

Small Beginnings

‘Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.’

Job 8:7

A small seed will grow to a large tree. A small germ can develop into a deadly disease. A small hole in the bottom of a boat can sink it. The small sin of Adam and Eve caused terrible results.

Many times we do not pay attention to small things that are happening. They seem so insignificant to us; yet they will develop into great things if they are allowed to grow, whether they are good or bad.

We may ignore the little oil warning light in the car dashboard but the result can be a burned out motor.

Parents may ignore the little misbehaviour in their small children, thinking that they will outgrow it later when they grow bigger. But on the contrary, this little misbehaviour will grow into a great disobedience or even into a criminal activity if allowed to continue. For this reason many Christian parents have lost their children to the world.

There was a little boy in Holland who saw water leaking from a small hole in the cement dike. He put his finger into the hole to stop the leak because he knew that if allowed to continue, it will grow bigger and bigger and finally will break the protective dike and cause a great flood. For hours he kept his finger in the hole until help came to repair the leak.

In February 1953 the protective dike did break and almost half a million acres of land were flooded and 1835 people drowned.

It was one small decision that Eve did; to walk to the tree of knowledge. She had no intention to disobey God. She only wanted to satisfy her curiosity - she just wanted to look at the tree. But by looking, a desire was aroused, and the desire brought sin.

Now to return to faithfulness, it is not just one decision that we make, but 1000 decisions daily. Constantly we are tempted by Satan and by our friends and by our own flesh to do sin.

Our Christian life is like walking on the road. Every obedience is a step closer to heaven, and every disobedience is a step away from God. And whatever we do a few times will become a habit which then forms our character.

One selfish or vain thought is a step in the wrong direction. It prepares a way for a second wrong thought and soon our conversation becomes vain and eventually it will lead to wrong actions. The small beginning sets us in the downward direction separating us further and further from God.

Many will try to still their guilty conscience with the thought that God will forgive, he is merciful. Yes, God has promised to forgive when we repent and confess our sins, but the damage to our characters cannot be repaired in a moment.

If you have acted selfishly 1000 times it has left deep grooves, like ruts in your character, and one act of kindness will not erase them all. Yet the one act of kindness can be the small beginning that leads into greater sacrifices and finally your character has changed from selfishness to unselfishness.

“God has given us our intellectual and moral powers, but to a great extent every person is the architect of his

own character. Every day the structure is going up... Every act of life, however unimportant, has its influence in forming a character. A good character is more precious than worldly possessions, and the work of forming it is the noblest in which men can engage.’¹

“Characters formed by circumstance are changeable and discordant - a mass of contraries. Their possessors have no high aim or purpose in life. They have no ennobling influence upon the characters of others. They are purposeless and powerless.” Test. V. 4 p. 656-657

Peter denied Christ three times. He did it from an old habit to protect himself in a danger. This is how many will act in the time of the Sunday law and in the time of persecution. Without thinking or planning on it, their characters can betray them in the time of danger, unless they go through the process of systematic character change before it.

The small daily tests that we pass through develop our characters. The great tests in the end reveal what our characters are. If we are not faithful in the least we will not be faithful in much either. (Luke 16:10)

To change our characters to Christlikeness requires continual prayer connection with God and strict obedience to His law. Also we must follow the example of Jesus in unselfish labour for others. Daily Bible study and continuous reading of the Spirit of Prophecy books is also necessary. Faithfulness in Health Reform and proper Sabbath keeping will help our character development. If we neglect any of these we will not have characters fit for heaven.

Our goal is perfection of character. It can be reached step by step in little experiences that we go through daily.

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:3.

This pure character is our passport to heaven.

“The angels of God, seraphim and Cherubim, the powers commissioned to co-operate with human agencies, look on with astonishment and joy, that fallen men, once children of wrath, are through the training of Christ developing characters after the divine similitude, to be sons and daughters of God, to act an important part in the occupations and pleasures of heaven.” T.M. p. 18

Also Satan is astonished that all his temptations and efforts fail to turn these men, women and children away from their faithfulness to God; that they would rather die than commit the smallest sin.

All this starts from a small beginning and then daily adding to it a sinner is changed to a saint.

Zechariah writes, “For who hath despised the day of small things?” Zech.4:10

The small incidents in our daily life are God’s mediums to perfect us to His own likeness.

May the Lord help us to see the value of these small things in life and be faithful in them, that we may be prepared to face the greater tests which soon will come upon us. AMEN

Timo Martin

REDEEMING THE TIME

*Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, **Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil. “ Ephesians. 5:14-16*

When God created man and put him into the Garden of Eden, He gave him something to do. He was not given a tennis racket, a football or a baseball bat and told to go and have a good time and get some exercise to keep himself fit. “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Gen. 2:15. Another task that was given to Adam was that, after God had created all the animals, He “Brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” Gen. 2:19. “It was the design of God that man should find happiness in the employment of tending the things He had created, and that his wants should be met with the fruits of the trees of the garden.” RH 07-25-71

“The Lord’s purposes are not the purposes of men. He did not design that men should live in idleness. In the beginning He created man a gentleman; but though rich in all that the Owner of the universe could supply, Adam was not to be idle. No sooner was he created than his work was given him.” CT 274.

There was no change after man fell into sin and was cast out of Eden, only there would be more hindrances to his work. “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall bring forth to thee; and thou shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Gen. 3:17-19. Nowhere is it written that you shall work eight hours, play for five and then get a good night’s sleep. In fact, playing was not known during those times. There was much work to do. In order to make a household run efficiently, most of the waking hours were needed to do work.

Even if you go back only about 150 years ago, most of the day was spent in work. If children were privileged to attend school, upon returning home they had many chores to perform before nightfall, at which time they did their homework before retiring to bed.

Today we have many modern inventions that make our lives easier. We need less time to cook, to clean our homes, wash our clothing and do our yard work. Much more time could be used in spiritual pursuits in this enlightened age, where the Bible is so widely distributed. The light of the truth is shining so brilliantly from the Word of God, and people have much time for study however, “There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” Pro. 16:25. People think they can be good citizens without church and Bible reading, but they are often living only for themselves, with no thought of others in need.

REDEEMING THE TIME

There are two evils in our day regarding time. First there is the waste of time in idleness and secondly there is the active but incorrect use of time. Both of these we will examine in this article.

With all this extra time it is much more important in this day and age to take careful thought on redeeming our time. Redeeming our time consists of using it wisely; making the most of every opportunity. Also taking advantage of every moment in time for great and noble purposes. This is the obligation and privilege of every Christian.

Redeeming the time means more than simply refraining from idleness or frivolous activities. A person is not *good* merely because he is not *bad*. Like Jesus he must be going about his “Father’s business”. He must be actively seeking opportunities to do good even to one’s enemies.

Has the crime level decreased in this enlightened age that we live in? We call the time 500 years ago, the Middle Ages or also the Dark Ages. Why was it considered dark? There was very little of the Bible available and there were seemingly many sordid crimes committed. Is it any better today? We are, as I mentioned earlier, in an enlightened age. We have the Bible; we have modern technology; we have more hygienic conditions; we are living longer. No, in reality, the condition of man has deteriorated in the eyes of God. Crime has increased. Today it is as in the days “before the flood,” when, “they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noe entered into the Ark.” Mat. 24:38. No work is mentioned here so they were not busy working. On the contrary they had too much time on their hands and were not channelling their energies in the right direction. Life was one pleasure party in their eyes.

SODOM

The same was true with the days of Lot. “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Luke 17:28-30. From this verse it seems they were participating in useful occupations, they planted, they builded,

they bought and sold. It seems like honest work. However here is another form of idolatry. Some people overwork. They work seven days a week, from morning until night and have no time for spiritual pursuits. Man needs a balance in his life. We are told to work six days. Not seven and not four or five. Six days we are to work and rest on one. That is God's ideal.

Lot chose to live among them even though he was troubled by their sin. "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." 2 Pet. 2:8. Unfortunately even though he was saved from destruction, he lost most of his family in the flames. What was their great sin in Sodom? What did their unlawful deeds consist of? Sodom was the "Fairest among the cities of the Jordan Valley... set in a plain which was 'as the garden of the Lord' in its fertility and beauty." This could be compared, perhaps, to the Garden of Eden. "Here the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics flourished. Here was the home of the palm tree, the olive, and the vine; and flowers shed their fragrance throughout the year. Rich harvests clothed the fields, and flocks and herds covered the encircling hills. Art and commerce contributed to enrich the proud city of the plain. The treasures of the East adorned her palaces, and the caravans of the desert brought their stores of precious things to supply her marts of trade. With little thought or labour, every want of life could be supplied, and the whole year seemed one round of festivity.

