

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Shakespeare Didn't Write the "Counsel of Peace"

By Allen Stump

(The following is an edited transcript of a sermon preached at the Florida camp meeting.)

I really appreciate the theme of the camp meeting, "Christ in His Sanctuary." We as a people have become very focused, and I think our focus has been good. Our focus has been correct, but we have not kept it entirely focused, as well as we could have, in the past. Sometimes people think that we emphasize the truth about who God is and the truth about who His Son is, to the exclusion of other things. I wouldn't want us to get out of balance and do that. However, we must realize that the understanding God's identity and character is indeed the most critical issue of Christianity and of our faith. If you really want to know what separates people into denominations, sectarianism, and the different branches of even the major religions of the world, it is actually their perception of who their God is and what He is like. This is ultimately the most basic, fundamental divider of everything. So, that is the fundamental basis where we have to begin, but we have so much that this branches out to, and brings in, that is important to us. Truly the message of Christ being our High Priest and the sanctuary message, is part of that great foundation that we need to understand better.

We believe that the Sabbath/Sunday issue will be the great test of God's people at the end. Remember it is a test about the God we have, about whether we are going to be loyal to Him and serve Him, and about whether He is the kind of God that has given us a Christianity that will enable us to survive through the most terrible persecution God's people will have ever seen. Daniel 11:32 states, "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." It will only be the people who know their God that are going to be able to survive the test. My God, the God of the Bible, is that kind of a God.

Recently someone wrote an article in a study paper about me that wasn't very flattering. I received some letters and emails about this article, and several people mentioned how the article was not Christlike. I believe this stems from the writer having a warped and perverted view of God, Christ, and the gospel. His writing does not go beyond the level of his Christianity. I believe, friends, that my God and His level of holiness is the type of holiness that we need and we must have. The Bible says that we can become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (2 Peter 1:4)

Our theme is "Christ in His Sanctuary." One of the most essential and key issues about the priesthood and the sanctuary is the necessity of having a sacrifice, for there is no atonement without a sacrifice. I'd like to "set the stage" by

Prayer Requests

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

We would like to give thanks to God for His caring for His children and providing for His work. We must be ever mindful that "The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 660)

Please keep Pastor Malcolm McCrillis of Tennessee and his wife Sandy in your prayers concerning health issues.

We are thankful to learn that Pastor Willis Smith of Cleveland has a new radio program. It is reaching fourteen states surrounding Ohio. The messages are from 9:00 to 9:30, Sunday evening, on 1220 and 1440 AM. We thank God that he has already had an excellent response. Please remember this evangelism outreach.

Also, please pray for the meetings that are noted on page seven of this issue. Thank you.

Editor

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beginning with a very unusual Bible text and I hope it will challenge you. Matthew 23:1-3: “Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”

Hypocrites and Actors

Jesus is saying, that when those who profess to teach sit in Moses’ seat, when they are teaching from Moses, and what the Word of God says, you are free and safe to do that, but don’t do as they do. Why? It is because the 000ir lives do not measure up to the Word that they are teaching. Jesus said, “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: ...” (Matthew 23:4, 5a)

I want to tell you, friends, that the spirit of the scribes and the Pharisees is not dead. It is very much alive today. It blossoms and comes out in all kinds of theological branches and venues. Verses 6-12 state: “And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Now notice, please, very carefully the first part of verse thirteen: “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”

What is a “hypocrite”? Jesus declared these people to be hypocrites, and He has given us a description of how they act in verse three. They tell you to do something, but they do something else. In other words, they are pretending. That is the point I wish to draw from this. Interestingly, the Greek word

translated “hypocrites” is *υποκριτης* (*hupokrites*), which is defined as “an actor,” “stage player,” or “pretender.” In one of the strongest denunciations in the Bible, Christ says that these people are “hypocrites” (actors), and He doesn’t just say it once, but again in verses fourteen, fifteen, twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-seven, and twenty-nine.

I bring this up because we have theological hypocrites and theological actors. We have people who have an acting God, an acting Christ, and an acting plan of salvation. For example, Gordon Jensen, in a special week of prayer issue of the *Adventist Review*, wrote:

“A plan of salvation was encompassed in the covenant made by the Three Persons of the Godhead, who possessed the attributes of Deity equally. In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, *one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son.* The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit, was also to participate in effecting the plan of salvation. All of this took place before sin and rebellion transpired in heaven.

“*By accepting the roles* that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity.” (Gordon Jensen—*Adventist Review*, October 31, 1996, p. 12. Week of Prayer readings. Emphasis supplied.)

Jesus says “actors” are hypocrites. It is hypocritical to say that you are doing something, but you really are not doing it, isn’t it? This is the type of god, plan of salvation, gospel that the great majority of Christendom today worships and serves. God and Christ are “actors” to many professed Christians. But beloved, Shakespeare didn’t devise the “counsel of peace.” Calvary was not a script with actors having “roles” written out to be acted.

Jesus was really either the Son of God, and told the truth that He was the only-begotten Son of God, and the Father told the truth that Jesus was the Son of God, or it was all a big act. And if it was a big act, then Jesus really didn’t die either. One of the basic common tenets of Trinitarian Christianity is that God

and Jesus are actually co-equal and co-eternal. Jesus is absolutely immortal in the same sense the Father is and could not truly, completely die. What happened at the cross was simply an act, a façade, and it becomes another part of the *hypocritical gospel*. But, that is not what the Bible says. The Bible says there is a real God, there is a real Son, and there is a real sacrifice for the sins of this world.

