

# 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 shew them his covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Straight and Narrow

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**A busy street in Guntur, India, where multitudes bow to idols of wood and stone who need to hear the message of the only true God.**





## Remaining Faithful

By Allen Stump

*The January through March issues of Old Paths contain a series on discipleship. This is the final part of that series.*

Author

When Jesus was upon earth, he worked to gather people to himself, men and women who identified themselves with him as his disciples.

Some of these people went on to do great things for the kingdom of heaven. Peter, James, and John, with the others, left a noble tribute to God and the truth. Others, however, went on to forsake him and even became the bitterest enemies of God and the truth. Even as soon as the crucifixion, some who had been crying hosanna were crying crucify him.

Of the multitude that followed the Saviour to Calvary, many had attended Him with joyful hosannas and the waving of palm branches as He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem. But not a few who had then shouted His praise, because it was popular to do so, now swelled the cry of “Crucify Him, crucify Him.” (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 743.3)

Our wise Saviour tested the faith of the disciples and developed the real characters of the most ardent believers by applying spiritual truths to their hearts.

At one time when the multitude was gathered about him, he uttered a truth revealing the requirements for his service, and the people were offended. Jesus had said unto them:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (John 6:53)

What was the reaction to this mystical statement of Jesus?

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? (John 6:60–61)

Notice it says that many of his disciples. At times, we hear what seem to be *hard sayings*, such as God requires us to keep an unpopular day of worship, requires ten percent plus of our hard-earned income, does not allow us to have intimate relations with anyone we please, etc. Are we offended?

Jesus went on to say:

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:62–63)

Jesus made it clear that his followers were not to be literal cannibals. He said that literal flesh profits nothing, but the *words* of Christ are what we need! Jesus continued:

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (John 6:64–66)

Jesus was testing the quality of their faith with sacred truth regarding the relation that must exist between himself and his followers. Their spiritual lives had to be sustained by receiving the principles of truth. They must accept, believe, and act upon the words Jesus uttered, which were spirit and life, and by this means they would become partakers of the divine nature.

The followers of Jesus are to be Christlike, meek, lowly of heart, self-denying, and self-sacrificing. They must walk in the narrow path trodden by the Man of Calvary, if they would share in the gift of life and the glory of heaven, but, just like today, the test was too great for many. Those disciples walked no more with Jesus. They could not hear the saying nor comprehend the nature of the truth he taught.

When we leave truth and make a conscious decision to turn away from the divine Teacher, the spirit of Satan takes control of our mind. When one leaves the Spirit of Christ, there is only one other spirit that can take control, and that is the spirit of the evil one.

Those early followers of Jesus could not see anything attractive in Jesus after those seemingly hard things had been said to them, even though they had once found him so interesting and attractive.

When a different spirit was controlling them, what did they do? They sought out Christ’s enemies because they were now in harmony with the spirit and work of the prince of darkness. Please never allow yourselves to be turned away from Christ, for there is only one place, one demon, to whom you can turn.

These former believers transmitted all kinds of false reports. They misinterpreted his words, falsified his statements, and impugned his motives, thus inflaming the passions of men and confirming them in hatred and unbelief. We have been told:

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel’s message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 608.2a)

Notice that these apostates “abandon their position.” Does that mean a position as a church member? The statement says nothing to indicate that, but it does speak of having had a profession of faith “in the third angel’s message.” So, they may still be church members, even in good and regular standing, who have left the position of truth. Ellen White continues:

Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and

accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them. (Ibid., p. 608.2b; all emphasis supplied unless otherwise noted)

Notice that these apostates are said to have “once rejoiced in the truth.” Again, the position they leave is one of truth, and they become “the most efficient agents of Satan.”

What was the result of this hatred in the days of Jesus?

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. (John 7:1)

Even his relatives were so influenced that they partook of this bitter spirit of prejudice and unbelief and thought that he could not be the Messiah.

For neither did his brethren believe in him. (John 7:5)

Have you ever felt you were between a rock and a hard place and that you were in very difficult situation and had to make a hard decision? Have you ever felt that no matter what you did, said, or tried to accomplish, it was not accepted and was misconstrued? Jesus was in a tighter position! The record says:

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (John 1:11)

Even his brethren did not believe on him, but did this prove his mission a failure? Did it destroy his truth and make him a false teacher or an impostor? No, indeed. Just because some do not accept the truth that you share or just because they look at you as if you belong to a cult, that does not make you an impostor or a false teacher.

Jesus said:

My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. (John 7:6–7)

The world will love its own (John 15:19) but hate Christ and his followers because when the truth testifies against the darkness of sin and error, Satan and his followers fight back. Notice the division among the people to the statement of Jesus, the faithful and true witness:

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. (John 7:12)

Christ’s words brought division then, and today, also, there is a division among the people concerning Christ and the acceptance of him as the great Redeemer.

You have heard that opposites attract. In the world of physics concerning magnetic poles, this is true, *but in spiritual things like seeks like*. The pure and holy does not wish to be among wicked and profane.