"The profusion reigning everywhere gave birth to luxury and pride. Idleness and riches make the heart hard that has never been oppressed by want or burdened by sorrow. The love of pleasure was fostered by wealth and leisure, and the people gave themselves up to sensual indulgence." PP 156.

Ezekiel describes it as thus: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good." Ezk. 16:49,50.

Do we see any similarities to our time today? Are we really a more blessed and enlightened generation? We have modern technology that gives us more free time to do as we please, rather than having time to do only what is necessary for survival.

"There is nothing more desired among men than riches and leisure, and yet these gave birth to the sins that brought destruction upon the cities of the plain. Their useless, idle life made them a prey to Satan's temptations, and they defaced the image of God, and became Satanic rather than divine, Idleness is the greatest curse that can fall upon man, for vice and crime follow in its train. It enfeebles the mind, perverts the understanding, and debases the soul. Satan lies in ambush, ready to destroy those who are unguarded, whose leisure gives him opportunity to insinuate himself under some attractive disguise. He is never more successful than when he comes to men in their idle hours." PP 156,157.

To fill up idle hours, young people often spend hours in front of the TV where they learn many destructive habits. They now have time to dabble in drugs, time to waste in front of the Nintendos and computer games, time for teenagers to become pregnant, time to think up many other terrible crimes that they would not have had time for if they were kept busy with useful labour.

ANCIENT ISRAEL

While the nation of Israel was in Egypt, they were extremely busy as slaves and did not have very much time to commit crimes. They also had little time for spiritual pursuits. However when they were free, in the wilderness, they should have taken the opportunity of this extra time to redeem the time. When Moses was in the mountain for forty days, they could have been praying and drawing close to the Lord. Instead they became idle and started to look for something to do in the ways of the world. This is when they thought of idolatry. In the service of idols, there was much singing and dancing. There were the exciting pleasures to engage in to fill up their time.

The warning is given, "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 1 Cor. 10:7. This is what happened in the wilderness when the Israelites made the golden calf. How soon they forgot the Lord's goodness in delivering them from slavery. (Ex. 32:6)

RECREATION VS. AMUSEMENT

To fill up time, people have resorted to use their spare time in recreation and amusements. Their work just gets finished so quickly and perhaps there is nothing more to do. What shall they do? Rather than become a 'couch potato', they decide to get some exercise. It is good to keep your body in good physical condition and healthful exercise in the open air is important.

"It is a privilege and duty of Christians to seek to refresh their spirits and invigorate their bodies by innocent recreation, with the purpose of using their physical and mental powers to the glory of God. Our recreations should not be scenes of senseless mirth, taking the form of the nonsensical. We can conduct them in such a manner as will benefit and elevate those with whom we associate, and better qualify us and them to more successfully attend to the duties devolving upon us as Christians." MYP 364.

Recreation and amusements are two different things. Recreation comes from the root word re-create, which

implies to strengthen and build up. Amusement is simply for the sake of having fun - to create laughter. It is a *duty* for us to engage in recreation that will build us up and better prepare us for our duties. Here is one difference between recreation and amusement. Recreation prepares us to better fulfil our duties. Amusements that tend to unfit us for the faithful performance of our duties in life are unacceptable, as they also tend to lessen the relish for the contemplation of God and heavenly things. If we come from our leisure time refreshed and closer to God, then it was good recreation. If we come and have less desire to spend time with God, we have not used our time properly.

The Christian life is often thought of as boring by those who do not have an experience with Christ. They see all the amusements that God condemns. Worldly people are laughing and seem to have a good time. Is there no happiness to be found in the service of God? "Christians should be the most cheerful and happy people that live." MYP 363. How is this possible with the self-denying pathway that is the way of salvation? "God is love. Whoso dwelleth in God, dwelleth in love. All who have indeed become acquainted, by experimental knowledge, with the love and tender compassion of our Heavenly Father will impart light and joy wherever they may be," MYP 363. To know Jesus as our personal Saviour. This is the answer - this is what brings true joy to a person's life.

"Children who are under strict discipline at times have dissatisfied feelings. They will become impatient under restraint, and will wish to have their own way, and go and come as they please. Especially from the age of ten to eighteen, they will often feel that there would be no harm in going to picnics and other gatherings of young associates; yet their experienced parents can see danger. They are acquainted with the peculiar temperaments of their children and know the influence of these things upon their minds, and from a desire for their salvation keep them back from these exciting amusements." IT, p. 391

Precious time is often wasted by young and old alike by simply gathering to have a 'good time.' They want to enjoy each other's company and simply talk and laugh about nothing of importance. "We may deny Christ in our life by indulging love of ease or love of self, by jesting and joking, and by seeking the honour of the world." IT 304.

In E. G. White's day the youth were beginning to love the world. "It is an alarming fact that the love of the world predominates in the minds of the youth as a class. Many conduct themselves as if the precious hours of probation, while mercy lingers, were one grand holiday, and they were placed in the world merely for their own amusement, to be gratified with a continual round of excitement. They find their pleasures in the world, and in the things of the world, and are strangers to the Father and the graces of His Spirit. Many are reckless in their conversation. They choose to forget that by their words they are to be justified or condemned. God is dishonoured by the frivolity and the empty, vain talking and laughing that characterize the life of many of our youth..."

"Satan makes special efforts to lead them to find happiness in worldly amusements, and to justify themselves by endeavouring to show that these amusements are harmless, innocent, and even important for health. He presents the path of holiness as difficult, while the paths of worldly pleasure are strewn with flowers." MYP 367. We need to encourage our youth to turn away from the ways of the world if they have fallen in this way and warn them of the danger they are in.

COMPETITIVE SPORTS

There is much interest in society in what is called, competitive sports.. In these sporting activities there are two opposing sides consisting of a different number of people, depending on the sport. Each of these sides is striving for the mastery. Their goal is to win, to be a better team than their opponent. Other than the fact that, in the world, far too much money is wasted for professional sporting figures salaries, there is also danger that teenagers will idolize sporting figures and then desire to be just like them.

But what about innocent sporting competitions among friends? Here are a few quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy and you can make your own conclusions from what you read.

"There were some who were striving for the mastery, each trying to excel the other in the swift running of their bicycles. There was a spirit of strife and contention among them as to which should be the greatest. The spirit was similar to that manifested in the baseball games on the college ground. Said my Guide, 'These things are an offence to God. Both near and afar off souls are perishing for the bread of life and the water of salvation.'" 8T 52.

"The public feeling is that manual labour is degrading, yet men may exert themselves as much as they choose at cricket, baseball, or in pugilistic contests, without being regarded as degraded. Satan is delighted when he sees human beings using their physical and mental powers in that which does not educate, which is not useful, which does not help them to be a blessing to those who need their help. While the youth are becoming expert in games that are of no real value to themselves or to others, Satan is playing the game of life for their souls, taking from them the talents that God has given them, and placing in their stead his own evil attributes." CT 274/275.

"A view of things was presented before me in which the students were playing games of tennis and cricket. Then I was given instruction regarding the character of these amusements. They were presented to me as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations." CT 350.

“Diligent study is essential, and diligent hard work. Play is not essential.... What force of powers is put into your games of football and your other inventions after the way of the Gentiles - exercises which bless no one. Just put the same powers into exercise in doing useful labour, and would not your record be more pleasing to meet in the great day of God?” FE 228/229, “Some of the most popular amusements, such as football and ^boxing, have become schools of brutality. They are developing the same characteristics, as did the games of ancient Rome. The love of domination, the pride in mere brute force, the reckless disregard of life, are exerting upon the youth a power to demoralize that is appalling.” Ed 210.

“How much time is spent by intelligent human beings in horse racing, cricket matches, and ball playing! But will indulgence in these sports give men a desire to know truth and righteousness? Will it keep God in their thoughts? Will it lead them to inquire, How is it with my soul?V CT 456.

“ ‘Be sober, be vigilant, [not in kicking football and in educating yourselves in the objectionable games which ought to make every Christian blush with mortification at the afterthoughts] * be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.’ “ FE 225.

