

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

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# The Harvest is Past

“Awake before you hear from pale and agonized lips the terrible wail: ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 589

“We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. Prophecy is rapidly fulfilling. The hours of probation are fast passing. We have no time—not a moment—to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works, ‘My lord delayeth His coming.’ Let the message of Christ's soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent, and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate preparation; for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields.” —*Maranatha*, p. 106

“There are many, many in our churches who know little of the real meaning of the truth for this time. I appeal to them not to disregard the fulfilling of the signs of the times, which say so plainly that the end is near. O how many who have not sought their soul's salvation will soon make the bitter lamentation, ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!’” —*Ibid*

“Let church members bear in mind that the fact that their names are registered on the church books will not save them. They must show themselves approved of God, workmen that need not be ashamed. Day by day they are to build their characters in accordance with Christ's directions. They are to abide in Him, constantly exercising faith in Him. Thus they will grow up to the full stature of men and women in Christ—wholesome, cheerful, grateful Christians, led by God into clearer and still clearer light. If this is not their experience, they will be among those whose voices will one day be raised in the bitter lamentation: ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my

soul is not saved! Why did I not flee to the Stronghold for refuge? Why have I trifled with my soul's salvation, and done despite to the Spirit of grace?” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 48

“Today Christ is looking with sadness upon those whose characters He must at last refuse to acknowledge. Inflated with self-sufficiency, they hope that it will be well with their souls. But at the last great day, the mirror of detection reveals to them the evil that their hearts have practiced, and shows them at the same time the impossibility of reform. Every effort was made to bring them to repentance. But they refused to humble their hearts. Now the bitter lamentation is heard, ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved’ (Jeremiah 8:20).

“What a scene is this! I pass over the ground again and again, bowed down in an agony that no tongue can express, as I see the end of the many, many who have refused to receive their Saviour. Justice will take the throne, and the arm strong to save will show itself strong to smite and destroy the enemies of the kingdom of God. Christ will lay bare the motives and deeds of everyone. Every hidden action will stand out as clearly before the doer as if proclaimed before the universe.” —*The Upward Look*, p. 301

“At the day of judgment there comes to the lost a full realization of the meaning of the sacrifice made on Calvary. They see what they have lost by refusing to be loyal. They think of the high, pure association it was their privilege to gain. But it is too late. The last call has been made. The wail is heard: ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.’ Jeremiah 8:20.

“The Lord is coming. The earth's history is soon to close. Are you prepared to meet the Judge of the earth? Bear in mind that ‘he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy’ (James 2:13). How terrible it will be in the last great day to find that those with whom we have been familiarly associated are separated from us forever; to see the members of our family, perhaps our own children, unsaved; to find those who have visited our homes, and eaten at our tables, among the lost. Then we shall ask ourselves the question, Was it because of my impatience, my un-Christlike disposition; was it because self was not under control, that the religion of Christ became distasteful to them?” —*Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 189

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*Ellen G. White*



Many people are happy that the year 2017 is ending. According to the calendar commonly used, December is the last month of the year. Recently, one month ago, I visited some people for Bible studies. I found them discussing how much they still need to do to prepare for their year-end ceremony. They were very happy and were preparing to kill bulls and chickens, as a church organization. They were planning to have a wonderful feast! It is the same for you.

Since you have been spared another year, what is recorded in the heavenly books under your name? Have you honoured the Lord? You have been given many opportunities. Did you make wise use of them, for yourself, your family, or your church? Have you overcome your pride? Have you walked in integrity and fear as did Job? Job “was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.” Job 1:1

Traditionally, the New Year is a time of new beginnings. It is a time when we make resolutions to do better this year than we did in the previous year. In the article, “*The Year 2017 And You,*” (See: January 2017 issue of *The Reformation Messenger*) there was a warning with these words: “*Now, a year of grace is ending [2016], while another year begins, not knowing what it (the year 2017) will bring; it is the appropriate time to reflect about the change that should take place in our life.*” The Lord spared your life another year which is now ending. Dear fellow pilgrim, what kind of life have you lived in the year 2017? We do not know what the coming year, 2018, will bring. Jesus told us to watch for we do not know when He will come. Let us focus our mind on the grace of the Lord, who spared us this one more year.

“The old year, with its burden of record, is fast passing away. The new year, [2018] with all its possibilities, will soon be ushered in. What advancement have we made in the knowledge of Christ during the past year? Are we prepared to show, more decidedly than ever before, that we are on the Lord’s side? At this time, when the nations of the world are wavering between infidelity and idolatry, are we prepared to stand as faithful ambassadors for Christ? Shall we not, at the beginning of this new year, give ourselves and all we have to God? Shall we not listen to His voice, which calls us to a renewed contest, to a more thorough consecration of ourselves and our intrusted capabilities to His service?”  
—*The Signs of the Times*, January 2, 1901 (the year 2018 has been added by myself)

#### PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

“Christ in His teaching linked with the warning of judgment the invitation of mercy. . . . His mission of mercy in its relation to God’s justice and judgment is illustrated in the parable of the barren fig tree.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 212

In His parable of the fig tree, The Saviour explained how God loved His people: “A certain man,” He continued, “had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come



seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’

“Christ’s hearers could not misunderstand the application of His words. David had sung of Israel as the vine brought out of Egypt. Isaiah had written, ‘The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.’ Isaiah 5:7. The generation to whom the Saviour had come were represented by the fig tree in the Lord’s vineyard—within the circle of His special care and blessing. . . .

“So God had planted Israel as a goodly vine by the wells of life. He had made His vineyard ‘in a very fruitful hill.’ He had ‘fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine.’ Isaiah 5:1, 2.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 214

### WHY A FIG TREE?

The owner expected this fig tree to have done better than in the previous years. This man planted a fig tree. In Biblical times, fig trees were valuable and so this man did not just plant any type of tree—he planted a valuable fig tree. Therefore, Jesus used the fig tree in His parable. God expects to find some fruit hanging on your tree! We have value in the sight of the Lord. He created us in His image for His glory. Christ taught saying, “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.” John 15:8. Without fruit, you are not a disciple of Christ!

“The precious fruits of character that made the life of Joseph so fragrant and beautiful, were not manifest in the Jewish nation.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 215. “‘And He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.’ Isaiah 5:2. The people of Christ’s day made a greater show of piety than did the Jews of earlier ages, but they were even more destitute of the sweet graces of the Spirit of God.” –*Ibid.*, p. 215

What about you and me today? As we have been receiving God’s love and protection, do we bear the fruits He expects to see from us? What happened when the owner came to look for fruit on his fig tree?

“God in His Son had been seeking fruit, and had found none. Israel was a cumberer of the ground. Its very existence was a curse; for it filled the place in the vine-

yard that a fruitful tree might fill. It robbed the world of the blessings that God designed to give. The Israelites had misrepresented God among the nations. They were not merely useless, but a decided hindrance. To a great degree their religion was misleading, and wrought ruin instead of salvation.



“In the parable the dresser of the vineyard does not question the sentence that the tree, if it remained fruit-

less, should be cut down; but he knows and shares the owner’s interest in that barren tree. Nothing could give him greater joy than to see its growth and fruitfulness. He responds to the desire of the owner, saying, ‘Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well.’” – *Ibid.*, p. 215

This is a great hope for you and me today. What fruit did you bear in this year 2017? What fruit are you bearing now today? Wild grapes? Another year of mercy is about to end. It is our duty to ask ourselves the following questions: During the present year, did I come closer to my Lord Jesus or have I gone farther away from Him? Am I a keen student of prophecy to discern its fulfillment? Do I realize that what is happening in the churches is a token of the soon coming of Jesus?

“The warning sounds down along the line to us in this generation. Are you, O careless heart, a fruitless tree in the Lord’s vineyard? Shall the words of doom erelong be spoken of you? How long have you received His gifts? How long has He watched and waited for a return of love? Planted in His vineyard, under the watchful care of the gardener, what privileges are yours! How often has the tender gospel message thrilled your heart! You have taken the name of Christ, you are outwardly a member of the church which is His body, and yet you are conscious of no living connection with the great heart of love. The tide of His life does not flow

*We are about to end another year and some of the questions we should ask ourselves are: How is our relationship with God? Are we walking with Jesus? Have we understood from experience what the message of Justification by Faith is? Is Jesus the centre of our lives, homes, and churches?*

through you. The sweet graces of His character, 'the fruits of the Spirit,' are not seen in your life." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 216

Why? Why were you spared this year? Is it for nothing? You may judge Ancient Israel for their murmuring. Many swear that they would not deny Christ as Peter did, nor betray the Saviour as Judas did, but the Apostle Paul wrote: "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Romans 2:3–5

The question comes to you now at the end of the year: What do you need to give up to obtain Christ? Do you need to part with "the garment spotted by the flesh?" Jude 1:23. Or is it the "eating flesh, and drinking wine" at your table that is keeping you from entering the pearly gates? Isaiah 22:13. Or do you need to part from "the strange woman" who is enticing you? Proverbs 2:16. Or is it "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" that you delay in selling all? Hebrews 11:25. For God has not called us unto "filthiness of the flesh and spirit," but unto, "perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1

"You realize, though it may be but dimly, that you are a cumberer of the ground. Yet in His great mercy God has not cut you down. He does not look coldly upon you. He does not turn away with indifference, or leave you to destruction. Looking upon you He cries, as He cried so many centuries ago concerning Israel, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger. I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.' Hosea 11:8, 9. The pitying Saviour is saying concerning you, Spare it this year also, till I shall dig about it and dress it." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 217–218

"What could have been done more to My vineyard?" Isaiah 5:4. Christ said, "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13:7. God wants us to be "trees of righteous-

ness" in His garden. Isaiah 61:3. He will be happy to see the fruit of the Spirit in our characters. Jesus, the Dresser of the vineyard, does everything possible so that we may bear fruit. Let us not repeat the history of Ancient Israel. It has been 129 years since God sent this important message to the Adventist people on the righteousness of Christ. The message of imputed and imparted righteousness must be lived and proclaimed by God's people if they wish to be recipients of the final blessing of the latter rain. Do we understand this message?