The Simplicity of the Gospel

Now, think about the issue of not only God, but also the way He has described the plan of salvation in His Word. In many places, He has used types and symbols to explain, or help us understand, the reality of the situation, hasn’t He? All those types and symbols have a place in reality, in an antitype. What would be the point of giving a type if there were no antitype? It would simply be, again, another type of acting or role. When the Bible speaks about a real God, friends, it is a real God.

I appreciate the statements in the *Testimonies* that tell us the Bible was written for the common person and not just the theologians. (See *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 330 and *Special Testimonies on Education*, p. 53.) When we read the simple and plain statements in the Bible of a personal God, of a personal Christ, of a sanctuary in heaven, and that the one on earth was made from a pattern of the one in heaven, I can believe it. I don’t need a theologian to tell me that. I don’t need someone else who has a degree of higher learning, who is supposed to understand those things, to tell me that, because God’s Word tells it to me. 1 John 2:27 says, “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” The Bible says that God is able to keep us, right? We don’t have to depend upon the theologians or churches.

Notice how Paul begins his epistle to the Galatians: “Paul, an apostle, (not of

men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.” (Galatians 1:1) Beloved, either God the Father raised Him from the dead or He didn’t. The Bible says God raised Him from the dead, and it says it not only here, but at least twenty-nine other times in the New Testament alone. Now, to be raised from the dead you have to be first dead. The sacrifice had to truly die. Paul goes on to say: in verse three, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” (verses 3, 4) E. J. Waggoner of 1888 fame says in his book, *The Glad Tidings*, p.11:

“If there were no other portion of Scripture accessible, this contains sufficient to save the world. If we would study this small portion as diligently, and prize it as highly, as if there were no more, we should find our faith and hope and love infinitely strengthened, and our knowledge of the rest of the Bible much increased.”

In a nutshell, these verses express what the real gospel is. They say that God gave His Son for our sins. He really did it! It wasn’t just a person acting as a Father and another majestic, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient being acting as a dying son. Something very real happened.

Paul had some problems with some of the churches in Galatia, because some of these hypocrites, some of these Pharisees, had come into the region of Galatia. They were going among the churches of Galatia, spreading their concept that Galatians had to follow the Law of Moses. Paul said unto them in verse six, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” The word “another” is the Greek word *ετερος* (*heteros*), which means another of a different type altogether. It is not just a similar gospel, but a different one altogether. It is not the same gospel. He then says in verse seven, “Which is not another.” This time, the word translated “another” is the Greek word *αλλος* (*allos*), which means another of the

same kind. Paul was saying that the Galatians were not receiving the same or a similar gospel, but something totally different. Something which claimed to offer salvation, but was not what he had taught them. “...there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you. let him be accursed.” (verses 7, 8) Paul doesn’t say, “Put your arm around him and be buddies, join the World Council of Churches, or get in the local ministerial fellowship with him.” Paul says, “Let him be accursed” or anathema. He says, “Don’t put up with a false gospel in your churches.” Beloved, the great issues that we have to deal with are not what many people think they are. I want to tell you that the real issue is simply the gospel, and the issue of the gospel is really who God is, and did He have a Son to give? That’s what the Bible says; that’s what the apostle Paul says. He says if you go off into something else, you have a different gospel. “As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Verses 9, 10)

“If there were no other portion of Scripture accessible [Galatians 1:3, 4], this contains sufficient to save the world.”
(E. J. Waggoner)

Well, beloved, the Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for us. I fear that sometimes we approach things too mechanically because we are reasonable people. The Lord says, “Come, let us reason together.” We think things through somewhat, and sometimes we approach things a little too mechanically. We have the facts and we even have the logic. We think we can whip anybody in a discussion, or a debate, because we have the facts and we know

how to use the figures in a logical, precise manner. Well, friends, we can have all the answers and be eternally lost. If that message hasn’t touched and reached into our hearts and allowed us to become changed people, Christians, then it will avail us nothing.

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:11, 12) Notice what he says that God taught him to do in verse sixteen: “To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Paul didn’t go to Jerusalem to listen to the apostles, but he talked directly to the Lord. I think that one piece of counsel we might glean from this is, Brethren, before you go talk to the people about God, go talk to God about the people. We need it probably much more than we have it.

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 2:1-5)

This is what it means to have the character of Christ, to be a partaker of the divine nature. I think we can sum it all up in one very simple thing. It means that we learn to give. We give of ourselves. The Bible says that “God so loved the world that he gave.” I like the bumper sticker I saw one time that said, “God so loved the world that He didn’t send a committee.” God really did something, didn’t He? His love demanded action, in giving Himself in the form of His Son. When we have the mind of Christ, self-giving love is going to flow out to others. Whenever we detract from the plan of salvation, whenever we take away from what God actually did in giving, then we deny the

power that we can have in our lives, to have that same character of giving and self-sacrificing love.

Continuing in Philippians 2:6-8: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

The Passion

If you were alive this last year, you most likely have heard of the movie, “The Passion of the Christ,” written and produced by Mel Gibson. The movie is a representation of the last twelve hours of Christ’s life. It emphasizes the physical sufferings Jesus went through prior to, and at, Calvary. The movie has been given a restricted rating due to the violent nature and the graphically-violent torture in it. It has raised more controversy than anything else coming and going for a long time. Let me just make some comments about this movie in connection with some things we have been talking about.

