. In order for man to possess an endless life he must continue to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. Deprived of that tree, his life would gradually wear out." —*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 66-69. See also *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 7, "The Flood."

### The 1856 vision

**Q** Some controversies have come to light regarding the writings of Sister Ellen G. White, as some claim that she is a false prophet because she made false predictions. I would like others' perspectives on the statement used to make these accusations. Here is the statement: "I was shown the company present at the Conference. Said the angel, 'Some food for worms, some subjects of the seven last plagues, some will be alive and remain upon the earth, to be translated at the coming of Jesus.'" —*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4b, p. 18. —GG

**A** It was during a conference in 1856 that Sister White made the above statement. Since all who were alive then are now dead, does this unfulfilled prediction prove that Sister White is a false prophet?

Deuteronomy 18:22 states: "If a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord but the thing does not take place or prove true, it is a word that the Lord has not spoken." —*New Revised Standard Version*. This text, taken alone, would indict a number of Bible prophets. But "in the mouth of two or three witnesses let shall every word be established." 2 Corinthians 13:1. Deuteronomy 18:22 is to be understood just as any other text—in context. Other scriptures reveal that there are qualifying factors to be considered, not the least of which is that God's promises are conditional. That means that the free will of man and men is also involved. For example, it was God's will that the gospel prophecy of Matthew 24:14 be fulfilled and Christ should return more than one hundred years ago; but because of insubordination Sister White stated in 1901: "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years!" —(Letter 184, 1901) *Evangelism*, p. 696. (More on that subject below.)

On the point of the conditional nature of God's promises we find these explanations in Jeremiah: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jeremiah 18:7-10.

Jonah's experience illustrates the first part of Jeremiah's counsel, where a threat of judgment was reversed. (See Jonah 3:3-5, 10.)

The second condition is seen in Exodus 6:2, 6-8, where a promised blessing is given and then retracted in Numbers 14:26-34. "And God spake unto Moses," "say unto the children of Israel, . . . I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, . . . and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord." Exodus 6:2, 6-8.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me? . . . Say unto them, . . . Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, . . . Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, . . ." "And ye shall know My breach of promise." Numbers 14:26-30, 34.

The house of Eli also came to know God's breach of promise. See 1 Samuel 2:30, 31.

These few examples show that God, though sovereign, is not arbitrary. He does not arbitrarily deal with men. He often holds in check His perfect will to allow the laws of nature to rule so that men can see the fruit of disobedience and perhaps learn under His permissive will, for He will not override one's free will. This is what gives divine predictions their conditional quality. As the Lord stated to Israel in Numbers

14:34: "Ye shall know My breach of promise," or, as an alternate marginal reading states, "Ye shall know the altering of My purpose."

Well-known Bible commentators present it this way: "God's promises are as conditional as His threats. It would be neither just nor merciful to us for God to continue His favors unabated after we had departed from Him. The removal of them is a wholesome warning to us. It springs naturally from the personal relation of God to His people, one which depends on reciprocal sympathy." —*The Pulpit Commentary*, Notes (Homiletics) on Jeremiah 18:7-10.

"The majority of the [Old Testament] prophecies, however, were of the conditional type. They contain a suppressed 'unless' or 'if you keep My commandments' type of conditionality. . . . It is this provisional nature to the threat or promise delivered by the prophet that explains such a famous case as that of the prophet Jonah." —*Hard Sayings of the Bible*, by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.; Peter H. Davids; F. F. Bruce; Manfred T. Brauch (1996).

Regarding the promise of Christ's second coming, we see that all through the Scriptures the expectation was a present reality for the people of God. Peter answers those who would doubt the certainty of God's promise to bring an end to this world of evil, simply because time has tarried, by stating that "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9.

And he also declares that by our choices we can hasten that day, and by implication delay it: "Waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God." 2 Peter 3:12, *NRSV*.

On this point other commentators have observed: "God appoints us as instruments of accomplishing those events which must be first before the day of God can come. By praying for His coming, furthering the preaching of the Gospel for a witness to all nations, and bringing in those whom 'the long-suffering of God' waits to save, we hasten the coming of the day of God." —Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, *Commentary*, Notes on 2 Peter 3:12.

The preaching of the gospel in the whole world is dependent upon Christ's disciples working in

cooperation with Him, with a faith that works by love. Therefore, the lack of surrender on man's part has "limited the Holy One of Israel" (Psalm 78:41) from doing as He desires. Nevertheless, the promises of God are sure. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14.

