A Great Egret is captured in mid-flight over a body of water. The bird's wings are fully extended, showing the intricate patterns of its feathers. Its long neck is tucked back, and its sharp beak is pointed forward. The background consists of a dense line of trees and foliage, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect. The water in the foreground is calm with gentle ripples.

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Messenger
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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

WE BELIEVE: The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He

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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PHOTO CREDITS

Front Cover: Helen Marttinen, Belize
Back Cover: Helen Marttinen, Costa Rica
Inside front cover: Helen Marttinen, Belize
Page 3: Helen Marttinen, Costa Rica

The Reformation Messenger is published monthly. It is an Official Publication of the International Missionary Society the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Reform Movement, Canadian Field. Subscriptions can be paid online on the website or by mail.

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COST:

Black & White x \$27.00 per year. Colour x \$47.00 per year. (Add \$10.00 North America and \$20.00 overseas shipping & handling)

Purchase all 27 years of the Messenger for \$200.00 (shipping included in price). Bound in books by year.

Catalogue is available upon request for all articles for 27 years.



Healing in His Wings

into the earth. It drinks in the sunshine, the dew, and the rain. It receives the life-giving properties from the air. So the Christian is to grow by cooperating with the divine agencies. Feeling our helplessness, we are to improve all the opportunities granted us to gain a fuller experience. As the plant takes root in the soil, so we are to take deep root in Christ.

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.” Malachi 4:2

“But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.’ We must walk carefully and humbly before the Lord in these precious hours of probation. We must draw close to Jesus till His light is shed upon us. It is the desire of our Saviour that we should be the light of the world, reflecting every ray that shines upon us. What straight paths should we make for our feet, so that the lame may not be turned out of the way! This is an age of light. The Lord of heaven is sending the rays of light into the homes of the world. A special light is shining upon the commandments of God. The door of the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary stands ajar, and within, as in the most holy place of the ancient sanctuary, is the ark of the testimony. The law of the Most High is beneath the mercy-seat. The light of this law is shining upon the world, penetrating the moral darkness that has covered the people.” *—The Review and Herald, June 29, 1911*

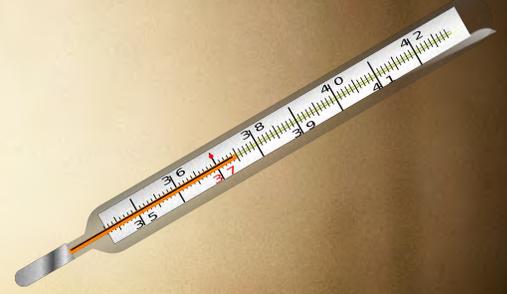
“The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. It sends down its roots

As the plant receives the sunshine, the dew, and the rain, we are to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit. The work is to be done ‘not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.’ Zechariah 4:6. If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us ‘as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.’ Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise upon us ‘with healing in His wings.’ Malachi 4:2. We shall ‘grow as the lily.’ We shall ‘revive as the corn, and grow as the vine.’ Hosea 14:5, 7. By constantly relying upon Christ as our personal Saviour, we shall grow up into Him in all things who is our head.” *—Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 66–67*

“How strongly and brightly shines the mercy and lovingkindness of God in His dealings toward His heritage. . . . All heaven has the deepest interest in our welfare, that Satan shall not control us and conform us to his character. . . . ‘But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall’ (Malachi 4:1, 2).” *—This Day with God, p. 123*

Ellen G. White

Spiritual Sickness



In our world there is much sickness; people are suffering and dying from many different sicknesses. There is physical sickness, and for this sickness there are doctors and hospital staff working on curing them. Then there is mental sickness when the mind is affected. "To deal with men and women whose minds as well as bodies are diseased is a nice work. Great wisdom is needed by the physicians at the Institute in order to cure the body through the mind. But few realize the power that the mind has over the body. A great deal of the sickness which afflicts humanity has its origin in the mind and can only be cured by restoring the mind to health. There are very many more than we imagine who are sick mentally. Heart sickness makes many dyspeptics, for mental trouble has a paralyzing influence upon the digestive organs." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 184

But, the worst kind of sickness is spiritual sickness. Sister White writes to a brother in the church who was spiritually sick. "Brother ----- is joined to the church, but not to the Lord. He has a dyspeptic religion. He is not right with God; he is filled with self. He has lost much by uniting with individuals who have not the spirit of Christ. He is lacking in almost every grace. He is useless to himself, and a great stumbling block to the church. Dear brother, Satan has controlled you to a great extent; your thoughts are unsanctified, your actions are not in accordance with the spirit of a true Christian. You have brought on your own disease; you must be your own restorer through the help of the divine Physician. Your moral powers are weak for want of nourishment. You are starving spiritually for Bible

truth—the bread of life. You need to draw daily nourishment from the living Vine. The church receives no strength from you and in your present condition would be better off without you, for now, if anything arises to cross your track and you cannot control matters, you settle back with stubbornness, a dead weight on the church." —*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 117

Jesus is the greatest healer, He can heal every sickness. Beside the Pool of Bethesda there lay great multitudes of sick people—blind, lame, paralyzed, invalids. One man had been sick, unable to walk for 38 years, and he had given up the hope of ever being healed. Then one day, suddenly, a stranger comes beside him and with a tender voice asks him, "wilt thou be made whole?" John 5:6. That moment, hope came to his heart, but instead of saying, "Yes, Lord, make me whole," he said, "I have no one to put me into the pool." He had no friend who could help him. Jesus, looking upon him in tender pity said, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." John 5:8

With joy in his heart, he goes to his home to tell everyone of his wonderful healing. Jesus could have healed them all, but they did not have faith enough for healing.

Today the world is full of sick people. Physically sick people suffer pain, and are not able to continue a normal life. Mentally sick people can exhibit strange behaviours. They can be depressed, sad, miserable, have phobias and complications. But the largest number of sick people are spiritually sick, and this includes those who profess to be Christians.

Sin causes spiritual sickness. The church of God in the

time of Isaiah was spiritually sick. He writes about it. "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Isaiah 1:5-6

A spiritually sick person suffers more than people with other kinds of sicknesses. He may be physically healthy and even rich, but he is not happy. But, a spiritually healthy person can be dying or even in prison, like Paul and Silas, and be rejoicing, even if he suffers torture and death penalty. He is still happy and full of joy. The spiritually sick person also cannot take offense. He feels deeply hurt easily, little things upset him and make him angry.

One of the spiritual diseases is jealousy. "Long has the Lord borne with His people. He has forgiven their wanderings and waited for them to give Him room in their hearts; but false ideas, jealousy, and distrust have crowded Him out." -*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 155

Jealousy has crowded the Lord out of their lives. Jealousy makes us instruments of Satan. Lucifer fell because of jealousy. It is the natural fruit of selfishness; it is poison which comes directly from Satan.

Pride is a spiritual sickness which destroys many good people. Pride kept many people from confessing their sins to others. Pride kept Satan from returning to God. Pride destroys love to God and to fellow men. We can have pride of dress, to have it elegant and be the latest fashion. We can have pride of opinion, thinking that we are right and others are wrong. Sister White writes about pride of position. "Pride of position is a deep-seated evil which has ruined thousands. Yes, tens of thousands, full of ambition for distinction and display, have been ruined because they have lost sight of principle. They have measured themselves among themselves, and compared themselves with themselves. Their eager grasping for credit and reward has resulted in diminished spirituality. This is a lesson all should study carefully, that they may be warned against selfishness and avarice, against pride which destroys love for God and corrodes the soul." -*Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 284-285

"There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable." -*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 154

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth.' Were you cold, there would be some hope that you would be converted; but where self-righteousness girds one about, instead of the righteousness of Christ, the deception is so difficult to be seen, and the self-righteousness so hard to be put away, that the case is the most difficult to reach. An unconverted, godless sinner stands in a more favourable condition than such." -*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 176

Many times this spiritual disease is not recognized. People can be proud of their humility, thinking that they are perfect.

God will not answer the prayers of proud persons. Sister White writes, "I saw that the strength of the children of God is in their humility. When they are little in their own eyes, Jesus will be to them their strength and their righteousness, and God will prosper their labours." -*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 307

God is willing to teach us humility, but it is a painful process. "It is painful to learn lessons of humility, yet nothing is more beneficial in the end. The pain attendant upon learning lessons of humility is in consequence of our being elated by a false estimate of ourselves, so that we are unable to see our great need. Vanity and pride fill the hearts of men. God's grace alone can work a reformation." -*Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 378

We learn humility by trials and afflictions. When we have a deep experience with God, we feel ourselves unworthy, that the lowest place in His service is too honourable to us; then God can use us in His work.

