

The Sabbath Watchman

2019

JANUARY - MARCH

Vol. 94, No. 1 - Beacon of hope, faith, and truth in a confused world.

*Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go
through them, And I will praise the Lord.*

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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.

THE SABBATH WATCHMAN is the official publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Reform Movement, International Missionary Society, General Conference, 625 West Avenue, Cedartown, GA 30125. Phone 770-748-0077 / Fax 770-748-0095 / Email info@sda1844.org / Website www.sda1844.org.

Published four times per year by the General Conference Publishing Department. Printed and distributed by Religious Liberty Publishing Assn. Mail or email subscription orders to 9999 East Mississippi Avenue, Denver, CO 80247 / info@sda1888.org. Annual rate (U.S. funds only): U.S.A.—\$30; Foreign—\$45. Phone 916-765-3389 / Website www.sda1844.org.



As the bow in the cloud is formed by the union of the sunlight and the shower, so the rainbow encircling the throne represents the combined power of mercy and justice. It is not justice alone that is to be maintained; for this would eclipse the glory of the rainbow of promise above the throne; men could see only the penalty of the law. Were there no justice, no penalty, there would be no stability to the government of God. It is the mingling of judgment and mercy that makes salvation complete....

Mercy invites us to enter through the gates into the city of God, and justice is satisfied to accord to every obedient soul full privileges as a member of the royal family, a child of the heavenly King. If we were defective in character, we could not pass the gates that mercy has opened to the obedient; for justice stands at the entrance, and demands holiness in all who would see God.

Were justice extinct, and were it possible for divine mercy to open the gates to the whole race, irrespective of character, there would be a worse condition of disaffection and rebellion in heaven than before Satan was expelled. The peace, happiness, and harmony of heaven would be broken. The change from earth to heaven will not change men's character; the happiness of the redeemed in heaven results from the character formed in this life after the image of Christ. The saints in heaven will first have been saints on earth.

The salvation that Christ made such a sacrifice to gain for man is that which is alone of value; for it is that which saves from sin.... Thus the law of God is not weakened by the gospel, but the power of sin is broken, and the scepter of mercy is extended to the penitent sinner.... God will never forget His people in their struggle against evil. Let Jesus be our theme. *The Review and Herald*, 13-12-1892.

Ellen G. White.

Origin of the Seventh Day

By Antonino Di Franca

First Part

Do you know that one of the seven days of the week is a holy day? Have you ever heard that one of them is blessed? Have you ever read that one day of the week is especially for people's benefit? Can you say which one it is? What makes it holy and blessed? How can you know that? What makes it possible to receive its blessing? Where can one find information about the holy, blessed day? These and many other amazing questions are waiting to be answered, so there is a special place for this long-awaited book that draws enlightenment from the one true source of life and hope, God's word.

In some societies, the frantic pace of activity is reaching dizzying levels, while in others unemployment is a serious problem. But especially in large cities, people work more than one job or long hours seven days a week under constant stress, which wreaks havoc on their bodies, minds, and spirits. Adding un-healthy, unsafe workplaces to the pressures, it is easy to see that work and stress are risk factors that threaten the physical, mental, and spiritual health of many people, with serious negative consequences for families and society. What good is it to work like a slave day and night under tension until one drops from exhaustion? Common sense dictates that regular rest periods are necessary for employees to relax and restore their energy. At the very beginning, when man was still in paradise and sinless and work was not difficult and exhausting as it can be now, the Lord planned for man to have one whole day of rest. Great benefits would thus be poured upon him, providing refreshment and spiritual growth.

Have men always paid attention to what is best for their employees and granted them such a day of rest, or did their personal interests take precedence over the health and well being of those who labored for them? What about when people were in slavery, subject to all kinds of abuse day and night? Even after slavery was abolished in some countries, terrible working conditions often prevailed during the industrial revolution. And today, all around the world, people in power exploit those who work for them, ignoring and trampling on the right to a just wage and human dignity. Left to himself, rarely does a man in power care about his employees over the long term. In fact, there is no certainty that a business owner will even provide for his own well-being!

The Lord knows what is in men's hearts and what temptations are constantly placed before them. He

not only set a good example in the beginning but made promises and provided universal guidance not only for those who are free but also for those who work for others as employees and servants. Everyone needs time for rest so that work does not crush him. God appointed just such a day of rest and pronounced His blessing upon it at the very beginning. Do you know what day that is?

When the heavens and earth were finished

Giving a panoramic view of the marvelous creation that God completed, the inspired author wrote: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation." Genesis 2:1-3.*

The first chapter of the Bible records the most amazing creation ever—the origin of the earth and all life on it. It is a light that illuminates earth's history and shows where man and all life came from. The second chapter gives the history of the great institution and blessing of the seventh day. It, too, is a light that illuminates not just the past but also the present and future, showing that we are not alone. A divine blessing constantly accompanies us as we live our lives.

The verses presenting the end of God's creative work include four fundamental concepts: (1) the completion of creation, (2) God's rest, (3) the blessing of the seventh day, and (4) the sanctification of the seventh day—He made it holy. We will examine these concepts in detail.

To conclude God's creative activity and introduce the holy rest day, the Biblical report states simply and unequivocally: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Genesis 2:1. The mention of the heavens, the earth, and the entire host of them—everything that they encompassed—the epilogue to that stupendous work.

"The heavens," writes John Calvin, "without the sun, and moon, and stars, would be an empty and dismantled palace: if the earth were destitute of animals, trees, and plants, that barren waste would have the appearance of a poor and deserted house. God, therefore, did not cease from the work of the creation of the world till He had completed

it in every part, so that nothing should be wanting to its suitable abundance.” –Calvin’s Commentary on the Bible, comments on Genesis 2:1. Accessed June 5, 2018, <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/cal/genesis-2.html>.

Fulfilled on the seventh day

In the second verse of Genesis 2 is the statement, “On the seventh day God finished His work that He had done.” The sentence that precedes it and the facts stated in Exodus 20:11 and 31:17, show the fixed relationship between earth and its Creator. When was the creation actually completed, according to God? On the sixth or the seventh day? Faced with such an interesting question, some commentators have suggested that an error was made in copying the verse. In fact, the first translation of the Bible into Greek, known as the LXX or Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac and Arab text of Genesis 2:2, and the Talmud (Megil. 9,1), has the word “sixth,” not “sev-enth,” day.