You can make your own decisions, with much prayer, in the light of the truth that has been presented.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” Phil. 2:3. Is this possible to do while engaging in, competitive sports? Is it not the desire of each player often to win; to be better than his opponent? There is often a feeling of elation upon winning and a feeling of defeat upon losing. In the world there is clearly seen the elation and pride on the part of the victors over their opponents. Since these testimonies were written, men have invented other sporting activities and competitions. One must decide which are acceptable in the light of the Spirit of Prophecy. Just because it is not mentioned by name, may not make it acceptable.

SO WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE?

“Any amusement in which you can engage asking the blessing of God upon it in faith will not be dangerous. But any amusement which disqualifies you for secret prayer, for devotion at the altar of prayer, or for taking part in the prayer meeting, is not safe, but dangerous. CT 337

“It is right that we should choose such places as this grove for seasons of relaxation and recreation. But while we are here it is not to devote our attention to ourselves merely, and fritter away precious time in amusements which will encourage a disrelish for sacred things. We have not come here to indulge in jesting and joking, in foolish talk and senseless laughter. We here behold the beauties of nature. And what then? Shall we fall down and worship them? No, indeed.

But as we behold these works of nature we should let the mind be carried up higher, to nature’s God; let it be elevated to the Creator of the universe, and then adore the Creator who has made all these beautiful things for our benefit and happiness.” 2T 589

HOLIDAYS

“I saw that our holidays should not be spent in patterning after the world, yet they should not be passed by unnoticed, for this will bring dissatisfaction to our children. On these days when there is danger that our children will be exposed to evil influences and become corrupted by the pleasures and excitement of the world, let the parents study to get up something to take the place of these dangerous amusements. Give your children to understand that you have their good and happiness in view.

“Let several families living in a city or village unite and leave the occupations which have taxed them physically and mentally, and take an excursion into the country, to the side of a fine lake or to a nice grove, where the scenery of nature is beautiful. They should provide themselves with plain, hygienic food, the very best fruits and grains, and spread their table under the shade of some tree or under the canopy of heaven. The ride, the exercise, and the scenery will quicken the appetite, and they can enjoy a repast which kings might envy.

“On such occasions parents and children should feel free from care, labour, and perplexity. Parents should become children with their children, making everything as pleasant for them as possible. Let the whole day be given to recreation.

“Exercise in the open ah* for those whose employment has been within doors and sedentary will be beneficial to health. All who can should feel it a duty to pursue this course. Nothing will be lost, but much gained. They can return to their occupations with new life and new courage to engage in their labour with zeal, and they are better prepared to resist disease.” IT, 514,515.

USEFUL WORK

“..if any would not work, neither should he eat.” 2 Thess. 3:10. “Daily systematic labour should constitute the education of the youth.” 3T 159.

“It was God’s purpose to alleviate by toil the evil brought into the world by man’s disobedience. By toil the temptations of Satan might be made ineffectual and the tide of evil stayed. And though attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, labour is still a source of happiness and development, and a safeguard against temptation. Its

discipline places a check on self-indulgence and promotes industry, purity, and firmness. Thus it becomes a part of God's great plan for our recovery from the Fall." CT 274.

Manual labour is not degrading. This was God's original plan and this is one of the best sources of recreation. This kind of recreation gives good exercise to the body while accomplishing something worthwhile in the process. There are plenty of ways to use recreation time for the glory of God, for example, if you like to take walks, then take a stack of tracts with you to put into people's mail boxes. Offer to do some gardening for an elderly neighbour. There are many other ways we can seek to benefit others if we only think about it and pray to the Lord for wisdom. All should be done to the glory of God. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand." Pro 10:4.

"God designs that all shall be workers. The toiling beast of burden answers the purpose of its creation better than does the indolent man. God is a constant worker. The angels are workers; they are ministers of God to the children of men. Those who look forward to a heaven of inactivity will be disappointed, for the economy of heaven provides no place for the gratification of indolence. But to the weary and heavy-laden rest is promised. It is the faithful servant who will be welcomed from his labours to the joy of his Lord. He will lay off his armour with rejoicing, and will forget the noise of battle in the glorious rest prepared for those who conquer through the cross of Calvary." CT 280.

As mentioned before, there are two dangers that exist in regards to time. One is not using our time at all -being idle, and the other is being active, but incorrectly using our time.

NEEDFUL PRAYER

Often when we are in a hurry, the hour of prayer gets cut short. If we use our time wisely, prioritising our duties, prayer would appear high on our list. "Satan leads many to believe that prayer to God is useless and but a form. He well knows how needful are meditation and prayer to keep Christ's followers aroused to resist his cunning and deception. By his devices he would divert the mind from these important exercises, that the soul may not lean for help upon the Mighty One and obtain strength from Him to resist his attacks." IT 295.

'TIME' IS A TALENT

"Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time.

"The value of time is beyond computation. Christ regarded every moment as precious, and it is thus that we should regard it. Life is too short to be trifled away. We have but a few days of probation in which to prepare for eternity. We have no time to waste, no time to devote to selfish pleasure, no time for the indulgence of sin. It is now that we are to form characters for the future, immortal life. It is now that we are to prepare for the searching judgment...

"We are admonished to redeem the time. But time squandered can never be recovered. We cannot call back even one moment. The only way in which we can redeem our time is by making the most of that which remains, by being co-workers with God in His great plan of redemption." COL 342.

"When these children decide for themselves to leave the pleasures of the world and become Christ's disciples, what a burden is lifted from the hearts of careful, faithful parents!" IT 391

It is my wish and prayer that each one of us would seek to do God's will and see the happiness and joy there is to be had in useful employment for the glory of God. There is much more joy than the amusements that this world offers. May God help us to seriously consider the time in which we live and use our time wisely.

AMEN

Wendy Eaton

SANCTUARY Part 2

"We have such an high priest, A minister of the Sanctuary, and of the true abernacle,.... for if He were on earth, He should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" Heb.8:1-5. The earthly sanctuary was made according to the model that was shown to Moses in the mountain. He was able to see the majestic temple in heaven, the earthly Sanctuary was a copy in

miniature of the heavenly Sanctuary. The verses we read in the book of Hebrews tells us that it would be a shadow of the heavenly Sanctuary. There is a great difference between an earthly and a heavenly Sanctuary.

Why are we looking into the question of a heavenly Sanctuary? Satan wants us to believe that a Sanctuary in heaven does not exist. There are certain theologians of the Bible that state that in heaven there is no Sanctuary (Temple). They say He does not need a literal building. We would like to see some verses from the Bible that show us there is a real temple in heaven. Under the seventh trumpet we read “And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged , And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament” Rev. 11:18,19. What place was opened? Where the ark of His testament is, we would say the Most Holy place in God’s temple. In the seventh angel of Revelation we read “And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” Rev.7:2,3. In the temple in heaven there is a golden altar before the throne of God. Let us remember the words, the earthly Sanctuary was to be a copy of the heavenly Sanctuary. Another evidence “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and the seven angels came out of the temple, and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God “Rev.15:5-8. The temple in heaven was opened and filled with smoke. The Bible confirms to us that there is a temple in heaven with a Holy and Most Holy Place.

There was a difference between the earthly and heavenly Sanctuary. The earthly sanctuary was to be a shadow of the heavenly. An example, if I place my hand under the sun it reveals a shadow but in that shadow you can’t see the color or the texture of the hand. There is an idea of a hand but it’s not the real McCoy. The temple in heaven is real. Not even the temple of Solomon with its great splendor can be compared to the temple in heaven. “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him” Dan.7:9,10. The throne of God was like fiery flame, the Cherubims are next to the throne of God and the Seraphims are around the throne of God. What is an incredible description is the amount of angels that stand before Him. The temple is bigger than we can imagine in heaven. The Bible states that the throne of God has wheels as flaming fire. We have a description of the throne of God in Ezekiel 1:4-20. When we begin to read this chapter it describes strange things but at the same time it’s a marvelous description. Four living creatures and every one had four faces, and every one had four wings: the soles of their feet were like the soles of a calfs foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. What we are reading are “things that eye have not seen and ears have not heard or have come to the imagination of man.”