Like appreciates like, and those who love truth gather together and rejoice; however, wherever evil exists, it leagues with evil, and do you know for what purpose? The destruction of the good! Adolf Hitler's name has become infamous not because he wanted to bless humanity but, rather, because he wanted to destroy a part of humanity.

Jesus Christ prophesies in the Revelation that a confederacy of fallen men and fallen angels with likeness of purpose and principle will join in a desperate and determined coalition to resist truth and righteousness. These alliances will be quite strange with many differences, but these wicked ones will be united in their opposition and hatred of one thing—the truth and those who follow it.

Paul writes:

**Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:12–13)**

Those who are faithful to God will be persecuted, and their destruction will be sought. Notice what Jesus said this hatred of his followers would lead to:

**These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (John 16:1–2)**

But why do they do want to kill the faithful?

**And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. (John 16:3)**

History reveals that those who do not know God or Christ, or who at least have great misconceptions of them, have been persecutors of God's people. It was the papacy, prophesied about under the symbolism of the little horn, which plucked up three of the first horns (the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths) by the roots (Daniel 7:8). The Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths all denied the doctrine of the Trinity and were, during their time, the most formidable rivals of Catholicism.

On October 27, 1553, Michael Servetus was burned at the stake at the insistence of John Calvin for what Calvin called execrable blasphemies. What were those terrible blasphemies? Servetus did not believe in the Trinitarian doctrine or in infant baptism.

The zeal of evil humanity seems to know no limits. All that which is evil is called good, and good is called evil. God pronounces a woe upon such:

**Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20)**

With what zeal will the workers of iniquity pursue their Satanic purpose? They will put light for darkness and darkness for light until they will sincerely believe they are servants of God and are doing him service by persecuting his children.

This has been the conflict especially within the Christian church.

**And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)**

But no matter how badly the followers of Jesus will be treated, he was treated worse, even as the worst of criminals. Jesus said:

**Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. (John 15:20)**

Christians are to expect hatred and persecution from those who hate Jesus. Just as surely as a true follower is persecuted, so surely can you be that the persecutor is antichrist.

Jesus told us these things ahead of time so we could remember he had told us it when they come to pass:

**But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. (John 16:4)**

Jesus said that in the last days:

**And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (Matthew 24:12)**

But in contrast to this, God will have a people who will have “the patience of the saints” and who will “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

God will have a people who will glorify his name, who will stand as reprovers of unrighteousness, and who will remain faithful.

In four places, God calls his people a “peculiar people.” Why? They will be loyal to all of his law when the world is wondering after the beast. They will reprove the church and the world for their sins. They will walk the straight and narrow path, not a wide, woke road. They will not find the amusements of the world funny nor live for its lusts.

They are:

**. . . men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall. (Ellen White, *Education*, p. 57.3)**

Satan will not give up without a great fight. He plans for a battle “with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:9–10).

Satan will pull out all stops and hold nothing back, and his tradecraft is such that:

**. . . if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (Matthew 24:24)**

### **Defending ourselves**

So, how can we defend ourselves? We begin by putting on the armour that God has provided:

**Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)**

**Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:14–18)**

You cannot have this armour even available to put on, if you are not in the word of God. Further, you must be in communion with God and heaven.

I heard a statistic that 8% of the people in the United States thought that they could beat a lion in a fight to the death! Can you imagine that? I hope you are not in that 8% and have to face a lion. Nobody can kill a lion without supernatural strength. Samson and David did it, but they could only do so because the Spirit of the LORD came upon them. But we have an enemy worse and more dangerous than a literal lion. We are told by Peter to:

**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (1 Peter 5:8)**

Be ready for battle. Do not expect Satan to roll over and give up. There will be a constant conflict from the time of your conversion and determination to serve the God of

heaven until you are delivered out of this present evil world.

Christians are in a war from which there is no decomposition. The work of God for this time cannot—I tell you, cannot—be accomplished without arousing opposition, reproach, and slander.

How will some react to this warfare and opposition?

**Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (1 Timothy 4:1)**

How can we be sure that we are not following doctrines of devils? Firstly, we must study carefully. Secondly, we must pray for discernment. Thirdly, we need to heed godly counsel from brethren of experience whom God has led in the past. We are told:

**There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for “in the multitude of counselors there is safety.” (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 293.1)**

Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven's arrangement as he can; therefore he deceives even the professed people of God and makes them believe that order and discipline are enemies to spirituality, that the only safety for them is to let each pursue his own course, and to remain especially distinct from bodies of Christians who are united and are laboring to establish discipline and harmony of action. All the efforts made to establish order are considered dangerous, a restriction of rightful liberty, and hence are feared as popery. These deceived souls consider it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They will not take any man's say-so. They are amenable to no man. I was shown that it is Satan's special work to lead men to feel that it is in God's order for them to strike out for themselves and choose their own course, independent of their brethren. (Ibid., vol. 1, p. 650.1)



Instead of joining hands with the great apostate, God wants his people to be a faithful group. He knows who are his and who will be faithful:

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his.* And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. (2 Timothy 2:19)

These shall *make war with the Lamb*, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are *with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.* (Revelation 17:14)

Yes, God knows those who are his, and he knows those who do not believe.