Sister White clearly understood that there is an implied conditional quality to God's promises and threatenings. Her writings in regard to Christ's advent reveal that His return involves a state of being among Christ's followers. In 1883 she made that point in this way: "The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional...."

"It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness. He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in 'because of unbelief.' Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

"For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years." –(Manuscript 4, 1883) *Evangelism*, pp. 695, 696.

"These words from Mrs. White harmonize with what we have already discovered of the ways of God toward humanity, that free will plays an awesome part in the operation of the plans of God for this earth. We can better understand Mrs. White's unfulfilled prediction of 1856

when it is examined in the light of the conditional character of prophetic promises found in the Scriptures." –*Ellen G. White Estate Research Documents*, Article "The Predictions of the 1856 Vision," p. 4. **SW**

## Color Code Your Bible

To enhance, direct, and focus your mind during Bible study, it is helpful to mark neatly and distinctly the different ideas presented in God's Word. This can be done using a color coding system, which will help you slow down and think more about what God's Word is saying to you personally. It will also help you to find topics and references easily when you need them. You might want to try the system presented below, or make up your own.

**RED** represents the power and blood of Christ, which washes away our sins. It is also used for His promises, or for anything referring to God. It is also used to mark the part God plays in our salvation. It helps us to see what God's work is and what He does to save us.

**BLUE** represents obedience in the sanctuary. This color is used to highlight the part we play in our salvation. This helps us see what God wants us to do and to be so He can save us.

**PINK** is used to denote a child's part or anything referring to infants and children.

**ORANGE** represents warnings, cautions, reproofs, or corrections.

**BROWN** is used for Satan's wrong ways of life, showing the thoughts, words, or actions that are evil. Evil is any selfishness. Brown is the color of dirt, so it fitly represents anything from which we need to be cleansed.

**GREEN** highlights anything that has to do with faith. In fact, Biblically green denotes faith.

**YELLOW** is used to highlight anything that you find interesting and valuable.

You can draw a box around a word or words showing key phrases, words, or topics that you want to find quickly

**NOTE:** You may find that it looks neater to underline the text instead of using a highlighter. However, since it can be difficult to differentiate between red and pink, you may want to highlight things in pink, while underlining all other colors. –[http://www.lmn.org/catalog/product\\_reviews\\_info.php/products\\_id/3865/reviews\\_id/22](http://www.lmn.org/catalog/product_reviews_info.php/products_id/3865/reviews_id/22).



# News to inspire

## A visit to Peru

*"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." Proverbs 19:17.*

This Bible text came true when I traveled to South America at the beginning of 2013 and spent several weeks there, especially in Peru, for the Good Samaritan Department.

At the very beginning, it was difficult, because there was a three-hour delay in our departure, but the Lord made all things well. After a long flight, I arrived in Lima. The brethren in Lima are always so kind; they were waiting for me, and it was a great joy to see them again.

That evening, I traveled to Chimbote, a small fishing town, where I had very nice experiences. One year before, at a conference in Germany, we solicited financial support for Sister Gumercinda Dominguez, who suffered paralysis. She did not have the means to pay for a tomography test that her doctor wanted to do for her. By the grace of the Lord, we were able to gather €400, and she was able to have the test.

Later, when her family was unable to obtain the money

for her treatment, especially because her sons were out of work, the Good Samaritan sent funds for her, and her family was very grateful. They sent us their greetings and wished us the Lord's blessings.

Now this sister is feeling much better. She has a walker and is very grateful for the help she received from the Good Samaritan Department. She expressed how wonderful it is to know that brothers and sisters so far away were willing to help her. I was very happy to see her walking with her walker and also to see her in much better health. Her daughter Sandy told me that one day, before the throne of God, they will see those who gave generous offerings for them.

It was another joy to meet the sister who is responsible for the Good Samaritan branch in Chimbote. I explained to her how the Department works and what we do, and she was also very thankful.

One evening as we were taking a walk, my friend Sandy and I saw an elderly man with very swollen legs and feet. I asked my friend if we could invite him to her place and give him some treatment for his legs. I began treatment on both of his legs, using some medicine I had taken with me from Germany. There were deep wounds in the man's legs, and I could see once more how wonderful our Lord is. The gentleman was very grateful for our help and attention, and we were able to tell him about our Lord Jesus.