"Christ will not undertake to teach the self-righteous, self-conceited, and self-willed. If such come to Him with the inquiry, What is truth? He gives them no answer. It is only the meek that He will guide in judgment; the meek will He teach His way. . . . If you are searching the Scriptures and different authors that you may find doctrines which will coincide with your own preconceived opinions, and if you have already settled your faith, then you will be boastful, self-confident, and unyielding." -*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 449

Another spiritual sickness is love to oneself, which is selfishness, and love to money and riches, which is greater than one's love to God. Solomon wrote about love, and how strong it is. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many

waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Love to God is a great blessing to us, but love of self is spiritual sickness. Peter loved Jesus so much that he promised to go to prison with Him, and even to death, but a few hours later he said three times that he does not know Jesus. His self-love was stronger than his love to Jesus. Peter did not recognize his self-love, until he had denied Jesus three times. Now "he went out, and wept bitterly." Matthew 26:75. He had been in the company of Jesus for three and a half years, comparing his character to the character of Jesus, but yet he did not recognize the difference between them. This same spiritual sickness is still existing in professed Christians, and they do not recognize it.

When the Sunday Law is enforced, and the Sabbath keepers are punished, then all who love themselves more than they love God will give up the Sabbath and start keeping Sunday.

Another spiritual sickness is covetousness. Covetousness takes our joy away and makes us feel miserable. If we have nothing in life except the hope of eternal life we are rich, and we have a reason to thank God day and night. Read the history of the Christians during the Roman persecution in the Middle Ages. Many were living in the underground catacombs where the dead were buried, suffering cold, hunger, torture, and death, yet not a word of complaint came from them.

How easily many of us complain if God does not supply our every desire and need. Many of our brothers and sisters, in the time of war, left their homes behind and escaped to other countries empty-handed. Some spent years in prison, and some were condemned to death. We are their followers, and we must not complain about the little trials that we may suffer.

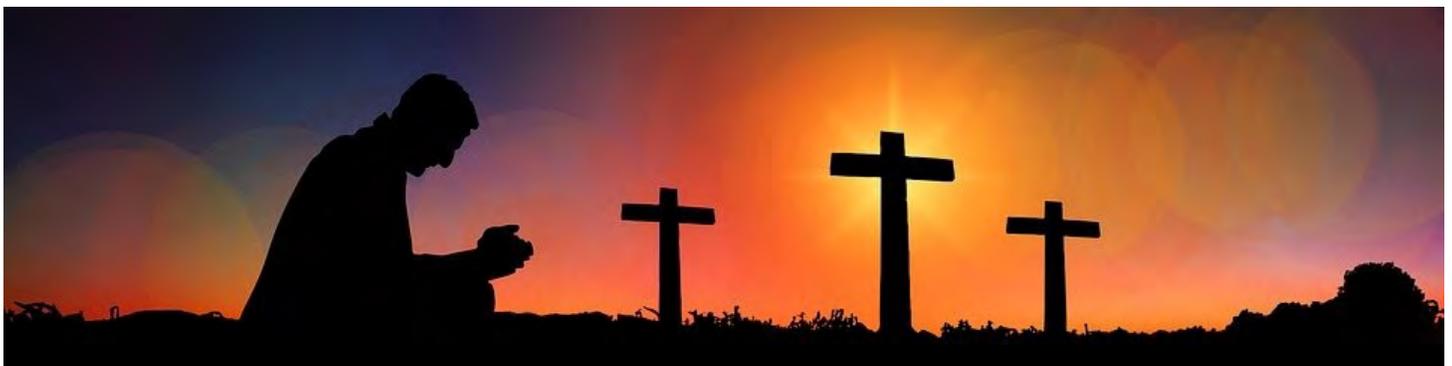
Spiritual disease causes more suffering and pain in our world than physical or mental sickness. For physical

sickness there are hospitals and doctors who can help us, but for spiritual disease there is only one, and He is Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus came to the Pool of Bethesda and there was a multitude of sick people, but He healed only one, asking him the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Spiritual sickness comes on the same way as physical sickness. First it feels painful, only a little dissatisfaction for God's commandments and requirements. The narrow way feels too narrow. Little by little the spiritual illness grows, and finally it comes to the point that we lose our faith. We have no desire to do missionary work, we pray less, and read the Bible less. Sister White gives counsel on how to overcome spiritual weakness. "It is necessary for you to watch for the weak points in your character, to restrain wrong tendencies, and to strengthen and develop noble faculties that have not been properly exercised. The world will never know the work secretly going on between the soul and God, nor the inward bitterness of spirit, the self-loathing, and the constant efforts to control self; but many of the world will be able to appreciate the result of these efforts." – *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 376

Terrible struggles are going on in our world in human hearts. To have a humble disposition and an unselfish character is not the result of an accident. It comes from years of soul struggle alone with God that others are not aware of. Regardless of how sinful we may be, God still loves us and is trying His utmost to purify us and save us. With a tender voice He is asking us, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He invites us, "Come unto Me and be ye saved, I have borne your iniquities, by the stripes laid upon Me, that thou mayest be healed." Jesus, our precious Redeemer! You cannot trust Him too fully or too soon. Wait no longer, lest you wait too long, and Satan fastens his delusions upon you. Our necessities touch the Saviour's heart of love, and with His healing efforts we will be ready for heaven and eternal life. We will be completely healed from all spiritual sickness. Amen.

Timo Martin





Whether to Laugh or to Cry

*“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: . . .
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”*

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4

Have you ever been in a situation, and the outcome was unexpected and your response was, “I don’t know whether to laugh or to cry”?

Many years ago I was travelling with my sister and we had just arrived into Finland from Sweden by boat. As we disembarked, someone ahead of us had their dog with them and this dog could not wait to get outside to relieve himself, so he relieved himself right there in the terminal. My sister was pulling along her suitcase. It was an old suitcase and unstable and she was pulling it with a strap. The minute we passed the dog’s feces, her suitcase fell over right on top of it. Of course, I found the situation rather amusing and could not refrain from laughing. In picking up her suitcase, some of the residue went on her clothing. At that point in time, my sister did not know whether to laugh or to cry. She hastily went to get some paper towels in the washroom to try to wash it off.

Although this situation is a little humorous, there are serious times in life in which people may not know whether to laugh or to cry.

Here are a few examples:

A Christian woman dies during the birth of her child. Shall the father rejoice, thanking God for the new birth, or weep over his lost loved one?

Maybe you have a child that you have been praying for, for years, and God finally answered your prayers and

the prayers of your spouse. When the child was born it was found to have some genetic defect that would require lifelong care. Do you rejoice over the birth? Or cry over the many years ahead of care and expense that you will have to provide?

You find the truth and espouse it with great rejoicing, but you lose your job because of the Sabbath. Or perhaps your spouse leaves you on your baptism day. Do you rejoice or cry?

There is a person who has been tormenting you for many years. One day they get a heart attack and are hospitalized for months. Do you rejoice or weep?

You get cut off by another car while driving, and further on you see that they have been in an accident, do you stop and help? Do you weep at their loss or do you rejoice?

Then there are times also when people laugh or weep at the wrong times.

You see someone slip on a banana peel and it looks humorous, so you laugh. They end up hitting their head on the pavement and getting a concussion. Your laughter quickly subsides. It was inevitable that they would get hurt, so why laugh in the first place?

Or perhaps your son or daughter finds a wonderful spouse in the church, but moves to a different part of the world, because the spouse is a missionary. You cry

and cry because you will miss this child so much, but you should be laughing and rejoicing. They married a good person in the church and a missionary. They are spiritually on the right track and one day they will be in heaven if they continue and you can spend eternity with them.

So the question is, shall I laugh or weep? When and why? The Lord delights to see His children laugh when they are joyful. We have a saying in English, “laughter is the best medicine.” This saying originated from King Solomon’s words: “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine:” Proverbs 17:22. This is pure, innocent joy and laughter.

But, are we happy, joyful, and laughing all the time? Or are there times when we are sad and weep? Clearly Solomon mentioned in Ecclesiastes, that there is “a time to weep, and a time to laugh”.

Let us explore this a little.

There are actually two types of laughter. There is the laughter of pure, innocent joy and there is the sarcastic satanic laughter when you laugh at someone’s misfortune, or laughter and mirth at pleasure parties of the world. Solomon states regarding this second type of laughter, “I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?” Ecclesiastes 2:1–2. Solomon says there is no lasting joy from this type of laughter.