The movie does not, and cannot, portray the entire plan of salvation. It doesn’t deal any with the early life of Christ, with the incarnation or with why He really came to this earth, except to die. Gibson deals with one specific point in the story of Christ. The movie is very violent. Gibson defended the extreme violence, saying that it was necessary to push the audience “over the edge,” so that they could feel the enormity of Christ’s sacrifice. The focus of this movie is Christ’s physical suffering, and this is what is presented to the world as the sacrifice for our sin—a physical suffering. Please consider that with his Trinitarian belief, Gibson doesn’t really believe Jesus truly died, but that only a physical shell of Jesus died. Evangelists, such as Billy Graham, and newscasters such as Paul Harvey, have seen the movie and have stated that they were greatly moved by it. Many evangelicals think that it will be the greatest witnessing tool in this century or perhaps in the last twenty centuries. Well,

many people who have seen the movie have been left silent and in tears over it. I am sure some were truly stirred by watching the movie. However, Brother David Clayton reminded me that a lot of people can watch a soap opera and cry. We can be moved to emotion by many things.

Notice the words of Jesus as recorded in John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” Jesus said the flesh profiteth nothing. I want to tell you that uninspired video presentations of the flesh don’t profit anything either. The gospel accounts in the Bible are the inspired Word of God that He has given to us to understand what the real passion of Christ is like, and I want to tell you, friends, if reading this cannot bring me to tears, if reading this cannot lead me to repentance, then seeing an uninspired movie about violence will not either. But, what was it that Christ really suffered that brought about His death for us? It wasn’t just the physical things that happened at all. It was the weight of my sin and the weight of your sin. Who killed Jesus many years ago? It wasn’t Roman soldiers, it was really you and me. And it was really death. It was something enormous that we don’t begin to fully understand.

Hebrews 2:14 says, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;...” What did He take part of? The same flesh and blood the children have—that’s you and me. “...that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” (Hebrews 2:14-17) Jesus is our high priest. The priest serves in a sanctuary. But, you know, before He could be the priest, He had to be the sacrifice.

Hebrews 2:9 says, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” Friends, the experience of death that Jesus had is an experience that no human being has ever had on this earth.

At Calvary there was a thick darkness about Christ. The enormity of our sins was so great upon Him that the Father hid His face from His Son. In “the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)

Christ Truly Tested

As Seventh-day Adventist people, we think we are pretty good in Bible prophecy and, especially, we like to study eschatology, the study of last day events. Probably every one of us at one time or another has seen the different prophetic charts, haven’t we? This happens, then this will happen, and then we have a Sunday law. Depending on whose theology you follow, you might get different scenarios, but we sort of think we’ve got it all mapped out. I don’t believe, friends, we have it all mapped out yet, because there is going to come a test upon us that we don’t understand yet. For it to truly be a test, we cannot not know what it is that is going to happen or it would not be able to truly test our character. I believe the same thing happened with Jesus Christ. Remember that Satan had made many accusations against God and Christ. For God to prove Himself to be true, Jesus had to be truly tested. In the humanity of Christ there were some things about the very end that were not fully revealed to Jesus. Remember, just a few hours before this He told His disciples: “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and **yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.**” (John 16:32) However, now comes a time when He cannot see through the darkness. God had been accused by Satan of being a tyrant, someone not willing to share, and someone who wanted all the power for Himself. How can God answer this? How can Jesus answer this for God, because God really

can't answer for Himself? Jesus has to voluntarily give all the power to the Father, allow Him to have everything, and He has to die totally helpless. If the Father is really selfish and wants all the power to Himself, then Jesus will stay in the cold tomb. If the Father really is cruel, if He really is a tyrant, He can hold all power and authority to Himself and Jesus will never exist again, but that is not the kind of God I know and that is not the kind of Being the Father is. Even in His greatest despair, Jesus had to still, somehow, trust that God was good, and even if the sin of the world was so great that this great God could not resurrect Him from the dead, He would die eternally so that we could live. We don't understand what went through Christ's mind very well but, if we turn back to the twenty-second Psalm we have, in some of these verses, a little window if you please, into the mind of Jesus at this time.

Christ's Internal Struggle

The twenty-second Psalm is a prophecy about what was going on in Jesus' mind at Calvary. It begins, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46 came from here, didn't it?) Interestingly, as you go through this prophecy, you find very scant mention that could only be taken as a hint for physical suffering. The physical suffering of Christ was great. I admit that, but friends, the emotional and the spiritual suffering that He was going through was so great He hardly felt the physical suffering. Ellen White insightfully wrote: "But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 753)

I learned a very hard lesson last year. To be honest, I don't know how much of it I want to confess. I did something that hurt two people that were very close to me, and I did not do it intentionally. In fact, I had good intentions, but I caused

pain for two people I loved nonetheless. The suffering I went through for a couple of weeks over that was intense. I was so sick I didn't want to eat. I didn't care if I got up. I didn't care if I went to bed. All I could do was just ask God to help me get through it, because I felt like I hurt those that were so close to me. I learned a little bit of what this is speaking of here. Whenever you feel like there is someone you love so much, and then something creates a barrier or a distance between you and that person, the things that are physical and transitory don't mean much anymore. In Psalm twenty-two Jesus is asking the Father why is He so far from helping Him, why doesn't He hear His cry? Parents, imagine that if you have a child in distress and he knows that you are supposed to be right there somewhere close by, within earshot, and he is crying out for you and you don't respond, or you are not able to respond, how would you feel? How would it rend at your heart?