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him.” Dan.7:13. Christ was taken in the clouds to the presence of His Father in heaven. We can’t imagine this great temple in heaven. The Bible states ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him and thousand thousands ministered unto Him. The earthly Sanctuary was a shadow compared to the heavenly Sanctuary. In the new earth there will also be a temple. “Mount Zion was just before us, and on the mount was a glorious temple, and about it were seven other mountains, on which grew roses and lilies And as we were about to enter the holy temple, Jesus raised His lovely voice and said “Only the 144,000 enter this place,” and we shouted “Alleluia.” This temple was supported by seven pillars, all of transparent gold, set with pearls most glorious I saw there tables of stone in which the names of the 144,000 were engraved in letters of gold. After we beheld the glory of the temple, and Jesus left us and went to the city” Early Writings p. 19. May the Lord help us to be able to understand the importance of believing in the Heavenly Sanctuary where Jesus is ministering on our behalf before the Father and be part of the blessed number of redeemed who will enter the Temple Of God. Amen

Br. In Christ Joshua Martinez; Orlando,Fl. We ask for thy prayers as we are now in the Orlando area to help it grow with God’s help.

LOST BUT FOUND

“Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple... “ Luke 2:46.

Jesus was twelve years old and had gone to Jerusalem with His parents to celebrate the Feast of the Passover, as it was the custom of every Jewish family. There they had the opportunity of remembering the powerful and miraculous flight of God’s people from Egypt as a symbol of deliverance from sin, and to center their attention and their hope on the Lamb of God who would die on their stead to purge them from their sins. It was a solemn moment, mostly for Jesus, since He was well aware of His mission, and treasured it in His heart.

The multitude was big and noisy. There were people who met one another every year on that special occasion and experienced big joy during this meeting. But sometimes the excitement of the event which had lost its solemnity since the courtyard of the temple had become a real market place, made people get involved in idle talk, and lose sight of the purpose of their journey. On this occasion, after the celebration was over, all who had walked together for many days, started their way back and were busily commenting on all they had seen and done. Thus, chatting and exchanging opinions, ideas, and impressions, the trip did not seem so long.

Although Jesus was only a child, not yet an adolescent, he could not delete those images from his eyes. His mind was eagerly going through all the Scriptures where His mission was described in detail: Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, Psalm 69:20,21, Psalm 50:6. He kept away from the crowd, and even from His parents who were mixed with the other believers who were involved in cheerful conversation instead of meditating upon the time in which the type would meet the antitype and Mary’s heart would be pierced like by a sword, as old Simon had prophesized. When the parents remembered their son they saw, to their amazement, that he was not there. Great was their despair to see that the precious child who had been specially entrusted to them by God, was not among them. They retraced their steps looking for Him among relatives and acquaintances, but could not find Him. It took them three days to see His lovely and gentle presence, as long as it would take His mother to meet Him again after His death.

Have we maybe also lost Jesus? We have certainly many times been asked this question from the pulpit. We have also been told that we have to retrace our steps and go to the place where we last saw Him, and that this trip may take longer than we expect. But have we been told where He is to be found? *“Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple :”*There is where we may find Him today, in the presence of God’s Father, making intercession for everyone who comes to Him just as he is acknowledging his sinfulness. Is that where we last saw Him? Or maybe we haven’t yet had the experience of seeing Him as our Advocate, as our High Priest, as our personal Saviour? Are we maybe still sleeping next to the ark where the law is, like Samuel, who did not recognize the voice of the Lord calling Him because he *“did not yet know the Lord? “ (1 Samuel 3:7)*

Do we belong to those who did see Him in the temple, to those to whom the wounds in his hands and feet were revealed, the ones who have seen their names printed in the palms of his hands but because of vain talks, daily worries, too much socializing and exchanging points of view, too much planning, have lost sight of Him? If this is our case let us get on our knees and close our eyes and undo our way. Let’s mentally go through all the experiences we have had with Him, let’s confess our negligence, and ask for true repentance so that we may be forgiven once and for all and our sin may be blotted out of our heart. Let us come to Him as to the High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses. *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. “ Hebrews. 4:15,16.* Yes, that is where we can still find Christ, and He wants to be found by us so that he may intercede for us. He considers it an honour and He tells us what Moses said to the Pharaoh: *“Accept the honour of saying when I shall intercede for you. “ (Ex. 9:9)* It is our choice, we set the time, and He patiently waits for us and keeps on pouring blessings upon us that we cannot enjoy because away from Him, we are spiritually dead.

“Now, so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple... “ Mary and Joseph did not know where He was, but they wanted to find Him and went all the way back to where they had been before. We know

where to find Him, in the heavenly temple, and we know that by faith we can enter the Most Holy Place and see him officiating for us, since at His death the veil that separated the two compartments was torn. He won't be there forever, He won't be there for long. We know that very soon, sooner than we expect, He will put on His royal garments, leave the temple and come for His bride.

So if we have lost Jesus, let's not waste our time, let's ascend to the temple in heaven by faith, and fall at His feet and ask Him to give us a contrite heart if we do not have it, and let us take heed to the warning in Hebrews 3:7,8 "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" Amen.

Theresa Corti

HOW TO FIND CONTENTMENT IN THIS LIFE

Contentment means freedom from agitation and anxieties; having our desires limited to the things that we have; being satisfied with food that God gives us. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5.

The horse that does not worry will endure much more hard work than the fiery steed. The ox that contently chews its cud as he bears the yoke will do more and better work than the one that frets. So it is with the people of God; some endure, others not, some work, others not.

The one that calmly trusts his Lord in adversity as well as in prosperity will find himself making progress in the Master's work. There is no reason why we cannot trust God, because He has given us nothing but good all the days of our life. We are to count our blessings.

Yes, even those who seem to be against us work for the good as in the case of Jacob when he thought himself to be bereft of his children. The promise always holds true, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8:28. Do you love God? Then claim the promise! Submit all to Him, knowing that He does not err-Sometimes it is necessary to turn our eyes away from the things that are seen, which are temporary to the things of God, which are eternal. The Lord is preparing us for the, "Eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. 4:17. Therefore let Him work in us, "To will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 2:13.

The apostle Paul seems to have had as much sufferings as any of God's servants, yet he says, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. 4:11.

Apostle Paul and Silas, lacerated with 40 stripes save one, laying upon their bleeding backs, with their feet elevated and fastened to the stocks still praised God.

But the physical suffering is not always the hardest to endure. No doubt Paul's perils around the false brethren caused greater anguish to him than the stoning by the open enemies. But even this he accepted without complaint by the grace of God. By these trials the child of God is made Christlike.

Job, a perfect, upright man endured the extreme of the sufferings, the same which the enemy wants to bring upon the children of God. Yet Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job 13:15. Passing out of the crucible of fire, he found himself in a sacred nearness to God. He said, "Now mine eyes seeth Thee." Job 42:5.

Thank God that we can also follow in the footsteps of the Lord, and be made perfect through sufferings."Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Tim. 6:6 Then how to find contentment in this life? In order to be happy in this life, we must strive to attain the character of Christ.

One of the outstanding characteristics of Christ was His self-denial and His benevolence. He did not seek His own, but went about doing good and this was His meat and drink.

So we also, by following His example, can be in holy communion with Him and by daily seeking to imitate His character we shall be a blessing to the world and have contentment now and an eternal reward hereafter. (TM 227).

AMEN
John Theodorou
Greece/USA

Precious Jewels of Christ

“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels: and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” **Malachi 3 : 17.**

The kingdom of heaven is compared to a merchant “who seeks beautiful pearls. He found a pearl of great price; and he went to sell all that he had, and he bought it. “ This parable has a double significance. It applies not only to the man who endeavours to find the kingdom of heaven, but also to Christ, who seeks his heritage. By his transgression, man lost his innocence and was sold to Satan. Christ, the only son of God, engaged to repurchase man paid the ransom on Calvary.

He left the worlds which remained faithful and the society of the holy angels, for he could not be satisfied as long as humanity was far from him. The celestial Merchant deposited his crown and his royal dress. Although Prince and Commandant, he took on him the clothing of humanity, then he came to a world dirtied by the curse to seek the single lost pearl, the man lost by disobedience.

He found his pearl in the dust. Selfishness hardens the human heart and falls under the hand of Satan. But Christ takes it out from the darkness bring forth the praises of “ that which called us from darkness to His wonderful light”. We are brought to make alliance with God, we receive forgiveness and find peace. Jesus discovers the pearl of humanity and inserts it on His own diadem.

He is disposed to communicate hope to the largest sinner and to the depraved man. He says :”All that the father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6: 37.

When a soul finds his Saviour, he will have joy like that the merchant who found a pearl of great price. By His grace, He will take care of this soul, this heart until His perfect jewel is worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

“ For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3 : 16.