Luke contrasts the laughter and joy of the world to the joy of the Christian. Although Christians initially may feel emotions of sadness and shed tears when things go wrong, once they turn to Jesus, this sadness is turned into joy. “Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.” Luke 6:21

Of the unbeliever, Luke agrees with Solomon that the mirth and laughter of the world is not lasting. “Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.” Luke 6:25

REJOICE

*“A time to laugh . . . a time to dance.”
Ecclesiastes 3:4*

In this verse, Solomon mentioned the pure, innocent laughter and joy that a Christian can experience in Christ. The reality is that the Bible is bursting with joy and happiness. Heaven is a place of rejoicing and the Lord wants you to



be there. He wants heaven to begin for you on this earth.

However, it is sometimes difficult to laugh and rejoice when you have just gone through a difficult and trying experience and you feel like weeping, but we have examples of people in the Bible who did just that.

It is said of the Apostles, after being released from prison. “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Acts 5:41. They were happy, joyous, praising the Lord.

Paul and Silas rejoiced and sang songs in prison. (Acts 16:25). “It was this joy that filled the hearts of Paul and Silas when they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. Christ was beside them there, and the light of His presence irradiated the gloom with the glory of the courts above.” *—Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 35

The Apostle Paul never complained about his trials. In fact he wrote to us that we are to, “Rejoice evermore.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16. If you read the verse before this (verse 15), Paul says, “See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

When would you want to render evil to someone? As a true Christian, hopefully never. However, we are human and we slip up now and then, unfortunately. For most people who are good moral citizens, the only time they would consider rendering evil for evil is in revenge, when they, or a loved one, have been mistreated. Thus, if we have been mistreated, we should not seek revenge, but “rejoice evermore.” And Paul continues in verse 17 to say, “Pray without ceasing.” It is not easy to rejoice when mistreated, unless we do as is recommended, “Pray without ceasing.” That is the only way to be able to rejoice in a bad situation. And then finally, Paul adds in verse 18, “in everything give thanks.” Paul did

not say give thanks, only in good times—but give thanks in everything. If we rejoice, and pray without ceasing, then we can give thanks in all things, whether good or bad. We can laugh and rejoice, not weep.

Jesus said, “Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and

cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." Luke 6:22-23. Interesting use of words here. Luke tells us to leap for joy when we are reproached for the name of Christ.

Matthew wrote the words that Jesus spoke: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:10-12

Peter agreed with him. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." 1 Peter 4:12-14

James wrote: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." James 1:2. James does not say, "if" we fall into temptation. He says, "when" we fall. It is inevitable that we will encounter temptations periodically (which includes sickness, persecution, poverty, and calamity). Such situations are often unexpected and unwelcome, but be joyful. It is not a time to weep and mourn. And, why? "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:3-4

There is no experience in life, however bitter or disappointing it may be, that the providence of God and the grace of Christ will not contribute to Christian growth and bring us closer to God, enriching our understanding of His love for us. So, laugh and rejoice because God will have the last word in the great controversy between good and evil.

Be happy, laugh, rejoice—the Lord is working for your character preparation for heaven and the devil cannot call you his own, if you are in Christ. His trials cannot disturb your oneness with Christ. Christian joy and courage are not based on external circumstances which may often be most forbidding, but on faith in God's overruling providence.

As long as the great controversy rages between Christ

and Satan, there will be trials to face which Satan hopes to use to destroy your faith. This is nothing new. We are made partakers of the suffering of Christ. It is not a time to weep and cry when in trials, but we should rejoice, knowing that God will work everything out for His good (Romans 8:28).

MOURN

"A time to weep . . . a time to mourn." Ecclesiastes 3:4

There is a time to weep and mourn. When is this time?



Although we are to laugh and rejoice in the midst of trials, we are human and will grieve and cry in times of distress and bereavement. But, we are not to remain in that state. Clearly though, Solomon stated that there is a time to weep and a

time to mourn.

Firstly, I will mention a few instances when the Lord told His people they were *not* to mourn.

Samuel was mourning for King Saul's fall from grace but the Lord said, it is time to stop mourning, I have work for you to do. "And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons." 1 Samuel 16:1. When the work of the Lord seems to flounder, due to unconsecrated leaders, do not weep and mourn. Rejoice; the Lord is in control of His work. Pray for your leaders and help them.

In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, again the people were told to stop mourning. "And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law." Nehemiah then encouraged the people by saying, "this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength." Nehemiah 8:9-10. Do not weep when you read the law. Yes, it is a high standard; but, the Lord has promised to help you reach it. It is not impossible.

When your crops fail (or you lose your source of income), is it a time to mourn? "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the

labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Habakkuk 3:17-18 . No, not even then.

Now we will read a few statements of times when we *should* weep and mourn.

It is written that, "Jesus Wept." John 11:35. Yes, He did. He shed tears of sadness. Jesus was touched with human sorrow. He wept, not for Himself. He wept for humanity. He weeps for you and for me, when we go astray. On the cross, He prayed, not for Himself, but for His tormentors. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. Yes, there is a time to truly mourn. David said, "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief." Psalm 6:6-7

"Blessed are they also who weep with Jesus in sympathy with the world's sorrow and in sorrow for its sin. In such mourning there is intermingled no thought of self. Jesus was the Man of Sorrows, enduring heart anguish such as no language can portray. His spirit was torn and bruised by the transgressions of men. He toiled with self-consuming zeal to relieve the wants and woes of humanity, and His heart was heavy with sorrow as He saw multitudes refuse to come to Him that they might have life. All who are followers of Christ will share in this experience. As they partake of His love they will enter into His travail for the saving of the lost. They share in the sufferings of Christ, and they will share also in the glory that shall be revealed. One with Him in His work, drinking with Him the cup of sorrow, they are partakers also of His joy." *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 12-13. The promise is, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Psalm 126:5

Solomon wrote: "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. . . . For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity." Ecclesiastes 7:2-4, 6

And also, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness." Proverbs 14:12-13. This laughter in

these verses is the evil sarcastic laughter of the world. This is clearly not Christlike. "Christian cheerfulness is not condemned by the Scriptures, but reckless talking is censured. Those who live in the last days should be circumspect in words and acts. Sobriety is more in accordance with our faith than levity." *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 370

James puts it this way, "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." James 4:9. This does not imply that the normal Christian life is to be characterized with gloomy sadness. He writes this to emphasize the point that the laughter of the world is not conducive to lasting happiness, and that sinners should feel the real wretchedness of their true spiritual state.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4

"It is right to be cheerful, and even joyful. It is right to cultivate cheerfulness of spirit through sanctification of the truth; but it is not right to indulge in foolish jesting and joking, in lightness and trifling, in words of criticism and condemnation of others. . . . What have they to mourn over? They should mourn over their inclination to sin, over the danger they are in from inward corruption and from outward temptation. They should be afraid because they have so feeble a sense of the sinfulness of sin, and so little idea of what constitutes sin." *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 938

This is a serious thought. Are you afraid because you have a feeble sense of the sinfulness of sin? Do you mourn over your inclination to sin—every sin, whether large or small? Think carefully what each small sin cost the Son of God in your behalf. Contemplate it daily.

When people have their sins pointed out, often worldly people laugh and say, "The devil made me do it." While this is true, is it something to laugh about? This saying originated with Eve in Eden; however, I doubt she laughed about it as people do today.

The true Christian will not make excuses, but will weep when their sins are pointed out. "The mourning here brought to view is true heart sorrow for sin. Jesus says, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' John 12:32. And as one is drawn to behold Jesus uplifted on the cross, he discerns the sinfulness of humanity. He sees that it is sin which scourged and crucified the Lord of glory. He sees that, while he has been loved with unspeakable tenderness, his life has been a continual scene of ingratitude and rebellion. He has for-

saken his best Friend and abused heaven's most precious gift. He has crucified to himself the Son of God afresh and pierced anew that bleeding and stricken heart. He is separated from God by a gulf of sin that is broad and black and deep, and he mourns in brokenness of heart.

"Such mourning 'shall be comforted.' God reveals to us our guilt that we may flee to Christ, and through Him be set free from the bondage of sin, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God. In true contrition we may come to the foot of the cross, and there leave our burdens. —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 9–10. While we weep and mourn over our condition, we shall be comforted. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5

It is a deep sense of spiritual need that leads to this kind of mourning—for the imperfections we see in our own lives. Christ speaks of those who, in poverty of spirit, long to reach the standard of perfection. There is comfort here also for those who mourn also for bereavement (which is natural—we are human), disappointment, or other sorrow. Comfort is promised. Jesus meets the mourning sinner with the comfort of sins forgiven. Unless there is a sense of need, there will not be mourning for what one lacks—righteousness of character.