About four-and-a-half years ago, my son Hans was diagnosed with malignant spinal cord cancer. We were told that he probably couldn't live very long at all. In fact, we were given counsel that maybe we should consider funeral preparations. Well, by God's grace, he is here today, isn't that wonderful? I tell you, it was a long time before I could even eat a morsel of food. I didn't want to sleep. I didn't want to do anything except be by his side and plead with God for him. He is so near, so dear, so precious to me and I just felt like he was being torn away from me, and that, in a very small part, is what Christ and God were feeling about the situation.

"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." (Psalm 22:2-4) Jesus thought about the wicked, stubborn, rebellious, and stiff-necked Israelites. They had trusted in God enough that He delivered them. Jesus had been God's darling; surely God can't let Him down.

"But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the

people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him." (See Matthew 27:42, 43) "But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels." (Psalm 22:9-14)

This is the tremendous, emotional experience. Jesus felt like He was coming apart. He felt like water. To hold water you have to have a container because it just falls out without something to contain it. This is the way Jesus was feeling on the cross, but He wasn't suffering alone.

The Father's Struggle

In Genesis chapter 22:2 God told Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." The focus of that story is not the suffering of Isaac, or even his willingness to be offered. I praise the Lord that Isaac was willing to be laid upon the altar voluntarily. However, there is a much bigger point. This story is a microcosm of the plan of salvation with the Father and the Son. In asking Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, it was symbolic of the Father offering all of heaven, everything that He was and had, for mankind. The focus in this story is the great sacrifice and the emotional turmoil that the Father had. Here is His Son, His precious, only-begotten Son, who has never done anything wrong. It has always been his delight to do his Father's will.

We've all seen children that were a little ornery, and sometimes we have

wished that we could be their parent for just five minutes. You have also seen other children that were just a joy to be around, always pleasant, nice. It is easy to love those children. There was nothing in Jesus that wasn't lovable. If you were a holy God, with holy motives, all you could see in Jesus would be purity, holiness, and love. The Father could see His very mind in His Son. And now the weight of the sin of the world is upon Jesus. There must be a separation. He must truly die, with no foreseeable future. He must suffer all the guilt of mankind.

I mentioned that I hurt two people that I love dearly a while back. I didn't do it intentionally. I suffered tremendously over that, but sometimes we do things that are wrong and we know they are wrong. When we repent, we really suffer over that. It really bothers us. It should. It should affect us down in our innermost being. Imagine a catalog of all the filthy things you have done in your life. That would be bad. But then multiply that by however many billions of people that have ever lived on this earth and whoever will live yet, and apply that sin and that guilt upon you. Oh, none of us would have gotten out of Gethsemane! In fact, even Jesus would not have gotten out of Gethsemane alive except He was strengthened by an angel. It was enough to kill Him. On the cross it was tearing at His heart and it ought to break our hearts, too. When the Father hid His presence from Jesus, it was more than Christ could take. Jesus' heart broke and He died. Imagine what this did to the Father who knew that His turning away would break Jesus' heart. It might be something like a parent having a sick child in a hospital, on life-support machines and, while that child is conscience and looking to you for help, having to pull the plug on that equipment to save the lives of others.

The Value of the Truth

Every doctrine we have should teach us something about God and if it doesn't, it probably isn't a worthwhile doctrine. So, think back on all those doctrines we teach, whether it is on the Sabbath, the state of the dead, reforms, or whatever,


and if there is not something in those doctrines that really helps us to understand who our God is, and to love Him better and to serve Him better, either we don't understand that doctrine well enough, or we don't understand it properly, or it should be discarded. But, when we study about the death of Jesus, the kind of experience He went through, when we study about the Father and the turmoil and agony it put God through to allow Jesus to die, it should tell us something about their character and about their love. Then, when God says He is our God, and when Jesus says He is the Son of God and He is my Savior, I can believe it. It's not an act. It's not a hypocritical gospel. It is something very real. Calvary wasn't just a drama, friends. It wasn't something better than Shakespeare. It was real! Whenever we take away the realness and make it into an act, even a passion play or a passion movie, we've missed the reality.

In Galatians 3:1 Paul speaks about his presentation of the gospel. "O, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" Where it says "evidently set forth," the Greek word means, "portrayed." We get our word "portrait" from this. A portrait is a portrayal of the human face. When we think of creating a portrait, we are thinking of creating a likeness of somebody. Writing to people who were not in Jerusalem during the death of Jesus, Paul says that Christ, and Him crucified, have been portrayed to them. Paul is saying, "By the spirit of God, I've painted word pictures for you. I've described this for you, and the reality of it."

The gospel is the real issue at stake here. If we have a false conception of God, we will have a false conception of the death of Jesus, of who Jesus is, and a false conception of the plan of salvation. If there really is no sacrifice, there can be no priest, because He had to have something to offer first. (See Hebrews 8:3, 4) The idea that there is no heavenly sanctuary and that all of the sanctuary descriptions in the Bible are metaphoric, is simply a natural fruit of believing the

Trinitarian doctrine, because the Trinitarian doctrine says there really is no death because there is no real Son. If there is no death, then there is no priest. I think you can see that the priesthood of Christ is based on His being the Son of God who could truly die.

It is my prayer that the real issues of the gospel will be continually before us, and brought to our memories, and that we will keep our focus broad, but we make sure it is focused sharply. You can take a camera and you can point it at an object and snap the shutter, but if the lens isn't in focus, even though it is pointed in the right direction, you end up with a blurry picture. Computers with photo-editing software are wonderful for taking wrinkles away. They are wonderful for darkening the hair and taking the gray away or whatever you want to do, but if you get a picture that is too far out of focus, no matter what you do to it you just can't make it sharp and clear. You have to start with a sharp view. We need a sharp view of the issues of the gospel.