After I left Chimbote, where I stayed at Sister Sandy's home, I visited various cities by traveling at night on the bus and meeting brethren

who needed help during the day. Some believers told me that normally foreigners don't travel alone in Peru; they go in companies. I was traveling alone, but I was accompanied by the Lord's angels.

For a trip to Cajamarca in northern Peru, which is about six thousand feet above sea level, Sister Sandy went with me. It is a very lush green region with lots of fruit. Sister Sandy was a great help and blessing in all the work we did together. The brethren there are remodeling the church. The meeting hall is on the second floor, and to reach it we had to climb up a narrow, wobbly wooden ladder. In Germany we would call it a "chicken coop ladder." Climbing this ladder was quite dangerous in the rainy season. One afternoon, I spoke about health reform and met many people who need our help.

Sister Jobita, who is perhaps 80 years old and unable to read, sells bananas at the market. Not long before, some robbers broke into her small place and stole the little money she had; she was not able to pay her rent and never received the help she was promised from the authorities. When I gave her a gift from the Good Samaritan, she embraced me in tears and was so thankful for the assistance.

Another sister, Trinidad, who is 83 years old and also unable to read, received no governmental assistance. She was unable to pay for some medicine, so I also gave her some means. To help those sisters was a great joy. I was very impressed by how they try to help each other.

Then I returned to Lima, where our denomination has 24

churches with many members and youth. During the seven-hour trip, a young lady who sat by me and was also traveling to Lima asked me some questions about the Bible. For more than four hours, we were able to speak about Jesus, His message, and His life. She was very interested and helped me when we arrived at our destination. Perhaps we will meet again!

It was a great blessing for me to be able to stay with the family of Brother Reto Veloz in Lima. One Sabbath Brother Reto's wife and I visited some believers who are in need. In the Meza family, the father is suffering from cancer



*This brother suffers from cancer, and his two daughters help him*



*Sister Anett Leithold with a sister who was helped in Cajamarca, Peru*

and has no strength to stand or walk. His daughters help him the best they can by preparing vegetable juices and herbs for him. His medicine is very expensive. A gift from the Good Samaritan provided assistance for them to buy the vegetables and special medicine. One of his daughters suffered from a worm in her brain. The parasite is now gone, but it left a lot of damage behind, and she suffers from epilepsy. I gave her some means to be able to buy medicine. The family was very grateful and sent many greetings to the brethren



Sister Anett with the Chiclayo Good Samaritan team

tional money to buy a little more food. With tears in her eyes, she thanked me for the Good Samaritan gift I gave her, with which she bought some boxes, oil, and a few other things for her little

business. A few months later, Sister Elisa Saldaña told me that Sister Rosula's business is growing. She now sells eggs and boiled potatoes with a special sauce, and she sends her thankful greetings.

Another brother lives with his nephew. The house belongs to his sister, and she lets him live in a small room without a window and with a tin roof; the sun beats down on it, and the room becomes very hot. They give him €7 every month, and his nephew serves him a simple meal each day. He was very grateful when he received a Good Samaritan gift.

In three churches in Chiclayo, I was able to present three talks about health and share God's blessings. I could tell you more stories, but one thing is for sure: Traveling in Peru was something very special for me; it was an awesome and blessed adventure. The country feels like my second home, and I thank God for so many blessings and that I could be a blessing to the brethren and they to me. It was a great joy to see them so happy and thankful, as reflected in their shining faces.

The believers send their greetings. It does not matter how much you do for your brothers and sisters, whether large or small. If you give with all your heart, the Lord will bless you.

For fifteen years, Sister Rosula has sold boiled eggs at the market, and often her income does not even come to €1.50 per day to cover her one meal a day. I was troubled when I saw her home. Her children cannot help her. I explained to her how she could sell more and earn addi-

—Anett Leithold

## Please continue helping Philippines

Below are some pictures of the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the town of Tacloban.

Wikipedia writes: "Typhoon Haiyan, known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines, was a powerful tropical cyclone that devastated portions of Southeast Asia, particularly the Philippines,

on November 8, 2013. It is the deadliest Philippine typhoon on record, killing at least 6,201 people in that country alone. Haiyan is also the strongest storm recorded at landfall, and unofficially the strongest typhoon ever recorded in terms of wind speed."

Please continue to contribute to the Good Samaritan Department to help the Philippines.



