

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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Pastor Jordan Opio of Uganda



“Be Ye” Commands of Christ

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Between 1652 and 1666, the Eastern Orthodox Church in Russia experienced a reform led by Patriarch Nikon of Moscow. He hoped to obtain unity between the Russian and the Greek churches by changing the Russian rites to align with the Greek, and he outlawed and suppressed believers in Russia who did not accept the new liturgy and other new changes. In addition to the change in liturgy, for example, the Old Believers, as they were called in Russia, objected to the use of three fingers, instead of the traditional two, in making the sign of the cross. They maintained fidelity to the old ways, even though much of the old ways were not based in scripture. They were severely persecuted and called Schismatics and Old Ritualists. Even the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, determinedly criticized them. So they left their homes for the far reaches of Siberia, choosing to suffer the affliction of a harsh environment and of few provisions rather than change their beliefs, somewhat like the Pilgrims who chose to sail to an unknown land in order to secure their freedom of worship. Old Believers were staunch adherents to traditional ways.

Two thousand years ago strong traditionalists also walked this earth, and Jesus encountered them. They held a firm grasp on the Jewish people with traditions also not based in scripture. The poor and unlearned knew nothing about God except that which the scribes and the Pharisees taught. Jesus yearned to reach the hearts of his people with the beauty of truth, and so he spent time with them on an unknown mountainside in Galilee. The sermon that day, commonly known as the *Sermon on the Mount*, is usually regarded as his first and is recorded in Matthew 5–7. No one is sure just where the event took place, although we know it was somewhere in Galilee. Ellen White calls the mount an “unnamed mountain beside the Lake of Genesaret” (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 1)

Jesus walked all about Galilee and in Judea, teaching the people:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. (Matthew 4:23)

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. (John 2:23)

And one night in Judea, while Jerusalem quietly slumbered, he taught one of his most important lessons to only one person—Nicodemus:

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night . . . (John 3:1, 2)

From Phoenicia in the north to Judea in the south Jesus traveled, teaching and healing the downtrodden and the sick, and on that wondrous day so long ago on that unnamed mountain near the Lake of Galilee, people were hungry and thirsting for words of life from the Master. They would not let him go. They doggedly followed him to the point that he bade them sit down. We can picture him walking among them as they did so, bringing assurance by his presence and calm with his smile. They knew he understood the needs of their hearts, and they patiently waited.

The words of truth Jesus then spoke continue to speak to us today. He commanded their attention not with fanfare or forceful demeanor but with words that gripped the mind and with a manner that would not let *them* go. Those words still grip our hearts. He did not dress to call attention to himself, as the priests and rabbis did, but he dressed in the garb of the poor, for he was one with them. He did not have an adventure-promising demeanor or voice but a sensible, calm spirit, and when he spoke, it was not on deep, hard-to-fathom topics. His subjects were spiritually deep, it is true, but they were spoken with simple words that all could understand. He freely gave of the river of life, and each heart was blessed—the troubled, the grieving, the poor, the hungry, and the lonely. All were benefitted. He spoke to the rejected one as if that person were the only one in the crowd needing solace, and he cheered the homeless, the childless, and those condemned as unworthy. His

words and look fell as sweetness on the parched soul. That's who Jesus was and is. He fed their physical hunger with loaves and fishes and then fed their thirsting spirit, and somewhere on that mountainside we all would have fit. Had we been there that day, perhaps hurting and alone, we would have heard the first word Jesus spoke—*blessed*—and our hearts would have been lifted and our minds cleared, unless, of course, we had felt no need. And so it is today—Laodicea-strong Christians are unaware of their need.

Be the children of your Father and be perfect

After pronouncing his blessings, Jesus taught the people about God. He compared the old ways of man's understanding with the true ways of God and then pronounced his first recorded "be ye" of the New Testament—"be ye therefore perfect" even as your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:48). Just a few verses earlier, though, he worded the "be-ye" concept slightly differently:

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That **ye** may **be** the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:44–45)

"*Ye may be*" in verse 45 uses the Greek verb *γίνομαι* or *ginomai* in the subjective mood, a mood which means something is possible, even probable, but not something that is certain. **Ye may be** children of your heavenly Father. The "be ye" of Matthew 5:48, however, is a different verb, *εἶμι* *σύ* or *eimi sy*, and is in a different mood—the indicative—a mood that asserts something to be true. The indicative mood speaks of something real and actual, not something that is only possible. It should be noted, however, that the verb is in the future tense, which some people may be inclined to say demonstrates the fact that we cannot be perfect in this life but in the future life, but remember Jesus was speaking to a people who were in great darkness, encumbered with the traditions and the commandments of men. He was opening their eyes that very day to the possibility of a new birth then and there. We know this is true because he told them to love their enemies and to do good to them that hate them, and this is only possible if we have been born of the Spirit. He was speaking of something those people had the opportunity of becoming at that time.