Dear brother, Dear sister, do you each realize your spiritual condition? Will you admit where you have erred? Can you, with the eyes of faith, see the High Priest, Jesus Christ, in the heavenly sanctuary, and hear His prayer for you? He pleads for more time for each one of us: "Let it alone this year also." Luke 13:8. He is patient and merciful. Can you see good fruit in your life? Jesus, the Gardener, wants to continue His work in us. But He must cut off the useless branches so that we may produce fruits of righteousness. Let us give Him that opportunity by cooperating with Him.

*A member in the church who does not practice all that he knows will lose interest in the meetings and also in Bible study.*

#### **DRAW CLOSER TO GOD**

Do not neglect to make it yours! One week, from Friday, December 1, to Sabbath, December 9, 2017 the worldwide believers of the International Missionary Society of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement will re-consecrate themselves to the Lord during the Week of Prayer. This year marks the 500th anniversary of the important event in the Protestant Reformation. The time when Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, protesting the unbiblical doctrines and practices of the established religion. While the world is in turmoil on many fronts and the religious world celebrates the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that important moment in the Protestant Reformation, let us think about our spiritual condition as Reformers in these last days!

During the Week of Prayer, take time to reflect on a personal, family, and community level about the year that is soon to end. Let us establish new spiritual goals and lift up



our hearts to the Lord in prayer. Let us humble ourselves before Jesus and repent for vows unfulfilled, goals not reached, defects still undefeated, and our overall neglects. Finally, let us find consolation for our spirits in the loving arms of our tender Saviour. He bestows on us one more opportunity to grow into His image, to enjoy His love, to know His truth, to overcome evil with His power, and to impart to others His good news of salvation.

In the time of Noah, the flood did not immediately follow the message God gave to Noah regarding the coming flood. The Lord first announced the end of civilization, then mercifully granted one hundred and twenty years of grace. Noah's preaching and faithful example urged the people to change their lives and prepare to meet the Lord, but they wasted the time. We also have been given ample time to prepare for the Lord's coming, but grace will not last forever. How are we using our time? How are we helping others to prepare to meet Jesus?

A member in the church who does not practice all that he knows will lose interest in the meetings and also in Bible study. Why should he learn more while he is not practicing what he currently knows? Courage, Brothers and Sisters, let us go forward to the victory. May this New Year that is on the horizon, bring a change in our lives and produce a deeper consecration to the cause of God. This may well be the last opportunity to save ourselves. Consider the remaining time of probation as more precious than gold.

Dear reader, let us not permit sin to destroy our lives. As long as we cultivate and idolize sin, God will be in second, third, or even the last place in our affections. We cannot then truly worship Him. God is love, grace, justice, goodness, and the source of true happiness. In the person of Jesus Christ, God sacrificed everything for us. Year after year, we receive countless signs of His mercy. Let us give Him what is due Him—our faith and love, our obedience and service, our worship and gratitude. Let Him lead our lives as we preach to others the glorious everlasting gospel.

As another year in your life comes to its close, perhaps your love has waxed cold from all the iniquity and evil witnessed on this old planet. Or maybe you are not just so in love with the Lord, with the Bible, and with your spiritual family as you used to be. Will you right now ask Jesus to forgive you, and increase your faith? Will you ask Him to give you the Holy Spirit so that you can return to your first love for the glory of God and well-being of your neighbours? Remember, you have been spared, while many others died in 2017, therefore God has a purpose for your life. The Lord has given you another year of life, another opportunity to receive more knowledge and to witness to others concerning the signs of the end; another year of grace. Are you thankful for all His blessings? Another year is before us; how do you plan to use the opportunities the Lord will grant you in the coming year? Choose today, decide today. Your day is today.

*Victor Shumbusho, DR Congo*

**“The world must be warned of the soon coming of the Lord. We have but a little time in which to work. Years have passed into eternity that might have been improved in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and in diffusing the light to others. God calls upon His people who have great light, much labor bestowed upon them, and are established in the truth to now work for themselves and others as they have never done before. Make use of every ability; bring into exercise every power, every entrusted talent; use all the light that God has given you to do others good. Do not try to be preachers; but become ministers for God.**

**“As the truth is better understood by the workers, it will ever appear in a more striking light; as you seek to enlighten others, with your minds under the holy influence of the Spirit of God, your attention will be directed toward those things that are of eternal interest. In such efforts, mingled with prayers for divine light, your own hearts will throb with the quickening influence of the grace of God; your own affections will glow with more divine fervor, and your whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, and more prayerful. Thus by Christ abiding in the heart, you may become laborers together with God.”— *Ye Shall Receive Power* p. 189**

**“We want to reach the people; we want sinners to be convicted and become truly repentant before it is too late for them to be saved, lest they shall take up the lamentation, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'” — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 50**



We often sing the beautiful song, written by James Lowell, "Once to every man and nation, Comes the moment to decide, In the strife of truth with falsehood, For the good or evil side; some great cause, God's new Messiah, Offering each the bloom or blight, And the choice goes by forever, Twixt that darkness and that light."

This song goes with Elijah's message, "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings 18:21

We have come to the time when every man, woman, and child has to make the final decision for life or for death, between truth and falsehood, between good and evil. Every person has a time of visitation, when the Lord calls him, and if this call is refused, it may never be repeated.

We cannot find God; we cannot repent without the Holy Spirit bringing us to repentance. But when God comes to us, then we may respond and find salvation. We read in Job 33:14, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." This may be the final invitation.

In a church meeting, we may hear the call, and to someone it may be the last appeal; and if it is refused, then the mind will be darkened, and the truth will be to him a foolishness. After this, the most solemn appeals will have no effect on him. His chance to choose has gone by forever. This may have happened already, even to rebellious children.

This call is not only to decide if we want to serve God or not. We may be baptized church members, and yet there may be sin in our life, unfaithfulness in one point of God's requirements. Time after time God is calling us to work out a reformation, and put this sin away from our lives, and if we refuse, then God may call us once more with a very solemn appeal. If even then we refuse, then there will be silence forever, and we will be shaken out from the church of God. This sin may be a neglected duty, similar to the servant

who had one talent and did not use it.

We read Hosea, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." Hosea 4:17. "The spirit of hatred which has existed with some because the wrongs among God's people have been reprov'd has brought blindness and a fearful deception upon their own souls, making it impossible for them to discriminate between right and wrong. They have put out their own spiritual eyesight. They may witness wrongs, but they do not feel as did Joshua and humble themselves because the danger of souls is felt by them." *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 266

"I have been shown that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is that they will not receive correction. Many have despised the reproofs and warnings given them. The True Witness condemns the lukewarm condition of the people of God, which gives Satan great power over them in this waiting, watching time." *Ibid.*, p. 255

The spiritually blind person cannot see his own spiritual condition, he cannot see his own great need, he thinks that he is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing, while the True Witness says that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Revelation 3:17).

"Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth, and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear, they will not be accountable, will be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected. There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In his sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is no provision for willful blindness." *The Review and Herald*, April 25, 1893

If we neglect Bible study or meetings, then our blindness is willful, and the Lord will do nothing to open our eyes to see. In this blindness we can make terrible mistakes and make wrong decisions.

Christ and Barrabas were set before the Jews, and they had to choose one of these two. With all the knowledge of the Bible prophecies and the law, they made the wrong choice, which sealed the eternal destiny for some of them.

Cain and Abel had a choice, and in his blindness, Cain made the wrong decision. His decision was made from the wrong spirit, from the wrong motives, and from hatred and jealousy.

Saul and David, the two kings of Israel had both committed sins. King Saul tried to defend his sin and to excuse it in his blindness. His sin was not forgiven. It is a terrible blindness if we try to excuse and defend our wrong doings, to say, "I see nothing wrong in it, it is not so bad, others make mistakes also."

David, on the other hand, humbly confessed his sin, “I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Psalm 32:5

David’s sin was from human weakness, but the sin of Saul was rebellion. “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, He hath also rejected thee from being king.” 1 Samuel 15:23

The people of Nineveh repented of their sins and therefore they were forgiven, and the destruction did not take place. “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.” Jonah 3:5

If we refuse to conform to the laws and commandments of God, it is called rebellion: it may be in tithing, health reform, Sabbath keeping, dress reform, or any other commandment that God has given. We will lose our spiritual eyesight if we willfully disobey God even in one point, and if this happens on our judgment day, then all will be lost forever.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem the last time, offering Himself to the people as their King and their Saviour, had they accepted Him, the Jewish nation would have remained His chosen people. The Roman army would have left them alone, and the city would not have been destroyed. But their eyes were blinded, and they made a terrible decision.

As Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives and beheld the city, He wept and the words came out of His mouth, “And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Luke 19:41–44

This terrible choice was made by the Jewish nation, which will affect them to the end of time. The final choice was made in one day, but the preparation for this decision was blindness that had been developing through years of rebellion against the will of God.

The Elijah message was preached by Brothers’ Jones and Waggoner during the conference at Minneapolis in 1888. Little did the Adventist leaders realize the importance of this message—that the destiny of the church was hanging on the acceptance or rejection of this message of Christ’s righteousness. If they had accepted this message, it would have brought reformation into the church, but they ridi-

culed and rejected it, and Sister White writes that they committed sin against the Holy Spirit, sin that has no forgiveness. Instead of returning to faithfulness the church continued into deeper apostasy. Individually we all face the Elijah message, and we must decide for or against it. Elijah was preaching “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him.” 1 Kings 18:21

The choice may not be between atheism and religion; no, the choice may be between one point of the law that we may lightly esteem. One thing that the Lord has spoken in the Bible, or in the Testimonies, if it is disregarded, it is enough to take our salvation away.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God in only one point, eating the forbidden fruit, and this was enough for them to be cast out of paradise, and to die. Ancient Israel did not reject God, nor His religion, but mixed His service with errors, and idol worship. The choice today is to serve God only, or try to serve two masters; it is between 100% obedience to God or 99% service to Him, and this decision will decide our eternal destiny.