The commentary of the French Bible of Louis-Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy reads: “God finished His work on the seventh day, that is to say, He ceased to act that day, all having been completed the previous day. This is why it is said in the Septuagint that God ended the sixth day, because He finished His works at the end of this day.” –Bible de Louis-Isaac Le Maistre de Sacy. La Genèse traduite en François avec l’explication du sens literal et du sens spirituel, Paris, Guillaume Desprez, 1725, pp. 35-36, comments on Genesis 2:2. Accessed June 4, 2018, http://jesusmarie.free.fr/bible_sacy_genese.pdf.

The German Konkordante Wiedergabe, published in 1958, follows this idea and translates the verse as, “And God finished His work on the sixth day.” Genesis 2:2. –Konkordante Wiedergabe der Heiligen Schrift (AT): Erstes Buch Mose, Pforzheim, Germany, Konkordante Verlag, 1958.

Nevertheless, others consider this differently. While the creation in itself was complete, operative, and “very good” (Genesis 1:31) on the sixth day, it was still lacking the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day. One author therefore writes that “the Sabbath completed creation” (Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its meaning for Modern Man*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952, p. 21), and another interprets the verb “finished” of verse 2 as putting the seal on His creation. “God did not work on the seventh day, but put the seal on His works; this is the sense of finished.” [“Dieu ne travailla pas le septieme jour, mais il mit le sceau à ses oeuvres; c’est le sens de complevit.”] –La Sainte Bible commentée d’après la Vulgate par L. Cl. Filion, Tome I, Paris, Letouzey et Ané Editeur, 1899, p. 25, comments on Genesis 2:2. Accessed July 9, 2018, http://jesusmarie.free.fr/bible_fillion_genese.pdf

This is also the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, which asks the question: “When did God complete His work? We can only answer, ‘On the

seventh day God ended His work’ (ch. 2:2), ‘for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day.’ Exodus 20:12.” –Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, Washington, DC, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953, p. 208, comments on Genesis 2:1.

The seventh day

In the same chapter, in commenting on the blessed and holy day established by the Lord at the beginning, the book of Genesis confirms that it was “the seventh day.” “... On the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.” Genesis 2:2, 3.

While the report of creation in chapter 1 mentions other days only once (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), Genesis 2:2, 3 includes the term “the seventh day” three times—twice in verse 2: “On the seventh day God finished His work,” and “He rested on the seventh day,” and once in verse 3: “God blessed the seventh day.” After telling about all six days and specifying what occurred on each one, the same thing is seen in the description of what happened on the seventh day—finishing of the work, rest, blessing, and sanctification.

According to this account, the Lord memorialized the seventh day of the creation week because it was the end, conclusion, or culmination of His work. The text states it twice: “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work that he had done, and He rested on the seventh day.” Genesis 2:1, 2, emphasis supplied. In hallowing the last day of creation, the Lord expressed His approval of what had been done. That approval could not have been given until He finished His work. Five times in five different verses (Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Hebrews 4:4) the Scriptures link the “seventh day” directly with creation, showing that its origin dates back to the beginning of the earth and mankind.

We read the following thoughts concerning the fact that the origin of the holy day of rest goes back to creation.

“At the end of the account of the creation of the world with which the book of Genesis begins, we read: ‘On the seventh day God finished His work which He had made, and He rested (Hebrew, *šābat*) on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.’ Genesis 2:2. The story of the Old Testament Sabbath therefore begins with the Sabbath or repose of God after His work of creation.” –Roger T. Beckwith and Wilfrid Stott, *This is the Day*, London, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1978, p. 2. Accessed March 7, 2018, <https://earlychurch.org.uk/pdf/ttd/chapter01.pdf>.

“Moses used this ... pattern to represent in a brief yet accurate manner God’s creation of the heavens, the earth and all things therein in the space of six sequential

numbered, literal days.... Moses' theological emphasis was to demonstrate in literary form that day 7 was a day of cessation from divine creative activity as the two uses of *šābat* ("ceased" in NET Bible) in Genesis 2:2, 3 clearly indicate." –Terry Mortenson, Thane Hutcherson Ury, eds. *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, Green Forest, Arizona, Master Books, 2008, p. 242.

"God first created space, and then He filled it with the inhabitants. On the first day God created light, and on the fourth day He put lights or luminaries (sun and moon) in their place as 'inhabitants' of the light element. The second day He separated water from water by creating an expanse and on the fifth day filled the waters with fish and the sky with birds. On the third day God formed dry land and the vegetation on it, and on the sixth day God filled the land with the inhabitants He created—first a variety of land animals and creatures, and finally humans. He then gave humans and animals vegetation for food.

"As a final and climactic act of His creation, God made the seventh day—separating it from the other days of His creation and making it holy. Sabbath is a palace in time. God created/formed a very significant temporal space, but much more than that, He also filled the time with His holiness.... The Sabbath is the only day where forming and filling are put together.... From the ... creation story it is evident that the creation of the Sabbath is highlighted...." –Jiří Moskala, "The Sabbath in the First Creation Account," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 13/1, April 2002, pp. 56, 57. Accessed October 7, 2018, <http://www.atsjats.org/publication/view/62>.

"We are simply told that God enjoyed His rest, because all was done, so far as the mere creation was concerned. There was nothing more to be done and, therefore, the One who had, during six days, been working, ceased to work, and enjoyed His rest. All was complete; all was very good; all was just as He Himself had made it; and He rested in it. 'The morning stars sang together; and all the sons of God shouted for joy.' The work of creation

was ended, and God was celebrating a Sabbath." –Charles Henry Mackintosh, *Notes on the Book of Genesis*, 1878, comments on Genesis chap. 2, w.p. Accessed May 15, 2018, <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=8IY-RvDKSwl%3d&tabid=268&mid=887>.