We need to understand the basic foundation of the gospel first, and then build upon it. We need to make sure that we are building upon the foundation instead of against it. So, as we build upon the proper foundation we obtain a higher viewing area so that we can see further. Isaac Newton, one of the greatest minds of the Christian era, a tremendous mathematician, physicist, and quite a Bible student in his own right, explained that if he had seen further than others, it is simply because he stood upon the shoulders of giants. Friends, God was pleased to give the Advent movement some Scriptural giants in our early years whose shoulders we are privileged to stand upon today. By God's grace, we can build on that platform and we can see further. Proverbs 4:18 says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We need the gospel of the Bible. We need Bible preaching. We need Bible repentance, and it is only going to come if we have a Biblical Christ and a Biblical God, not hypocritical ones! 

Youth Corner—Importance of Immediate Preparation for Service

Now, as never before, the great and wonderful work of this message is to be carried on. Our periodicals are to be distributed by men and women in all stations and walks in life. Young and old are to act a part. We have, as it were, been asleep regarding this matter. Let every one professing the name of Christ act a part in sending forth the message, "The end of all things is at hand, prepare to meet thy God." Our publications should go everywhere. The circulation of our periodicals should be greatly increased.

It is our duty now to employ every possible means to help in the proclamation of the truth. We are to

work as we have never worked before. The Lord is coming very soon, and we are entering into scenes of calamity. Satanic agencies, though unseen, are working to destroy human life. Now is our time to work with vigilance. Our books and papers are to be brought to the notice of the people; the gospel of present truth is to be given to our cities without delay. We need to arouse to our duties.

Just now, when people are thinking seriously, literature on the meaning of the signs of the times, wisely circulated, will have a telling effect in behalf of the truth. God's judgments are abroad in the land. Now is our

opportunity to make known the truth to them.

The Lord is soon coming. In fire, in flood and earthquake, he is warning the inhabitants of this earth of his soon approach. We have no time to lose. We must make more determined efforts to lead the people of the world to see that the time of judgment is near at hand. Carefully prepared literature on the significance of the scenes we are now witnessing is to be circulated everywhere.

O, if our people would feel as they should the responsibility resting upon them to give the last message of mercy to the world, what a wonderful work would be done! A thousand times more work for God might be accomplished if all his children would fully consecrate themselves to him, using their talents aright. (Mrs. E. G. White—*Youth's Instructor*, August 20, 1907)

Upcoming Meeting Schedule

We would like to inform you of some upcoming meetings that Lynnford Beachy will be speaking at across the country in September of this year.

Windham, Maine Camp Meeting

Some brethren in Maine are hosting a camp meeting from September 1-4, 2004. You may need to bring warm clothing. For more information contact Mervin or Rosemarie Shoemaker at: (207) 892-2338. The camp meeting will focus on the Love of God and healthful living. There will be several speakers from across the country.

Cañon City, Colorado Camp Meeting

Philadelphia Press in Colorado will be hosting a camp meeting at the Indian Springs Ranch, about 7 miles NE of Cañon City, from September 8-11, 2004. (The first meeting begins at 9 a.m. on the 8th.) For more information contact Richard Stratton at: (719) 547-1932. There will be several speakers from across the country.

Southern Minnesota

On Wednesday evening, September 15, and all day Thursday, September 16, 2004, we will be holding meetings at the Pipestone RV Campground Pavilion (across from the National Monument), located at 919 N Hiawatha Ave., Pipestone, Minnesota. Phone: (507) 825-2455. The Wednesday evening meetings will be held from 4:00-8:30 p.m., and the Thursday

meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact Laurie Lewis at: (507) 825-2310.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

There will be meetings in Minneapolis on Friday, September 17, and Sabbath, September 18, in Room 303 of the Coffman Memorial Union Building, Minneapolis Campus, University of Minnesota. The Friday evening meetings will be held from 5:00-8:30 p.m., and the Sabbath meetings will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by a potluck dinner and afternoon meetings from 2:30-8:30 p.m. Parking is rarely free on University grounds—and this one is no exception, not even on weekends. We are going to try to obtain prepaid parking vouchers for Sabbath keepers. For more information contact Chris Walega at: (612) 374-4683. *Lynnford Beachy*

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

German and Poland Camp Meeting Report

By David Clayton

The following is a report on my visit to camp meetings in Germany and Poland during the month of August.

I arrived in Germany on Monday morning, August 2; one day after the camp meeting had started. Erwin Zoor from Germany, Vlad Ardeias from Romania and Dr. Steven Burks from Ohio, USA, were present at the airport to meet me at six o'clock in the morning.



Inbetween meetings

I was overjoyed to see these brothers again and especially so since I had not seen Erwin and Vlad in over a year. Frankfurt, where I arrived, was approximately two hours from the camp meeting site in Edersee, and we had a lot of time to update each other on what was happening as we traveled back to the campgrounds.

When I arrived I discovered that the meetings were being held in a beautiful spot located on the bank of a lake. It was a place that apparently was used as a



Meeting in Edersee

holiday resort and there were several cabins as well as several campers parked on the banks of the lake. Our meetings were being held in the main building, which had several dormitories as well as the dining area, the hall where we had our meetings, and several recreation areas.