# News to inspire

## News from Myanmar

Greetings with the words of God found in Psalm 1:3: "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Tomorrow, Sunday, April 14, we will fly back to Manila, Philippines, and then fly to Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. Regarding the work here in Myanmar, we are trying our very best to do all we can to help our people, to help the work, and to find more people who do not yet know the gospel we are bringing.

We tried to get help from the government to travel back to Matupi, even though the risk is big, but all our efforts failed. The government said they cannot allow us to go there, because there is big trouble with Muslims from India who came here to fight against some ethnic groups. So we were not able to meet the majority of our members in Myanmar.

We invited John and his wife to come with us to Yangon to ordain him as a church elder. He showed us their marriage contract from the Civil Registrar and also their receipts for tithes and offerings, showing that they are really paying their tithes. When we found out that there are few interested people in Yangon, we tried our best with Pastor Arnulfo Cortez to contact friends and those who had visited the church. Then we conducted a seminar from Wednesday to Sabbath and called the people and the members in Yangon for a series of studies.

After the seminar, we were able to encourage our members, share points of faith with them, and teach important truths for the Buddhists and various Christians. Some want to be

baptized, but we found out that it was too soon for them. There are also candidates for baptism in Matupi; however, since we need more money to bring them here, we postponed the baptism. We will leave them all with Brother Suan to continue following up with them.

During our last week here, we tried our best to contact H.C. Ratthie, the man who had written to the GC office, by Internet and phone. We also attempted to locate the place because we were unable to contact him by phone or on the Internet. Finally, after one week, we were able to reach him by phone, and we invited him to come to our hotel. He came and took us to his place, where he had gathered about fifty people. We gave them health lectures and Bible studies. The people were very interested.

Then yesterday, Brother Cortez, Brother Suan, Brother Suan's wife, and I went again and gave more studies from morning to afternoon. Four pastors were there, along with many Christians. Most of them were very interested especially in the Sabbath, and they were very surprised when we presented the Sabbath truth from the Bible. They had many questions, but we had to stop, because we needed to catch the last bus back to Yangon. The place was far from the city of Yangon.

I found out that most of the people were interested to know the truth, and some of them were sincere; but Ratthie, the one who wrote to the GC, seemed mostly to be looking for financial support for his ministry, serving children, poor people, non-Christians, etc. I often meet this kind of people. But we tried our best and pray that the Holy Spirit will reach his heart with the truth so he can see the great value in connecting with the family of God.

I am sad that we met these people at the end of our stay and now have to leave, but I instructed Brother Suan to take care of these souls, and they promised to continue studying with him. Brother Suan's strength so far has been in preaching to the established congregations, so we tried to train him how to search for new souls in addition to maintaining and encouraging the members. I hope and pray that God will help him.

There is a lot of work to be done in this country, because it is difficult to be a Christian here and adopt Heaven's teachings and principles. The people are accustomed to practicing what they learned from their parents in the Buddhist faith.

We conducted a meeting for church officers and taught them what they need to do. We observed that our system of worship is strange to them, even in singing, for they are used to singing in a boisterous praise style that is not very sacred.

We also tried to encourage them regarding the importance of the canvassing work so they can grow and stand strong without depending on the General Conference. They want to do this, but we need to help them in producing materials. There are some options we are looking at and studying. The secretary here, Sister San, can send something to the GC Publishing Department in Burmese; but I don't know if your computer can read Burmese writing. The other possibility is for them to prepare the originals here in Myanmar and we supply money for printing the materials. Another possibility would be to see if we can purchase the printed materials more cheaply in Philippines. When the believers have these materials for canvassing, we can help train colporteurs here and teach them everything before sending them

to different cities. We need to do this so that in the future we will not always need to support this country financially, because the people are poor, most of them having no work. In fact, many of our people have gone to other countries to find work, and now we don't know where they are and what happened to them.

Concerning the land, yes, I believe we need to have that here. The land that Brother Suan mentioned is okay. It can be reached by car, and electricity is available; we can dig for water and purchase a water pump without too much expense. But I would suggest that before buying any property we need to register the church, or at least a health organization, because we do not know what will happen in the future. Furthermore, land is expensive and the prices are constantly rising, especially near the city. The house and land where Brother Suan is living is for sale for around 300,000 dollars.