"The seventh day, rich with God's blessings, was the climax of God's creative work. In the words of Abraham Heschel, 'Last in creation, first in intention, "the Sabbath is the end of the creation of heaven and earth."' Everything was declared to be 'very good' and no shade of disorder can be traced in the complete Creation Story." –Zdravko Stefanovic, "The Great Reversal: Thematic Links Between Genesis 2 and 3," in *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Spring-Summer 1994, vol. 32, no. 1-2, p. 49. Accessed October 7, 2018, http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Scholarly_Journals/AUSS/AUSS19940401-V32-01,02.pdf. For the reported quotation, see Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951, p. 14.

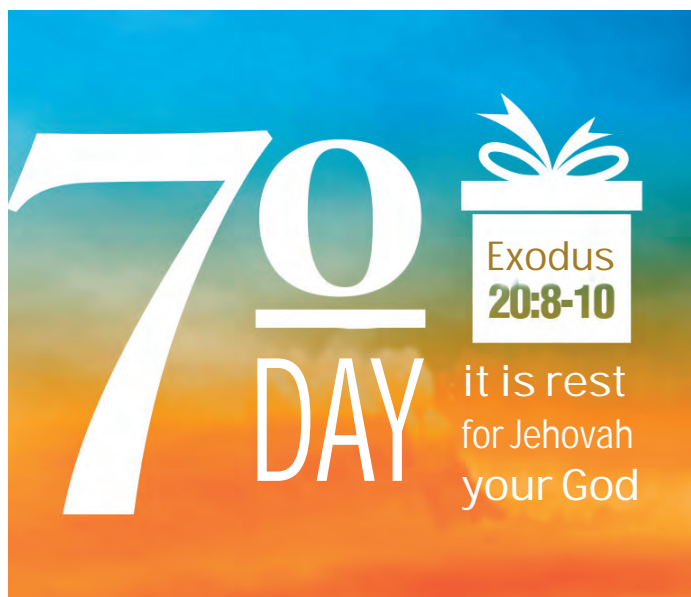
Other authors, who also traced the origin of the sanctified rest day to creation, made the following comments.


"According to the Biblical creation narrative the Sabbath originated at the end of creation week as an expression of the divine will. Genesis 2:1-3." –Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, *The Biblical Sabbath: The Adventist Perspective*, Genève, Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2002, p. 1. Accessed May 15, 2018, https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Sabbath-Catholic_2002.pdf.

"Silence and stillness once again enter the atmosphere. The mood of the prologue now resurfaces in this epilogue. There is no activity, no noise, no speaking. All that God has willed and designed for His canvas of the universe is now in its place." –Victor P. Hamilton, "The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17," *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990, p. 141.

Right at the beginning, when every day had its proper designation with an ordinal name (first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days), the last day also received the next consecutive ordinal name, the "seventh" day, so it was specified exactly and could not be confused.

Some people think that it is no matter which day they keep to worship the Lord; they think that every day is alike. According to them, neither the day nor the name has any importance; the only important thing is to worship Him. This may seem like a harmless, acceptable idea, but is not. This type of thinking has generated enormous differences and confusion among people who want to follow their own personal opinions, according to their own understanding, simply because they will not accept what the Lord instituted for man's blessing and sanctification. It is good to worship and praise the Lord every day, morning, noon, and evening, and even more at other times of the day; but this is no justification for altering and rejecting what the Creator established—the "seventh day."





This is not just the seventh day in sequence; it is also the day when God rested from His marvelous work of creation. His “resting” was part of that work of creation, imparting a very special, spiritual meaning to Sabbath rest, or cessation, while still identified as the “seventh day.” Exodus 16:23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30; 20:8, 10, 11; 31:14, 15, 17; Genesis 8:22; Job 32:1; Proverbs 18:18. In some verses, both names are used—“seventh day” and “Sabbath”—as in Exodus 16:26, 29; 20:10, 11; 31:15.

The term “Sabbath” denotes the concept of “rest” or “day of rest,” while “seventh day” indicates its ex-act location within the week, coming every seven days. Thus, it refers properly to the events of creation and to its origin when everything was brought into existence. Of all the days of creation, the one that is set apart, blessed, and sanctified day is the “seventh”—not another and not just any one of the seven. Let us not ignore or oppose the order established by the Lord!

The day the Lord appointed at the beginning of all things is thus definite and not just one of several, which one may select as he prefers. The clearly specified “seventh day” is clear evidence that when no day had an exact name, God carefully identified each one, including the last one. Reading the sacred scriptural record, it is clear that the day that is blessed and sacred is the last of the series and therefore called “the seventh day.” Genesis 2:2, 3. In His holy word, the Lord inspired the writers to use that exact designation. This shows that He is very particular about this identification, so that people may receive the blessing of His holy day and never be confused with keeping another day.

"I Am the Door"

John 10:9

By T. Corti – Gutknecht

Man was created to live in freedom close to the environment—flowers, trees, and plants of all kinds that covered the face of the earth—and to be caressed by the rays of the sun and the gentle breeze. But when he fell into sin, that external environment changed drastically; and soon the descendants of Cain proceeded to build cities.

But life in a city restricts a person, enclosing him within walls and alienating him from the natural environment. Then his soul begins to get sick. Anxiety, stress, depression, and neurosis are names assigned to the many psychological upsets that affect modern man.

A person tries to make his home an attractive, comfortable place, beautiful both inside and out, so that when he returns home he finds solace. However, often he cannot enjoy the surroundings that he has created, because he is burdened with pressures and problems, making it impossible for him to enjoy the paintings that grace the walls of his house or the music that reaches his mind and heart. So, he decides to escape for the weekend and go far from the city to the sea or the mountains, where he can find a little rest and peace for his soul in nature.

For a moment, let us imagine what might happen. For one reason or another, this person may be oppressed by worry. The weight that he carries in his soul deprives him of sleep and true rest. What can that lead to? In the extreme, his nerves may be on edge, making him short tempered. He may end up arguing with his wife or children over something of little consequence. Unable to control himself, he slams out the door and finds himself by the sea as he seeks to sort through his thoughts. Or he may lock himself in a room, seeking to be alone but actually finding only isolation, terrible loneliness, and mental confusion.