Alexandra Hecquet,
New Caledonia (South Pacific)

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE AND TOUR

Sunday, July 28-Monday August 5,2002 “From the past to the future”

The General Conference Session came to an end on Sunday, July 28 and after the last meal was eaten many bid each other their goodbyes and farewells. Although a parting of the ways can be a sad occasion, many of the youth did not seem too sorry; the reason for this was that they were not going to be separated from each other just yet: a bus was waiting outside of Papendal to take them on a tour that would take them through many historical sites in Europe. As the youth got on the bus, many were excited about the trip that they were about to embark on.

The bus left Holland at about 3:00PM and on the way to France passed through Luxembourg and Belgium. From a personal point of view, I thought the bus conductors were very nice and friendly. As they spent more time with us they got to know us better and were really surprised to know that we don't drink anything with caffeine in it. In the beginning of our bus ride they tried putting on some secular music to brighten the mood but soon found out that we don't listen to that kind of music. Later on we learned that the conductors preferred to listen to our Christian music and one of them also said that he would try to quit smoking. By the grace of God we were able to witness to these two men.

MONDAY JULY 29:

At 6:00 Monday morning we arrived in Avignon. We had the opportunity to visit Le Palais des Papes (The Popes' Palace). From 1309-1377 popes ruled from Avignon instead of Rome. Moreover, from 1378-1417, two popes ruled simultaneously one based in Avignon the other in Rome. Later on a third pope began to claim that he was the rightful representative of Christ on earth. In the Great Controversy we can learn that this was called the Great Western Schism.

TUESDAY JULY 30:

On Tuesday we arrived in Pisa early in the morning. We were taken to see the great bell tower of the Cathedral, “The Leaning Tower of Pisa.” Up to this date nobody knows who built it although there has been a lot of speculation. Its fame has spread abroad because of its inclination and beauty. The tower was not meant to be tilted but this is what has set it apart and made it special from other standing structures. Care has been taken by scientists and engineers to keep it this way.

FLORENCE:

Next, we were taken to Florence the city that is said to be “the cradle of the modern world.” For 200 years art flourished in this city and produced the great works of literature and art by Dante, Leonardo, and Michelangelo.

Florence is a very crowded city with tourists milling all over the place. Gypsies abound in huge numbers in this city. Some wear colourful outfits and long flowing skirts, often holding a baby or two in their hands. Some sit on the street corners begging for money but others prefer to walk wherever tourists walk and ask for money to feed themselves and their babies. We didn't offer them any money but we did offer them something better instead, pamphlets that spoke about the way that leads to hope. The Baptistery Doors was the first historical site we visited here. History tells us that the contest that marked the beginning of the Renaissance was the Baptistery Doors Competition. An artist was needed to decorate the north doors of the Baptistery Cathedral and a young man by the name of Lorenzo Ghiberti was chosen for the job after he won the contest. The bronze Baptistery Doors depict different Biblical stories: Adam and Eve, Jacob and Esau, Moses., .etc.

Afterwards we went to the city square where we saw a copy of Michaelangelo's David (original resides in the Academia, a 15 mm walk away). This monumental statue of David was the epitome of what a Renaissance man was supposed to be: charming, cultured and alert.

WEDNESDAY JULY 31:

We finally arrived at around 1:00 in the morning at the Italian Mission House in Guilianova. Since we were all tired we quickly settled down to sleep. The mission house is located in a beautiful area surrounded by houses and a sloping, green countryside.

In the backyard of the mission, there is a garden that produces its own vegetables and herbs. Worship was usually held at 7:30 in the morning and before a Bible reading was given brothers Stefano Salemin and Pablo Hunger would play their guitars and the youth would join in singing different Italian or Spanish songs of praise. From Wednesday to

Saturday different interesting subjects were presented to the youth by different people in the morning or else in the evening. The different subjects that stood out were given by brothers: Pablo Hunger, Gabriel Porrás, Juan Quesada, Stefano Salemi and Larry Watts.

PABLO HUNGER:

On our first morning there, brother Pablo Hunger, the world youth leader, spoke to us about the history of our church.

His service was entitled “From the past to the future” which was also the motto of the conference. He spoke about the tour we’d just taken and how we’d had the opportunity to witness first hand many historical places in Europe.

He took us throughout the entire history of the reformation beginning with the Waldenses pointing out their faithfulness amidst their trials and tribulations. These peaceful people lived in the Piedmont Mountains and brought up their children to serve and honour God. As they grew older they left their safe homes in the mountains and valleys to be missionaries and witnesses for Christ. The difficulties they endured during this time of persecution only served to strengthen their faith and trust in God.

He continued with John Wycliffe, John Huss, Jerome and other faithful reformers. He paid particular attention to Martin Luther who exposed many of the errors of the Catholic Church. More than 500 years have passed since the time of Martin Luther but the age of the reformers is not finished yet.

What will await the future reformers? And what will be their role in the closing scenes of this earth’s history? If they hold on to Christ they will conquer new heights; gain new victories and one day be with Him in heaven.

GABRIEL PORRAS:

One evening brother Gabriel who is currently working in Suriname as a missionary had the chance to present a very important message. The title of his message was “The Borders of Israel.” After the Israelites’ sojourn in the wilderness the Lord brought them to the land of Canaan as He had promised them. Ancient Israel was counselled by God to remain within the borders of the land they had just conquered and inherited. Many people might think that there is no lesson to be learned from the counsel God gave His people, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. (Joshua 1:3-4). If we analyze the subject a little deeper, the meaning of the borders and the reason why God gave them becomes clear and an important lesson may be learned from it.

The Southern border was the wilderness, in the wilderness there is no water, nothing green. There are only poisonous snakes and a hot ardent sun during the day and terrible cold nights. There was nothing for the Israelites here. This place had nothing to offer them but despair and the memory of bitter experiences.

This wilderness represents the old life, sin and hopelessness. Since there was no hope of salvation out there, they were told not to turn back but to keep away from it. The Northern border was Lebanon. These lofty, green mountains were partially covered with snow throughout the greatest part of the year. From these unsealed mountain heights one could see: new horizons, the world and all it has to offer, pride, insolence, greed and search for glory. Everything that exalts men. As is written in Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Sometimes we don’t consider pride as something bad, we simply see it as one of many sins. Let us just remember that pride has been the downfall of many people and that it was what caused Satan to be thrown out of heaven.

The Eastern boundary was the river Euphrates. The main stream of Mesopotamia and the centre of business and trade, this river represented the prosperity and success in this life. The minds of the Israelites needed to be fixed on spiritual things and the cares of this world and the love of money were not to influence them.

The Western boundary was the Mediterranean sea in the Old Testament times this sea was the highway of the Phoenician merchants who had a connection with all of the Mediterranean world. The Hebrews, who lived in a country void of natural harbours, were not a seafaring people.

The sea is in continual agitation, it has all kinds of distractions. In a spiritual sense it represents the agitation of this world: fashion, men’s ideas, vanity... etc.

The human mind is never satisfied, and always wants to explore new horizons and see the world. Sometimes we want to go beyond the boundaries God had established for us. Everything seems to be great and wonderful, but although Satan offers us greatness and glory we are to remember that heaven is greater.

Young people always want to know what their boundaries are and often test their parents and other adults to see how far they can go without getting into trouble. In the church the youth want to know how far they can go without committing a sin.

Our safest course is to stay within the boundaries and never push our limits. Let us always fix our eyes upon Jesus and go to Him because He is the solution to our problems.

JUANQUESADA:

Brother Juan Quesada is a young minister from Chile. He also had a special message for the youth. He went to the book of Hosea and recounted in vivid detail the entire life story of this prophet and his wayward wife Gomer. He told the story in a way that made it seem real and not just a historical fact.

Hosea as any other young man probably wanted to get married and so he did to a young woman named Gomer. Perhaps in the beginning their marriage was good, they had three wonderful children and enjoyed a happy life. Unfortunately for Hosea his dear wife left him for other lovers and was unfaithful to him.

Time passed and one day the Lord had a special message for this prophet. "Then the Lord said unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other Gods, and love flagons of wine."(Hosea 3:1) Gomer had left her beloved husband for other false lovers who betrayed her in the end. One day as she was being sold in the market square for 15 pieces of silver and a homer of barley and a half, Hosea appeared on the scene As he beheld all this, his love for Gomer still as strong as ever caused him to buy her back for himself.