"To every stricken one, Jesus comes with the ministry of healing. The life of bereavement, pain, and suffering may be brightened by precious revealings of His presence. . . . The Lord has special grace for the mourner, and its power is to melt hearts, to win souls. His love opens a channel into the wounded and bruised soul, and becomes a healing balsam to those who sorrow." —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 12–13. "Christ lifts up the contrite heart and refines the mourning soul until it becomes His abode." —*Ibid.*, p. 11. And they can laugh again.

We are not only to be happy and rejoice ourselves, but to share this joy with others who are mourning. "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our



God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified." Isaiah 61:1–3

The apostle Paul never tires of repeating the fact that holy joy is one of the chief duties and privileges of the Christian. He wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4. Life can be tough. If you do not know whether to laugh or to cry, choose laughter. The Lord is always the same, yesterday, today, and forever. His love, His power and His consideration are the same in times of affliction as in times of prosperity. Christ's ability to give peace to the heart does not depend on external circumstances; so the heart that is centred on Him may constantly rejoice.

"Wherever we go, we should carry an atmosphere of Christian hopefulness and cheer; then those who are out of Christ will see attractiveness in the religion we profess; unbelievers will see the consistency of our faith. We need to have more distinct glimpses of heaven, the land where all is brightness and joy. We need to know more of the fullness of the blessed hope. If we are constantly 'rejoicing in hope,' we shall be able to speak words of encouragement to those whom we meet. 'A word spoken in due season, how good is it!'" —*Lift Him Up*, p. 244



"We must live by faith daily. . . . Rejoice in God always. Today praise God for His grace, and continue to praise Him every day." —*This Day with God*, p. 58

There is "A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance." Rest in the arms of Jesus.

Amen

Wendy Eaton

"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations." Psalm 100

Joseph Meets his Brothers

Part III The Story of Joseph

Based on Genesis 42, 43, 44, 45



The years of harvest plenty ceased,
The sky went dry, no rain brought trees and plant to bud,
the meagre days increased, the food ran out the people had.

Other countries, Egypt suffered want, and the predicted famine filled the land.

Now the people came and cried to Joseph: "We are starving, give us corn, that we not mourn and die of hunger!" He then opened up the stores, filled the sacks with grain in scores, for the multitude lined up, day by day and month by month to satisfy indeed the need throughout the land. And because of Joseph's wise and careful lead beforehand, plenty food was now at hand.

.....

"There is corn in Egypt" Jacob told his sons, "you should go there now at once!"

The famine also was in Canaan, but not by chance—by Providence. It was the means of God to bring about a change so wondrous, yes, without a doubt. Like an earthquake that would open up, and spill the cup of old guilt long held back, of hatred, envy, jealousy, so that at last the truth of that ugly secret record would break forth, covered up for many years; that confessions would be made with many tears, but for the healing, reconciling—Lifting off the weight of hidden guilt that filled so long the hearts of ten of Jacob's sons...

.....

When Joseph saw them come to him, a dart of pain shot through his heart—but also love, and it was hard for him this to disguise, but he had to be wise not to let them know he was their brother, no, not yet. He had in mind to use another method to find out what their characters were now about.

The brothers did not have a clue who stood before them—they bowed their faces to the ground—they saw the governor of Egypt of great fame, who sold grain to all who came.

Joseph then spoke roughly: "Ye are spies!" This he said because he tries to find out if Jacob is alive, test the integrity of their lives, to see if they were still the same brute clan, or maybe—have become true, honest men.

"Ye are spies to see the nakedness of the land!" "Nay, my lord, we are all one man's sons. We are true men, not spies. Twelve brothers are we, one is still at home and one is not."

"Ye are spies. Ye shall be proved of honesty, true integrity, bring your youngest brother hither here to me!" And three days he put them in the ward, they were sorely troubled at his word.

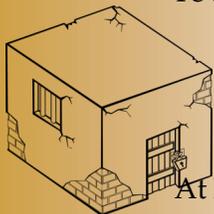
Then were sent home, save Simeon, who was kept hostage alone, till they return with Benjamin, Joseph's heart to see did yearn.

At home again mixed feelings filled the minds as Jacob's sons related their encounter with this strange ruler to their father, who trembling in distress, heard that Benjamin be taken there, to verify the son's acclaimed uprightness.

"You bereave me of my children, Joseph is not, Simeon is not.

And now Benjamin! All these things are against me!" Jacob clamored, "What else is coming over me!" Sorrow bowed him down, much grief pressed on his forehead yet another frown.

.....





But the days once more came on, with hunger at the door,
 and Jacob after struggling sore, finally gave in to deliver Benjamin.
 He also sent a present to this governor to bend his heart to soften
 and give all children back to him.

Grain was needed to survive the famine, the sons left home with Jacob's prayer
 for them, who in their absence put his trust in God to be gracious in his trying lot. —

.....

The Scriptures tell of the commotion sombre,
 the emotions when Joseph saw his younger brother. The brothers dining in his house, the sending off
 and then the troublesome return, because of Joseph's cup be found with them.

The men did rent their clothes in sheer distress, as the cup was found with Benjamin.

When Joseph claimed him for his servant, their heart was filled with bitterness.

Then Judah rose, entreated Joseph with great passion, to give to him that portion,
 and let the boy go free, and accept his ardent plea, for he pledged himself to be
 surety for Benjamin, and take instead of him the blame.

If coming home without the boy it will cause their father sorrowful to die.

Then Joseph could no more refrain himself,
 he cried and wept aloud, and said: "I am Joseph!"

The brethren could not say a word; it was a sword had hit their heart.

They were troubled, shocked in disbelief, as Joseph saw their open grief,
 he called them near to bring relief, he read terror in their eyes,

old guilt broke forth without disguise, of the scene when they conspired to cruelty against their brother
 they did hate for of the dreams of which he said, that they would bow to him!

And then this very thing did happen, as they bowed to him in their first meeting,
 making true of that what Joseph had been dreaming!

In deep remorse and painful shame, they stood before him who became a man of fame,
 but Joseph did not scold nor spoke revenge, but uttered words of comfort to impart
 trust into their hearts, that it was God who made all good and brought him hither,
 that he would become ruler in the land, preserving lives to stand now at the helm
 of that great crisis, years of famine now at hand.

God opened thus the way to unite the family again to come to Egypt, to buy grain and then bring Jacob,
 and his sons, all other members, down to Goshen the best place chosen,
 for their living and to multiply them in the future, to fulfill the prophecy God gave
 to Abraham, to stay four hundred years in the land of Ham (Genesis 15:13; Psalm 105:23).

Pharaoh provided wagons, much provision for the journey taking place.

Joseph excitedly envisioned to see his father by God's grace,
 now could hardly wait for the embrace....

Though glad about the kindness of their brother, sore troubles filled the hearts
 of Jacob's sons, how they could convey to their father
 this great news that Joseph is alive and well,
 when many years ago they brought his bloody coat to tell,
 that he was dead, and now must face their lie so great...



Weeks went into months since Jacob sent his sons,
his heart was with them while at home. Burdened if they all return together,
or if there would be one other trouble being placed,
by this Egypt's ruler to be faced.

He could only lay his burden in the hands of God his faithful guide.

He alone can comfort him provide.

So, he spent the waiting time, trusting God that all be fine.

.....

Then one day he saw from afar a caravan draw nigh.

The men did look familiar, but what those many donkeys, camels, wagons are?

And now one lad in nice apparel runs toward him in hasty pace,

Jacob thought: "Do I see right? this is Benjamin!" And in that moment they embraced.

"Where did you get this garment? What are these wagons, tell me please!"

And Benjamin with joy did shout: "O father, Joseph is alive! He gave me this!"

Now the sons came near their father, close to him to gather,

saying: "Joseph is alive! He is the governor; he wants you to come down to him!"

When Jacob heard that Joseph lives, he fainted, almost lost his breath,

he could not believe what he just heard; it shook him to the core.

If this is now not true, another blow he could take no more...

Then the brethren told the story of their visit, and that Joseph sent explicit,
the wagons, food and mammals, to take him, Jacob, family and all possessions,

down to Egypt there to live secure in the land of Goshen,

a place especially for him be chosen.