How desperate can his thoughts get? What temptations might such a person encounter and fall under? He may feel imprisoned, as if there is no door that can lead to freedom. Naturally, wherever he goes and whatever he does, his problems go with him, driving him deeper and deeper into despair. He may

even resort to alcohol or something worse to drown his sorrow; he may flirt with his secretary or seek an extramarital relationship to distract his mind from the responsibilities that overwhelm him. Momentary sinful pleasure only adds to his anxiety, adding guilt to the long list of negative thoughts that seem to make life impossible to live.

What a terrible position to be in! Sometimes such a person wishes for death to intervene and end everything; but his body, despite all of the abuse that he has inflicted on it, clings to the life so wonderfully created by the God of love. Psalm 139:14. Finally, he sinks into a sofa and sobs bitterly with his head in his hands. There is no escape, there is no solution, there is no hope!

But listen! "I am the door," Jesus says to all who are in this or a similar situation. "Come to the Father through Me, and you will find rest." He is your Creator. He knows your needs, sorrows, and pain. He knows that you are crushed, that your whole body, soul, and spirit are in pain. He can heal you. He is the only remedy, the only solution to your problems.

Jesus came to preach good news to the downcast, to bind the brokenhearted, to preach freedom to the captives, and to open the prison for the prisoners. Isaiah 61:1. Every person is a prisoner of himself, of his sinful nature; he is his worst enemy. He needs a friend—someone who understands him, who is merciful, who does not condemn or accuse him, who opens the door to a new world. Jesus gives access to the Father, and in His arms everyone can rest like a child. It is true. Everyone is actually a child—hidden under the appearance of a businessman, intellectual or scientist, skilled worker, or efficient employee—full of fear and insecurity, desperately seeking to find comfort and love.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Let no one be afraid to go through the door that leads to real freedom, peace, and happiness. May the Lord help you to go through the door and never look back.



Successful Lives

By José Vicente Giner

Success according to the world

There is a word that we all like—"Success." It comes from the Latin word *exitus*, meaning "salty"; but it can mean different things. For example, we can refer to the effect or the successful consequence of something—"We achieved considerable success in the sale of our products"—or to minimize the competition—"We achieved total success as a team by reaching the goal of first place." Most people in the world understand success to be a personal achievement in some area of life—education, society, work, family, relationships, etc. So, if a person is well paid and has a good job, an outstanding family in which everyone gets along, a nice house and yard in a nice, safe residential area, good health, and good friends, he can claim success. According to society, success equates to being well off in general and has more to do with having than with being. Many people are focused on achieving this kind of success. When the opposite happens, the word "failure" is used.

But let me tell you that this is not the success that produces permanent happiness, because it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reach a satisfactory level in every area of life in this world; furthermore, even if one achieves this, it is always very unstable. It may be that a person does well economically; but he can get sick and lose everything, or he can have very good health but no work. There are many who have a good family but suffer the ravages of war. Others live in countries where there is no social justice and life is not respected. One can reach a high intellectual level but have no close relationships. There are also people who have achieved success according to popular opinion but are unhappy in their hearts. In short, there is always something in our lives that bothers us, so we must conclude that, from this perspective, human success will always be relative and weak.

Success according to God

The world's view of success makes people puppets of circumstance. Why? Because they will always measure their happiness in terms of the environment in which they live and move. So, a person who has a lot of money will be happy as long as he keeps it and enjoys it. The day the money runs out or he loses it, he will fall into a deep pit of despair. A young man who focuses all of his efforts on

pleasing a young woman whom he loves will be devastated and think he is a failure—unsuccessful in a relationship—if she leaves him or does not want to continue a relationship with him. There are even people who are happy when the sun is shining and everything smiles on them but become depressed and rude if black clouds block the warm sunshine. There are others who have everything but are never satisfied, because they focus on what they do not have instead of valuing what they have. Others are never satisfied, no matter what happens; they always have reasons to be negative.

In reality, true success in life consists of developing a noble, symmetrical character, like that of Christ. This is never taught in schools or universities. Students prepare for a successful profession and face the challenges of working life, society, politics, economics, etc.; but they are not taught to develop their characters. Only one who is able to rise above the negative circumstances that surround him and maintain his integrity and inner peace can taste success.

"A great name among men is as letters traced in sand, but a spotless character will endure to all eternity. God gives you intelligence and a reasoning mind, whereby you may grasp His promises; and Jesus is ready to help you in forming a strong, symmetrical character. Those who possess such a character need never become discouraged because they have not success in worldly affairs. They 'are the light of the world'; Satan cannot destroy or make of none effect the light that shines forth from them." — Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 546.

The Bible teaches that success comes from living in harmony with God and from being able to reflect a character like that of His Son Jesus Christ: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3. How wonderful! These words of Jesus affirm that to know God and His Son Jesus Christ is eternal life. That is to say, loving God and believing in His Son Jesus Christ, accepting Him as one's personal Savior, is eternal life, something that transcends everything that we have and are here in this world. When Christ dwells in our hearts, He is our Guide and inspires our thoughts and actions; we begin to savor eternity in this transitory life; we have a piece of heaven in our hearts; and the human being is sensitized and begins a process of transformation that will lead to personal improvement. In a heart where the Spirit of Christ dwells, there is no place for evil. This is success according to God.

Jesus taught that in this world every human being experiences difficulties and problems—even those who believe and love God. “In the world ye shall have tribulation:...” John 16:33. These words addressed to the disciples show that in this life no one should expect everything to be a bed of roses just because he is a believer. Sooner or later affliction comes to us all, and we must be prepared to face it without falling apart. That can be achieved only with God’s help. What does the entire text in John say? “These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Yes, “in Jesus” one can achieve peace. Is this not the truly successful life? What is the use of possessing all the gold in the world if one has no inner peace? A person can have all the worldly success possible; but if he is not at peace with God, what good will that success do him? Inner peace means having a conscience free of guilt; living in harmony with God, oneself and others; being happy despite the bad times we go through; and not being a puppet in the hands of circumstance. “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. To live by loving Christ, believing that He guides, inspires, and helps us, is to have a real life, one that is above everything of this world. To have control of our minds, to be the masters of our actions, to sow love every step of the way, to share the good news of salvation with our neighbors, to have Jesus engraved in our hearts, and to be sure that we are doing everything better than we know and can through Him, is to commit ourselves to the improvement of everyone and everything around us through our influence and example. “To have life” is to know that one day, although we will die, we will be resurrected to be with Christ and to live forever.