Most nations have *special military forces* who are the best trained and the most determined to never fail. The Russian *Alpha Unit*, the British *SAS*, the United States *Delta Force Rangers* and *Navy Seals*, for example, are all determined fighting specialists. Their work for their country is important and aggressive. They seldom fail, but *our work for God's kingdom* is to be more aggressive and even more determined than that of these elite fighting groups!

*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* (2 Timothy 2:3-4)

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* (Ephesians 6:12)

Sometimes soldiers have to surrender in war. Even General Robert Lee surrendered to end the American war between the states, but Christians are in a conflict that does not allow us to stop our warfare. This strife does not allow us to lower the blood-stained banner we carry and to capitulate. There must never be a white flag of surrender in our hands. We can never become the captives and servants of Satan!

There are those who decide they can follow no more, and they choose to surrender. They want to be released from the conflict and the suffering, but this peace will be gained only at the loss of Christ and heaven. *Friends, this is one reason we must learn and practice self-discipline.* If we cannot keep the body in subjection, neither will we keep the mind in captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Speaking of the early Christians' fight with the apostate church, we read:

*After a long and severe conflict, the faithful few decided to dissolve all union with the apostate church if*

*she still refused to free herself from falsehood and idolatry. They saw that separation was an absolute necessity if they would obey the word of God. They dared not tolerate errors fatal to their own souls, and set an example which would imperil the faith of their children and children's children. To secure peace and unity they were ready to make any concession consistent with fidelity to God; but they felt that even peace would be too dearly purchased at the sacrifice of principle. If unity could be secured only by the compromise of truth and righteousness, then let there be difference, and even war.* (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 45.3)

Beloved, let it be war to the end of earth's history than peace through apostasy and sin. Disobedience will separate the soul from God. If you do not overcome evil, it will overcome you.

Beloved, if you refuse to heed the pleading of the Spirit today, sins that were once most repugnant will become attractive and finally welcomed. A refusal to walk in and to practice truth will cause the wicked to cast off the fear of God and their allegiance to his law.

We need to be constantly on our guard, to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. Remember, the devil is as a roaring lion. He crouches quietly in stealth, looking for his victims.

The indulgence of spiritual pride, of unholy desires, of evil thoughts, and of anything that separates us from an intimate and sacred association with Jesus, imperils our souls. To finally be victorious, we must have living faith in God. So, beloved,

*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.* (1 Timothy 6:12)

*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* (1 Peter 1:5)

If the thought of apostasy is grievous to you and if you do not desire to become an enemy of the truth and an accuser of the brethren, then follow the command of Paul:

*Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.* (Romans 12:9)

Believe in him who:

*... is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,* (Jude 24)

*Continued on page 13, column 2*

## Mission Trip Reports

### India

In March, Pastor Daniel Mesa and I were privileged to travel to India and to work in the southeastern area of the country with Pastor Niak Christian.

Pastor Christian is a convert from Hinduism and lives in a country with a majority of Hindus but also with several Muslims. The Christian faith is a very small minority, with most believers being Pentecostal; however, even a small minority is several people in a country of 1.3 billion.



**Pastor Niak's family with Allen and Daniel**

One of the sites we saw were large red chili fields that were being harvested. The chilis were picked and laid out to dry. Then they were gathered up in piles, some as large as a small house, to be bagged and then shipped out for sale.

India is a contrast of knowledge and ignorance. Many of the people are very intelligent and well-schooled and yet the great majority live in ignorance concerning common hygiene and especially concerning the one true God. Sadly India is a very dirty country. There seemed to be trash everywhere you looked or stepped. Open defecation takes



**Ministers came to hear the word of God.**

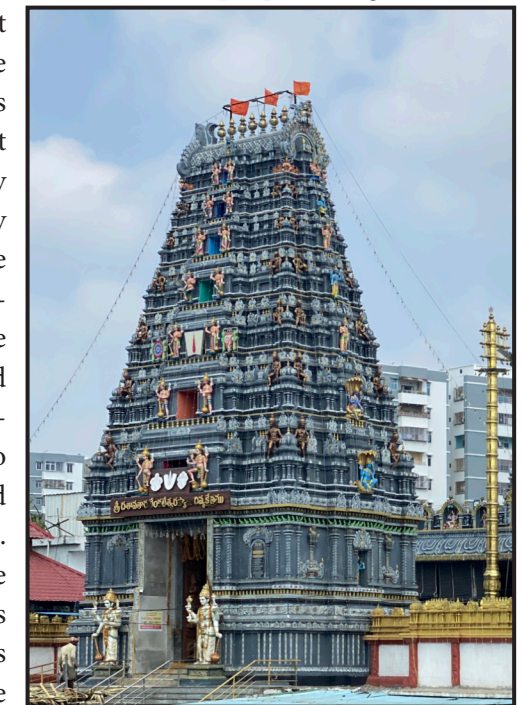


**Pastor Daniel preaching with Pastor Niak**

place in field and even on the roadsides. No open water source should be trusted for drinking, though we saw one of the cleaner rivers being used to wash clothes, bathe in, and even brush teeth in, all within a few feet of the others.