This camp meeting had been organized by a group called "Prophetic Word Empowerment Circle." This group has been organizing meetings to study the prophecies for several years, but about a year ago the chairman, George Bunkus, accepted the truth about God and decided to focus the energies of this organization in spreading this truth as well as looking at prophetic issues. Many of the members of this group, some of whom were pastors, abandoned the organization and some tried to stop it when they learned of these new developments. However, the organization has gone ahead with its plans to use every means to spread the truth about God, and this camp meeting was one such effort. Other leaders in Germany, like Thomas Friedrich, Bruno Fischer and Erwin Zoor also worked to get people to come to this camp meeting and contributed to the planning and overall organization of the meetings.

Meetings were very regular and the time of each presentation was strictly adhered to. No one was allowed to go over his scheduled time, which at first presented a challenge to some of us, but we were able to adjust. Meals were catered for by people working in the kitchen and the times for meals was carefully observed. At times I found myself having to speed up my eating as the tables were being cleared when I was just getting started!

There were over a hundred people present at this camp meeting and they were all, for the most part, eager to hear what was presented and also to participate with questions and comments in the various discussions and presentations. I had been to Germany twice before and had been to other meetings, but this was by far the most responsive audience that I had seen in Germany. After a day or

two I became really comfortable with them, even though the language barrier was a major obstacle. It was difficult to communicate without Erwin always being present to help, but there was no mistaking the smiles and the words of appreciation for the messages that were presented.

There were five main speakers at the meeting: Dr. Steven Burks from Ohio, USA, Paul Osei Agyeman from Berekum, Ghana, Thomas Friedrich from Germany, Brother Jeltsch also from Germany and myself, David Clayton from Jamaica. Brother Jeltsch is a naturopath and spoke exclusively on the subject of health. I am afraid that I did not benefit greatly from his presentations as well as those of Brother Thomas Friedrich because they spoke in German and I was not able to follow what they were saying. However, from the response of the people it seemed that their presentations were very much appreciated.

Steve (Burks) focused mainly on tracing the apostasy of Babylon in the deep-rooted foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, tracing it all the way back to the earliest beginning of Babylon, and also showed how the number 666 is identified with Babylon from earliest times.

I spoke on the "The Fruit of the Gospel" and the "The Truth of the Gospel." After discovering that there were other issues that the people desired to have cleared up and that were significant issues among them, I spoke also on "The Sanctuary in the Book of Revelation," and also looked at some Biblical principles of individuality in religion, in speaking on the subject, "A People without a King." It seems that these subjects met the needs of many of those who were present and the response of those who spoke to me afterwards was very encouraging.

Some young people asked to speak with me after the presentation on the Sanctuary in Revelation. In this presentation I had dealt with the sequence of the feasts of Israel and showed clearly that all the feasts that have already been clearly fulfilled have been fulfilled in definite sequence. I also showed that the

Feast of Tabernacles is still to come and is fulfilled with the gathering of God's people at the final harvest. It was evident that the antitypical blowing of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement had to have a fulfillment some time after the day of Pentecost in AD 31, and before the Day of Atonement, which is to have its fulfillment with the gathering of God's people when Jesus returns again. These young people had been leaning towards the opinion that Jesus accomplished the work of the Day of Atonement on the cross, and began the work represented by the Most Holy Place immediately upon His return to heaven. They were also of the opinion that both goats on the Day of Atonement represented Christ.

After my presentation, however, they could see that it was totally inconsistent to place the Day of Atonement at Calvary, when all the other feasts were fulfilled in their exact sequence and at the appointed time. They could also see that the scapegoat, which was not led away into the wilderness until the end of the Day of Atonement, could not represent Christ, since He was not to bear sin again when the work of salvation is over. We also looked closely at Hebrews chapter 9 and I showed them that, in the Greek text, every place in Hebrews where it says the "most holy place," it is literally translated, "the holy place," (except in Hebrews 9:3). They were honest young people and were happy for the discussion, and I was blessed to know that at the end of our talk they were seriously reconsidering their ideas.

Different Ideas

There were several persons at the camp meeting that held ideas that were not representative of the majority of those who were there. Among these was the idea that Jesus had been crucified on a Wednesday. Some persons felt so strongly about this that there were several discussions on it during question and answer sessions and Steve also did a presentation on it. Unfortunately, we were not able to come to an agreement, but the happy thing is that nobody allowed it to separate us. There were

also some who had strong feelings on the name Yashua and who wanted to be baptized in this name. We did not discuss the issue openly, but I was to be involved in the baptizing and I felt that it would be inconsistent for me to use this name in baptism since I was not convicted of the necessity of it. There was also a man there who was always making comments in meetings and holding long talks with anybody who would listen. Nobody seemed to be able to understand what he was saying, but once I spoke to him through a translator and it seemed to me that he was saying that God has a Son who is Jesus, but that the Bible teaches that Jesus is also to have a son and that he (this man), is that son. Needless to say, after that I did not have any more discussions with him.

On the last day of the camp meeting we had a large baptism. Thirty-four people were baptized. It was an unusual baptism because none of the German brethren felt comfortable with the idea of baptizing people, so the duty fell to



A couple being Baptized

Steve, Brother Paul from Ghana and me. It must have been an unusual sight to see 34 Germans, all white people (with the exception of one black girl), being baptized in Germany by three black men: one from Africa, one from the USA and one from Jamaica. I found the idea a little amusing but somehow I felt that God and all heaven were pleased. One incident took place at the baptism that set me thinking and made me believe that I had been wrong in a position I had taken. One lady came to me during the baptism to be baptized. She looked at me with eyes that I can only describe as pleading, and said, "In name of



Thirty-four souls were baptized at the German meetings

Yashua." I still had reservations in my mind and I handed her over to brother Paul from Ghana who baptized her in Yashua's name as she had requested. However, I could not forget the pleading in her eyes and as I was thinking about it that night I came to the conclusion that I had been wrong. The apostle Paul says, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye,..." (Romans 14:1) This was just another way of pronouncing the name of God's Son. As long as she was not imposing this on me, why should I refuse to fulfill her request? I think this helped me to see things a little differently and has given me a clearer view of the things that are really essential in Christ.