Our only Pattern

Studying Christ’s character, we see that He was perfect in everything He did and that He left an example for everyone to follow. The word tells us that He is the Creator: “All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” John 1:3. The Lord Jesus designed every bush and plant, river, mountain, animal, and star that exists; and the most beautiful thing for us is that He created man in His own image and likeness. Genesis 1:26. You and I are not the result of evolution but the creation of the divine Hand.

That wonderful God, full of power and glory, came to earth as a Man in His Son, Jesus Christ, through whom He created and sustained all things. The Creator came to live in this world with us. He did not stay in heaven to watch us degenerate and be ruined by our mistakes, but rather He deigned to remove His royal robe, scepter, and crown to become one like us. Is this not something that astonishes the mind and heart? Although He was the King of the universe, He became a servant of those whom He Himself had created: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it

not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:6, 7.

And He not only took human nature upon Himself but also lived in complete submission to His Father. In reality, He was the servant of His Father and of every human being. Studying His life, we will see that He dedicated more time to healing and helping people than to preaching. He spent every day visiting people in their homes, in the town squares, in the countryside, and by the sea—wherever they were. He gave them peace and hope and comforted, helped, guided, and strengthened them. He healed the sick, pardoned sinners, raised the dead, calmed the fierce elements of nature, and cast out demons. Never did anyone do such a work. He did not look at the nationality, social position, or intellectual position of an individual; He simply loved everyone around Him. Christ’s work was to serve suffering humanity, to make the world better by His presence, and to plant a message of hope in every heart, making people able to bond with God through Him. Christ took their hands with one of His hands; and with the other, the hand of His Father. Thus, man is united to God through His Son.

But His crowning work was to die for all mankind on the cross of Calvary. “And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Philippians 2:8. Why did Jesus die? To pay man’s debt of sin. It was we who were assigned to death for our faults and sins, but Jesus offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice. He took every person’s place to pay the penalty that each one owed because of sin.

He was treated like a vile criminal, beaten, spat upon, insulted, despised, mocked, and rejected as the worst of men. However, at all times He maintained inner serenity; no one could steal His peace and infinite calm or His love and compassion for the human race. What a mystery! The One they slew could have defended Himself and destroyed everyone with a single glance; but He endured the greatest suffering with humility so that you and I may accept all of His joy. “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:7.

Hanging on a cross, it appeared that His life was a failure, cut short, and unsuccessful. But that appearance was far from the reality. On the cross, Jesus gained the victory over death, dying without committing a single wrong act. The apostle Paul said that with the death of Christ eternal death was defeated: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:54. Yes, He obtained the victory by living in harmony with God’s law.

Jesus lived without committing a single sin, and today He is willing to live in the human heart and mind so that man will overcome the enemy and be transformed in character. Jesus does this through the Holy Spirit, who works in men’s minds, guiding them and taking them step

by step to success, which is impossible for man by himself. "And when He is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." John 16:8; 14:16, 17.

This is the success that God desires every person to achieve—the transformation of character through the work of the Spirit of Christ. By contemplating Jesus and following His example, one's heart responds to the divine call and does the work that God gives it. New feelings and emotions grace the soul, and new desires and attitudes permeate the being. Thus he who was immoral becomes pure, the drunkard becomes sober, the thief becomes honest, the liar clings to the truth, the crude person becomes refined, and the old being dies to be born into new life. "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.

Contemplating Christ's life will transform a person.

The Saviour lived a successful life and now offers that success to all who will accept it. Jesus is the only Pattern to follow. He will not disappoint anyone, and everyone can go to Him just as he is, with his burdens and sins, failures, and pain. No matter what a person is or where he is, today is the day to go to Christ and receive forgiveness and power to overcome sin. This is success.

"Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, 'Ye shall receive.'" —The Acts of the Apostles, p. 564.

Paul persecuted the Christians and delivered them to death. He was very cruel in the work of destroying the early Christian church. But one day Christ crossed his pathway, and Paul underwent an extraordinary transformation—the persecutor became the one that was persecuted. He who was once a staunch enemy of the Christian faith became the ardent defender of the Master's teachings. Look at the language he used concerning his experience: "Yea

doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Philippians 3:8.

Paul was enthralled by Christ and made the decision to leave everything to follow Him. Very possibly the people of his time considered him a fanatic or a lunatic, unsuccessful and a failure, especially because he renounced his status for the love of Jesus. It is not that he wanted to give up everything he had and was, but the faith that he embraced swallowed up his previous ideas and education. This is very different, because most people cling desperately to everything they always loved and practiced. I am not saying that it is impossible to change the way we thought and acted for many years, but it is impossible without God's help. In matters of faith, every person who falls in love with Jesus is willing to reexamine his beliefs and compare them with what is taught in God's word. If one's thoughts are in harmony with the holy Scriptures, then he is on the right path, otherwise spiritually speaking there is no light in him. Isaiah 8:20. The Lord offers His help so that everyone can follow and love Him.

Paul is a good example, for he lived what he taught and his character was deeply changed. A man who hated Christians and condemned them to death learned to love them and be like them. A man who used violence to accomplish his goals learned to be a peacemaker. A man who was proud of his learning came to understand that these were worth nothing if they were not in harmony with the holy word. A spiritually blind man could now see. His heart was transformed by the Holy Spirit, and he died as a martyr of the Christian faith.

Real success, then, is to reflect the character of Christ; everything else is a mere addition. Success is living as Christ lived so that one can experience the joy that He experienced and finally, one day, according to His promises, inherit eternal life.

Someone once said that the success of life is not to always overcome, but never to be discouraged. I encourage you to continuously strive for a character like that of Christ. He left the example in His word and makes it possible to relate to Him through prayer and the study of the sacred Scriptures. Christ invites us to follow Him—imitate Him—and gives us the power to do so. "... Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matthew 11:29.