In Matthew 5:45, the Greek verb translated in "ye may be" the children of God is *ginomai*, and the Greek word translated "be ye" in verse 48 is *eimi sy*. One word conveys the sense of possibility, the other of certainty, but it is also important to know that a form, or a lemma, of *ginomai* is *gennao*, and *gennao* is translated *be born* in John 3:3. This helps us understand that when Jesus told the people to **be** the children of God, he was telling them of the new-birth experience.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born (*gennao*) again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

A person cannot love his enemies, bless them that curse him, do good to them that hate him, or pray for them who despitefully use him unless he is born from above. This new birth requires us to cooperate with God and, thus, is spoken of as a possibility because we all have the freedom to accept or to reject God's offer and help.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5)

Be ye wise

The next place Jesus states *be ye* is in Matthew 10:16:

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: **be ye** therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (Matthew 10:16)

We are to be wise as well as harmless. Just how wise is a serpent? Nowhere in the Bible are serpents praised. They are used to depict craftiness and deception, as in the Garden of Eden, or as poisonous and harmful as is the viper, and even to represent Satan himself, that old serpent. Surely God does not want us to be wise in the ways of deception and sin. One thing to consider, however, is that the serpent does not have a voice as we think birds and mammals have and does not even have the ability to persistently communicate as insects do, such as a chirping cricket, but they can make a hissing sound when threatened by forcing air over their single larynx. Usually, however, they are silent. They do not call or sing or communicate audibly in any way, except by a rare hiss or shake of the tail, and there can be wisdom in silence. Silence is often called golden.

But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (James 3:8)

We can show wisdom in not offending with our tongues, as James also noted:

If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, and *able* also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:2)

It is the tongue and the way we use our senses that give Satan a huge advantage in planning his attacks against us. He cannot read our minds, but he certainly hears what we say and sees what we do.

Satan cannot read our thoughts, but he can see our actions, hear our words; and from his long knowledge of the human family, he can shape his temptations to take advantage of our weak points of character. And how often do we let him into the secret of how he may obtain the victory over us. O that we might control our words and actions! How strong we would become if our words were of such an order that we would not be ashamed to meet the record of them in the day of judgment. How

different will they appear in the day of God from what they seem when we utter them. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, May 19, 1891, par. 9; also *Messages to Young People*, p. 328; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

Eve was not aware that **she had revealed her thoughts in audibly** conversing with herself; therefore, she was greatly astonished to hear her queries repeated by a serpent. She really thought that the serpent had a knowledge of her thoughts, and that he must be very wise. (Ellen White, *Confrontation*, p. 13.1)

All should **guard the senses**, lest Satan gain victory over them; for **these are the avenues of the soul**.

You will have to become a faithful sentinel over your **eyes, ears, and all your senses** if you would control your mind and prevent vain and corrupt thoughts from staining your soul. The power of **grace alone can accomplish this** most desirable work. (Ellen White, *Counsels to the Church*, p. 166.1–2)

If there is any way by which Satan can gain access to the mind, he will sow his tares and cause them to grow until they will yield an abundant harvest. **In no case can Satan obtain dominion over the thoughts, words, and actions, unless we voluntarily open the door and invite him to enter.** He will then come in and, by catching away the good seed sown in the heart, make of none effect the truth. (Ibid., p. 166.5)

Everything that can be done should be done to **place ourselves and our children where we shall not see the iniquity that is practiced in the world.** We should carefully guard the sight of our eyes and the hearing of our ears so that these awful things shall not enter our minds. (Ibid., p. 166.8)

Be ye not called

The next time Jesus states *be ye* is in Matthew 23:

But be not ye 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. (Matthew 23:8–11)

This quotation is seemingly self-explanatory, but a few comments may be helpful. First of all the Greek word translated “master” or “masters” means *teacher*. Rabbi also means *master, teacher, or even lord*, and the reference to father is the title bestowed on men, such as in Father Abraham. Jesus is saying not to look to men—the scribes and Pharisees, the rabbis, and even men who are revered, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—but to look to God for guidance and truth, and we are not to desire to be a person called master, for we are all brethren and are servants to one another.