I personally found most of the people to be gracious and friendly, but

you are to be guarded, I was told, to not speak openly and loudly against the Hindu monkey god or the elephant god or other various deities. To do so could provoke harm. There were many idols and temples adorning the lands in the countryside, as well as in the streets in the towns. At times you will see offerings of flowers or food near these idols.



**One of many Hindu temples**

Pastor Christian knows and networks with many Pentecostal, Baptist, and other evangelical ministers. He made arrangements for meetings each day we were there to meet with either pastors or churches to share truth with them.

*Continued on page 11, column 1*



# From El Salvador



Evening meeting at the camp near Perquin



Some of the group at the camp near Perquin



Fernando, Oscar, and Alfred at Mayan temple in Tazumal



A home meeting in Santa Rosa De Lima



Alfred with church leaders at Mejicanos



Alfred preaching at the camp near Perquin



Oscar, Neffer, Alfred, and Alexis



Oscar with his cousin, Juan José



Oscar checking his uncle's diseased foot



# Kitwanga Camp Meeting

There was a sweet camp meeting near Kitwanga, British Columbia, Canada, April 27–30. You might be asking where is Kitwanga? Kitwanga is a small community in the west central area of British Columbia, but though Kitwanga is a small community, there are some believers there with very big hearts.



**Sabbath meeting in the greenhouse**

Paul and Cheryl Goodwill have an organic farm between the famous Seven Sisters Peaks and the Kitwanga Peak. They offered their place and services for a camp meeting, and it was certainly the most majestic place I have ever attended for meetings.

There is a pullout the government has built on the road adjacent to their property where people stop to get a nice view of the mountains. The Goodwill's have an organic



**Seven Sisters Mountains**

vegetable stand beside the pullout and keep it stocked with truth-filled literature and with vegetables in season. If you did not know better, you might think the pullout belonged



**Brother Brian Thomas speaking**

to the Goodwills. Pastor Daniel Mesa and Brother Brian Thomas joined me in Seattle to fly up to Vancouver and then to the Northwest Regional Airport in Terrace, where Sister Goodwill met us to take us to their place.

The theme of the camp was “The Elijah Message.” There was a large emphasis upon fellowship, too, with lots of time for socialization and hikes and campfires in the evening.

The Internet service in the area is underpowered, but we were still, by God's grace, able to broadcast most of the meetings on YouTube. You can see some of the presentations at: <https://www.youtube.com/@Lucas-nr5ow/> streams.

Most of the messages centered around Elijah, John the Baptist, and the last generation giving the message for their time (I Kings 17; Malachi 4:5, 6; Matthew 11:12–15; Revelation 14:6–12).

Though many were invited, the attendance was small, but fervent. On Sabbath, we had a little over thirty people and all seemed to be very blessed. Two precious souls were baptized on Sabbath, providing a special highlight for the day.

A special thank you to Paul and Cheryl Goodwill for opening up their home and to each for helping to make the camp meeting a special experience.

We hope all who missed this chance will take advantage of the camp meeting in Tennessee this month at Fall Creek Falls State Park. See page 13 for more details.

to the Goodwills.

Pastor Daniel Mesa and Brother Brian Thomas joined me in Seattle to fly up to Vancouver and then to the Northwest Regional Airport in Terrace, where Sister Goodwill met us to take us to their place.



**Jonathan's baptism**

“Mission Trip Reports,” continued from page 7

It was amazing to see over one hundred pastors coming to meetings, almost all on small motorcycles or scooters. The ministers were 99% friendly to us and eager to learn. Most have had no formal training, and they are anxious to learn all they can. To each pastor, booklets of ruled paper and pens were issued, so they could take notes, which most did copiously.

Usually our meetings would begin with Pastor Mesa speaking about antichrist from the book of Revelation, and I would follow speaking about antichrist denying the Father and Son and would speak about the one true God. After a meal, Pastor Christian would usually address some points on the Holy Spirit. Often we were asked to pray for the sick and asked for prayer in general for God to bless the workers.

On the Sunday morning we were there, we went to a small church in the country, arriving at 5:00 a.m., and the building was full of women sitting on the floor, with men outside in chairs waiting for us. At this meeting, we talked about the blessed hope of the second coming of Christ and also of the righteousness of Christ and how the law is a reflection of that righteousness. Later in the morning, we spoke at a large Sunday-keeping church and had a very good response. The pastor was eager to learn more, but he was also very sick. We prayed for him to have health in order to receive and preach truth.

The facilities at most of these churches were very primitive. Most had no water toilets, and the last place we were at had no toilet of any kind. When I asked where the toilet was, I was told anywhere one want to go. However, all of the buildings we were in had sound systems! Microphones and speakers were the normal. It seemed that the louder the better. As we would wait for our meetings to begin, there might be some singing first and greetings. These times would have sound levels up to 100 decibels. Pastor Daniel and I used ear plugs and even toilet paper stuffed into our ears to help reduce the noise.

While we were there, one of the highlights was to see four former Pentecostal ministers baptized into the third angel's message. There are at least forty-five converted pastors who are preaching the truth in India now, and they need more training and help; yet, they are a small army compared to what is needed. Pastor Christian and the other believers in India face many challenges, from mandatory school attendance on Sabbath for most children, to opposition from Hindus and Muslims, and to a lack of any kind of religious liberty protection from the government.