Do not be discouraged if so far you have had little success. Keep connecting to God through Christ, give Him your heart so that He can mold it, let the Holy Spirit envelop you with His sweet influence, and fervently ask for the inner change, because only he who asks, seeks, and knocks, will receive, find, and have the door opened to him. God bless you.



By Raquel Orce Sotomayor

Children in the Family

“For He [God] established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” Psalm 78:5-7.

According to the holy Scriptures, as seen in the above verse, one of the established ways of spreading and preserving the truth is to transfer divine knowledge from generation to generation, from parents to children. Thus, when a couple makes the decision to have children, there are prerequisites to meet, which are vitally important in the education of the new family member—steps to follow in the training of children in the light of God’s word and the Spirit of prophecy.

Dedication

“And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and ... wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life,...” 1 Samuel 1:11. Hannah’s prayer contains the basic considerations when a couple desires to become parents. That desire must be a subject of prayer and deep spiritual thought, recognizing God as the Giver and the parents as the recipients of a gift of a son or daughter for the purpose of dedicating him or her to the Lord’s service. This is the true starting point of being parents. It expresses the spiritual relationship that the parents have with their Saviour.

When the responsibilities of parenthood are taken up in harmony with Heaven’s principles, the child’s education rests on a triple foundation of belonging to and serving God.

1. Children belong to God. The principles that the parents practice—love, care, and consideration—are their acknowledgment that they owe their children to God.
2. Children are a gift from God. The evidence of this is seen in the parents as a sense of privilege, honor, and delight in having children.

3. Children are to serve God. This is seen in how the parents relate to their children’s future.

“Children are committed to their parents as a precious trust, which God will one day require at their hands. We should give to their training more time, more care, and more prayer. They need more of the right kind of instruction....

“Remember that your sons and daughters are younger members of God’s family. He has committed them to your care, to train and educate for heaven. You must render an account to Him for the manner in which you discharge your sacred trust.” —The Adventist Home, p. 161.

Leadership

“... How shall we order the child...?” Judges 13:12. The values that parents desire to impart to their children, as well as the behavior that is desired in their lives, are concerns and questions that Samson’s parents posed to the angel. They will also be considered by every responsible father and mother before the births of their children.

“Every Christian home should have rules; and parents should, in their words and deportment toward each other, give to the children a precious, living example of what they desire them to be.... Teach the children and youth to respect themselves, to be true to God, true to principle; teach them to respect and obey the law of God. These principles will control their lives and will be carried out in their associations with others.” —The Adventist Home, p. 16. It is important to consider what rules you will teach in your home and to carry them out consistently.

1. God’s law must be the top household principle.
2. The parents’ examples must harmonize with the truth in word and behavior.
3. Parents should be what they expect their children to become.

It is very important to connect the standard to behavior, just as the Bible’s instructions and principles are connected to the application of them, theory is related to practice, and the ideal is connected to what is real. The parents must know the path to follow before educating their children—

principles of goodness and their application in every aspect of individual and family life.

Discipline

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4. Often discipline or a reprimand is considered punishment at some level of intensity. However, the sacred Scriptures show these two terms in a divine perspective that is vital for parents to know. Discipline outlines the rules that govern an activity—in this case, how the home environment is managed. Communication is the foundation of discipline. This is achieved when:

1. The children know what is expected of them and it is confirmed that they do, indeed, know.
2. The child will be given an explanation—brief but understandable, according to the child’s age—what the consequences will be and what steps will be taken if the established rules are not followed.
3. The children are taught what they can expect if they do something wrong and what they should and should not do after that, according to the principles established in the home.

“No doubt you will see faults and waywardness on the part of your children.... Let them mingle kindness and affection and love with their family government, and yet let them be as firm as a rock to right principles.” —Manuscript Releases, vol. 2, p. 279. Teaching is directly related to warning; children should be instructed about what positive behavior is expected in the place of something that must not be repeated. Thus, it is not just that unwanted behavior will be punished but that clear instruction has been given about how things should be done and what is expected of the family member, according to the principles of God’s word that are the family’s foundation.

“First reason with your children, clearly point out their wrongs, and impress upon them that they have not only sinned against you, but against God. With your heart full of pity and sorrow for your erring children, pray with them before correcting them. Then they will see that you do not punish them because they have put you to inconvenience, or because you wish to vent your displeasure upon them, but from a sense of duty, for their good; and they will love and respect you....

“If the children see that you are not unreasonable, you have gained a great victory. This is the work that is to be carried on in our family circles in these last days.” —Child Guidance, pp. 252, 253.

Repetition

“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” Deuteronomy 6:7. The principle of repetition does not mean nagging or constant talking but consistency and encouragement to do good, according to the circumstances and opportunities offered to parents every day. Every family is unique, with an identity of its own, depending on the values considered most important and appreciated, as well as on the beneficial activities and actions of each family member.

The daily practice of certain shared activities strengthens the family in many respects. These include morning and evening worship, giving thanks for the food before eating, studying the Sabbath school lesson, reading a Bible story before going to sleep, coming together for one or more family meals every day, after-dinner activities of varying kinds, attendance at all church activities, services, conferences, seminars, etc. Such activities should be part of the family, not because of their form, but because of their content, for they make the family a shared unit and identify the members of the household as part of a whole. Shared experiences, family activities, acquired skills, defeats acknowledged, and victories won can bond related and even unrelated individuals in what becomes “my family.”

“Lessons on obedience, on respect for authority, need to be often repeated. This kind of work done in the family will be a power for good, and not only will the children be restrained from evil and constrained to love truth and righteousness, but parents will be equally benefited. This kind of work which the Lord requires cannot be done without much serious contemplation on their part, and much study of the word of God, in order that they may instruct according to His directions.” —Child Guidance, p. 88.

From the time when children are very small, it is supremely important for parents to establish repeated activities that are carried out every day as natural and permanent, for these family habits are part of the inheritance that strengthens religious beliefs and values, security, and godly characters. These include:

1. Family worship, prayer, Bible reading, sharing thoughts about and experiences with God, and explanations of religious terms and concepts, such as faith, the source of blessings, help for neighbors, and the Sabbath.
2. Family activities, including food and food preparation, conversation, activities, visits, missionary outreach, church attendance, and hospitality.
3. Examples of relationships and roles. Father, mother, children, brothers, sisters, neighbors, acquaintances, and the needy all provide learning experiences to each other and especially to smaller children.