Satan is tempting us to give to God only a half service. He has covered the beginning of his way with beautiful flowers, with fun and entertainment, but the end of his way is bitter. Millions of children and young people blindly follow the great deceiver, giving their hearts and souls to the enemy of righteousness, and Christ and His angels have to turn away sadly, yet these people profess religion and go to churches. The persecuting powers in the Middle Ages were religious, but their obedience was not 100%.

Cain was religious, offering sacrifices to God, but yet he killed his brother. King Saul was religious but yet disobeyed God. Judas was a disciple of Jesus yet he loved money more than God. We may be religious, and be church members, but our service to Him may be tainted with the love of the world.

Are there men, women, and children today who make their choice to follow Christ 100%, without reservation, or conditions, who do not compromise, but stand firm for the truth and righteousness, and would rather die than commit the smallest sin?

The song that was mentioned in the beginning continues, “Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust, Then it is the brave man chooses While the coward stands aside. Though the cause of evil prosper, yet ‘tis truth alone is strong. Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong. Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.”

Today, make a full surrender to Christ, your Saviour, and you will never regret it; you will be the happiest person in the world. Amen.

*Timo Martin*



# Because of Unbelief

disasters happened? Where was God when innocent people suffered at the hands of the evil one?

Regarding spiritual matters, you can ask any atheist and they will admit that they do not believe in God. Many of them will give some kind of excuse like the fact that they have seen no evidence of His existence. So, what you cannot see how can you believe, they argue.

The reality is, what would happen if we removed God and His presence with all His holy angels from this earth? “Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God’s people shall be accomplished.” —*Maranatha*, p. 266

When these angels let go, and the spirit of the Lord is withdrawn from the earth, then the reality will be seen of what life is without God. It will be total chaos. During the time of the French Revolution, France outlawed any worship of God and instead, raised up the god of reason. The chaos that ensued in that country was just a small foretaste of what will come in the future to the entire world. France later had to admit that the presence of God was necessary for a well-ordered society.

Then you ask any and every Christian, and they will state that, yes, they do very much believe in God. Many worldly people, who do not practice any form or religion, also state that they believe in God. They believe in the existence of an Almighty Being. Some have stronger beliefs and believe in His day-to-day presence in the affairs of their lives and on this earth. Others have a more distant belief stating that He is some Being up in the sky, far away; far removed from the affairs of this earth. When things go wrong, they blame God. Where was God when all these

Do you believe God is here and now? With you everywhere you go? “If you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last. If you hold the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end, your ways will be established in God; and what grace has begun, glory will crown in the kingdom of our God.” —*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 332

Would your life be any different if you could physically see Jesus by your side, and see your recording angel with book in hand, writing down every word, thought and action? Do you believe He is here, or are you unbelieving; thinking that you can hide any secret sins or thoughts you may be harbouring? We do live every day in the immediate presence of God. When people go to listen to some famous person, or go before kings and emperors, the utmost respect is shown. They are quiet and listen well. Is the same respect shown in the house of God—the church on earth when we are in the presence of the King of kings? Are children permitted to make noise? Do we talk and whisper?

***It is said of the nation of Israel—God’s chosen people, “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Hebrews 3:19.*** This was not written about Atheists or heathen people. It was written about the nation of Israel—God’s chosen people. What were they unbelieving about? Did they believe there was a God? Yes, they did. His immediate presence was seen daily with the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. How could they not believe? They had seen the miracles He did in the wilderness, at the crossing of the Red Sea, the daily Manna, the water from the rock. What did they not believe?

“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But ‘they could not enter in because of unbelief.’ Hebrews 3:19. Because of their backsliding and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the Promised Land.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 458

“They acknowledged that the land they went up to see was a good land, but they declared that the inhabitants were strong, the giants were there, and that they themselves were in comparison as grasshoppers in the sight of the people and in their own sight. All the difficulties were magnified into insurmountable obstacles. They made it appear as folly and presumption to think of going up to possess the land. . . . They exaggerated the difficulties until all the congregation was crazed with discouragement and fear.” —*Christ Triumphant*, p. 370

Although they were on the borders of the Promised Land and were prohibited from entering, it was not an arbitrary act on the part of God or because Moses had failed to provide strong and able leadership. Moses had been faithful, and therefore could not be charged with the responsibility for their failure. Their lack of faith, demonstrated by their disobedience, made it impossible for them to enter. They did not believe that the God who had been leading them in the wilderness and did many mighty works, could help them defeat the giants in the land.

“Shall it be then in these last days, just before we enter into the heavenly Canaan, that God’s people shall indulge the spirit that was revealed by ancient Israel? Men and women full of doubts and criticisms and complaints can sow seeds of unbelief and distrust that will yield an abundant harvest.” —*Ibid*, p. 123

In the spirit of Prophecy this verse (Hebrews 3:19) is used also in reference to God’s people in and around the year 1890. “In like manner, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to proclaim the message.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 458

The reason we are still on this planet today was not because of the unbelief of the Atheists, or worldly loving Christians. It was because of the unbelief of the Adventist people. God’s chosen people—His church. What were they unbelieving about? There was a crisis in the church in 1888 regarding the Christ Our Righteousness message. The majority of the ministers and leaders rejected this all-important message. They strongly emphasized work righteousness. They took Christ out of the equation. As the

quote above stated, they refused to do the work and others were raised. Similarly, as in Ancient Israel, the first generation refused to do the work so another generation was raised who did the work.

“For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.

“Had the church of Christ done her appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 38

In both cases, with Ancient Israel and with the Adventist Church in the early 1890’s, there was unbelief in the power of God. The Israelites did not believe that God was powerful enough to help them drive the giants out of the land of Canaan. They were thinking on human terms; human strength. They saw their size and the size of their army and did not believe it possible. The Adventist believers were depending on their own strength in the keeping of the commandments. They took the power of Christ out of the equation.

When Jesus walked this earth, many of the Jews—His own countrymen—did not believe. Although the prophecies were very clearly written in the Old Testament, they refused to believe. “And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” Matthew 13:58. “And He marvelled because of their unbelief. And He went round about the villages, teaching.” Mark 6:6. The people in the village of Nazareth where He grew up and the Jewish leaders strongly disbelieved Him to be the Messiah.

An Israelite man, whose son Jesus healed, cried this when Jesus asked if he believed Jesus could heal his son. “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.” Mark 9:24. This man was a believer in God. He had a measure of faith. What did he mean by “help my unbelief”? “It is not an abundance of light and evidence that makes the soul free in Christ; it is the rising of the powers and the will and the energies of the soul to cry out sincerely, ‘Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.’” —*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 518. This man desired to believe and recognized his need; his lack of faith. He strongly desired more. Do you desire for more faith? Faith grows by practice.

In the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25) why did five not enter? They were members in the church of God alongside the five wise virgins. They did not enter be-



cause of unbelief. They did not believe they needed an extra supply of oil—the Holy Spirit. Thus they did not enter. We very much need an extra measure of the Holy Spirit today in order to be prepared for Christ's soon coming.

The disciples even did not believe when they first received news that Jesus was risen. "Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen." Mark 16:14

Why was the nation of Israel cut off? "Because of unbelief they were broken off." Romans 11:20

Many nominal Christians do not take God's word seriously as written. The one obviously apparent issue is that of the Sabbath commandment. They do not believe that God is serious about the seventh day. As long as it is one day, then it does not matter which one they keep. God is not that particular. But if you read your Bible carefully, God is very particular; not only in the necessity of the keeping of the fourth commandment on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, but also on how it is kept. The deeds we should and should not do; the conversation we are to have; and even the thoughts we are to think. Do we believe God is that exact and particular about your Sabbath observance?

Even the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment about killing. Surely God cannot mean that killing in time of war is wrong. In time of war it is perfectly fine to take another human life as it is merely self preservation—protection. In the Old Testament, God directed the nation of Israel in battle, so surely it is not breaking the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment by killing in time of war. And neither is abortions on demand. Most state hospitals and even church hospitals that are funded by the state take part in this killing practice.

Although we can clearly see and understand that this reasoning is incorrect, there are genuine Christians who honestly believe this is correct.

What about in God's church? Are there some who will be lost due to unbelief? This comes down to you and me.

I am sure all of us who are reading this believe in God. We may claim to believe all the doctrines in the Bible; we may claim to believe the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation; We may claim to believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement is God's remnant church today; we may live up to the standards outlined in the Bible . . . but can it still be said of us, we cannot enter because of unbelief?

Why have we not entered the heavenly Canaan? Is it the

fact that there are still some prophetic events in Daniel and Revelation that need to be fulfilled? Is it because the corruption of the world has not reached its climax? It has nothing to do with the people in the world—nothing to do with Atheists and the nominal Christian church. It has nothing even to do with the nominal Seventh-day Adventist church. It has everything to do with you and me.

Why? Is there any possibility that it could be because of our unbelief?

There was a young man I met in the church more than 25 years ago. He was baptized. He was asked what led to him making the decision for baptism. He simply stated that he went through the Bible Studies with the Missionary in the church and the evidence was so strong. The prophecies in the Bible were clear in pointing out where God's church was. The prophecies were fulfilled exactly as they were written. With such evidence how can any refute the truths of the Bible? This man was baptized clearly on the evidence provided in prophecy. No mention was made about a personal relationship with Jesus and the sacrifice on Calvary. Sadly, this man is no longer a member in the church. Why? He believed. Yes, He believed in the accuracy of the Biblical record, but he did not believe in the power of Christ to overcome sin.

Some may start to question God and His leading in His church; they do not like the leaders and the decisions they are making. They believe that they, or their friends, could do a better job. The Israelites did this. How many times did they accuse Moses of leading them into the wilderness to perish? On the very borders of Canaan, they doubted. They went as far as to set up a rebellion with Korah, Dathan and Abiram because of Moses' "bad" leadership (Numbers 16). This has happened many times in the past, in God's Church.

How seriously do we take God at His word? In order to be baptized, we have to understand and accept the basic doctrines of the church and our lifestyle must be corrected and changed.