Be ye not troubled

Another “be ye” verse to consider is Mark 13:7:

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet. (Mark 13:7)

The Greek word translated *troubled* also means frightened, alarmed, or aroused inwardly. Jesus does not want us to be frightened about what is coming upon the world. We know a time of trouble is coming that will try men’s souls:

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time . . . (Daniel 12:1)

But God has promised to protect and to provide for his people during this time:

. . . at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1)

Isn’t it wonderful to know those who live through the time of Jacob’s trouble will be like Daniel, for the Bible calls them Daniel’s people or “thy people.”

Christ will be to you a present help in every time of need, if you call upon Him, that you may **be like Daniel, whom no temptation could corrupt.** (Ellen White, *Fundamentals of Education*, p. 248.1)

God does not want his people to be troubled as events unfold at the end. Nebuchadnezzar, however, was troubled; in fact, trouble is noted throughout the book of Daniel:

And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him. . . . And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. (Daniel 2:1, 3)

Both of these words *troubled* come from the Hebrew word פָּאַם *pá'am*, and this word implies agitation, disturbance, and affliction; whereas, in the verses quoted below the word *troubled* comes from בְּחַל *b'hal* or *behal*, which implies terror, fright, and fear. Belshazzar had great terror, and even Daniel is described in Daniel 7:28 as having much terror.

I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled (*behal*) me. (Daniel 4:5)

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled (*behal*) him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble (*behal*) thee . . . (Daniel 4:19)

Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled (*behal*) him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. . . . Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled (*behal*), and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished. (Daniel 5:6, 9)

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled (*behal*) me. . . . As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled (*behal*) me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart. (Daniel 7:15, 28)

Trouble is also mentioned in other places in Daniel (Daniel 5:10; 11:44; and 12:1). Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Daniel were all troubled about supernatural events they had seen because they did not understand them, and Daniel was even told he would not understand some of what he had experienced because the words were to be closed up and sealed. Even though he did not understand, he did not lose faith because of it. Even though we may not understand things that happen to us, we also must not lose faith, if we are to be like Daniel, but we are to trust in the God of Elijah, Job, and Daniel to see us through.

If Daniel had seen the things that have transpired since his day and that are yet to transpire, it may have been more than he and others, until recently, could have borne. It might have caused them great consternation, and so it may have been in mercy that God sealed the prophecy. How could they have understood aircraft, bombs, robots, drones, and the dark planning of nations? Even today, we comprehend little of the things planned behind closed doors by Satan for the destruction of nations, peoples, and tribes; plans for the overthrow of the rule of God in the hearts of men by sports, music, entertainment, wars, disasters, purposeful bank losses, internet schemes to defraud the innocent of their savings, pandemics, diseases, new addictive drugs which proliferate around the globe, and much more, most of which, again, we know nothing about. Satan will impersonate Christ before long and even now impersonates human beings and angels of light, as he plans his atrocities with men of disobedience, as predicted over one hundred thirty years ago:

As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will impersonate Jesus Christ, and the world who has rejected the truth will receive him as the lord of lords, and king of kings. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 9, Ms 39, 1894, par. 11)

The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his miracle-working power. He will assume to personate the angels of light, to personate Jesus Christ. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 96.1)

As the crowning act in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Saviour's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will make it appear that Christ has come. In different parts of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of dazzling brightness, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13–15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that mortal eyes have yet beheld. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 624.2)

Be ye ready

Jesus also tells us to be merciful (Luke 6:36), to not be of a doubtful mind (Luke 12:29), and to be ready for the return of Jesus.

Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 24:44)

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. (Luke 12:40)

And to help us be ready, Jesus revealed the future and how to know when his coming draweth nigh:

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:4–14)

Luke 21 also records events indicating the nearness of the return of Jesus and adds a few details not mentioned by Matthew, such as signs in the heavens, betrayal by family and friends, men's hearts failing them for fear, and the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles.