And when Jacob saw all the provisions,

he revived and caught the vision,

to see his darling son again, overwhelmed him so with joy,

it let forget him all the pain endured, for his dear boy,

now a great man of fame, who did not forget his father—

yes, Joseph is a treasure like no other....

The great outlook surged him with new energy,

calling all his family, wives, and servants, sons and daughters of his sons,

to waste no time but making ready for the journey down to Egypt their new home,

Threescore six of them would come.



End of Part III.
To be continued.

Edda Tedford, Canada



The Thought

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1

At the opening of his gospel, John, the person who the Bible refers to as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23), introduces Jesus as the “Word.”

Through 3½ years of living, learning and working with Jesus, John went from a person whom the Bible calls one of the “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17) to this man, “whom Jesus loved.”

Charles Spurgeon, in a sermon given on May 23, 1880, described this relationship. “And yet within that circle of love there was an innermost place in which the beloved John was favoured to dwell: upon the mountain of the Saviour’s love there was a knoll, a little higher than the rest of the mount, and there John was made to stand, nearest to his Lord.”

In the original Greek, this “Word” is “Logos”, which literally means “the thought”. Not just any thought but “The Thought.” It gives us a whole different dimension of understanding to this phrase. It lifts the comprehension of it above the mundane, temporal, and earthly. For it is not merely an action but the essence or birth of action.

Before we speak, first our minds must generate the thought; and hence, we understand that as in all

things, Jesus is the first.

“In the beginning was the Thought, and the Thought was with God, and the Thought was God.”

Action cannot come before the thought. So, it is important to really understand that no other existence occurred before this “Thought.” No big bang to initiate life into existence. No “God particle”, nothing. Nothing could happen before “The Thought.”

But this beloved disciple did not just stop there. This Thought was with God and was God.

“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate who could appreciate His purpose and share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. See John 1:1–2.

“Christ the Word was one with the eternal Father, one in nature, in character, in purpose. ‘His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.’ Isaiah 9:6. His ‘goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.’ Micah 5:2.

“The Father wrought by His Son in the creation of all heavenly beings. ‘By Him were all things created, ... whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers.’ Colossians 1:16. Angels

are God's ministers speeding to execute His will. But the Son, the 'express image of His person,' 'the brightness of His glory,' 'upholding all things by the word of His power,' holds supremacy over them all. See Hebrews 1:3, 8." —*From Eternity Past*, p. 9

No action existed before "The Thought" and no thought existed before "The Thought."

This understanding brings a deeper meaning to the proceeding texts in John chapter 1 as the beloved disciple introduces the work of "The Thought."

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness." —*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 246

Life proceeds out of The Thought. The Thought cannot help but create life because He is life.

Despite all of man's wonderful inventions, his scientific study and discovery, man is unable to create life. Despite all of his boasting and accusations Lucifer was unable to create life. Then becoming Satan, he and his evil demons are unable to create life. Life can only come from "The Thought."

This life that proceeds from The Thought is the light of men.

Lucifer, his name meant the light, because he was created by the Light and, as the covering cherub, he dwelt in the very presence of the Light. But he lost that light because he lost that life that can only come from The Thought.

Satan means adversary or darkness, which is literally the absence of light. The absence of "The Word" or "The Logos" or "The Thought".

"Through successive ages of darkness, in the midnight of heathenism, God permitted men to try the experiment of finding out God by their own wisdom, not to demonstrate their inability to His satisfaction, but that men themselves might see that they could not obtain a knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ His Son, save through the revelation of His word by the Holy Spirit. When Christ came to the world, the experiment had been fully tried, and the result made it evident that the world by

wisdom knew not God." —*Christian Education*, p. 92

Many years before, king David came to the same conclusion as John. David, like John, had many character flaws, even to the point of adultery, murder and betrayal. Yet David had also lived with Jesus in his life. He came to know The Thought intimately. The psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

In Psalm 33 David uses the Hebrew word *Dabar*, which also means "thought", to describe Jesus. "By the word [Dabar] of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." Psalm 33:6

Just like John, David realized that the light that lit the path of his life, through all of its turns, came from the life that came from The Thought, and The Thought—Jesus, was revealed in His word.

John, Spurgeon further mentioned in his sermon of May 23, 1880, "He was exceedingly livid in his beliefs, and believed to the utmost what he had learned of his Lord. Read his Epistle through, and see how many times he says 'we know,' 'we know,' 'we know.' There are no 'ifs' about him; he is a deep and strong believer. His heart gives an unfeigned assent and consent.

"Withal there was an intense warmth about John. He loved his Lord, he loved his brethren; he loved with a large heart, for he had a grand nature. He loved constantly, and he loved in such a way as to be practically courageous for his Master, for he was a bold man, a true son of thunder. He was ready to go to the front if he was bound to do so, but it is in quite a quiet way, and not with a rush and a noise: his is not the dash of a cataract, but the still flow of a deep river."

Is your experience with Jesus a "we know", "we know" as was John's? The Gospel of John is a firsthand experience with Jesus—the Thought. John experienced the Light firsthand. Unlike before he met Jesus, The Thought is what now came before John's actions. John was now patient, kind and faithful. He was at the foot of the cross when all of

the other disciples fled. He personally saw Jesus fulfil His promise to take his sin away.

“True faith rests on the promises contained in the word of God, and those only who obey that word can claim its glorious promises. ‘If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.’ John 15:7. ‘Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.’ 1 John 3:22.” – *Christian Experience And Teachings*, p. 126

These texts are witness to John’s first-hand experience of a relationship with Jesus as “the Word”, “the Logos” or “the Thought”, and John testifies that we will find this same relationship with Him in His word. This intimate and life changing relationship is available to you.

“Those who expect to be children of God are not to expect an easy time in this life. There are battles to be fought. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness in this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. We are not left alone to engage in this conflict. Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation. He clothed His divinity with humanity, and took the field Himself, that He might teach us to fight the battles of the Lord. He says ‘Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God:

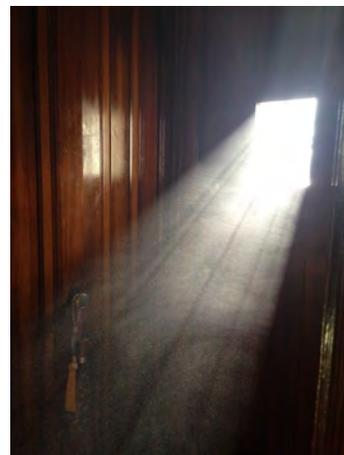
yea, Thy law is within My heart.’ [Psalm 40:8].

“Who is this? We ask Isaiah, and he answers, ‘Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace’ [Isaiah 9:6]. John the Baptist tells us who He is: ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ [John 1:29]. And the beloved disciple adds his testimony, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ [John 1:1].” – *Manuscript 61*, 1899

“In his old age John revealed the life of Christ in his life. He lived to be nearly one hundred years old, and over and over again he repeated the story of the crucified and risen Saviour. Persecution came upon the believers, and those young in experience were often in danger of losing their hold on Christ. But the old, tried servant of Jesus steadfastly maintained his faith.” – *Manuscript 92*, 1903

May God grant us this same intimate relationship with “the Word”, “the Logos”, “the Thought.” Amen

John Formosa



“Striving to Become Christlike.--Beholding Christ for the purpose of becoming like Him, the seeker after truth sees the perfection of the principles of God's law, and he becomes dissatisfied with everything but perfection. Hiding his life in the life of Christ, he sees that the holiness of the divine law is revealed in the character of Christ, and more and more earnestly he strives to be like Him. A warfare may be expected at any time, for the tempter sees that he is losing one of his subjects. A battle must be fought with the attributes which Satan has been strengthening for his own use. The human agent sees what he has to contend with--a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out. But with Christ there is saving power that will gain for him victory in the conflict. The Saviour will strengthen and help him as he comes pleading for grace and efficiency. ” – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1098



John Formosa

October 25, 1963—March 10, 2021

In this issue, you have the opportunity to read the final article written by John Formosa for the people of God. On Wednesday March 10, 2021, God saw fit to lay another faithful soldier to rest. John Formosa experienced a medical emergency from which he never recovered.

John was born in Toronto Canada to Brenda and Henry Formosa. He was the second youngest of seven children. At the age of 11 he was introduced to the message of the International Missionary Society, Seventh-day Adventist Reform church, when his mother responded to an advertisement that the church had placed in the local newspaper. His mother and grandmother took their stand and were baptized into the church. When John was 18, he decided to follow their example and gave his life to the Lord, through baptism.