"Many who, like ancient Israel, profess to keep God's commandments have hearts of unbelief while outwardly observing the statutes of God. Although favored with great light and precious privileges, they will nevertheless lose the heavenly Canaan, even as the rebellious Israelites failed to enter the earthly Canaan that God had promised them as the reward of their obedience." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 162

How strict is God in regards to your diet? Can we interpret the dietary guidelines as we wish? "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." 1 Corinthians 6:19. Would you bring rubbish into the church? Why would you put rubbish—albeit, it is not meat or a meat product—into the temple of your body? Some believe as long as it is not flesh, it is acceptable. This shows their unbelief. Anything harmful is not

acceptable to God; in other words—sin. Good and evil cannot dwell together. And the Holy Spirit may not want to dwell in a polluted environment. Yes, He is patient with those who are ignorant, but those that know? There is no excuse. The spirit of the Lord is grieved.

What happened to the nation of Israel when they cried for meat? The Lord gave them their meat (quail), but, oh, how



sick they also became (Numbers 11). Their bodies were polluted. The nations around them were likely meat eaters and eating all kinds of unclean meats also but did not get sick. Why? Unbelief on the part of the nation of Israel. Unbelief on how strict God expects us to be in our dietary habits

will cause many to lose their way. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” Acts 17:30

To be an unbelieving Christian is very dangerous; to claim to worship and obey the Lord outwardly, while inwardly dwells the evil heart of unbelief. The punishment will be greater for those who know better.

It can be with any minor violation of God’s law. I heard one young person say “God can’t be that strict”, He will be a little lenient. Is this true? How strict is God? One small sin. . . “No sin is small in the sight of God. The sins which man is disposed to look upon as small may be the very ones which God accounts as great crimes. The drunkard is despised and is told that his sin will exclude him from heaven, while pride, selfishness, and covetousness go unrebuked. But these are sins that are especially offensive to God. He ‘resisteth the proud,’ and Paul tells us that covetousness is idolatry. Those who are familiar with the denunciations against idolatry in the word of God will at once see how grave an offense this sin is.” —*Counsels to the Church*, p. 259–260

In many areas, we are tempted to set up our own standard since the standard in the church is often a mere guideline, as it is not possible to make strict laws on every small detail of life. People set their own standards on diet, on dress, on Sabbath keeping, how they spend their time and money, etc. Some people consider some of these issues as “grey areas”. There is no black and white—each is free to make interpretations as suits them. “There is a place for every penny that you do not actually need for comfortable food and clothing. . . . If you have money, do not spend it for extra ribbons or trimmings or articles of adornment, but let the rivulets flow into the treasury of God, to be registered to your account in the books of heaven.” —*The Review and Herald*, August 11, 1891

Many will be lost because of unbelief. They did not believe that God expected them to be “this” strict in adhering to

His commandments. The grace and mercy of God will enable you to overcome every sin. It is possible to he who believes.

“Their history of unbelief and rebellion is left on record as a special warning that we should not follow their example of murmuring at God’s requirements. How can we pass on so indifferently, choosing our own course, following the sight of our own eyes, and departing farther and farther from God, as did the Hebrews? God cannot do great things for His people because of their hardness of heart and sinful unbelief.” —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 378

Many will be lost because they did not believe the coming of Christ was this close. “But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming;” Matthew 24:48. This servant believes that Jesus will come, but believes there is a delay so he can live his life as he chooses for now.

“It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 22–23

“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief.” Hebrews 4:6. The generation of Israelites that left Egypt entered not into the literal Land of Promise, but the following generation did. There was a delay due to their unbelief.

“The land to which we are traveling is in every sense far more attractive than was the land of Canaan to the children of Israel. . . . What stayed their progress just in sight of the goodly land? . . . It was their own willful unbelief that turned them back. They were unwilling to risk anything upon the promises of God. . . . The history of the children of Israel is written as a warning to us ‘upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ We are standing, as it were, upon the very borders of the heavenly Canaan. We may, if we will, look over on the other side and behold the attractions of the goodly land. If we have faith in the promises of God we shall show in conversation and in deportment that we are not living for this world, but are making it our first business to prepare for that holy land.” —*That I May Know Him*, p. 169

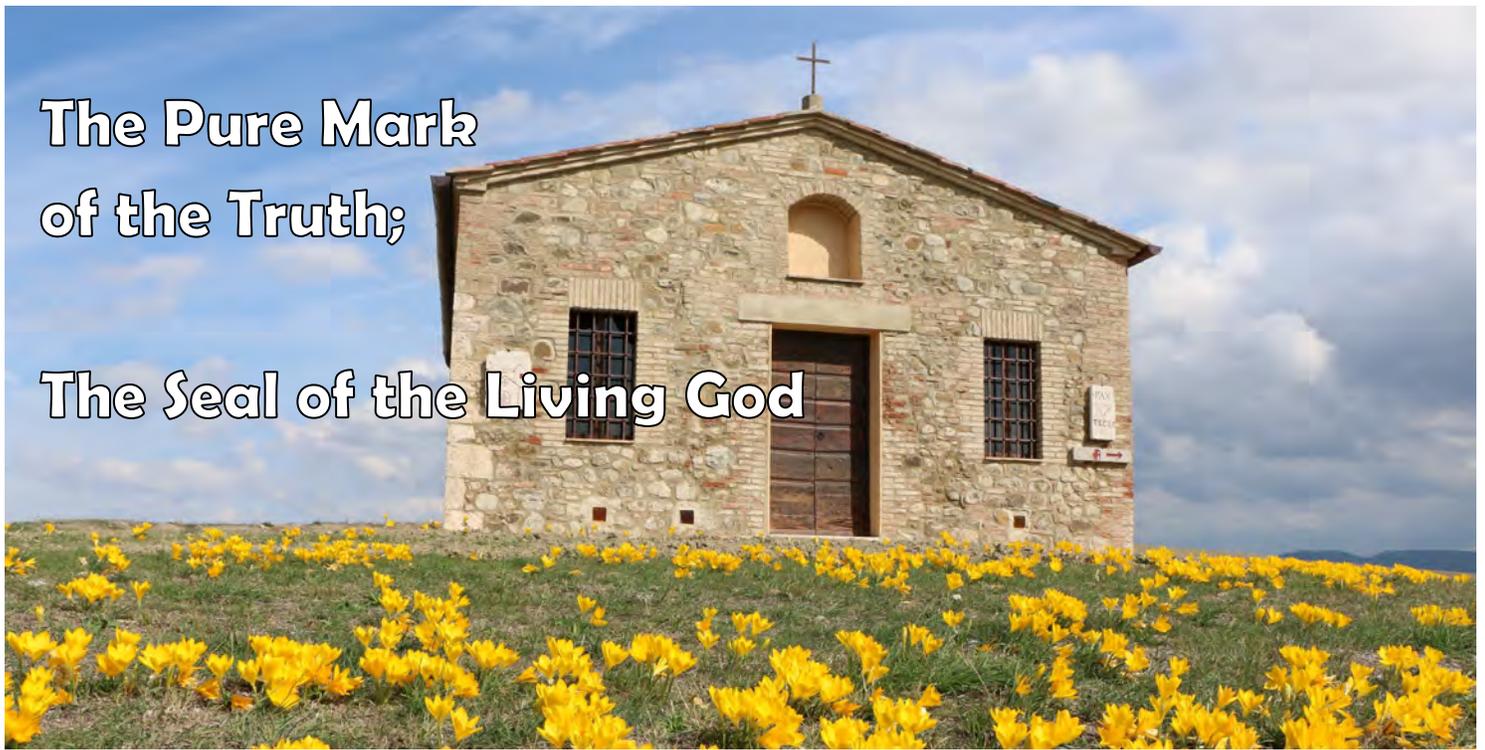
The counsel for us is: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” Hebrews 3:12

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.” Hebrews 4:11

**Wendy Eaton**

# The Pure Mark of the Truth;

# The Seal of the Living God



My brethren, and sisters, I was impressed to share with you an important subject wherein lies our eternal destiny. We are living in the last days of probation and do not know how long time will last. While probation still lingers, do we have the pure mark of the truth? Every day we are deciding our destiny as to whether we will receive the seal of the living God or the mark of the beast.

The children of Israel, when they were about to be delivered, were given instructions from God through Moses. "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on



the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token on the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:7, 12-13

the children of God in this age will bear the signature God has appointed. They will place themselves in harmony with God's holy law. A mark is placed upon every one of God's people just as verily as a mark was placed over the doors of the Hebrew dwellings, to preserve the people from the general ruin. God declares, 'I gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them'" –*The Review and Herald*, February 6, 1900

## THE SIGNATURE OF GOD'S APPOINTMENT

"The Israelites placed over their doors a signature of blood, to show that they were God's property. So

The signature of God's appointment was the signature of blood to show that they were God's people. They were to place the blood on their door post. It was a sign that they were chosen to be God's people for all generations. God has always had a special people and a special sign for His chosen people.

### **What is this sign?**

The Sabbath is a sign between God and His people. The Sabbath was to be kept throughout all generations. In Ancient Israel, whosoever profaned the Sabbath would be put to death. "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Exodus 31:13-14

As with the Israelites, the children of God in every age will bear the signature of God.

The Sabbath is contained in the law. In the new earth we will keep the Sabbath. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." Hebrews 8:10–11

"And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea." Revelation 7:1–2

We either keep the commandments or we perish. There are only two ways, one is the way of obedience and everlasting life, and the other is the way of Cain—disobedience and death.

### **PROFESSION ALONE CANNOT SAVE**

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:21

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement are the custodians of the truth today. Everyone must make the choice between truth or falsehood.

"Not all who profess to keep the Sabbath will be sealed. There are many even among those who teach the truth to others who will not receive the seal of God in their foreheads. They had the light of truth, they knew their Master's will, they understood every point of our faith, but they had not corresponding works. These who were so familiar with prophecy and the treasures of divine wisdom should have acted their faith. They should have commanded their households after them, that by a well-ordered family they might present to the world the influence of the truth upon the human heart." — *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 213

Brethren, our influence matters a lot. It shows to others if we are of the world or of God. Ask yourself, what gospel are you presenting to the world?