As soon as he had bought her he said "thou shalt abide with me for many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee."(Hosea 3:3) This story is a miniature representation of how ancient Israel treated God and how the church still treats God. The Lord loves His church and he bought her with an infinite price, the blood of His beloved Son Jesus Christ. Although she had turned away from Him, he did not completely forget her but forgave her and welcomed her back into His outstretched arms.

STEFANO SALEMI:

Brother Stefano, an Italian brother who has worked in South Africa with brother Giner and is now working in Italy spoke about the importance of communication and the different ways in which we can communicate with others. Through a power point presentation and many visuals he got his point across. Jesus often employed these different means of communication with his disciples. He spoke to them not only through speech but also through the use of his other four senses. Touch, Smell, Hearing and Sight.

Often we forget that talking is not the only form of communication that exists although it seems to be the most obvious.

Verbal communication is essential in any relationship be it with mother and child, or husband and wife. Many times we think that we really know our friends but it is surprising for us to discover that sometimes we haven't taken the time or effort to really get to know them. We may not know what their favourite dish or colour is because of this lack of communication. We also impart information to others by the way we walk and stand, the expression on our faces may radiate joy at seeing someone or anger at a supposed wrong. Although the mouth might say one thing the actions express another.

Touch is another important means of communication: hugs and kisses express love for our family. A simple pat on the back to a friend or a warm handshake may express encouragement and serve to lift someone's spirits up.

Sight is also important. We have much to thank God for in particular for the wonderful gift of sight.

With it we can behold the beautiful scenes of nature around us and learn of God's love for us. We can watch the expressions of those who are dear to us and with it we may also read the word of God and find out on our own how great His love is and how He died to set us free,

The sense of hearing must not be forgotten as it allows us to hear the word of God. Music plays an important role in our lives. Through it we can enjoy beautiful hymns and the sound of instruments. Smell is another sense that brings much comfort such as a plate of warm food to nourish us throughout the day.

LARRY WATTS:

On Sabbath brother Larry spoke to us about talents. Each of us is a unique individual and we all need to analyze ourselves and find out what our talents are. Talents are the four lane highways of our minds: these are the things that we like and are easy for us to do. It is what brings us joy and happiness, and what we often spend our free time doing. Some people find math easy others find it hard. Why should we spend our lives trying to be something that God did not intend for us to be? In 1 Corinthians 12 we find a list of different gifts imparted by the Holy Spirit and in Matthew 25 we see that different people received different gifts. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 8:12 that God requires of us according to what we have and not according to what we don't have. And in Ephesians 2:12 we are made to realize that each of us has a unique place to fill in the final events of this

earth's history, to bring unity to the church of God by using our talents in the service of the Lord. God is going to use the young people to shake the earth. The greatest untapped power on earth is not Niagara Falls. It is those young people who will be united under the latter rain. They will shake not only the earth around Niagara but the whole world will tremble under the power of unselfish love. God will use someone, why not us now?

SATURDAY AUGUST 3:

The afternoon youth meeting on Sabbath was a blessing for all. The young people had a chance to present the specials they'd been practicing and others were welcomed to give their testimonies or experiences.

Brother Gabriel played the guitar and sang a song of praise to the Lord with a group of friends.

There were many other nice songs, including a nice Russian one which was sung by sister Olga from the Ukraine and played on the piano by brother Pavel.

The German group went up to sing as well as a Bulgarian group who told an experience and then 2 orphans in their group sang a song.

The Bulgarians told about their hardships during the time of communism. Their church had been closed down and they couldn't study or preach about the word of God.

Sister Irene has been greatly blessed by the Lord and He has done so many wonders for her, including healing her from an ulcer. During her time of sickness she asked God to extend her life and if He did she promised to serve Him faithfully always.

Thankful to be alive, she is now in service for Him,

JOSE ALBERTO'S EXPERIENCE:

Throughout all this there was one experience which stood out above the others and that was brother Jose Alberto's, originally from Portugal but has been living in Spain for many years now. He began to wander the streets from the age of eight leaving home at the tender age of nine. He never really had a home or got to know his father. In a desperate attempt to find on the streets what he could not at home he began to hang out with a gang of 20-30 year olds. The older ones took him under their wing and began to show him the ropes. Since he was so young they protected him and he was seen as the mascot of their group. By the age of 9 he was already consuming alcohol and tobacco. At fifteen he was injecting himself with drugs, taking cocaine and practicing all kinds of vices. His family couldn't stand the sight of him and offered him no support whatsoever. Living in the streets gave him easy access to drugs and because of this he began to lose a lot of weight.

Soon he was weighing only 47kilos(a little more than a hundred pounds).

He had no hope in this life so he sought death as the only means of escape. Many of his former companions were dying all around him. One night they'd go to sleep in the same room and the next morning they were lying dead beside him or else had contracted AIDS. Although they'd all take the same drugs he was the only one who never died or had anything bad happen to him.

One day a man from a rehabilitation centre spoke to him but Jose wasn't ready to let go of the kind of life he'd been living yet.

At the age of 25 he finally entered the rehabilitation centre but he was rude and treated all those who wanted to help him with disrespect.

Finally, since he was getting so out of hand they sent him to Valencia, Spain. His exact words are "nunca olvidare Valencia"(I shall never forget Valencia).

He spent eighteen months in this association. In the city of Valencia he met a woman who also spoke Portuguese as he did and they soon became friends.

They exchanged addresses and telephone numbers. Meanwhile he returned to Portugal for a couple of days and here he began to seek his old hangouts and had a relapse. He began to take drugs but something told him to return to Spain and to look for that girl again. So he did. He turned up at her house and she offered him a place to stay. This particular girl was a Baptist and very religious. She had never smoked or drank or gone to any dances. He also noticed that she carried her religion with her wherever she went. There was something special about her; she had God in her life. At mealtimes she would often pray for Jose and he marveled as he watched her.

She invited him to church and he began to attend for her sake. Soon life had a new flavour for him. Eventually he married her. After a while they came into contact with the reform message, which they gladly accepted.

There have been many trials and difficulties in their lives. Jose had to learn to give up worldly music (rock, heavy metal) and spices, so now he uses garlic and onions very liberally. His exhortation to parents and children is to be grateful for each other because he never enjoyed family life. He is also thankful for the blood that was shed on Calvary for his sake and prays that he will never leave the little flock of God.

To end it all he and his beloved wife Tania sang a special hymn.

SUNDAY AUGUST 4:

On Sunday we were woken up at 4:00 in the morning to go to Rome.

First of all, we saw St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. From the point of view of men it is very impressive with all its grandeur, pomp and glory.

The architecture is incredible and the inside is elaborately decorated with many paintings and statues of saints. In the basement they had many tombs, one was supposed to be St. Peter's, this is what the Catholic world professes but we know otherwise.

On our way to the Coliseum we stopped by at the Arch of Titus which commemorated Titus' triumphal conquest of Judea.

The Coliseum was our final destination during the reign of the emperor Vespasiano (c. 72 AD). Originally it was called the Amphitheatrum Flavium, it began to be called the Coliseum because this building stood next to a colossal statue of Nero.

Although this building is in a dilapidated condition and all you see are ruins it once stood over 160 feet high with 80 entrances and could hold up to 50,000 spectators.

This was also the site of public events such as: mock naval battles, gladiator fights and wild animal hunts.

It was here where persecuted Christians were brought to be killed and then torn apart by lions and other wild beasts of prey.

This entire trip was a blessing and a nice time of fellowship with other youth around the world.

Reyna Conde

(Notes provided by Brs. Larry Watts and Gabriel Porras.)

CANADIAN FIELD CONFERENCE

August 30 - September 1, 2002

The Canadian Field President, Br. Kanagarajah opened the 2002 Canadian Field Conference on Friday evening with a responsive reading from the words found in Psalm 122 and speaking on the conference motto "Be thou faithful unto death" Revelation 2:10. He welcomed all the churches that were represented; members, visitors and those that had travelled long distances to attend the conference.

Br. Ivo Yonov, the Canadian Field Bible Worker from Montreal opened the Sabbath. He spoke about the hope that we, as God's children have, of reaching our goal - our heavenly home. The one that shall endure unto the end shall be saved. He urged all present to take heed that no man deceive them although iniquity abounds. He stressed the fact that it is not what we say about ourselves but it is what God thinks of us that is important. God needs those who will remain faithful until the end. It is the end that counts. It doesn't matter which year you were baptized but if you were faithful until death. God needs people who will remain faithful to Him until the end.