For a brief period, John worked as a canvasser for the church in the city of Vancouver. After he and Helen Marttinen got married, he left full-time missionary work and took up his own occupation; however, the work of the Lord was always dear to his heart.

He continued to work as he could on a volunteer basis. John gave Bible studies, went canvassing with the church on occasion, and preached regularly in church. He held many positions at the local and field levels over the years.

The church has been blessed with his executive abilities for which he was gifted by the Lord. He served as the secretary for the Canadian Field for over 15 years, and he was still holding this office. For example: during this time, he successfully facilitated the immigration process of four of our missionary workers to Canada from Co-

lombia and Argentina. He also helped find contractors and gave expert advice with our different local church buildings that needed repair.

John also was the leader of the Multi Media department in Canada and facilitated the on-line weekly church services and Sabbath School Lessons. We pray that someone will step up and take over this very important work.

John was also much loved by the young people. At times he was elected as the youth leader, and other times he took on the role of helping the youth, even without being in the office as the leader. He spent time with them, counselled them, and they will never forget the camping trips he took them on. They will miss him greatly.

John was also generous with his money, when he had money he gave to the church and individuals, wherever help was needed. He gave generously to the Good Samaritan department when there was a need. He sponsored several orphans in Africa. John also funded the building of the primary school in Okok, Kenya. He also funded some local projects, such as building a large shed at the back of the Bloor Street church, repairing the roof, and giving financial assistance to the Woodbridge church.

John was a very social person. When the news of his passing was shared, many people were in shock, and quite a few said "I just spoke with him today (or yesterday)". He had the interest of the work of God in his heart and reached out regularly to the leaders, workers, and many others on a regular basis, while continuing to work his secular job.

Outside of church, John volunteered on the board of the Friends of High Park Zoo—a free zoo, for all to enjoy in the city. It was in much needed repair and John lobbied with the local government for funding for the repair. The funding was approved the day before his passing, which he was very excited about as he shared the news

with Helen. Sadly, he will never see the repairs come to fruition.

John will be greatly missed by family, friends, and church members. We pray that God will raise up soldiers to take his place in the work of God. Jesus is coming soon and we look forward to meeting John again in the resurrection morning. We appreciate your prayers.



(From one of the youth in Canada). Leo Chiatto: "I'm deeply saddened that our dear brother and friend, John Formosa, has passed. You were such a good and supportive friend and had such a positive outlook on life along with good advice. I still find it hard to believe. You will be sorely missed, but have the hope to meet again in His Kingdom." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Colossians 3:4.



Letter from the Kenyan Union:

Dear Brothers, Sisters, Relatives and Friends.

It is with profound sadness, that we have learned of the untimely death of our beloved brother, the late John Formosa. As Kenya Union the cruel hand of death has robbed us of a humble man who was friendly, generous, forgiving and gentle in spirit.

We will forever remember the late John for His generous contribution, and subsequent establishment of Okok Bethel Academy School in Kenya which has helped many know Jesus and their life changed. (See photo below)

As a union, we join the entire Canadian field, relatives and friends at this time of Dark clouds. To those who we know face to face, and the rest we wish you a quick recovery as you lay to rest the Hero, the late John Formosa.

May the hope of resurrection be forever our focus In Jesus name, Amen.

Till we Meet again, till we Meet Again, till we Meet Again!!! For and on behalf Of Kenya Union,

Nashon Ouma Ojuok



Food Guides: Grains and Cereals

"If we plan wisely, that which is most conducive to health can be secured in almost every land. The various preparations of rice, wheat, corn, and oats are sent abroad everywhere, also beans, peas, and lentils. These, with native or imported fruits, and the variety of vegetables that grow in each locality, give an opportunity to select a dietary that is complete without the use of flesh meats." –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 314

This month we will explore another section of Canada's Food Guide, the originally named cereals and breads category. This section has remained in the food guide with some minor revisions since the first food guide in 1942.

I like looking at the evolution of food guides, as they are an indicator of the evolving science of nutrition. I am focusing on the Canadian Food Guides; however, many countries have their own food guides and have changed in similar ways over the years. From 1942–2019, the Canadian Food Guides have evolved in many ways; however, in some ways they have remained the same. The intent of the food guides has not changed in "guiding food selection to promote the nutritional health of Canadians."

The original food guide instructions were to have "one serving of a whole-grain cereal and 4 to 6 slices of Canada Approved Bread, brown or white." In 1944, the guide changed the bread description to "Canada Approved Vitamin B Bread, whole wheat, brown, or white, with butter." In 1949, the guide removed the reference to Canada Approved Bread, and just indicated to consume 4 slices of bread with either butter or margarine. Then later the quantity of bread required was removed. However, what remained throughout all the guides was

the recommendation to eat whole-grain cereals. In 1977, this group now stated, cereals to be "whole grain or enriched". This suggested that if you did not eat whole grains, enriched grains were an adequate substitute. Enriched grains were fortified with different vitamin B's yet they lacked the fibre content of whole grains. In 1982, again a slight change in which whole grains and enriched grains remained as part of the bread and cereals group; however a new statement was added, "whole grain products are recommended." In 1992, the food guide had a significant change. Now the food groups were lined up as in the colours of the rainbow. The outside arc of the rainbow, the largest food group, was the newly named "grain products" category. This indicated that grains should be eaten in bigger quantity than the other food groups. The specific reference to bread was now removed. Interestingly, the next food guide that was issued in 1997 still used a rainbow; however, the outside arc of the rainbow was no longer grains, but fruits and vegetables, recognizing that this category plays the most important role in the health of Canadians. The grain category was now the second outer arc of the rainbow.

Finally, in 2019, the food guide arranged the categories onto a plate, to show the size comparison each group should have to one another in terms of eating patterns. The grain section comprises $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate; $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate is the of the vegetable and fruit group, and the protein group is another $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate. The heading on the diagram states "choose whole grain foods." The word "enriched" has been removed.

WHAT ARE GRAINS?

First of all, let us establish what a grain actually is. The

official name for grains is “cereal grains”, which is why the word cereal is seen on many food guides. They are “small, hard and edible dry seeds that grow on grass-like plants called cereals.” Some examples of grains are wheat, rice, corn, barley, oats, millet, spelt, and rye. Grains are used worldwide as a food staple because of their durability, they can be stored and transported without spoiling. The hard outer husk of the seed protects the inner edible portion of the seed. Of all the food groups, grains are the main energy food source used by people around the world. Grains can be milled into flour or pressed into oils. Grains are used in many food products, including bread, oatmeal, pasta, breakfast cereals, popcorn, and tortillas. Several foods are known pseudo-cereals. They are not grains, but are prepared and eaten like grains, including amaranth, quinoa and buckwheat.

HISTORY OF BREAD

Grains have been used throughout history. In searching the Bible, we find many references to grains and bread. The first time it was mentioned was in Genesis 3:19, “In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.” Ever since Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, bread was a part of man’s diet. Initially bread was made by mixing crushed grains with water and spreading the mixture on stones to bake in the sun, the result being a type of flatbread. Once yeast was discovered, it changed the method of bread-making. Already in Exodus 12, leaven, another name for yeast, is mentioned, in the context of leavening bread. This would indicate that the Israelites used leaven which allowed their bread to rise and become softer and more palatable. According to history, the ancient Egyptians also used yeast.

As time went on, many other countries developed their own versions of bread. In 450 BC, the Romans developed the milling process, and were able to create a bread that eventually became an art form. Even from earliest times, the rich class of Romans considered white bread as higher quality and thus was used by the educated and wealthy. In Britain, in the medieval times, bread baking became a status symbol. The upper classes preferred the fine, white loaves, and could afford the costs associated with producing white bread. Those who were poorer con-



sumed rye, bran, and coarser breads. It was not until the steel roller mill was invented by the Swiss in 1834, instead of crushing grain, the roller system broke it open, exposing the different parts of the grain including the endosperm, germ, and bran and easily separated them.

Early in the 1900’s, bread began to be milled to “improve” its flavour, to the point where the flour that was milled was so fine, pure white flour that it became very low in nutrition. The endosperm would remain and the rest of the wheat grain, the bran and the germ which contains most of the nutrients would be removed. White bread was looked on as the bread of the rich because most working class people would make their own bread, which was made by using the whole wheat grain.