The Lord instructed Moses to tell the children of Israel, "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 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 6:5, 7

Everyone must search the Bible for himself with a humble spirit, as a child. "God does not regard all sins as of equal magnitude; there are degrees of guilt in His estimation as well as in that of finite man. But however trifling this or that wrong in their course may seem in the eyes of men, no sin is small in the sight of God." — *Counsels to the Church*, p. 259

### **Abraham was able to instruct his household after him.**

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Corinthians 10:12

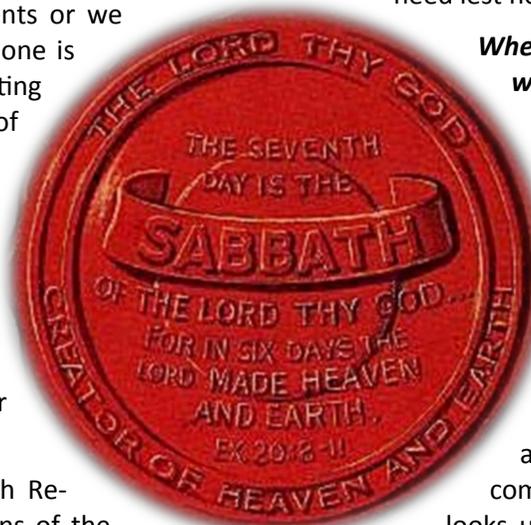
### **When Peter walked on the water he went slowly, but pride came in his heart, and he lost sight of Jesus.**

"We should take this lesson to ourselves. Again the destroying angel is to pass through the land. There is to be a mark placed upon God's people, and that mark is the keeping of His holy Sabbath. We are not to follow our own will and judgment and flatter ourselves that God will come to our terms. . . . That which

looks unimportant to you may be of the highest consequence in God's special plans for the preservation of your life or the salvation of your soul. God tests our faith by giving us some part to act in connection with His interposition in our behalf. To those who comply with the conditions His promise will be fulfilled." — *In Heavenly Places*, p. 150

### **STRIVE TO BE SEALED**

We are living in the sealing time; the angels are sealing the people of God. You will either receive the seal of the living God or the mark of the beast. The Lord ordered His angels to go to into the house of the Lord and set a mark upon the foreheads of those who sigh and cry for the abominations done therein. The Lord spoke through Ezekiel, "And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be



done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in my hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity." Ezekiel: 9:4-5

Those who receive the pure mark of the truth given by the Holy Ghost are those who will cry for the abominations done in the church.

The warning is given, "The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions His messengers, the men with slaughtering weapons in their hands: 'Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. . . .' The abominations for which the faithful ones were sighing and crying were all that could be discerned by finite eyes, but by far the worst sins, those which provoked the jealousy of the pure and holy God, were unrevealed. The great Searcher of hearts knoweth every sin committed in secret by the workers of iniquity. These persons come to feel secure in their deceptions and, because of His long-suffering, say that the Lord seeth not, and then act as though He had forsaken the earth. But He will detect their hypocrisy and will open before others those sins which they were so careful to hide." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 211

Jeremiah warned, "Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust

ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these." Jeremiah 7:2-4

Many people are professors of the truth, not doers of the word. The Lord gives the following warning:

"Here we see that the church—the Lord's sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men, those to whom God had given great light and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God's power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say: The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil. He is too merciful to visit His people in judgment. Thus 'Peace and safety' is the cry from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God's people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. These dumb dogs that would not bark are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children all perish together. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 211

Finally brethren "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John 3:3

Peace be unto you all. Amen.

*Jenifer Akello*

*Uganda*

**COMING NEXT MONTH:  
THE PURE MARK OF THE TRUTH, PART 2**



## LOOKING FOR YOU . . .

**If you are interested in submitting an item for publication in *The Reformation Messenger*, please submit by email or mail.**

**Submit:  
Drawings, Announcements ,  
Reports, Articles, Poems, Photos,  
Personal Testimonies and Experiences.**



I ask the question again! "Is it yours?" Last month we discussed the need to be vigilant when handling something that does not belong to us; something which is not our property. We saw that our body is the Lord's. This month we will discuss time. Time is not something material; yet it is something that needs to be managed and handled as such.

Many authors have written about the concept of time management. Theories have been explained about time and its value. According to Wikipedia, the value of time is the opportunity cost during the time that a traveller spends on his/her journey; the amount that a traveller would be willing to pay in order to save time, or the amount they would accept as compensation for lost time.

Time is very precious to all of us. It is priceless and is free to everyone; however, no one can buy it or sell it. One can destroy time as well as use it. It is true that the one who destroys time can definitely be destroyed by time; and one who uses time can definitely be blessed by time. One who loses time can never get it back again. Time may destroy our health if we do not eat our food in a timely manner or take our medicine at the right time. Time is like a flowing river which moves constantly forward but never backwards. There is a common saying that "*Time and tide waits for none*". This proverb means that time never waits for anyone; one must go alongside with time. Nothing in this world can defeat it or win from it. Time is called the strongest thing in this world which can either damage or improve a person.

#### VALUE OF TIME

Time is the *most valuable* thing on earth. Although you may have food, clothing, homes and degrees, just remember that everything is acquired in time and all of man's business is conducted by time. If you do not have time, it means you have nothing. Technology has been developing so that we can do more work in less time. By wasting

time, we can lose everything, including our salvation. "It is wrong to waste our time, wrong to waste our thoughts. We lose every moment that we devote to self-seeking. If every moment were valued and rightly employed, we should have time for everything that we need to do for ourselves or for the world. In the expenditure of money, in the use of time, strength, opportunities, let every Christian look to God for guidance." —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 208

We all need to learn to number our days and plead with the Lord to restore our lost days. Most people value their money more than time; however, as I stated, nothing is as valuable as time.

Time can give us money, prosperity, and happiness; however, nothing in this world can give time. Time can only be used; it cannot be bought or sold. Many people live with little idea as to how to utilize their time properly. They enjoy spending their time only by eating, playing, or socializing with their friends. In this way they spend days and years. They never give a second thought to what they are doing, in the way they are living and using their time. They do not regret the way they are wasting their time. They have lost large amounts of their time which they can never get back. We should learn from the mistakes of others.

#### IS YOUR TIME YOURS?

The reality is that, "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." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342. Why? In God's sight, every second will be accounted for. He created time, so man has no right to misuse it. As our body is not ours, likewise the time given to us is the Lord's. God will require a more strict account of our time than any other gift! King David knew that his time was not his. "My times are in Thy hand." Psalm 31:15. Peter reminds us to "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." 1 Peter 1:17. Our time down here is not permanent. We are just pilgrims passing through from time to eternity. We will have to give an account of how we used our time.

#### NUMBERING OUR DAYS

We normally number our decades or years with our birthdays, but we do not usually number our days. But we need to number our days, in the light of God's eternity, considering our mortality and in the light of God's mercy (probation 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." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342

We read in Psalm 90 (a prayer of Moses), "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Psalms 90:12 —*King James Bible*

*In different versions of the Bible, this same prayer reads:*

"Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts." —*Holman Christian Standard Bible*

"Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom." —*New Living Translation*

"So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." —*World English Bible*

"Teach us to keep account of our days so we may develop inner wisdom." —*International Standard Version*

"So teach us to consider our mortality, so that we might live wisely." —*Net Bible*

"Teach us to number each of our days so that we may grow in wisdom." —*God's Word Translation*

"To number our days aright let us know, And we bring the heart to wisdom." —*Young's Literal Translation*

What version ministers to you? We cannot waste time while on our spiritual journey on this earth. Time is short. Life is made up of years, and years are made up of days. Days are made up of hours, and hours by minutes, and minutes are made up of seconds. The older we get the quicker the days and years seem to pass by.

When Pharaoh asked Jacob his age, this was his answer: "And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Genesis 47:9. How would you answer this question if asked your age?

We all need to be taught by the Lord to number our days so that we can live wisely during our short lifespan here on this earth; so we can learn what is important in life and what is not. The knowledge which comes from the Lord will enable us to use wisely the rest of the time we have. If we learn to number our days, paying full attention to each moment, we will be wise and truly learn to know the

deepest meaning and purpose of life. Methuselah lived for 969 years, but Moses said in his prayer, "For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Psalm 90:4. David said, "Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee." Psalm 39:5. We never know what tomorrow may bring. Let us redeem our time today.

## REDEEMING THE TIME

No one can escape the passing of time. We are all subject to aging and mortality. Time is a talent that we all have. The Lord has given it to every one of us. No one has more than anyone else. The question is, "Can the time be redeemed?"

Once precious time goes, it goes forever and never comes back. Each moment is of value, and once lost, can never be recovered. All the minutes, days, weeks, and years during which you did not serve the Lord are considered lost.

"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. . .

"Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal and earthly matters, in a treadmill of care and anxiety for the things that are but an atom in comparison with the things of eternal interest. . . . The Bible gives no indorsement to idleness." —*Christ's Object Lessons* p. 342–343

Although smaller duties are important, we should not allow them to hinder the accomplishment of greater duties. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Our time should be allocated accordingly.

Do not presume on tomorrow for you do not know what tomorrow will bring you. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." James 4:13–16

"The most signal victories and the most fearful defeats have been on the turn of minutes. God requires prompt-

*We all have the same portion of time. Each person has 24 hours. Time is the talent given to all equally, the only difference is on its use.*

ness of action. Delays, doubtings, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage. . . . The timing of things may tell much in favor of truth. Victories are frequently lost through delays. There will be crises in this cause. Prompt and decisive action at the right time will gain glorious triumphs, while delay and neglect will result in great failures and positive dishonor to God.” – *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 497

Since time belongs to God, we are just stewards and must acknowledge that it is His. As stewards, we are accountable to God for what we do with our time. “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2

### FAITHFUL STEWARDSHIP OF TIME

God is very particular with His time. Jesus came to this world “when the fulness of the time was come.” Galatians 4:4. During His ministry He could say: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” John 9:4

Timing is very important in heaven. The Lord’s clock is exact. The Hebrews stayed in Egypt 215 years. They were in the wilderness for 40 years and in captivity in Babylon for 70 years, exactly as prophesied. The Christian church was persecuted over a period of 1260 years. The 2,300 days (years) ended in 1844 and then began the time of the end.