We were then privileged to hear the word of God from Br. Guillermo Gamallo, from Spain, who was visiting us for the first time. He said that each of us today has the duty to know the time in which we are living. The fulfillment of Revelation 13 is taking place. The world marvels after the beast and follows him wherever he goes. We have to wake up from this sleep in which we have been living. We have a wonderful message that no other church in the world preaches. We have to awaken. We are to speak the present truth. To be almost saved is to be totally lost. We cannot play with our salvation. There is still time to go to Jesus and to say "Lord, forgive me" and be reconciled with the Father.

On a beautiful, sunny Sabbath morning we were greeted by Br. LaRue Shields for the Sabbath school. He told us that we must be united in love and praise God. Br. Errol Fletcher conducted the adult review lesson and Br. Timo Martin the Adult English lesson and Br. Abel Conde the Adult Spanish lesson.

The Divine Service was kept by our newly-elected General Conference President, Br. Branko Cholich. He said, "Whenever I come to this place, I feel at home". We were all happy to hear those words from Br. Cholich as he and Sis. Cholich lived many years in Canada with us. Br. Cholich spoke about the church entering a new era of the reform movement. He spoke of us needing to mobilize all our energies to go forward united and to accomplish the task that remains before us. Christ told his followers to be faithful until death. The ability to talk is a great gift that was given to man. We should practice holy conversation wherever we go. God's people will be tested and their faithfulness will be at stake. In these days you will be saved because of your faithfulness to God. Be ye reconciled to God.

After lunch the examination of four young souls who would be baptized the following day took place. The church provided overwhelming support for the baptism of these young souls. Following this event the Streetsville church youth presented their program. The theme was "Music". The young children sang praises and told memory verses while the older youth spoke about music throughout the ages and sung beautiful songs. The music included instruments and voice. The Toronto children and youth then presented their beautiful spirit filled songs of praise to God.

Following the youth program Br. Timo Martin held the Missionary Experiences and Testimony meeting stating that it remains always encouraging to hear of the experiences that brothers and sisters have made. All present received a rich blessing listening to what brothers and sisters had experienced around the world. Br. Cholich spoke of his experiences in China, Korea, Bangladesh, Congo and Burundi. The work was going forward in these countries and he thanked God for his protection throughout his travels. Br. Tzevtan Petkov, the General Conference Secretary, spoke on his experiences in Russia, in countries of the former Soviet Republic and Greece. He encountered perils from Muslim extremists when traveling through some of these countries. There were difficult times for some of our members, but with prayer, the Lord took care of the matters. Sister Leila McTavish spoke of her experiences in Fiji, Malaysia and Thailand. Speaking about Christianity to Muslims is prohibited in these countries and it is punishable by hanging. She had to spread the word of God very carefully. We need to plant the seeds of reformation - to save a few more souls before it is too late.

After dinner Br. Tzevtan Petkov closed the Sabbath. We spoke on the Reform having a very serious message. Not only were we to be faithful, but to be faithful unto death like the motto of our conference read. Many times we believe that we are ready to die for our Lord but we do not really know ourselves yet. Today we have to be prepared. We need to sacrifice ourselves spiritually every day. We need to be ready to die every day for Jesus - not just for some time in the future. Today is the day that we must be ready to be faithful until death.

Br. Michael Mitov, the Canadian Field Bible Worker from Vancouver, gave the concluding service of the day. He spoke about the words in the Bible where it says that it is difficult to find a faithful man. There are people who are faithful in difficult times but during good times they are not. God wants us to be faithful at all times - good and bad. Saul did not exactly fulfill the commandment of the Lord. He was faithful in the big things but he did not fulfill the things that God told him. We must be faithful to God during every step of the way. We must go forward with Jesus in front of us leading the way.

On a beautiful warm and sunny Sunday morning, Br. Kanagarjah baptized four dear, young souls in the murky waters of Lake Ontario. These souls who had decided to dedicate their lives to Jesus were Debbie Conde, Emelina Garcia, Adam Luoranen and Bryan Urizar.

After returning to the church these new members were accepted into God's church. All were happy to see these young souls give their hearts to follow the Lord Jesus. Following the acceptance of the new members Br. Cholich presented the new Canadian Field Officers to the church. He encouraged the new officers to perform their duties faithfully as well as all members to provide their full support to them.

Br. Gamallo then spoke again providing some very spiritual and encouraging words to all present. He spoke on how

God made a pact with Abraham, with Moses and with Noah. The Lord wanted to be with His people so He called for them to put away their sins and to abandon their idolatry. The Lord wants us to be saved and He wants us to make a covenant with Him. If we look at the model of the sanctuary that God told Moses to build, it is the true pattern of the sanctuary that exists in heaven. Br. Gamallo had visual aids which served to illustrate the different aspects of the contents of the Ark of the Covenant and how they related to us and of their importance. Jesus had made a complete sacrifice for us - 100%. The Father was suffering through the crucifixion with His Son. The Lord wants a people that will make a 100% covenant with Him. He wants one true and faithful people. We cannot be saved at 99%. Jesus is interceding on our behalf at 100%. We need to renew our covenant with the Lord. We need to confess our sins to our Lord. He wants us to approach Him.

After listening to these words the whole congregation stood up and renewed their covenant with the Lord. There were also four souls who came forward as the altar call was made. Today there is still a time of grace. We need to renew our covenant with the Lord daily.

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After a very uplifting conference the time had come for the farewell meeting. The workers and church leaders spoke words of encouragement to all. We were reminded that we had to remember the essence of Christianity - to love one another. Each one of us must think about what we can do for God so that we can finish the work. Let brotherly love continue. We need to pray one for another. God will help us with faith to go ahead.

It was truly a blessed conference with many special songs and music throughout the entire time. This added to making all the meetings more pleasant and special. We were also very thankful and privileged to have Br. Cholich visit us again in Canada.

Let us pray for the work all around the world, as well as in the Canadian Field. Let us go forward with renewed strength to finish the work and hasten the Lord's soon coming.

AMEN.

The Canadian Field Secretary

CHILDREN'S CORNER

STORIES IN THE JUNK YARD

In the small town of Malvern, Arkansas, USA is a junkyard, called Walter's Wrecking Yard. Walter Battle is the owner and his motto is, "Other's folks misfortune is my gain."

One crisp October morning, Keith Smith headed down to the junkyard. Now he was a pastor of the local church and didn't normally spend much time in the junkyard, however this day there was something that he needed for his car and he figured the cheapest place to get it was the junkyard.

While driving his car the previous week, he had hit a pothole in the road and lost one of his front hubcaps. He had gone to buy a new one, but the new ones were so expensive and therefore he decided to go to the junkyard and have a look.

He wheeled into the parking lot in a cloud of dust, parked his car, and proceeded into the small office in the concrete-block building.

Walter and his friend Ray were sitting around the gas stove, drinking a cup of hot herbal tea and listening to some nice classical music. "Hello Keith," he said, "What can I do for you today?"

"Well, Walter," he replied, "I'm looking for a hubcap for my car."

"You lost it, huh?" Walter mumbled.

"Yes, the second one on the same vehicle."

"Was it a pothole?"

"Yes, I didn't see it until the last minute and then it was too late to avoid it"

"It happens every time to people."

"Do you have a spare?" asked Keith.

"I believe you will find one of them tacked up out there on the back fence," Walter pointed out the back door as

he took another sip of his tea.

Keith stepped out the door into the yard. It was about a two-acre lot, wall-to-wall with damaged cars, surrounded by a two-metre board fence. Along the back perimeter of the fence, hanging corner to corner, were hubcaps. Hundreds. Thousands of hubcaps. Every make and model you could think of.

He strolled along the fence, scanning the array of gleaming chrome discs until he spotted a hubcap that matched the ones on his car. He took them off the nail and walked back to the office.

Just before he walked in the door, out came Walter, "Did you find any?"

"Yes." He held up the hubcap. "This should do the trick. What do I owe you?"

"How about five dollars?"

"Sold!" said Keith, as he searched for the money in his pocket. He took out a five dollar bill and handed it to him. "Thanks, Walter."

"No problem, Preacher." He smiled and stuffed the money in his shirt pocket. "Any time you need another one, you just come back here, ok?"

Just then a horn honked. A tow truck pulled up outside the fence.

"Excuse me a minute," said Walter. He made his way to the gate in the fence and swung it open. The tow truck pulled forward through the opening into the yard.