Please remember Pastor Christian and the work in India. It is a hard field which needs a great dedication.

## El Salvador

I recently visited a camp meeting in Florida to say a friendly hello to some other one true God believers who are not a part of 1889 HSDA. The theme of the meeting was “True Education.” While there, Brother Alfred Irizarry offered to let me speak in his place for a meeting. At first I declined, due to a schedule issue, but was then asked to speak at another time. After prayer, I believed that the Lord wanted me to share, and I shared the study on “True Education” that was published last month in *Old Paths*. Part of that study deals with how to relate to different counsels on what the true church is and is not. After the presentation, I was asked to repeat it the next day to some Spanish brethren who were to arrive. That meeting went well, and later Brother Irizarry invited me to join him and Brother Oscar Cortez on a visit to El Salvador, where there were believers in the one true God but who were having problems coming all the way out of Babylon. Brother Oscar was born and partly raised in El Salvador.

Our first Sabbath was spent with a small conference church group who mostly had come to accept the truth. We had the chance to clarify some issues about our Father and his Son, as well as to study the second and fourth angels' messages. These brethren have an advantage in the sense that the conference does not own their meeting place; instead, it is owned by a couple who freely allow the use of this place to the others.

We spent most of the following week making home visits with Oscar's family members.

One of Oscar's cousins, Juan José, owns a metal fabrication shop. He was very gracious to show us around, and he told of how God had saved his life from a gang shooting when he was shot three times. He really appreciated our visit and took us to lunch, during which we visited more. Juan was not raised as a Christian but had spent some of his early years staying with a Jehovah Witness family. There he learned what he called “good principles” that helped to guide him for a few years, but then he stopped following any god. He still knows that God cares for him, and we were able to leave literature on God's love with him. He stated he liked to read and would read the material. He made me promise to see him again next time I visit the country, a promise I will be glad to keep.

We also visited an elderly uncle who had had a very bad sore on his left foot last year. Oscar had instructed the family how to use natural treatments with charcoal and other things, and this year the sore is almost completely healed. We were thankful to be able to visit and pray for him.



We were able to take one day off and visit some ancient Mayan ruins. That was more than just interesting and was a very instructional day.

We next went to the eastern part of the country, where we made several home visits to share the truth about God and to encourage those who had already received the truth about God to consider the call of the fourth angel to come all the way out of Babylon. We had occasion to anoint and pray for the sick, and God greatly blessed our efforts. A brother and sister we met with were very disappointed in the teachings they were receiving in the Sabbath school lessons and from the sermons given in the pulpits. The brother was blind but said that he could see more about what was really going on than the members who had sight.

The second weekend was in an area called Perquin in northeastern El Salvador, less than three miles from the border with Honduras. We rented the use of a small camp with a few cabins and a pavilion for these meetings.

On the way, we stopped and were treated to a nice lunch by a brother who wanted to attend the meetings but could not due to sickness in his family. He was trying to work within the church and bring reform, but on Sunday we received word that he had made the wise decision to separate from the corporate church in all ways he could and that he could now see the truth and wanted to follow it all the way.

The interest at the camp, though attendance was small (about 20), was very good. The people had been studying and were well prepared for more depth on the messages we were bringing. Brother Alfred spoke on the truth about God, while Brother Oscar spoke about medical missionary work and country living. I spoke on the fourth angel's message of Revelation 18:4. After speaking about coming out of Babylon, I shared the following quotation:

**The Lord abhors indifference and disloyalty in a time of crisis in His work. The whole universe is watching with inexpressible interest the closing scenes of the great controversy between good and evil. The people of God are nearing the borders of the eternal world; what can be of more importance to them than that they be loyal to the God of heaven? All through the ages, God has had moral heroes, and He has them now—those who, like Joseph and Elijah and Daniel, are not ashamed to acknowledge themselves His peculiar people. His special blessing accompanies the labors of men of action, men who will not be swerved from the straight line of duty, but who with divine energy will inquire, “Who is on the Lord's side?” (Exodus 32:26), men who will not stop merely with the inquiry, but who will demand that those who choose to identify themselves with the people of God shall step forward and reveal unmistakably their**

**allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Such men make their wills and plans subordinate to the law of God. For love of Him they count not their lives dear unto themselves. Their work is to catch the light from the Word and let it shine forth to the world in clear, steady rays. Fidelity to God is their motto. (Ellen White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 148.1)**

As I neared the end of my last message, I shared my desire to be a man of action “who [would] . . . not be swerved from the straight line of duty.” I inquired, “Who is on the Lord's side?” Almost all stood to the call to come all the way out of Babylon.

There is so much to yet do in this country, but the work is progressing quickly, with much already being done which none of us had yet heard of. God is drawing his people together, and now is the time to do all we can unitedly, while we can work in an open and free way. Soon the open, above-ground work will stop and only underground work can be carried forward. How much more important it is for us to be united and as networked as possible now in preparation for that time to come. Please keep the people in India and El Salvador in prayer. These countries have many who are wistfully looking to heaven!