Before we left the camp meeting we had a little service where we laid hands on three of the leaders in Germany, Brothers Erwin Zoor, Bruno Fischer and Thomas Friedrich, and committed them to the task of preaching the gospel and ministering to the saints. We rejected the idea of calling this an ordination ceremony, but felt that this public committal would help these brethren, and others in Germany, to have confidence in their call to the work and would help to remove whatever reservations there might be in accepting them as legitimate gospel workers.

It must be said that there were a few who were strongly opposed to this dedicatory ceremony, stating that it was not necessary and that it would lead to the idea that these men were the leaders in Germany, and also to the idea that others were not qualified to do the same work. However, the general consensus was that this was a good thing and that it was not intended to limit or inhibit the right of others to participate in the work of the



Praying for the Brethren

gospel, but to provide for the needs of those who had reservations about the calling of these men and who felt the need of representatives they could call upon. It must be added that these three brethren have already made full proof of their ministry. Bruno has written a couple of books on the subject of the Godhead, and Thomas has been giving studies and organizing meetings for many months on this subject as well as on prophecy. Erwin, of course, has been involved full-time in the work of translating and printing the materials from Smyrna and Restoration Ministries, as well as from other sources. He has published these materials in German, Hungarian and Russian and has sent out thousands of these materials all over Germany and other parts of Europe.

This camp meeting had an international flavor as there were representatives from Germany, the USA, Jamaica, Romania, Russia and Ghana. At first there was much debate about whether or not the representatives from Ghana would come. Brother Paul Osei Agyeman has been visiting Germany and preaching at camp meetings and churches for several years, and there were suggestions that perhaps he would not wish to harm his influence by attending a camp meeting like ours, where we were teaching that God is not a Trinity. When Brother Paul did not arrive at the expected time some felt that these fears were justified. However, I had met Paul in Ghana and felt that he was a man of integrity and courage who truly loved the Lord and I was confident that there was a good reason why he had not come at the scheduled time. Paul finally arrived a couple of days late along with

four other brothers from Ghana. Then we discovered that the reason why he was so late was that he had been having studies on the subject of the Godhead with the leaders and organizers of another group who had had a camp meeting in Holland. Paul had been a speaker at this meeting and had good friends among the organizers.

One day some folks from Germany arrived at the Holland camp meeting and distributed literature on the subject of the Godhead. This incensed the main speaker and he publicly challenged anyone to prove to him that the Holy Spirit is not a (separate) person. Paul was so upset by this that he was tempted to challenge this man although he was sitting, at the time, on the same platform as this speaker. However, he restrained himself, not wishing to cause confusion, but later he arranged to have studies with this man and some others and this was what had delayed him in Holland so long.

By the time the German camp meeting was over I was feeling that the trip had been worth it and I had made some new friends. To be sure, I was not able to speak to most of them, but the language of love is unmistakable. I will cherish memories of those who came, with tears in their eyes, to give a hug and to simply say in halting English, "Your message went down into my heart." This, for me, was the supreme blessing, knowing that lives had been altered by our visit and that some had come to love and appreciate our Father better.

Poland Camp Meeting

After this meeting in Germany, Steve and his daughter, Stephanie, returned to the USA, while Erwin and I started off for Poland. We returned to Erwin's home for one day to get a little rest but then we set off for the meetings in Poland near a place named Pulawy (pronounced Poowavy). The trip was a long and tiring even though Erwin did all the driving. We set off at six o'clock in the morning and drove for a thousand kilometers. The roads were good in Germany, but when we got to Poland there were frequent and lengthy delays as the roads were all being worked on in

an attempt to get them up to the standards of the European Union. Poland has just been accepted as a member and now is working hard to justify being accepted by the Union.

We arrived at the meeting place near midnight and were tired and worn out by the time we got there. These meetings took place in a house in the middle of the forest, far away from any other human habitation. The only neighbors were a herd of about seven or eight horses that roamed the woods around us and slept in a barn next door. The owners of these horses came to attend to them daily, but otherwise, they were free to roam about as they pleased. In spite of this they were really very tame and friendly. It would have been very difficult for us to find the hidden dirt road which led to this house at 11:30 in the night, but Jacek Poreda was waiting for us on the main road and piloted us for about a mile along this dirt road until we came suddenly upon the house in the middle of a clearing.

The next morning I discovered that there were about 20 people assembled for these meetings and that, basically, I was going to be the only speaker, apart from Jacek who would do a few of the morning meetings. These presentations, in fact, were not to be sermons but more like Bible studies and discussions in which I would attempt to deal with some of the issues that were troubling these people, as well as do my best to answer their questions.

I discovered that there were many issues troubling the brethren in Poland. First of all, there had been a big split in the group since last year when Allen Stump and I had been there. Some of the brethren had taken an ultra conservative and extreme legalistic position on some things and internal disagreements had resulted in nearly 75% of the believers in Poland separating themselves from a smaller group of about 15 to 20 people. Jacek Poreda, the man who had first invited us to Poland, was a part of this smaller group and it was he, along with Piotr Maciejewski who had organized the camp meeting that I was now attending.