Canadians developed a taste for white bread, which was looked on by nutritionists as not much more than empty calories. When WWII came, the Canadian government decided to improve the food value of white bread in order to provide better nutrition when other food sources were not available during the war. Canadians were reluctant to eat brown “whole wheat” bread. The Canada Approved flour, milled from flour from the “wheat berry” was to contain more of the B vitamins that were lost in the regular milling of white flour. The flour was also available for consumers to buy to make their own bread. This flour, the wheat grain, was introduced in 1942. It was not much better than the white bread already available, and Canadians did not like the slightly rougher texture, thus the Canada Approved Vitamin B bread was soon discontinued.

As time went on, bread was no longer confined to wheat grains, but breads could be found using many different grain products such as rye, spelt. For many people, removing bread from the diet does not reduce the amount of grains that are consumed, as people eat more prepared grain foods such as rolls, donuts, muffins, and many other sweet desserts

By the 1949 Food Guide, the bread category only indicated to have at least four slices of bread. In 1952, nutritionists and the Canadian Government decided to introduce vitamin-enriched flour to Canada. The flour would have the same appeal as white bread, but it would be enriched with the B vitamins and iron that were missing from white flour. By 1955, 90% of all Canadian white bread was made using enriched flour. Over the years, with various messaging, including the benefit of gluten-free diets, and removing bread from

one's diet as a means to lose weight, bread is losing its appeal for many consumers. As I am presenting the grain food group today for its value that the nutrients provide, I will address the topic of gluten in another article.

WHOLE GRAINS

All grains as they grow are whole grains. The grain kernel or seed contains three parts—the bran, germ, and endosperm. When making whole grain products, they are used in their whole form or ground into flour, while still keeping all the three parts of the seed.

Each part of the seed has its own health nutrients. The bran is the outermost layer that supplies B vitamins, iron, copper, zinc, folate, selenium, potassium, magnesium, antioxidants and phytochemicals. The bran is also rich in fiber. The germ of the seed is where growth occurs; it is rich in healthy fats, vitamin E, B vitamins, phytochemicals and antioxidants. The endosperm is the interior layer that contains carbohydrates, protein, a small amount of some B vitamins, and minerals. Of all three parts, the endosperm is the least nutritious. Whole grains can be single foods such as brown rice and popcorn, or as ingredients in food products such as the oats in oatmeal, or whole wheat flour in bread. A food product must contain 100% of the original kernel to qualify as a whole grain.

Grains contain a significant amount of starch, which is a complex carbohydrate that provides the body with fuel for energy. Complex carbohydrates are long chains of sugar (glucose) molecules. Because of their length, they break down more slowly in our body than simple carbohydrates such as are found, for example, in fruit. Thus, they have a lower glycemic index, a value which is assigned to foods based on how slowly or how quickly a food causes increases in blood sugar levels. The glycemic index of foods is important to diabetics in order to maintain normal sugar levels; however, sugar spikes in our bodies which then quickly drop, should be avoided by all people because of the damage that high sugar levels cause.

When looking for whole grain products, be careful as whole wheat and multigrain foods may not be whole grains. Multigrain just tells the consumer that there are a number of different types of grains in the product. Some foods look like whole grain because of the colour, but this is not a good test either, as often molasses or caramel is added to bread to darken it. In order to know you are getting whole grains, read the nutrition label. Look on the ingredient list and choose foods that have

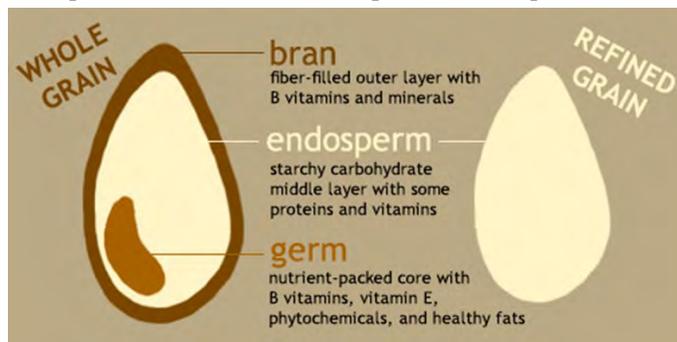
the words "whole grain" followed by the name of the grain as the first or second ingredient. For example whole grain oats, or whole grain wheat. To ensure that the food is healthy, also avoid foods that have any form of sugar as one of the top four ingredients. The less ingredients other than the whole grain in a food product makes it that much healthier. Also, avoid the ingredient "high-fructose corn syrup", as the word "corn" is misleading. It is a highly processed unhealthy sugar. Eating whole grains in their whole forms, such as brown rice, barley, oats, corn and rye, and avoiding processed foods provides all the benefits of whole grains without any additional ingredients.

Whole wheat foods are not always whole grain, according to Canadian labelling rules. Up to 70% of the germ can be removed, and the manufacturer is still allowed to label the product as whole wheat. If the product contains the name "whole grain whole wheat" it will contain 100% of the kernel. Another way to tell if the product contains mostly whole grains is by looking at the amount of grams of fiber per serving. If a product is 100% whole grains, the amount of fiber per serving should be 16g or higher. In Canada, many products use the "Whole Grain" stamp; however, ensure that the stamp states 100% and 16 or more grams of fiber. A Whole Grain stamp can be used on labeling even if the product has less than 50% of its grain as whole grains. But, the stamp will indicate 50%.

REFINED GRAINS

The invention of industrialized roller mills late in the 1800s, allowed grains to be processed in a new way, producing refined grains. The milling process made it easy and cost effective to have the germ and the bran removed, leaving only the endosperm. The bran is removed so that it is easier to chew; it gives a finer texture to flour. Removing the germ, which has a high fat content, allows for a longer shelf life. However, the germ and the bran contain most of the nutrients and all of the fiber.

The process removes about a quarter of the protein, 80%



of its thiamine, more than half of its riboflavin, 80% of its niacin, 90% of the Vitamin E, half to two thirds of magnesium and 77% of iron, as well as valuable phytochemicals, ash, protein and all the fiber. Eating refined grains is considered consuming “empty” calories. The biggest source of refined grains is from white flour; other sources include white rice and white pasta. Refining wheat creates a fluffy flour that makes light, airy breads, cereals, crackers, desserts and pastries. However, refined grains cause a rapid sugar spike in the blood followed by a large drop. When blood sugar drops it makes people feel hungry and they often eat when they are not truly needing to eat, leading to weight gain. Refined grains are linked to significantly increased risk of many diseases, including obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes. “For use in breadmaking, the superfine white flour is not the best. Its use is neither healthful nor economical. Fine-flour bread is lacking in nutritive elements to be found in bread made from the whole wheat.” –*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 320

ENRICHED GRAINS

Because refined grains lacked significant and necessary nutrients, consumption of these grains caused a rise in deficiency diseases such as pellagra (lack of niacin B3) and beriberi (lack of B1). Therefore, many governments required that refined grain products be “enriched.”

Enriched grains are refined grains where some of the nutrients lost during processing is replaced. Most enriched grains add back Vitamin B’s: B1, B2, and B3. However, this enrichment process only adds back very few of the many missing nutrients; many other nutrients are lost from the refined product. Often refined grains will also be “fortified”, which is adding a nutrient that did not exist naturally in the original food, or replaced at levels that did not occur naturally in the original food. These can include certain other vitamins and minerals including folate and iron. However, enrichment cannot replace the fiber content or the many phytochemicals which were lost in the refining process.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains have been shown to have many beneficial health effects on the human body. The bran component of the grain seed contains fiber, which slows the breaking down of the complex carbohydrates into sugar, which prevents sugar spikes in the blood. Refined grains have a much



lower glycemic index. This is important for diabetics especially. Fiber is also important in helping to lower total cholesterol, “bad” cholesterol, triglycerides, and insulin levels. Fiber also helps keep bowel movements regular by increasing its bulk and weight and softening it, thus allowing the movement of stool through the intestines more readily, treating and preventing constipation. It has also been shown to be beneficial in reducing the risk of colon cancer because fiber helps move waste more efficiently through the intestines. It also prevents the formation of blood clots which can cause heart attacks or strokes. The fiber in whole grains is known as a prebiotic, which helps to feed, grow, and sustain healthy bacteria in your intestines, ensuring a healthy gut microbiota.