"Where do you want this?" the driver hollered.

"Put it over there!" Walter pointed. "Next to the blue Camaro!"

The driver followed instructions and expertly deposited the car, a late-model green Pontiac, in the desired spot.

"Fine! Fine!" shouted Walter, making an okay sign with his hand.

After unhooking the car, the driver walked over with a clipboard and handed it to Walter.

"You need to sign this," he said, "It's for the insurance company."

"Right," said Walter, as he scribbled his name. "You have a good day now. Be careful."

The driver climbed into the cab of the tow truck, waved and was gone.

It was then that Keith began to notice the twisted, green Pontiac. "Boy," he commented. "Somebody really totalled that one."

"That somebody was Lucas Ivy," said Walter. "He crashed into a tree while coming home drunk from the bar down at Donaldson."

"Really?" Keith asked in surprise.

Walter nodded.

"I bet he got real hurt from that accident,"

"I'm sure he did," replied Walter. "They've got him down at the funeral home right now."

"Dead?"

"Yes, graveyard dead."

"That was an awful high price to pay for one careless moment."

"Yes, it was.

Unfortunately he should have known better. The police had stopped him and charged him five times for driving while drunk. He even had his license removed for a while. Finally his habit killed him."

There was a long silence before Keith spoke again. "There's not much left of his car."

"Keith, if these cars could only talk, the stories they'd tell... Look over there." He pointed across the yard to a mangled black Dodge. "See that Dodge? Jackie Crawford was driving back from North Hampton on the interstate highway and fell asleep at the wheel. They buried her the Christmas before last. She was only 26 years old and left behind a husband and two small children."

Keith shook his head.

"And look over there." He pointed to what was left of a blue VW. "Some guy from California ended his life in that car. He went to pass someone on Highway 9 and hit a huge truck head-on. It killed him instantly. And there. The silver Firebird. Bobby Joe wrapped that one around a telephone pole not more than a kilometre south of here. He was drag racing with Gravitt's boy, Bill."

Suddenly Walter's

expression changed. He seemed as he was holding back tears, unable to speak. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his nose. "But here's the worst of all."

He directed Keith over to the back corner of the yard. Walter stood with both hands on the door, peering through the shattered window of a crushed blue Chevy Nova. He hung his head.

"This here is my boy's car," he said slowly. "One rainy night six years ago he was headed home when he went into a skid and off the Ouachita River Bridge. He was knocked unconscious and never got out of the car."

Keith stood silent. Speechless.

Big tears rolled down Walter's cheeks now as all the memories welled up in him like a flood.

"Martin was a senior at the high school. A good boy. I have never gotten over it. I've never been able to scrap this car, even though the engine is good and it has a lot of salvageable parts."

"I'm sorry," Keith said quickly.

He took a deep breath and signed. "No use me getting all teary-eyed. It won't bring him back,"

He stood resolutely and brushed back a tear. "Keith, if folks could only realize the dangers out there on the

highway at every curve. It only takes one careless moment to destroy a life. People's words and actions can never be undone once they're done. When you're operating a machine, like a car, you have to constantly be on guard. Am I right?"

"Right," agreed Keith.

"Yes, each one of these cars has a story behind it. Most of them are real-life tragedies." He shook his head and walked back toward the office. Keith followed.

"Listen, Keith," he said as he turned. "I don't know what's got into me. I've got to run down to the parts store and pick up a carburetor. Then I got to run over to Gil's shop before noon. You look around or whatever."

"Yeah, thanks," responded Keith. "And, Walter, thanks again for this." He held up the hubcap.

He smiled, turned, walked through the office, and was gone.

Keith walked over to the green Pontiac the tow truck had just brought in and peered through the broken window. On the passenger's side, on the floor was a carton of cigarettes, a few crumpled cans of beer and a loose piece of paper. He reached down and picked it up. It was a note from Lucas' wife. "Luke, I've gone to pick up Rachel from the babysitter. I'll have supper waiting. Don't be late. Love Erma."

"What a shame," he thought, tossing the paper back into the car.

He walked into the office. Ray was still sitting by the stove. He glanced up.

"Did Walter show you Martin's car?" he asked.

Keith nodded.

"Did he tell you the whole story?" He took another sip of his tea.

"What do you mean?" asked Keith.

"About the argument he and Martin had the night before he was killed," said Ray.

"No," Keith said with a puzzled look on his face.

"Well you see, Martin and Walter had a terrible argument over some little thing. It was fierce, really fierce. In fact, he slapped Martin and told him to get out of his sight."

"Are you serious?" Keith asked in surprise.

Ray nodded. "Then Martin died that very night in the wreck. It was terrible. Walter nearly went out of his mind. He loved that boy. It tore his heart knowing that the last word he said to him was an angry word and the last touch he had of his son was a slap. And do you know what the argument was over?"

"No, what?"

"A fuse. A lousy fuse!"

"Are you serious?"

"Dead serious," said Ray as he continued. "They argued over a fuse. Martin was supposed to go up to the auto supply store and pick up a fuse for Dr. Jones' Volvo. It was an odd size, I suppose. Well, Martin had forgot and the doctor came by to get his car and it wasn't done. Walter got angry and said that Martin was irresponsible. Martin talked back, and that's when Walter hit the boy. Anyhow that's how Ed Tunks tells it because he was there."

"That's really sad," is all Keith could say.

"Walter told me he would give anything if he could take back those final words or live that afternoon over again."

"Ray," Keith said thoughtfully. "Now I know what Walter meant when he was talking to me out in the yard. He told me that people's words and actions can never be undone once they're done."

"Yes, I guess that should teach us something, don't you think?"

"Like the Bible said, Ray, 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' [Psalm 90:12] Life is short. Any of us could be taken at any time. We must live each day, each moment, as if it were our last. Guard the things we say. And guard the way we drive. It's only in a careless moment that we say or do things that can never be undone."

Ray was solemn, but nodded in agreement.

"Well, I should be going," said Keith. He waved and headed out the door.

Ray stood and walked to the open doorway. "Preacher," he called out, "you drive careful now, hear? I don't want to see your car in this junkyard!"

"Thanks, Ray, I will."

Strength of Character

“Those who are partakers of the divine nature will not give way to temptation. The enemy is working with all his might to overcome those who are striving to live the Christian life. He comes to them with temptations, in the hope that they will yield. Thus he hopes to discourage them. But those who have planted their feet firmly on the Rock of Ages will not yield to his devices. They will remember that God is their Father and Christ their Helper. The Saviour came to our world to bring to every tried, tempted soul strength to overcome even as He overcame. I know the power of temptation; I know the dangers that are in the way; but I know, too, that strength sufficient for every time of need is provided for those who are struggling against temptation.” MYP p. 81

It is very important that we do not follow every thought that enters into our mind. A lot of temptations come in the form of thoughts. Therefore if we are to resist temptations we must think twice before we just blindly follow our inclinations.

“Fallen man is Satan’s lawful captive. The mission of Jesus Christ was to rescue him from his power. Man is naturally inclined to follow Satan’s suggestions, and he cannot of himself successfully resist so terrible a foe, unless Christ, the mighty conqueror, dwells in him, guiding his desires, and giving him strength. God alone can limit the power of Satan. He is going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it. He is not off his watch for a single moment, through fear of losing an opportunity to destroy souls. It is important that God’s people understand this, that they may escape his snares.” MYP p. 51

Therefore we must test each thought that enters our mind, and be sure that it is not a disguised trap.

“I have been shown that we must be guarded on every side, and perseveringly resist the insinuations and devices of Satan. He has transformed himself into an angel of light, and is deceiving and leading thousands captive. The advantages he takes of the science of the human mind is tremendous. Here, serpentlike, he imperceptibly creeps in to corrupt the work of God. The miracles and works of Christ, he makes all human.” MYP p. 57

Satan knows that if he were to make an open attack, present a blunt temptation, it would almost certainly fail. He knows that he must disguise the temptations and snares that he sets for us. He knows that only in this way does he have a chance. Therefore we must be ever on the alert for temptations in disguise.

“Those who are finally victorious will have seasons of terrible perplexity and trial in their religious life; but they must not cast away their confidence, for this is a part of their discipline in the school of Christ, and it is essential in order that all dross may be purged away. The servant of God must endure with fortitude the attacks of the enemy, his grievous taunts, and must overcome the obstacles which Satan will place in his way.”¹ MYP p. 63