“Every moment is freighted with eternal consequences. We are to stand as minute men, ready for service at a moment’s notice. The opportunity that is now ours to speak to some needy soul the word of life may never offer again. God may say to that one, ‘This night thy soul shall be required of thee,’ and through our neglect he may not be ready. (Luke 12:20.) In the great judgment day, how shall we render our account to God?” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 343

“The youth who are not barricaded with principle do not regard time as a precious treasure, a trust from God, for which every human being must give an account.

“Children should be educated to make the very best use of their time, to be helpful to father and mother, to be self-reliant. They should not be allowed to consider themselves above doing any kind of labor that is necessary.” – *Child Guidance*, p. 123

“The improvement of wasted moments is a treasure.” – *Ibid*, p. 123. “Only let the moments be treasured. A few moments here and a few there, that might be frittered away in aimless talk; the morning hours so often wasted in bed; the time spent in traveling on trams or railway cars, or waiting at the station; the moments of waiting for meals, waiting for those who are tardy in keeping an appointment—if a book were kept at hand, and these

fragments of time were improved in study, reading, or careful thought, what might not be accomplished.” – *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 343

“By many children and youth, time is wasted that might be spent in carrying home burdens.” – *Ibid*, p. 345

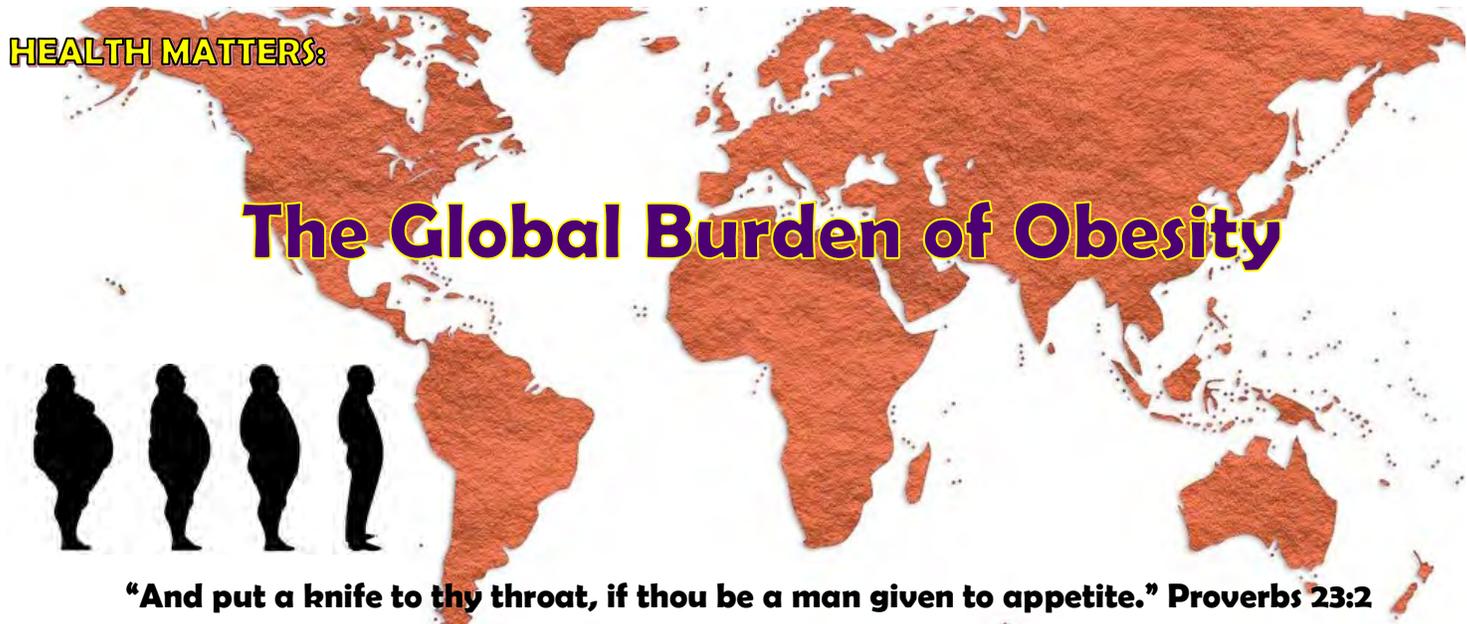
In the time of Noah, the flood did not immediately follow the giving of the message to Noah. The Lord first announced the end of civilization, then mercifully granted one hundred and twenty years of grace. Noah’s preaching and faithful example urged people to change their lives and prepare to meet the Lord, but they wasted the time. We also have been given ample time to prepare for the Lord’s coming, but grace will not last forever. How are we using our time? How are we helping others to prepare to meet Jesus?

In conclusion, time is the most valuable thing on this earth; nothing can compare with it. Once it is gone, it never comes back. It always runs forwards, not backwards. Everything in this world depends on time, nothing happens before its time. If we have no time, we have nothing. Loss of time is considered the worst thing on this earth because wasting time wastes us and our future. We can never acquire lost time again. If we have lost our time, we have lost everything. We should be very punctual according to the time and do our all work in a timely manner.

The signs of the times tell us that the end of time is very near. The signs Jesus foretold are coming to pass, such as violence, wars, revolutions, and other crises that are shaking the world. Diseases, pestilences, famines, destructive earthquakes, and the growing lack of love are warnings telling us that time is nearly over. Therefore, “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.” Amos 4:12. Let us consecrate ourselves anew unto God in humility, confessing our indifference and coldness, and be liberal in giving to the Lord our affections, our time, our talents, and our resources in the coming new year, 2018. This is a new chapter of time which Heaven grants us. Amen.

**Victor Shumbusho,  
D.R.Congo**





# The Global Burden of Obesity

**“And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.” Proverbs 23:2**

Worldwide, causes of death are complex, ranging from accidents, disease, infections, drug use including alcohol and tobacco, toxins from pollution, malnutrition. . . and the list goes on. In general, causes of death are attributed to either the aging process, to circumstances, or to lifestyle choices. In countries with low-income economies, more than half the deaths were caused by communicable diseases, maternal causes, conditions arising during pregnancy and childbirth, and nutritional deficiencies. In countries with high-income economies, the leading causes of death were related to age and lifestyle, including heart disease, strokes, Alzheimer’s, and certain cancers.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) classifies death according to the disease or injury which caused the death. However, causes of death can also be categorized according to the risk factors that can contribute to death. These risk factors may range from smoking, to unhealthy diets, to reckless driving, income levels, lack of access to medical care including vaccinations, physical inactivity and many others. Many of these risk factors are within the control of the individual person and are considered “preventable” risk factors, which can contribute to the death of that individual. These preventable risk factors can also lead to a number of diseases. Each year, nearly 900,000 Americans die prematurely from the five leading causes of death (heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, accidents, stroke)—yet 20 percent to 40 percent of the deaths from each cause arise from preventable, or also referred to, modifiable risk factors.

Let us look at the top risk factors that contribute to disease and death. Tobacco use is considered the number one risk factor when it comes to preventable deaths. We know that tobacco use leads to lung cancers, emphyse-

ma, chronic obstructive pulmonary (lung) disease (COPD), heart disease, strokes, diabetes—and this is not the full list.

And, what is the second risk factor? In many countries, obesity is listed as the second most prevalent risk factor in preventable death. The reason that obesity now ranks second is the high numbers of people who are now obese. Obesity rates are rising. Since 1975, the number of people worldwide who are obese has nearly tripled. And it is proven that obesity leads to many other diseases which are significant for their morbidity (causing sickness) and mortality (causing death). Several countries now list obesity as a disease because of the health impact that it has on those who are obese.

This article will focus on obesity, as it is becoming a significant health issue, not only in the richest countries, but in developing countries also. Overweight and obesity are linked to more deaths worldwide than underweight. Globally there are more people who are obese than underweight—this occurs in every region except parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Let us first look at some numbers. In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults worldwide, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of these, over 650 million were obese. If we look at percentages, 39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13% were obese. These numbers vary from country to country; however, most of the world’s population lives in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight. The number of overweight children is even more alarming. 41 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2016. Over 340 million children and adolescents aged 5–19 were overweight or obese in 2016. The rise in overweight and obesity in the age cate-

gory of 5-19 has risen from just 4% in 1975 to just over 18% in 2016. The rise has occurred similarly among both boys and girls: in 2016, 18% of girls and 19% of boys were overweight.

In 1975 1% of those in ages 5-19 were obese. In 2016 this has increased to 6% of girls and 8% of boys. Children are not immune to developing diseases caused by obesity. Many children and adolescents who are overweight and obese are starting to show signs of heart disease from an early age.

How do we determine if someone is underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese? Of course we can look at someone and have a good idea where they may fall in the four categories. Because obesity has been recognized as a particular health problem in itself, even more so than just being overweight, knowing if someone is obese is important; this provides the health professional with the opportunity to assess for health problems directly associated with obesity. The BMI (Body Mass Index) has been widely used to determine which of the four categories someone's weight falls into. This is a calculation based on the combination of height and weight. There are graphs available on the internet that can be used to calculate BMI values. The limitations of the BMI are that it cannot determine the percentage of body fat, and it is also inaccurate in people who have a lot of muscle. A BMI score of 30 or above indicates obesity.

sity. (See the graph).

An effective alternative to the BMI is to measure the circumference of someone's waist. This gives a good indication of the amount of abdominal fat someone is carrying. Knowing the circumference of someone's waist can help determine the risk of heart disease and other medical conditions. The following figures indicate individuals in the "at risk" group: women with a waist circumference of 90 cm (35 inches) and over, and men with a waist circumference of 102 cm (40 inches) and over.

The waist-to-hip ratio is also an excellent way of calculating how much excess weight someone is carrying. To calculate this ratio, use a tape measure and take a reading from the natural waist line and the widest part of the hips. Now divide the circumference of the waist by the hip circumference measurement. The World Health Organisation determines that abdominal obesity is represented by a waist-hip ratio above 0.90 for males and above 0.85 for females.