We are working very hard here, and it is difficult this time, because it is very hot. Brother Cortez got sick, but we used lemons and cucumber and thank God that he is okay now. There are many places that we need to visit, but it is impossible to reach them this time because of the political situation of the country.

We visited a Seventh-day Adventist pastor who had become my friend and was very interested to hear the message that we shared with him. But the leaders found about this and increased his benefits and transferred him to Matupi to take care of many churches there. We need to pray for the work here, for it is not easy to have even one member in this Buddhist country.

Thank you for your support, and God bless you.

—Leonardo Jastiva  
and Arnulfo Cortez



Services were held in Halle, Germany, to remember Günter Pietz (inset), who died for his faith when he was 17 years old—seventy years before, in 1943

## Memorial services in honor of Günter Pietz

On September 27 and 28, 2013, many believers, friends, and visitors gathered in commemoration of Brother Günter Pietz, who laid down his life as a martyr during World War II. Memorial services were held at Prison Memorial Roter Ochse (Red Ox) in Halle, Germany, at the very site where Brother Pietz was beheaded 70 years before. In 1938, this building was turned into a punishment and education camp for the city of Halle. More than 500 men and women—primarily political prisoners—were executed here under the Nazi regime.

The services held during the commemoration event expressed important spiritual thoughts concerning faithfulness under trial and persecution.

Brother Pietz is an example of a young person who remained faithful even at the cost of life itself. He was raised in the faith

and from childhood stood up for what was right. At the age of 15, he was arrested for the first time and tortured for refusing to work in a factory on the Sabbath day. A year later, he was taken to Auschwitz concentration camp for ten weeks for the same reason. On April 30, 1943, he refused military service on religious grounds. Not yet 18 years old, he refused to take the Hitler oath of allegiance, which was punishable by death. On August 6, 1943, he was sentenced to death for refusing to go into the military. He was executed on September 27, 1943.

What made it possible for this young man to forsake all for His Lord in the prime of life? He had his eyes fixed on eternity, as reflected in his letters to his parents. He wrote: “Yes,... the people—they know nothing. They only strive for worldly things—to eat and drink—and do not think at all about what they will have to face one day.” He knew that only the pure in heart shall be

able to stand before God. In the face of death, Brother Pietz expressed feelings of hope, love, and joy. When overcome by sadness, he prayed the prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Luke 18:13. He had a calm assurance that the Lord was with him, and his heart was filled with peace. His prayer was, “May the Lord strengthen my faith so that I may not shrink back even from the judgment itself.”

In the September 28 Sabbath service, Pastor Gustavo Castellanos remembered not only Brother Günter Pietz but all the brethren of the Reform Movement who laid down their lives out of love and faithfulness to Jesus Christ, as well as those who survived persecution and imprisonment. The theme of the meditation was Revelation 2:10: “Be thou faithful unto death.” Brother Castellanos reminded the listeners that, according to Bible prophecy, difficult times are ahead. He presented a number

of questions to ponder: How do we act when things are difficult? Do we choose the easy way of reinterpreting our faith and considering religious matters as something relative? Or do we act according to Scripture and seek to remain faithful to the Lord? Brother Castellanos appealed to the listeners to dedicate themselves fully to the Lord and to remain faithful to Him in all situations of life. It is our privilege to have the same assurance that Brother Günter Pietz had: “I know that the Lord is by my side.”

It may seem difficult today to imagine that, one day, we will have to choose between life and death. But actually, we are choosing between spiritual life and death every day. Let us pay closer attention to the choices we make in the small, everyday trials, because only he who is faithful in little things will be prepared to be faithful in bigger ones. May the testimony of faithful believers inspire us to make peace with God and remain faithful to Him no matter what comes.

—Report by Jens and Ines Müller, summarized by Karola Kraenzmer

## Pictures on page 28:

Top left: Pastor Sevith Moyo and Brother Louis Joe Mensah, back center, with four newly baptized young men in Burkina Faso. The brother at the bottom left is from Burkina Faso; the others are from neighboring countries.

Top right: Brother Christian Danboyi, right, with believers in Delta State, Nigeria.

Middle left: Believers in Togo.

Middle right: Believers in Lagos, Nigeria.

Bottom: Group attending a family workshop held in Venezuela under the leadership of Sister Raquel Orce.

# Believers in far-off places



**Burkina Faso**



**Delta State, Nigeria**



**Togo**



**Lagos, Nigeria**



**Family workshop in Venezuela**