Christ has given signs of His coming. He declares that we may know when He is near, even at the doors. **He says of those who see these signs, "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."** These signs have appeared. Now we know of a surety that the Lord's coming is at hand. "Heaven and earth shall pass

away,” He says, “but My words shall not pass away.” (White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 632.2)

The Greek word translated *generation* is *genea*, a form of the Greek word *ginomai* discussed earlier and “primarily signifies ‘a begetting, or birth’; hence, that which has been begotten, a family; or successive members of a genealogy . . . a race of people, possessed of similar characteristics, pursuits, etc. . . . or of the whole multitude of men living at the same time . . .” (W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*)

So, the English word *generation* translated from *genea* does not always mean the years attributed to the length of a generation, usually thirty to forty years. It can also mean successive members of a genealogy, a race of people, or a multitude of men living at the same time; however, **Ellen White connects** (in the above reference) **those who see**, i.e. know, that all of the signs of Christ’s coming have been fulfilled, including the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles, **with the generation** (Luke 21:32) **that shall not pass away**. (For more on the fulfillment of the times of the Gentiles, see *Old Paths* October 2006 through January 2007.)

We are to **be ready** for the return of Jesus, but how? We know parents, for example, have a work to do for their children and that teachers, preachers, and individuals have a similar work to do for themselves and for others. We also know that we are facing great challenges, and we want to be able to stand through the challenges and to stand firmly in the day of the Lord, when we will be severely questioned about the truth:

If God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when **we shall be brought before councils**, and every position of truth which we hold will be severely criticised. The time that we are now allowing to go to waste should be devoted to **the charge God has given us, of preparing for the approaching crisis. Much time should be spent in prayer**, that our garments of character may be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. (Ellen White, *The Review & Herald*, December 11, 1888, par. 17)

Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. He who marshals the stars in order in the heavens, whose word controls the waves of the great deep—the same infinite Creator will work in behalf of His people if they will call upon Him in faith. He will restrain all the forces of darkness until the warning is given to the world, and all who will heed it are prepared for His coming. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, December 14, 1905, Art. A, par. 3)

We should now acquaint ourselves with God by proving His promises. **Angels record every prayer that is earnest and sincere.** We should rather dispense with selfish gratifications than neglect communion with God.

The deepest poverty, the greatest self-denial, with His approval, is better than riches, honors, ease, and friendship without it. We must take time to pray. If we allow our minds to be absorbed by worldly interests, the Lord may give us time by removing from us our idols of gold, of houses, or of fertile lands. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 622.2)

So, one way to prepare is to spend much time in prayer. Another way is to know the Scriptures:

Who among our teachers are awake, and as faithful stewards of the grace of God are giving the trumpet a certain sound? Who are voicing the message of the third angel, telling the world to make ready for the great day of God? The message we bear to the world has the seal of the living God. **The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are to be combined in the work of fitting up a people to stand in the day of the Lord.**—Manuscript 96, 1899. (July 20, 1899.) (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 268.2)

Satan is now more earnestly engaged in playing the game of life for souls than at any previous time; and unless we are constantly on our guard, he will establish in our hearts, pride, love of self, love of the world, and many other evil traits. He will also use every possible device to unsettle our faith in God and in the truths of his word. If we have not a deep experience in the things of God, if we have not a thorough knowledge of his word, we shall be beguiled to our ruin by the errors and sophistries of the enemy. False doctrines will sap the foundations of many, because they have not learned to discern truth from error. **Our only safeguard against the wiles of Satan is to diligently study the Scriptures; to have an intelligent understanding of the reasons of our faith; and to faithfully perform every known duty.** The indulgence of one known sin will cause weakness and darkness, and subject us to fierce temptation. (Ellen White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 154.6)

Just before us is “the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.” Revelation 3:10. All whose faith is not **firmly established upon the word of God** will be deceived and overcome. Satan “works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” to gain control of the children of men, and his deceptions will continually increase. But he can gain his object only as men voluntarily yield to his temptations. Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to prepare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense. “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, **I also will keep thee**” (verse 10), is the Saviour’s promise. **He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him**

to be overcome by Satan. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 560.2)

Our only safeguard against the wiles of Satan is to **diligently study the Scriptures**; to have an intelligent understanding of the reasons of our faith; and to faithfully **perform every known duty**. . . . Now is the time when we are to **confess and forsake our sins** that they may go beforehand to judgment and be blotted out. Now is the time to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” It is dangerous to delay this work. Satan is even now seeking by disasters upon sea and land to seal the fate of as many as possible. **What is the defense of the people of God at this time? It is a living connection with heaven. If we would dwell in safety from the noisome pestilence, if we would be preserved from dangers seen and unseen, we must hide in God; we must secure the protecting care of Jesus and holy angels.** In these days of peril, the Lord would have us walk before him in humility. Instead of trying to cover our sins, he would have us confess them, as Joshua confessed the sins of ancient Israel. We profess to be the depositaries of God’s law. We profess to be building up “the old waste places,” and to be raising up “the foundations of many generations.” If this great and solemn work has indeed been committed to us, how important that we depart from all iniquity! (White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists*, pp. 154.6; 155.2)