“Children are to learn to obey in the family government. They are to form a symmetrical character that God can approve, maintaining law in the home life. Christian parents are to educate their children to obey the law of God.... The reasons for this obedience and respect for the law of God may be impressed upon the children as soon as they can understand its nature, so that they will know what they should do, and what they should abstain from doing.” –Child Guidance, pp. 86, 87.

System

“... Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 1:28. The education of children does not consist of an occasional or isolated action under extreme situations; rather, it is constant interaction between parents and children for the purpose of advising and teaching values and behaviors day after day that one wants to become part of their lives. Remember that there are two pillars—the will and self-control—that support the character. You want to be an example of Jesus’ character so your children may be blessed to pattern their lives after it. “The will is the governing power in the nature of man, bringing all the other faculties under its sway. The will is not the taste or the inclination, but it is the deciding power, which works in the children of men unto obedience to God, or unto disobedience.

“Every child should understand the true force of the will. He should be led to see how great is the responsibility involved in this gift. The will is ... the power of decision, or choice.” –Child Guidance, p. 209.

Parents should identify the strong and the weak characteristics of each of their children and establish, under prayer and divine direction, a personalized plan to help each little one develop a desire to be and do good. Self-control grows by setting limits and having an influence on one’s environment. For this to be developed, parents need to consider carefully how to instruct a child, in accordance with his talents and abilities, not only to make decisions but how to do so in his unique place within the divine principles and standards and the given time and relationships.

1. Be consistent in doing that which is good, and practice it daily in the family.
2. Be diligent, perseverant, and loving in giving one’s children instruction, correction, and guidance.
3. Be careful and tender in helping the children to develop good habits, being sensitive to and controlling one’s own feelings.

“Parents, it is your work to develop in your children patience, constancy, and genuine love. In dealing aright with the children God has given you, you are helping them lay

the foundation for pure, well-balanced characters. You are instilling into their minds principles which they will one day follow in their own families. The effect of your well-directed efforts will be seen as they conduct their households in the way of the Lord.” –Child Guidance, p. 174.

Conversion

“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” 1 John 2:13. Parents should not expect from their children that which they have not become themselves. The value of divine principles in a family is directly proportional to what has been given to the children by their parents. If values are to be understood to be patterns for behavior, it is indispensable to realize that they are learned by impregnation—practical daily example.

For children to accept divine principles, they have to come from the significant people in their immediate circle—parents. And that circle will encompass a mutually positive, loving relationship, for the conversion that all Christian parents desire their children to obtain can come only from those who provide a heavenly example to their children. Healthy children do not accept the path of good independently from their models but through the divine influence that binds them to their parents, as well as through their own experience. “When the will and ways of God become the will and ways of ... parents, their children will grow up to love and honor and obey God.” –Child Guidance, p. 66.

1 E. G. White, *Felicidad y Armonía en el Hogar*, pág. 42

2 E. G. White, *Carta 74*, 1896

3 E. G. White, *Manuscrito 38*, 1895

4 *Signs of the Times*, 10 de abril, 1884

5 E. G. White, *Manuscrito 73*, 1909

6 E. G. White, *Manuscrito 24*, 1894

7 E. G. White, *Manuscrito 126*, 1897

8 E. G. White, *Testimonios para la Iglesia*, tomo 5, pág. 513

9 E. G. White, *La Educación*, 280

10 *Review and Herald*, 6 de junio, 1899

11 E. G. White, *Carta 356*, 1907





World in Brief

INDONESIAN FIELD CONFERENCE 2018



"Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the archdeceiver. But the Son of God was not to prove His divinity to Satan. He met the tempter with the words of Scripture. 'It is written,' He said, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' In every temptation the weapon of His warfare was the word of God."—Christ Triumphant, p. 193.

The 2018 Indonesian Field Conference was a wonderful experience shared with members and friends of the Indonesian Field. We felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and love among the brethren. The main subject was Christ's divine and human natures. The blending of the two natures of Christ is actually one of the secrets of Christ's victory. It is amazing that God in His love for the human beings He created guides us to a similar experience. Within us, our human nature can be united with His divine nature through the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit.

"The old nature, born of blood and the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The old ways, the hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up; for grace is not inherited. The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, and new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. When men who claim to be Christians retain all their natural defects of character and disposition, in what does their position differ from that of the worldling? They do not appreciate the truth as a sanctifier, a refiner. They have not been born again."—(Review and Herald, April 12, 1892) Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1101.

Elder Adrie Kalengkongan, president of the Indonesian Field, has done much in the care for the Lord's vineyard. The Christian spirit and the good relationship in the field have produced very positive results. Brother Kalengkongan did his best to participate during the organizational meetings of the Indonesian Field and all of the meetings. He also took care of his wife, who was very sick. During one of the meetings, we heard that she had been admitted to the hospital, and so we all visited her there. Sadly, after I returned to Australia, I received the news that she had passed way. Our dear, faithful sister in Christ now rests in the grave, waiting for the resurrection at Christ's second coming.



Group of members in Indonesia



Choir in Indonesia



Field Officers in Indonesia

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." Colossians 2:8-10.



I was happy to see Elder Herman Karinda with his family. He is the retired former president of the Indonesian Field. Recently he fell and broke his hip. His family was very thankful to receive financial support for his hip operation. Our worldwide church organization, "The Good Samaritan," provided the funds for the operation.

We had a very busy and blessed time together during the conference. The good harvest of the first fruits appeared. Three souls expressed their desire and readiness to be baptized. These souls have visited the church meetings and have lived according to the divine principles. They have taken a firm stand to follow the heavenly Shepherd and be a part of His flock. Even though the program kept us busy, we were able to conduct the baptism of these precious souls.

Thank you, dear Lord, that You take care of Your

children in Your flock and of those who seek for You. Thank You for helping us to carry out our mission of preparing the way for Your coming. We need Your guiding power and wisdom for transformation of our characters. Dear Lord, let us by Your healing power be freed from every sinful habit and be born again, begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit. Then, make us partakers of the divine nature, just as in Christ the human and divine natures are one. The victory and the glory belong to Him now and forever.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

—Elder Anton Salavyov
Oceania Division President



Group of Conference attendees in Indonesia



Three candidates for baptism

TRIP TO OKINAWA, JAPAN FEBRUARY 2019

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24.