The key fact to know when it comes to obesity is that, for the most part, it is preventable. A fundamental cause of obesity and overweight is an energy imbalance between calories consumed and calories expended. To put it simply, obesity develops because the amount of calories taken in exceed the needs of the body. Therefore, many aspects of obesity are controllable through diet

and exercise. However, it is not always this simple. Many scientists have weighed in on this topic and recognize that people who are obese, who have an increased accumulation of fat, are not just eating too many calories or lacking physical exercise; history of obesity; this risk is two to eight times higher as opposed to a person with no family history of obesity. The risk is even higher in cases of severe obesity. Whether

## BMI Chart

Weight	lbs																										
	kgs																										
Height	in/cm		Underweight					Healthy					Overweight					Obese					Extremely obese				
	5'0" - 152.4	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42		
5'1" - 154.9	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40				
5'2" - 157.4	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39					
5'3" - 160.0	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38				
5'4" - 162.5	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	31	32	33	34	35	36	37			
5'5" - 165.1	16	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	30	30	31	32	33	34	35	36			
5'6" - 167.6	16	17	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	33	34	34			
5'7" - 170.1	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	29	29	30	31	32	33	33			
5'8" - 172.7	15	16	16	17	18	19	19	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	32	32			
5'9" - 175.2	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31	31			
5'10" - 177.8	14	15	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	30			
5'11" - 180.3	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	28	28	29	30			
6'0" - 182.8	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28	29			
6'1" - 185.4	13	13	14	15	15	16	17	17	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27	28			
6'2" - 187.9	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	19	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	27	27			
6'3" - 190.5	12	13	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	21	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	26	26			
6'4" - 193.0	12	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	17	18	18	19	20	20	21	22	22	23	23	24	25	25	26	26			

this is due to genetics or learned lifestyle patterns is not always known. Current knowledge concludes that genetic factors may be involved in causing obesity; and that these genes probably interact with environment factors, such as food intake and physical activity in increasing the risk of obesity.

Overall, obesity is related to genetic, psychological, physical, metabolic, neurological, and hormonal impairments. People who are obese can have disorders in the body's signals that trigger feelings of hunger and fullness. Efforts to lose weight is difficult, and often people regain all the weight lost within months or years. This is caused by a



slower and less efficient metabolic rate once weight is reduced. Once a person has been overweight, the body automatically tries to return to its previous weight. And finally, the food industry

markets products that include high levels of fats and sugars, and are extremely inviting and tasty, keeping people craving more of these foods, regardless of whether they are hungry or not.

Obesity is one of the few conditions that can negatively influence social and interpersonal relationships. There continues to be a stigma around obesity; those who are obese are considered lazy, unsuccessful, unintelligent, lack self-discipline, have poor willpower, and are choosing to be noncompliant with weight-loss treatments. Obese people are viewed as personally responsible for their weight problems. The current message in society is that both the cause and the solution for obesity reside within the individual person.

Weight stigma remains socially acceptable, therefore negative attitudes toward obese persons include employers, coworkers, teachers, physicians, nurses, medical students, dietitians, psychologists, peers, friends, family members, and even in children aged as young as three years. This social stigma leads to social exclusion and isolation, lower income levels due to discrimination in the workplace, decreased academic performance due to bullying in schools, and inadequate health care due to biases among health professionals. All these taken together impact a person's overall physical and mental health.

Recent estimates suggest that the prevalence of weight discrimination has increased by 66% over the past decade, and is now comparable to the rates of racial discrimination in America. Some think that this discrimination is useful, as

it may motivate obese people to adopt healthier lifestyles. Unfortunately, this assumption is not true. If weight stigma promoted healthier lifestyles and subsequent weight loss, then the increase in weight stigma over the past few decades should have been accompanied by a reduction in obesity rates; instead there has been an alarming increase in overweight people. Research also shows that weight stigma increases the likelihood of engaging in unhealthy eating behaviours as a way of coping, and lower levels of physical activity, both of which exacerbate obesity and weight gain. In fact, teaching people to develop ways of coping with weight stigma can lead to improved weight loss. But, how do we educate the public to change these negative stereotypes?

Factors leading to the increase in obesity include advancements in technology, and the reduction in jobs requiring manual labour, leading to decreased energy expenditure. We need to use less energy to do our jobs, and to maintain our households. The structure of environments have decreased the opportunity for healthy lifestyles, with the design of cities, making them less favourable for walking, including reduced feelings of safety, the increase in public transportation, the amount and easy accessibility to food stores and restaurants.

The food industry has increased our ability to access inexpensive, but calorie-dense foods and beverages. At the same time, costs for fresh fruits, vegetables, and other whole foods have increased in price. This has led to a greater consumption of unhealthy foods. Extensive marketing by the food industry also leads to overconsumption of these unhealthy, fat and sugar laden, high-calorie products. Much of this marketing is geared towards children, which starts them early on the road to excessive weight gain.

Environmental changes which contribute to the rise in levels of obesity have increased faster than the recognition of the many factors, including biological and genetic, that play a part in maintaining a healthy weight. Also lagging behind are strategies to combat the environmental changes that are leading to increases in overweight and obese individuals.

Overweight and obesity are no longer just considered a high-income country problem, as both are on the rise in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings. In Africa, the number of overweight children under 5 has increased by nearly 50 per cent since 2000. Nearly half of the children under five years of age who were overweight or obese in 2016 lived in Asia. Obesity is rising; however, the nutritional status has not changed. People are eating more, their weight is increasing; however, the food they eat is unhealthy. Studies indicate that during the last 30 years, there are significant changes in average body

weight, diet, and physical activity, occurring alongside economic development in developing countries. Lifestyle and environmental factors are acting together to fuel the obesity epidemic. If we look at the example of Africa, the epi-



demic of obesity can in part be explained by decreased levels of physical activity as far back as the late 1980s; roads were tarred, taxis and buses became the most common

transport means and, in addition, there was an ongoing trend away from manual labour to less physically strenuous jobs and the shift to less nutrient-dense diets.

As evidence mounts on the impact of obesity worldwide, along with a significant increase in preventable sickness and death, and the impact on world economies and overall health of the population, several prominent medical and health organizations, including the American Medical Association (AMA) and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), have declared obesity a chronic disease. The numbers in these countries is alarming. Canada has determined that the financial burden of obesity represents \$3.96 billion dollars a year on the Canadian economy. It is expected to surpass smoking as the leading cause of sickness and death. In the United States, the estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related illness are \$190.2 billion or nearly 21% of the annual medical spending in the United States. Childhood obesity alone is responsible for \$14 billion in direct medical costs.

More globally, the World Health Organization has developed the *"WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health"* and describes the actions needed to support healthy diets and regular physical activity. The Strategy calls upon all stakeholders to take action at global, regional and local levels to improve diets and physical activity patterns at the population level in an effort to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity, and its subsequent health effects.

Also, in 2016, the United Nations created 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which were approved by all world leaders. Sustainable development calls for "concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and the planet." Included in these SDG's is a statement acknowledging that overconsumption of food is detrimental to our health and the environment, and that 2 billion people globally are overweight or obese.

What is the benefit of referring to obesity as a disease? It

is important for health care providers to recognize obesity as a disease so preventive measures can be put in place and patients can receive the appropriate treatment," said CMA President Cindy Forbes. Recognizing obesity as a disease may precipitate a shift in thinking of obesity as just a lifestyle choice to a medical disease with an obligation to treat it as other diseases. Despite the increase in evidence of the effects of obesity on an individual's health, the debate continues. Is obesity a disease? For some, obesity as a disease invalidates the importance of discipline, proper nutrition, and exercise and enables individuals with obesity to escape responsibility. For others, obesity as a disease is a bridge to additional research, coordination of effective treatment, and increased resources for weight loss.

Adherents of obesity as a disease state that it meets the definition because it decreases life expectancy and impairs normal functioning of the body. Reluctance on the behalf of the medical profession to treat obesity as a disease is the fear that doctors will be overwhelmed with the numbers of obese people in their practice, and the challenge of finding adequate and timely treatments for these people.

Understanding that the disease of obesity is most often caused by modifiable risk factors, awareness will lead to changes in perception as to the causes of obesity, in individuals, health professionals and governments. This then can lead to an increase in collaborative efforts to reverse the obesity epidemic. It is governments, not individuals that have the ability to change the food environment by regulating industries, implementing taxes, and controlling availability and affordability of food products—healthy foods need to be cheaper, and readily accessible, whereas unhealthy foods need to have added "sin taxes", which can go directly into funding healthy programs for weight loss. Governments can also influence and promote changes to physical activity of its people by making changes and improvements in infrastructures, such as making cities more bicycle friendly, improving access to leisure facilities, or legislating employers to reduce sedentary work practices. Until obesity is universally recognized as a chronic disease, and not just a lifestyle choice, its prevalence will continue to increase at exponential rates. Awareness of the problem is the first step to finding sustainable solutions.



"It is sin to be intemperate in the quantity of food eaten, even if the quality is unobjectionable." —*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 102

**NEXT MONTH: IMPACT OF OBESITY ON HEALTH**



# The Poor Widow's Offering



"Annie! Maxi! We are leaving now; Grandpa has arrived," Mother called out from the bottom of the stairs.

"Coming!" Annie was wearing her favourite dress and shoes, and Max was dressed very elegant.

It was Sabbath morning and they were heading to church. Annie and Max loved going to church, it was refreshing to see others of the same faith, and to be able to delight in worship together. Today, a Pastor from another country, along with his family, would be visiting. They were missionaries in India. Annie and Max were excited to meet the children.

During the sermon, the Pastor spoke about the wonderful work being fulfilled in the Asian countries. However, he mentioned the poverty seen in these countries, and how there were many families in the faith who were in need. This touched Annie's heart, her eyes filled with tears as she imagined children without proper clothing and shoes. After the service, Annie tugged on her mother's dress.

"Mother, may I speak to you please?"

"Yes dear, what is it?"

"I would like to give a special offering to the Pastor and his family. I have some money that I have saved in the piggy bank you bought me last month. Can we go get it?"

Mother looked at Annie pleased, and with a warm smile and kiss, she decided she would take Annie to the house quickly so she could fulfill her desire. Mother parked the car in front of the house, and Annie jumped out and ran into the house excited. However, after ten minutes, Annie hadn't still come out. Mother decided to go in to see what was happening. She found Annie's

room slightly opened.