I want to thank all those whose prayers and support have made these efforts possible and who have helped to sustain the work in such areas.



*“Youth's Corner,” continued from page 16*

psychopaths. She jolted me into reality and had me prepare a sheet of paper I could place on the table in front of me during the trial that would remind me what a psychopath is. This would remind me that Allen wasn't the friend we had thought he was. It seems logical now, in retrospect, that I should have realized this, but what I saw and experienced then was Allen as a friend and him pretending to be another victim of the kidnapping, along with me. It felt as though the person we had known as our dear friend, Allen, had died. I grieved the loss of our friendship and the betrayal.

Allen fit every description of a psychopath that I could find on the Internet. I did prepare the page my psychologist friend had recommend, with pictures, to keep in front of me in the courthouse. The exercise helped.

Next month: Justice Served

## 1889 HSDA–USA Camp Meeting

An 1889 HSDA–USA camp meeting will be May 16–21, 2023, at Fall Creek Falls State Park in Spencer, Tennessee. This is the last call.

The main meeting building has a large kitchen with a large room that will be used for dining and for the main meetings.

No Wi-Fi is available, but cellular service with AT&T is, and we will be able to broadcast meetings using hotspots. You can access the broadcast at the Smyrna classroom at <https://join.onstreammedia.com/live/smyrna/go> or by phone at 1–805–744–6450, conference code 73407721#. The meetings will also be recorded and posted.

There will be no cost for staying at the camp, but you will need to provide your own bedding for the cabins. Sleeping bags or twin bed sheets and blankets will work.

We will provide two free meals a day, but a donation would be appreciated to help with the cost. The food will be healthy, simple, and filling, and we will be glad to accept any volunteers who would like to help with the kitchen du-

ties and with cleanup afterwards. A final camp schedule is below.

The temperatures in mid-May usually range from between 65° and 75° F throughout the day. There are usually about ten days of rain at the park during the month of May, so please bring an umbrella in case we catch a few of those ten days. We have a link to register at <https://smyrna.org/2023-camp-meeting-attendance-survey/>.



*“Remaining Faithful” continued from page 6*

To the church of Smyrna, Jesus says:

**. . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)**

Brothers and sisters, I encourage you to be faithful, like Abraham; the prophet, Isaiah; Paul and Silas; the great Bohemian, John Huss; the rock-solid James White; and the inflexible-with-sin Ellen White. Be that faithful person for God in the twenty-first century in the last great conflict. The coming of the Lord is soon. May we be ready!

## Final Camp Meeting Schedule

May 16–21, Fall Creek Falls State Park, Spencer, Tennessee.

Time (CDT)	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sabbath	Sunday
6:30–7:00 am		Devotional–Youth	Devotional–Youth	Devotional–Youth	Devotional–Youth	Devotional–Youth
7:00–9:00 am	Breakfast					
9:00–10:25 am		Onycha Holt	Fay Ulett	Allen Stump/ Communion	Allen Stump	
10:25–11:10 am	Break					
11:10–12:35 pm		Jean-Christophe Bolotte	Testimonies	Martin Barlow	Martin Barlow	
12:35–3:05 pm	Lunch					
3:05–4:30 pm		Ralph Fisher	Rob Chisum	Jean-Christophe Bolotte	Jean-Christophe Bolotte	
4:30–5:00 pm	Break					
5:00–6:00 pm		Youth/Browns	Youth/Browns	Youth/Browns	Youth/Browns	
6:00–7:00 pm	Break					
7:00–8:15 pm	Todd Brown	Martin Barlow	Daniel Mesa	Daniel Mesa	Daniel Mesa	



# Youth's Corner – Kidnapped in Ecuador!

## A Story of Faith, Surrender, Forgiveness, and Trust in God, Part 7

By Sheri Yohe

### The first hearing

The first court hearing was to determine if there was enough evidence against the suspects to go to trial. I was told about the hearing at the last minute. God brought the right help for us at the 11th hour, right on time. The Sunday before the hearing, we met with a couple that had gone through a court trial in Loja a few months earlier. They recommended an attorney who they felt had done a very good job for them, after they had gone through two “bad” ones.

In the Ecuadorian court system, there are no juries. Three judges determine the sentence of those convicted of crimes. The prisons are overcrowded, just as they are in the United States. Stiffer penalties came into effect just a couple of days before my kidnapping. Prior to that, a suspect could only be tried for one crime. If the charges against them included assault and battery, robbery, and kidnapping, for example, the prosecutor was forced to choose one. The new law in Ecuador meant that an individual could be prosecuted for a list of crimes and allowed for longer prison sentences. The detectives told me that Allen was looking at ten to thirteen years in prison.

I was told I would be in the same room with the kidnapers, but there was some kind of transportation problem, which meant that they could not attend the hearing. God did that for me, I am sure.

During the hearing, which took two and a half hours, one judge heard the detailed evidence presented by the district attorney against each of the participants, as well as a statement from each of the defense attorneys. It felt like it took much longer.