Okinawa's population is among the longest lived in the world. The residents there have less cancer, heart disease, and dementia than Americans. Interestingly, Okinawan women live longer than those anywhere else on earth. However, my trip to the beautiful island of Okinawa had a deeper meaning for me and for our brethren there. What can be better than a long, healthful life? The answer is, The words of Christ accepted by faith in us. When we hear, believe, and experience God's word, it becomes a transforming power through the Holy Spirit, who changes our minds and habits and makes us like Christ. It is wonderful to experience and feel God's presence in us personally. His word is living water that gives the faithful believers not only long life, but also everlasting life! "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"... Ephesians 5:25-27." —Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, p. 129.

My trip to Okinawa was an especially joyful experience. I was able to meet with my precious friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, whom I had not seen for several years. My heart was full of gratitude to our Lord, because God fulfilled my impossible dream of many years ago when I was a young boy living in communist Bulgaria. At that time, I was sad, because the mes-

sage of true Reformation had not reached Japan. My prayers and wishes to God were for Him to help us spread the message of Reformation successfully in that country. God performed a miracle to fulfill my dream to make me a participant in this wonderful blessing. The Lord's work began and developed in Japan through the efforts, support, and sacrifice of Brother Woonsan Kang from South Korea and Brother Masahiko Matsumoto and his wonderful family. This trip brought back memories of the good experiences that we shared in other Asian countries that we visited previously. My prayers and love are with them as well.

I was surprised and blessed to see the lovely church building in Okinawa for the first time. This is a sign of progress. Even though it is not a large building, everyone can feel comfort when he enters the church, especially when the believers are there. In this room are smiles, a good spirit, and perfect, tasty vegetarian meals that helped me to remember how to eat with chopsticks. In the church, there is a heavenly atmosphere with wonderful piano and violin music. Our members in Okinawa are very talented singers. In addition, everyone can feel something very important in this church—the nice relationship among the brothers and sisters. They are united as one beautiful family.

For several days, we held seminars that were a blessing to all who attended. The main topic was our need to be as Christ is. He, the second Adam, came to earth to save us by uniting His divine nature with our human nature. When we follow His example by faith and surrender entirely to Him, He is able to



World in Brief

purify our human nature. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:4.

I was overjoyed at the decisions of a young brother and sister, children of a sister whom I baptized many years ago. They were baptized at the same place where their mum was baptized. This particular place I will never forget, because on previous visits I conducted several baptisms there and also performed a wonderful wedding service. After the baptisms of the two dear souls, we experienced a joyful and very moving acceptance of them into the church. We held the Lord's Supper service and organizational meetings of the church as well.

Then came the time for my return trip to Australia. We needed to travel to Naha, the capital of Okinawa. Arriving there about two hours before sunset, I was surprised when we stopped at a very interesting place—an ancient fortress. It was an amazing place that helped me to understand a little bit of the history and culture of the Okinawan people. Usually in every ancient place there is some special story that represents that place. Right before we entered the fortress, Brother Masahiko drew my attention to two lion sculptures located on both sides of the gate. While the lions look similar, there is a strange difference between them. One of the lions has an open mouth, while the other has a closed mouth. And inside the fortress, in front of the throne, there were two dragons, one of them with its mouth open, and the other with its mouth closed.

Brother Masahiko explained the meaning of this difference, according to the traditional thinking of the ancient Okinawan people. The lion and the dragon with open mouths expressed the typical understanding of the ancient Okinawan people: "Let everything be taken if it can be taken." The lion and the dragon with closed mouths mean "I will not give anything." To me this sounded like a selfish point of view. Definitely it is not typical of all Okinawan people today, for they sell many of this kind of souvenirs.

Later I thought more about these two symbols—the lion and the dragon. Satan is compared to a lion in several Bible verses. For example: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8. Satan is also symbolized by a dragon. For example: "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Revelation 20:2. Yes, the appearance of any kind of selfishness in us is a serious sign that we are under the influence of Satan's evil spirit.

We thank God the Father for His kindness and love in giving us salvation through His beloved Son. In the Bible, it is clearly written that there is another Lion—the "Lion of the tribe of Juda." Revelation 5:5. His name is Christ our Saviour, and there is no spot of selfishness in Him. Jesus gave and continues to give us His best to help and save us in the heavenly "Most Holy Place." He wants first to help us through the process of justification. After that, if we surrender entirely to His sanctifying guidance in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, Christ transforms our characters according to His entirely unselfish character. He will implant in us His divine nature and give us eternal life.

As we continue the battle with Christ, Satan becomes more and more furious, like a "roaring lion." Then we have to begin our last battle through our final baptism by fire. Let us walk by faith with Christ. If He is with us, who can be against us? Now, it is important to understand that we need to make a clear and definite choice as to who we want to be with. There is no middle road. There are only two clear options. The first is to be an entirely self-sacrificing person, as Christ is—the "Lion of the tribe of Juda." The second option is to be selfish, as Satan is—"your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion." He is also the dragon, "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." Revelation 12:9. The choice is ours.

On the last day, before my departure, I stopped at the church. I was surprised that at the place where I stayed there was a nice present from a boy. We became good friends during the meetings. He made very interesting dogs and a squirrel out of paper in the origami style. Obviously, he spent a lot of time to make me happy, and I appreciate it very much. But more so, he made me happy with words that I will never forget. He said, "I would like to be baptized by you when you come back next time." How wonderful it is when God touches the hearts of our children. The prophesied political signs of events around us and around the earth are shouting to us, "Jesus is coming!" Now is the time when "the Spirit and the bride [must] say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.

Dear reader, you are welcome to view some pictures and videos at www.imspacific.org and thus share my joyful, blessed trip to Okinawa.

—Elder Anton Salavyov, *Oceania Division President.*



On the shores of the sea before baptism



Candidates for baptism



Two new members of the church



Sharing food with brothers in Japan



Preparations for baptism