"Annie? Sweetie, is everything okay?" she asked as she opened the door completely to find Annie sobbing with the piggy bank opened beside her on the bed.

"What's wrong darling?" mother knelt in front of her daughter, wiping her tears.

"I only have five dollars, mother, I thought I had more, but this is all I have!" Annie let out a loud cry.

"Oh darling! here, let's wipe these tears away and let me tell you a story that Jesus once spoke about. After getting Annie's face washed up, they went to the living room where Mother took the beautiful white and gold family Bible they had on the bookshelf. Let me read to you the story of the poor widow's offering, in Mark 12:41-44, listen to this. *"Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."*

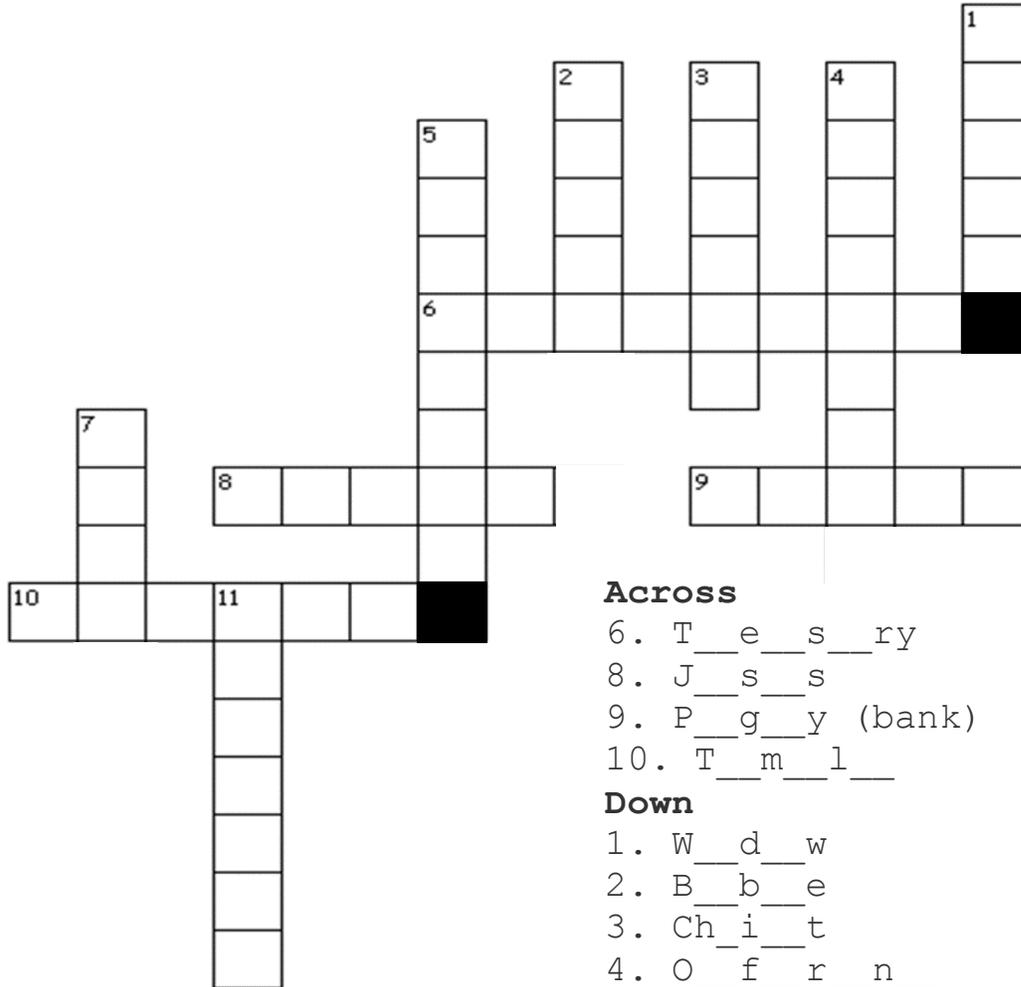
"Annie, you are giving all you have for the cause of the Lord. This is more than what many give because sometimes we give only some of what we have, but you are giving all your savings. I know you were saving to buy the violin so you can play in the church band. Jesus appreciates this act of kindness and love. Do not feel saddened of the amount, as you just heard; you are giving more than you can imagine."

Annie smiled and felt grateful to Jesus for having spoken those words. She felt like He had spoken them just for her. Happily, they returned to church, and Annie gave her offering with a joyful heart to the Pastor.



## Challenge Ten

Fill in the missing letters in the box and then place the words in the crossword puzzle.



### Across

- 6. T \_ e \_ s \_ \_ r y
- 8. J \_ s \_ s
- 9. P \_ \_ g \_ \_ y (bank)
- 10. T \_ \_ m \_ \_ l \_ \_

### Down

- 1. W \_ \_ d \_ \_ w
- 2. B \_ \_ b \_ \_ e
- 3. Ch \_ i \_ \_ t
- 4. O \_ \_ f \_ \_ r \_ \_ n \_ \_
- 5. G \_ \_ a \_ \_ e f \_ \_ l
- 7. L \_ \_ v \_ \_
- 11. Pl \_ \_ a s \_ \_ d

Complete all 15  
Challenges

Email your challenges here:

[veronicoemigarcia@gmail.com](mailto:veronicoemigarcia@gmail.com)

Don't miss Grandpa's  
next visit to Annie and  
Max's home!!



# KENYA

**Graduation of 6th intake at BAMI college (Berea Adventist Missionary Institute) — October 22, 2017**



**Believers who live or have lived or worked in Philippines  
Who attended the General Conference in Italy**



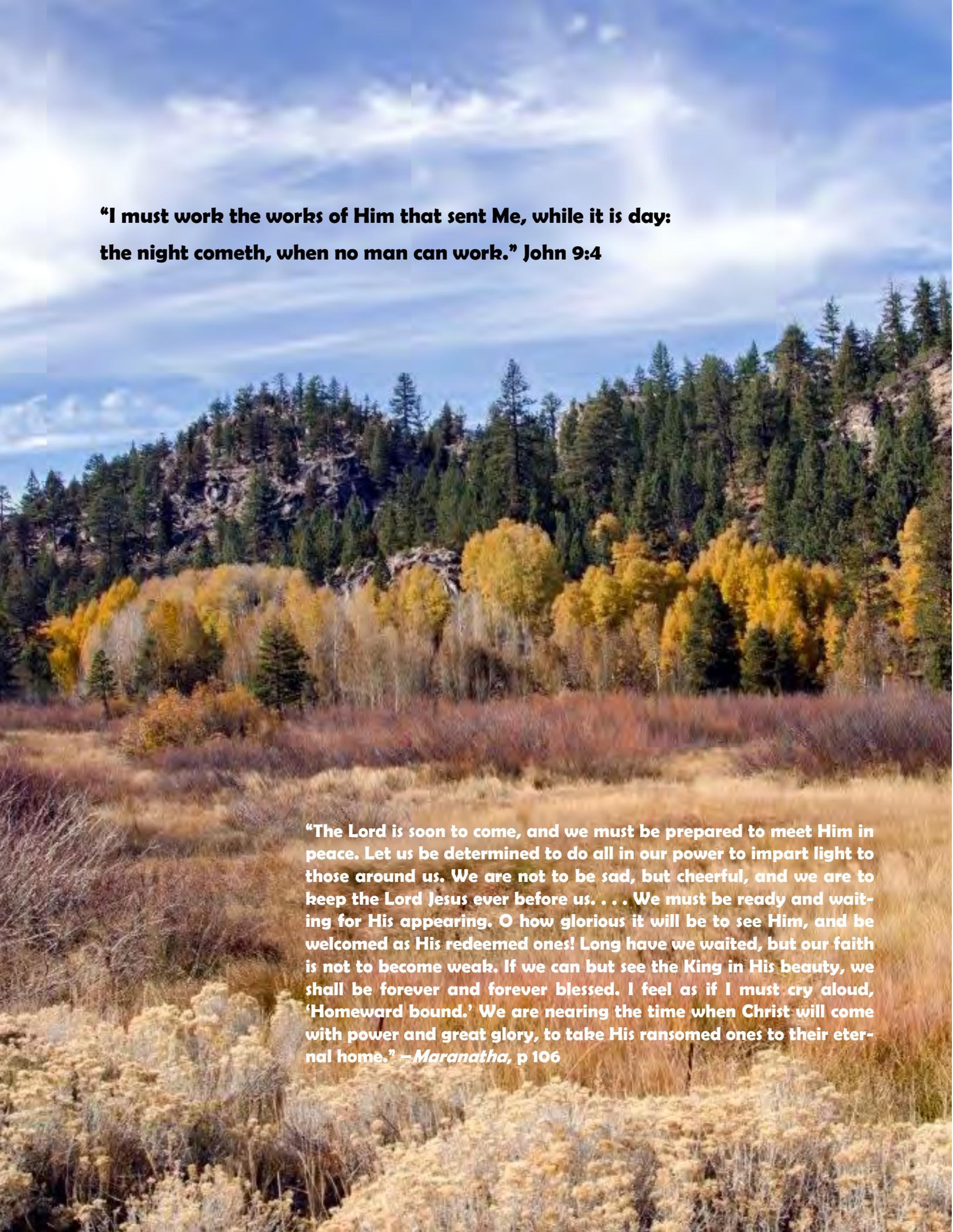
## Vietnam



**Peter and Jeanie  
(from Philippines)  
with interested souls in  
Vietnam.**

## Believers who live or have lived or worked in Argentina who Attended the General Conference in Italy





**“I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day:  
the night cometh, when no man can work.” John 9:4**

**“The Lord is soon to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. . . . We must be ready and waiting for His appearing. O how glorious it will be to see Him, and be welcomed as His redeemed ones! Long have we waited, but our faith is not to become weak. If we can but see the King in His beauty, we shall be forever and forever blessed. I feel as if I must cry aloud, ‘Homeward bound.’ We are nearing the time when Christ will come with power and great glory, to take His ransomed ones to their eternal home.” – *Maranatha*, p 106**