I struggled to breathe the entire time. Hearing the evidence presented in the courtroom banished any denial I was still holding onto to protect my fragile emotions. I sat with Pedro, a translator/attorney, on one side of me, and Don on the other. I concentrated on taking long, deep breaths. Tears ran down my face, and at times my chest was so tight I felt like I would suffocate. My muscles were overly tense and yet, I was sure my legs would not hold my weight if I stood up. Our friend, whom I had just met the Sunday before, came to the hearing with her husband to support us. She slipped me a note asking me if I needed to leave the room for a few minutes, but I could not move. I did not want to collapse trying to walk out, so I declined and gave her a weak smile. God was going to get me through, no matter what, and he did.

When it was confirmed that the case would move to trial, the district attorney asked the judge if I could give my testimony by via the Internet through Skype, to protect my fragile emotional state. Our attorney told us that if there were any way we could attend, it would give more strength to our case and possibly help achieve fair sentences for the criminals.

After the hearing, we took a taxi back to Vilcabamba. I am not sure either of us could have driven the forty-five minute trip on the mountain road. My whole body ached from muscle tension. Even after going to bed early and sleeping through the night, I was still physically weak the next day. It took four weeks to recover from that hearing. I had a relapse of the chronic fatigue syndrome symptoms that I had suffered with for many years. I had been almost 100% symptom-free for five years, but the stress of the hearing was too much. I chose to trust that each courtroom experience would be less stressful as the Lord healed me.

I continued to struggle with the question, “Why?” Why would God allow this to happen to my husband at 84 years old? The kidnapers didn’t literally take our lives, but what they did take had an immeasurable toll on us emotionally. I watched my husband age rapidly after the night of the kidnapping and through this horrific experience. In a period when he should have been relaxing and enjoying the *golden years*, we were both constantly stressed, fighting nausea and fatigue, struggling with safety concerns, and dealing with police involvement in our lives through the necessary and welcomed protective services program. We cried together regularly as we faced the coming trial with the stress of testifying and reliving the nightmarish ordeal. Again and again, I chose to trust that God had a good reason for this and surrendered it all again into his hands.

### Waiting

On December 21, our attorney and her assistant came to visit us at our rental home in Vilcabamba. They asked me what happened on July 3, 2014. They explained that it was the date on the first ransom note they found in Allen’s apartment. The second ransom note was dated the day of the kidnapping, August 12, 2014. I pulled up the calendar on my computer and located the month and day, then I gasped aloud! It was the day Allen drove, my grandchildren and me home when we had returned from the monkey-viewing trip to Tena and just three days before he went with all of us (Don included) to the Galapagos Islands.

(Don did not go with us to Tena to see the monkeys. We were alone, with Allen as our security.)

On December 23, two days later, Don suffered a second heart attack. We knew it was the stress of knowing that Allen planned to do us harm when our grandchildren were with us in Ecuador. Oh, what a disaster that would have been! It would have emotionally scarred our grandchildren, their parents, and, of course, it would have been even harder on us to think our grandchildren were involved. Because of this heart attack, Don was dismissed from attending the trial. I would go alone. He would stay home. I was both relieved and afraid, relieved that Don would not have to endure the trial and afraid to go alone.

### The first trial

The trial was scheduled for Monday, January 19, 2015. On Wednesday, January 14, police came to our house to serve me a subpoena. They told me the trial would begin the next day. I told them it was scheduled for the following Monday, the 19th not the 15th. They showed me the date on the legal paperwork. It did say Thursday, January 15. I was stunned! Two friends from the States were arriving on Friday to support me during the trial scheduled for Monday. Local friends from Vilcabamba were planning to come, too. No one was ready for a trial on the 15th. I was terrified to go alone, and was not mentally prepared to testify the next day or to be in the same room with the criminals.

I called our attorney, who checked it out and said it appeared that the judge had changed the date. I had an appointment with the attorney scheduled for Thursday afternoon (the same day as the new trial date). That appointment was going to prepare me for my testimony—the kinds of questions the defense attorneys might ask, go over where I would sit in the courtroom, who to look at when I answered the questions, and explain the translating process. In light of the unexpected date change, she told me to come to her office right away to start preparing. I got in a taxi and headed to Loja. I was crying, struggling with my feelings about having to testify early without the support I was counting on from friends who would not be able to get there in time. My phone rang while I was in the taxi. A friend was communicating with my attorney and confirmed that it was a mistake! The trial was still scheduled for Monday, January 19. The date change had been a clerical error.

On Sabbath afternoon, January 17, two days before the trial, a woman approached one of my friends in Vilcabamba. The woman told my friend that she was a good friend of mine and asked her for my address and telephone number. My friend recognized her as Karol, Allen’s girlfriend or wife who was suspected of being an accomplice to the kidnapping from pictures I had shown her. My

friend told Karol that if she were a good friend of mine, she would already know how to reach me. When Karol left, she walked up a hill and got into a white pickup truck, which my friend recognized as the same truck that Allen’s brother was driving when he had come asking for me just before the hearing in November. He had introduced himself to my friend as Allen’s brother, and told her he was looking for me. She did not tell him anything either, just walked away from him.