Among the issues that had caused the larger group to separate was the fact that

they believed that all women should cover their heads in worship, and also that women should not be allowed to speak during religious services. I was told that one brother among these people has even started offering up burnt offerings. Whenever he reaps his crops he will give away one tenth of it and then burn another one tenth as an offering to the Lord. Last year in Poland we struggled to deal with some of these issues but, unfortunately, were not able to spend enough time discussing some of these things with the brethren. The situation that I encountered there this year made me regret that our time in Poland had been so short last year. Near the end of the camp meeting we attempted to visit some of these brethren and called to find out if we could stop by for a short while. However, the answer that was given was that we should not come because we were “uncircumcised.”

I discovered that among Jack’s smaller group there were also some issues that needed immediate attention. In fact, Jacek had written to me some time before to ask me to prepare to give studies specifically on the issues of legalism, righteousness by faith, the Sabbath, and the law, as well as other related issues. However, I was not really prepared for what I found there. A former Seventh-day Adventist who was not an extreme liberal had befriended the brethren in this group and had convinced many of them that sabbath observance was no longer necessary. He persuaded them that the Sabbath of the Seventh day had been only a type, which was fulfilled in the experience of spiritual rest that a person finds when he comes to Christ. He also convinced them that the days of creation were not literal days, but much longer periods, and that God’s Sabbath has actually continued for six thousand years. He believes that the communion service is legalism and is unnecessary and, of course, has thrown out completely the concept of clean and unclean foods. I discovered that the fact that these brethren were studying with this man was probably a factor that contributed to the splitting off of the larger group.



David Preparing to Baptize Alice

I began with studies on the subject of the Sabbath and the law. This was at the request of Jacek. I showed how the Sabbath existed, and was sanctified and blessed, long before the law was formally given on Mount Sinai, and showed how it was a part of God’s perfect plan for sinless man. We also looked at the reasons for Sabbath observance and God’s intended purpose in giving this gift to man. The place of the Sabbath in the law, and the perpetuity of the law were also carefully examined. As we studied, there were many questions, and these studies sometimes dragged on for hours. Although these questions often required lengthy answers, I believed they were asked by sincere people and as the meetings continued we began to be more and more in harmony. I found myself wishing many times that I could have a break from the next session. However, by the grace of God I was able to manage.

At one of these meetings, as we studied the subject of the Sabbath, the man who had been teaching these doctrines attended, with his wife. He interrupted so frequently, and with such lengthy comments, that it was impossible for me to make any progress with the study. At times he and his wife (who also talked non-stop at times) seemed to speak in a rehearsed way, with both of them saying the same exact sentences, like a poem that they had studied and were reciting

in unison! Eventually we had to call a halt to the meeting to refresh our minds. However, I think that during that session many of the people began to see the real nature of what these people were really teaching and were able to get clearer ideas in their heads. These people did not attend another meeting (thankfully). They told Jacek that I could not teach them anything so they saw no need to attend.

On the Friday Jacek stated, “Well, we will have to prepare for the Sabbath soon. Many of us had believed that the Sabbath was no longer necessary, but now we have discovered that we still are expected to observe this commandment, although our understanding of the rules



Some of those at the baptism

which governed it has changed.” I was amazed to think that it had reached that far, but was happy to know that the people had responded honestly to the evidence presented.

Later we studied on the centrality of the Godhead message, which seemed to make a strong impression. We also looked at some prophecies, such as the 144,000, and also the issue of the 2300 days and the Atonement. We also had long discussions on the issues of women covering their heads, speaking in tongues and similar minor issues. The Lord blessed these studies and the evidences that were presented satisfied the questions of the people for the most part. I saw that the principle of what it means to be under the law as opposed to being

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led by the spirit needed to be properly understood, and that is what I endeavored to concentrate on.

Towards the end of the camp meeting there was a baptism. The only candidate was Alice. I tried to get Jacek or Erwin to do the baptism but Alice indicated that she wanted me to baptize her, and so I had to face the icy water in the nearby stream. It was the coldest water I have ever done a baptism in. Even after I stepped out of the water afterwards, my feet were still tingling. However, it was a nice little ceremony and I was happy that I was able to have a part in it.

One of the high points of the camp meeting for me was seeing Ania and Dominik Walczac again. This was the young couple who had been married and baptized by Allen last year. At that time they had been faced by very difficult circumstances. I was happy to learn that they were both now in comfortable jobs where they were able to have the Sabbath off, and was excited to learn that they would be having a baby in just a month's time. God has blessed them and opened doors for them. Even their relatives, who initially gave them a very hard time, had come around in the last few months, and they are much more at peace than they were at this time last year.

The camp meeting came to an end with some singing around a campfire, where the brethren milked the last ounce of energy from me with insistence on some Jamaican singing. I gave what little was left and, at the end, felt satisfied that the Lord

had blessed the trip to Poland even though it had been physically and mentally stressful.

Erwin and I left Poland on August 17 for Germany. After spending a day there, I left from Frankfurt airport for home, and arrived safely, by the grace of God, after a long trip of 17 hours (including the wait in Miami), which left me drained. After the rigors of this European trip, I arrived feeling satisfied that God had worked for His glory in Europe, but happy to return home where things were (for the moment at any rate) much more settled.

David Clayton

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Editor Allen Stump—editor@smyrna.org
Associate Editor Lynnford Beachy—berean@smyrna.org