Studies show that people who ate 2.5 or more servings of whole grain foods per day had a 21% reduction in cardiovascular disease than those who ate less than 2 servings a week. Whole grains reduce inflammation and infections. These prevent diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, ulcerative colitis, and gout. People who ate at least 70g/day of whole grains had a 22% lower risk of total mortality, with a 23% lower risk of cardiovascular disease mortality and a 20% lower risk of cancer mortality. Eating 2 to 3 servings a week of whole grains, the risk of diabetes dropped by 30%. Switching from white rice to whole grains reduces diabetes risk also, by 11%. Another study showed that in women who eat the highest amount of whole grains, at least 2 servings a day, their risk of diabetes type 2 was reduced by 43%. Because whole grains break down slowly during digestion, it helps keep blood sugar levels on an even keel. Phytochemicals, and essential minerals such as magnesium, selenium and copper found in whole grains may protect against some cancers. In general, people who regularly eat whole grains live longer than those who did not consume whole grains on a regular basis.

The recommendation is to eat three servings (3 ounces) of whole grains per day. Whole grains are packed with so many different nutrients that are beneficial to our health, few foods can offer such diverse benefits.

“There is more religion in a good loaf of bread than many think. Food can be prepared simply and healthfully, but it requires skill to make it both palatable and nourishing.” –*Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene*, p.49

CHILDREN'S CORNER:

A One-minute Conversation



Billy grew up in a nice Christian home. His parents were very much involved in the church services and activities. Billy enjoyed going to the Children's Sabbath School. There was a nice group of children and they enjoyed doing the lessons and singing together. Billy was also very active in the youth programs they presented, and he was very friendly to the new visitors that came to church.

The local believers also enjoyed spending time outside of church and often went on church picnics on Sabbath afternoons and sometimes even on the occasional Sunday.

At home, Billy was very helpful around the house. His family had morning and evening worship. Billy said his own prayers morning and night and read a chapter of his Bible before going to bed.

Billy seemed like he was growing up to be a nice Christian young man, who loved the Lord and would serve Him for his entire life.

Although Billy was faithful and active around his church friends, he had one problem that plagued him. He was not so open about his faith to his friends at school, nor with anyone he met outside of the church.

His parents, especially his father, was very outgoing and spoke with many people he met out on the streets and in the parks or shopping malls. Whenever he engaged in a conversation with someone, he always managed to turn the conversation over to spiritual themes. This bothered Billy and he felt embarrassed. He secretly hoped they would never encounter some of his school friends' parents. Billy squirmed and became openly impatient if his father's conversation went too long. Sometimes it was only a one-minute conversation—like when

they were pumping gas, and his father said a few short words to the person on the other side of the pump. Even if the conversation did not turn to religious themes, Billy's father always ended the conversation by saying, "God bless you." Sometimes the strangers reacted well, other times they seemed indifferent, or even scoffed a little.

As he grew older, Billy would walk away from his father when his father engaged in these conversations and pretended he did not know his father. One day, he was very impatient and

asked his father why he bothered. They clearly were not wanting to come to church and some clearly opposed his point of view and would not accept the things his father was speaking about. Why waste the time? There were so many other things that needed to get done.

His father politely responded by saying, "Well son, we are told by Isaiah, 'Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters.' Isaiah 32:20. And Ellen G. White wrote, 'We can pass through this world but once; as we pass along, let us make the most of life. . . . Our sphere of influence may seem narrow, our ability small, our opportunities few, our acquirements limited; yet wonderful possibilities are ours through a faithful use of the opportunities.' (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 356). So you see, son, we may never meet those people again, but they may remember the words I have spoken and the Holy Spirit can awaken in their hearts a desire to know more one day when they are really in need. And also, you never know, but those few words may make a difference in that person's life that we are not aware of."

Billy still was not satisfied. When he became a teenager, his school friends became more important to him than his church friends. Slowly he was losing interest in church. He managed to graduate from high school and decided to leave home and leave church. He moved in with some of his friends and obtained a job at a local supermarket on the other side of town, far away from his parents.

As time went on, Billy developed some bad habits that were costing him a lot of money. His salary was not enough to pay his rent and to pay for his food and bad habits. Rather than give up his habits, Billy decided he was going to start to steal. He became good at it for awhile. One day though, when he was 21 years old, the

owner of a store caught him stealing; Billy got angry and got into a fight with the owner. He hit the owner so hard, that the owner fell backwards and hit his head on the corner of one of the display shelves. Sadly, the man died. And what was Billy to do? He had nowhere to go and run and hide as there were other customers in the store who had seen it all. The police soon arrived on the scene and Billy was taken away.

Billy was sentenced to 20 years in prison for his crimes. He had thrown his youth away. In prison, life was not good for Billy. He refused to allow his parents to visit. He was an angry young man and he often got into fights with the other inmates when they were out in the courtyard for their daily hour of fresh air. Billy was a big man at this time and he would often hurt the other person quite badly. He himself also developed a few scars. It became such a problem that they had to chain a heavy ball to Billy's feet when they went outside to keep him away from the others. So, now, he would sullenly sit in the corner off to himself, brooding in his misery.

One day a minister was passing through the prison courtyard crowded with convicts who were showing every different phase of ignorance and brutality. He noticed one gigantic person sitting alone in a corner, his feet chained to a ball. There was an unhealed wound on his face. The sight of this silent gaunt figure touched the visitor.

"How long does he have to serve?" he asked the guard.

"Oh, another 20 years."

"Does he have anyone outside to look after him? Parents, siblings?"

"How do I know? He doesn't talk about his personal life and now he does not interact with anyone. He just sits there alone."

"May I speak with him?" Asked the minister.

"Yes, but only one minute. We are not supposed to stop to talk to the convicts when they are out here."

The minister hesitated. What could he say in one minute? He touched the man's wounded cheek. "I am sorry," he said. "I wish I could help you."

Billy nodded in appreciation of the sympathy expressed.

"I am going away," continued the minister, "and shall never see you again, perhaps; but you have a Friend who will stay here with you."

As the keen small eyes of the minister were upon him,

Billy dragged himself up, waiting and eager.

"Have you heard of Jesus?"

"Yes."

"He is your Friend. He can forgive you of your sins. He loves you and if you are good and true, and will pray to God to help you, I am sure He will care for you. And one day He will come again and take you home to heaven."

"Come sir," called the keeper, "Time is up."

The minister turned sorrowfully away. Before he left, Billy quickly called out after him, and taking his hand, he held it in his own for just a few seconds as was allowed. Tears were in Billy's eyes.

Shortly after, Billy had been sent to the mines to work. Fourteen years later, the minister, not knowing that Billy was there, had been sent to encourage the workers in the mine. When he was there, he saw a large man, bent over with the hardship of life.

"Who is that?" asked the minister.

"Oh, he is one of our best workers. He has been down here for over ten years. He is always cheerful and really encourages the others when they are down. He is always talking about Jesus."

Just then Billy stood up. He recognized the minister. "Do you know me? Is Jesus coming soon? I have tried to be so good. Jesus has truly been my best Friend. Thank you so much for your one-minute conversation. It meant so much to me that you took the time to care. I have told so many of my fellow inmates of my best friend, Jesus. I used to be embarrassed when my father spoke to strangers about Jesus, but now I can't stop speaking about Him myself. My father was right all along, bless his soul."

The minister's eyes welled up with tears. Yes, he now remembered Billy. What a change there was. Billy no longer looked angry. Billy was radiant with happiness and beaming with joy. "Yes, Billy, now I remember you. God bless you. Jesus is coming soon."

By a simple one-minute conversation, this convict had turned his life around and had given his life to Jesus.

Ask yourself, what would you say to someone if you were told you had only one minute to talk to them, and then you would likely never see them again? Wise King Solomon said, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Proverbs 25:11

Washington D.C., USA



The Gambia

Missionary work in a largely Muslim country is not easy, but Daniel Kimeu has been faithfully working in The Gambia for several years.

We praise the Lord as we begin to see fruit for his labour. On February 18th, a young man, Joseph Manneh, was baptized and joined the church of God. Let us keep praying for the churches who face difficult challenges. The Lord has His faithful children still in all parts of the world. "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest." Luke 10:2





Nigeria-Newly Baptized souls on left.

Baptism in Gensan, Philippines



March 7

“Every pulsation of the heart is a rebound from the touch of the finger of God. He watches over us by day, and under His wings we find shelter by night. His preserving care is over us, whether we wake or sleep. He is as a sentinel to guard us from Satan's power, or we should be taken captive by him. Jesus is our constant friend. We are to look to Him moment by moment, and by looking to Him we are to live.”
– *The Review and Herald*, December 2, 1890



“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver me from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence; He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust; His truth shall be thy shield and buckler.’ [Psalm 91:2–4] Servants of God, you have great advantage, which you should appreciate.” – *Loma Linda Messages*, p. 358