Attorneys have told me that it’s fairly common for relatives and friends of the suspect to try to talk to the victim to convince them of his or her innocence. This is alarming, and causes more stress and fear. The police were notified of Karol’s visit immediately. They said they would check every hotel in Vilcabamba and arrest her if they found her. They told me to stay out of town and explained it could be an innocent appeal for me to soften my testimony, a try to convince me Allen was innocent, or a dangerous attempt to eliminate me since I was the major witness against them. They said I should not take any chances.

Meanwhile, it turned out that all the witnesses were notified of the wrong new trial date, as I was. This meant that certain important witnesses were absent on the actual trial date because of the confusion, and once a list of witnesses is submitted for a trial, they must all be present or the trial cannot take place.

I did not know any of this at the time. So, on Monday, January 19, we had driven the hour into Loja with our friends from Vilcabamba and two friends who had come from the States to give us support. I had a terrible night prior to the court date. All too soon the day I dreaded arrived. I was sitting at the main police station in Loja waiting for the trial to begin. It was 8:30 a.m. I was anxiously waiting for the police escort which would take me to the courthouse. I mentioned that I wanted to be in the courtroom at least 15 minutes before the trial began so I could become familiar with the surroundings and avoid the criminals when they were brought into the court room, and just then the protective services director came into the room and said the trial had been postponed.

Unbelievable! They waited until I was sitting there, thirty minutes before the trial was supposed to begin. It seemed like emotional abuse. Another clerical error? I had all kinds of questions. My friends were here from the United States, and all those dear friends from Vilcabamba were waiting at the courthouse. The friend who had been through her own trial offered to walk over and tell them about the postponement. Disappointment does not adequately describe my feelings. I wanted to get it over with! I did not want to wait another six weeks. My friends would not be able to return to Ecuador to give me support. I was



terrified of going into the same room with the criminals, yet I did not want this hanging over my head for another six weeks.

I had to wait in the police station for an hour before they would allow me to leave the building, and then only with a police officer who would escort me out of town. The kidnappers were en route. Their family members would be close by. They said it was not safe for me to be in Loja without a police escort. Haven't I seen this in a movie somewhere? Many people have told me this story is the stuff of which movies are made.

One week later, on Monday, January 26, the same woman (Karol) showed up at a local juice bar in Vilcabamba asking for me. She got the same response that my friend had given her the week before. I reported this second visit to the police, who said they would have taken her into custody for questioning if we would have notified them sooner.

### **Leading up to the trial; take two**

The weeks after the postponement were difficult. Don and I rested a lot. I spent days in bed. I worked on keeping my thoughts focused on God and positive things. I tried to forget about the upcoming trial and everything associated with it.

The attorneys had told me that I was the main witness, and if I returned to the U.S. before the trial, I would be extradited for testimony unless I had an extremely good reason. A physical illness like Don's counted. My post-traumatic stress symptoms did not.

No one came back to town asking for my address after that. Thank God they stopped that emotional harassment. I sent out an email to the local expat community email list explaining what had happened the day of the trial postponement. A friend told me a few people had gone to Loja to support me on the trial date but had not been told what happened. I did not know these people and had no way of communicating with them except through a public email list. I also included a picture of Karol and asked for help. I explained that she had been in town looking for me. I asked the community not to share anything about me if she came back and to contact the police immediately so they could pick her up for questioning. The friend who had come to Cuenca to help us pack and move to Vilcabamba worked at a local cafe. She asked the restaurant next door if Karol had stopped by there. She had.

I talked again to Pedro, our attorney's assistant, about why Allen's attorneys had not been informed to call off my harassers. He agreed that they should have been and said that had to be discussed with police protective services. Why had it not already been discussed with them? Some-

one had come looking for me three times. He told me he had taken care of it. He also explained that a common restraining order, which is what I wanted, was used in situations where a trial had not yet begun. He did not tell me what they do in situations like mine but said it was illegal for family or friends of a suspected criminal to seek out the victim. The police did increase their surveillance of our home and checked in with us more often after that conversation.

I managed to basically wipe everything from my mind to achieve total denial for a blissful week, and then one Monday morning my husband said, "Do you realize the trial is only a week away?" Tears came to my eyes and reality came crashing through. I would have to face this monster.

I have always hated confrontation. I avoid people who cause me pain and typically over obsess about people who have negative feelings toward me. This trial would bring me face-to-face with everything I feared. Facing the criminals would be hard, but it would pale in comparison with facing our dear friend who had groomed us for eight months, working his way into our hearts and making us think he cared for us as we cared for him.

I prayed that God would send some people for emotional support during the trial. For some reason, He had altered our plans. Darlene and John could not come back from the United States to be with me, and the friend who had been through her own ordeal with her husband and who had become an amazing source of strength for me was dealing with her own PTSD and needed to take care of herself.

This friend is a psychologist. She understood me very well and knew when to encourage me to do what would be best for me. She reminded me that during my testimony I could ask for a recess if I needed a break, and the judges would honor my request. She had realized a few days before the trial date in January that I was struggling with testifying against Allen, caught between the sympathy I still held in my heart for him and the reality that he was a criminal who meant us harm. She counseled me to research

*Continued on page 12, column 2*

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