In addition, we are to plead for the Holy Spirit:

Do not believe anything simply because others say it is truth. **Take your Bibles, and search them** for yourselves. **Plead with God that he will put his Spirit upon you**, that you may know the truth and understand its principles. If you gain an experience of this kind, there is nothing that will turn you from the truth. You will be like Daniel in the lions’ den, and like Joseph in Pharaoh’s prison. (Ellen White, *The Signs of the Times*, November 11, 1889, par. 10)

We must also be faithful to the commandments of God:

The angel with the writers ink horn will soon place a **seal** upon the foreheads of all who are **loyal and true to the commandments of God**. Then the four angels will let loose the four winds. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 8, Lt 146, 1893, par. 6)

And again, parents are to cooperate with God for the salvation of their children:

Parents, the Lord has shown me that if you wish to save your children, separate them from the world, keep them from other wicked children. Subdue their tempers and evil passions; teach them to obey you, then they can more easily obey the commandments of God. After you have done your duty, carry your children to God and plead His blessing upon them, and He that said, “Suffer

little children to come unto Me and forbid them not,” will be ready to listen to your prayers for them, and the seal or mark of the believing parents will cover the children if they are brought up right. (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 206.1)

If parents neglect their duty, and leave their children to indulge in wicked, evil passions, the destroying angel will cut them down, and you parents will have an awful account to give for the neglect of your children. You who have not done your duty, now awake and redeem the time. It is but short, but you can work faithfully and can do much for your children. God corrects us when we err and go astray from Him, and you should correct your children when they do wrong. It will be for their happiness here and hereafter.—Manuscript 5, 1854, 1, 2. (“Gather the Children,” June, 1854.) (Ibid., p. 206.2)

Another way to be ready is to “hold communion with God” which occurs when we study his word and pray:

The Bible is the most precious lesson book that you can study. In studying it, you hold communion with God. If you are an earnest Bible student, you will, when standing before a congregation, speak with power and assurance. (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 254.1)

Store the mind with the precious promises of God’s Word and hold communion with God by frequently repeating them. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol.4, Ms 9, 1883, par. 22)

And then we come to the command given us by Jesus—watch!

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore **be ye also ready**: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 24:42–44)

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:13)

Take ye heed, **watch** and pray: for ye know not when the time is. *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. **Watch** ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. **And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.** (Mark 13:33–37)

So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass away**, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my

words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. **Watch** ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:31–36)

Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not **watch**, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. (Revelation 3:3)

We are to watch because the time is at hand:

As the message of Christ's first advent announced the kingdom of His grace, so the message of His second advent announces the kingdom of His glory. And the second message, like the first, is based on the prophecies. The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. At that time, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Daniel 12:4, 10. The Saviour Himself has given signs of His coming, and He says, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." "**Watch** ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:31, 34, 36.

We have reached the period foretold in these scriptures. The time of the end is come, the visions of the prophets are unsealed, and their solemn warnings point us to our Lord's coming in glory as near at hand. (White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 234.4–235.1)

National Sunday Law

A. T. Jones watched as Senator Henry W. Blair introduced a bill for a national Sunday law into the Senate of the United States Congress on May 21, 1888. You can read the bill for yourself at <https://archive.org/details/s.-bill-50-2983>, but it begins by stating it is a bill:

To secure to the people the enjoyment of the first day of the week, commonly known as the Lord's day, **as a day of rest**, and to promote its observance **as a day of religious worship**. (<https://archive.org/details/s.-bill-50-2983>)

In 1888, A. T. Jones was co-editor of the Adventist religious liberty magazine, *American Sentinel*, and later became head of the church's religious liberty department. On

December 13, 1888, he spoke before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, of which Senator Blair was chair, and advocated for the separation of church and state and argued against the passage of the Blair bill. You can read his presentation in his book entitled *The National Sunday Law*, in which he stated in the introduction:

A national Sunday law is a question of national interest. . . . The subject is worthy of the careful attention of the whole American people. The principles of the American Constitution, the proper relationship between religion and the State, the distinction between moral and civil law, the inalienable civil and religious rights of men, —these are questions that never should become secondary in the mind of any American citizen. (A. T. Jones, *The National Sunday Law*, p. iii.2)

And then he later wrote:

The principle upon which we stand is that civil government is civil, and has nothing to do in the matter of legislation, with religious observances in any way. The basis of this is found in the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 22:21. When the Pharisees asked whether it was lawful to give tribute to Cesar or not, he replied: "Render therefore unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." (Ibid., p. 11.1)

But Senator Blair did not accept this reasoning and stated the majority had the right to decide what was to be rendered to Cesar, meaning the majority had the right to make laws governing worship.

The majority has a right to rule in what pertains to the regulation of society, and if Cesar regulates society, then the majority has a right in this country to say what we shall render to Cesar. (Senator Blair, quoted in *The National Sunday Law*, p. 28.3)

Again, Blair stated we have to obey regulations that are determined by the majority and then further solidified belief with the concept of the good of society:

Senator Blair.—We do not say that we must invade the condition of mind; but society has a right to make regulations, because those regulations are essential to **the good of society**. Society by a major vote establishes a regulation, and **we have to obey what is settled by the majority**. (Ibid., p. 31.6)

Even if a portion of the people dissented, the greater good must bear sway, even when mandating worship:

A belief in the existence of God, and reverence for the Creator, and a cultivation of that sentiment in society, is for the **good of society**; is, in fact, the basis of all law and restraint. (Ibid., p. 29.4)

These are some of the thoughts voiced in the Senate committee in 1888, and A. T. Jones faced them. The Blair

bill did not become law, and the concept of the good of society is not a forgotten idea today. It is used in support of vaccination, and Islam also adheres to the right of the good of society. According to the testimony on YouTube of a former Muslim, when a person leaves Islam they are considered to have committed treason and, as a result, must face Muslim apostasy law and Muslim punishment. The one who has left is not considered to have just changed his or her belief or to have a different opinion, he or she has betrayed and harmed the Muslim community and the general public as well, and **the interests and the safety of the public are greater than the traitor-to-Islam's own safety and rights**, he says, which means it is justifiable to kill the infidel. In fact they *must* be put to death because they are guilty of treason, and parents or friends often accept finding and killing the betrayer as a mandated responsibility.

But returning to Sunday laws, we also are faced with a movement for Sunday laws not only nationally but internationally. The European Sunday Alliance is the combined effort of several entities, both religious and secular: the Commission of the Bishops' Conference of the European Union, the Protestant church in Germany, the European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions, the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe, the European Services Workers Union, Don Bosco International, the Jesuit European Social Centre, the International Young Christian Workers, the German Sunday Alliance, and the Austrian Sunday Alliance. Their desire is to synchronize free time on Sunday by seeing "that all relevant EU legislation and non-legislative measures respect and promote the protection of a common weekly day of rest for all people living and working in the EU, which shall be in principle on a Sunday." This effort is to foster, among other things, "adequate time especially for families and young workers for worship and community, social & religious engagement." (Quotations are from the Alliance website at https://www.comece.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/03/European-Sunday-Alliance-EU-elections-manifesto-2024-draft-20231212_06.pdf.)

And then there is the New Apostolic Reformation:

The New Apostolic Reformation is a theological movement that combines elements of Pentecostalism, evangelicalism and the Seven Mountain Mandate to advocate for spiritual warfare to bring about Christian dominion over all aspects of society, and **end or weaken the separation of church and state**. NAR leaders often call themselves apostles and prophets. . . . American Republican politicians such as Mike Johnson [Speaker of the House], Doug Mastriano [Pennsylvania gubernatorial candidate in 2022], Marjorie Taylor Greene [U.S. representative], and Lauren Boebert [U.S. representative] and activists such as Charlie Kirk have aligned with it. (*Wikipedia*, "New Apostolic Reformation")

Today's push for a day of rest is coming from a coalition of ecclesiastical leaders and secular leaders. They claim the need for a day of rest not only to provide worship opportunities for all but also to provide a day of mental rest and a day for family time. There is, as well, a cry for a day of rest to help save the environment. If there is less need for travel and less need to heat or cool office and convention spaces, for example, the environment will benefit, and the final cry for a legislated day of worship will come because of the unprecedented chaos our nation will experience:

Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. *The nations of the world are eager for conflict*; but they are held in check by the angels. When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of Satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.

Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claim to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and *with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished*. Letter 79, 1900, pp. 12, 13. (To William Kerr, May 10, 1900.) (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, p. 145.3-4)

Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, **all the elements of strife will be let loose**. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. (White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 614.1)

Those who honor the law of God have been accused of bringing judgments upon the world, and they will be regarded as the cause of the **fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men** that are filling the earth with woe. (Ibid., p. 614.3)

Then an appeal for the greater good of the nation will be made:

As the Sabbath has become the special point of controversy throughout Christendom, and *religious and secular authorities have combined to enforce the observance of the Sunday*, the persistent refusal of a small minority to yield to the popular demand will make them objects of universal execration. It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that **it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown**

into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument many centuries ago was brought against Christ by the “rulers of the people.” “It is expedient for us,” said the wily Caiaphas, “that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” John 11:50. This argument will appear conclusive; and a decree will finally be issued against those who hallow the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, denouncing them as deserving of the severest punishment and giving the people liberty, after a certain time, to put them to death. Romanism in the Old World and apostate Protestantism in the New will pursue a similar course toward those who honor all the divine precepts. (Ibid., p. 615.2)

Brothers and sisters, are we watching? God is.

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. “*They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*” **Malachi 3:17**. If the blood of Christ’s faithful witnesses were shed at this time, it would not, like the blood of the martyrs, be as seed sown to yield a harvest for God. Their fidelity would not be a testimony to convince others of the truth; for the obdurate heart has beaten back the waves of mercy until they return no more. If the righteous were now left to fall a prey to their enemies, it would be a triumph for the prince of darkness. Says the psalmist: “*In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me.*” **Psalm 27:5**. Christ has spoken: “*Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.*” **Isaiah 26:20, 21**. Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life. (Ibid., p. 634.1)

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

(John 14:1–3)



Uganda Camp Meeting Report

By Allen Stump

A camp meeting was held in Uganda August 31–September 14 at the Nabumali High School near Mbale, Uganda. The Nabumali High School is a private school run by the Anglian Church. A large building for meetings and dorm rooms were rented to host the camp. Brother Jordan Opio and others organized the camp for one-true-God believers from all over Uganda and believers from any surrounding areas who could visit. While there were several church groups from Uganda present, there were at various times believers present from Kenya, Sudan, and even the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My wife, Sheri, and I were privileged to attend the camp till September 10.

The camp had various areas of study. One was on prophecy with studies in Daniel and Revelation and especially in issues in Daniel 11 (called the eastern question) and Revelation chapters 8–11 (called the western question). Another area dealt with what the believer’s responsibility should be to the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church and whether reorganization is necessary for the work to be finished in the last days. Lectures on health were given on most days were given, as well as studies on the sanctuary message.

There were medical missionaries who helped people with certain health issues and several nice children’s programs. There were also meetings for the women and men as separate units to learn more about being good husbands and fathers (future or present) and good wives and mothers (future or present).

Singing is a large part of the believers’ worship in Uganda, and we were treated with many songs each meeting as well as several selections from various church choirs, including choirs made up of young children who did a wonderful work.

The meetings would begin early in the morning and run till around 8:00 p.m. each night.

The camp was served food on a two-meal-a-day plan with simple fare, such as ugali, made of corn meal, beans, and sometimes flat bread. These items were served from large pots that had been cooked over open fires, with the bread fried in iron skillets. I was amazed at the amount of food some of the youth could eat but there were no overweight youth and few adults that would compare with the average American in the weight department!

Uganda has self-styled itself as “The Pearl of Africa.” One thing we found for sure is that the people are certainly some of the friendliest in the world and pearls of beauty. Although Sheri and I were the only “whities” at the camp, we felt perfectly at home all the time and in all situations. The love of the brethren was so genuine and sincere. Each person was a smaller pearl within the bigger pearl of the country.

For our part, Sheri and I had different but complementary roles.

Sheri would address the congregation most days with a health lecture. At times she was aided by Brother Stephen Omondi from Kenya who is a young medical missionary worker. She also addressed the sisters about home family life.

Similar to Sheri, I addressed men about family life issues. Mostly, however, I shared doctrinal studies clearly demonstrating that the Adventist corporate church had apostatized and that the call of the fourth angel was relevant to the believers. I then studied about church organization and how we relate to statements by Ellen White about no *new organization*. It was plainly shown that the corporate church, by accepting the new false god of the trinity, had stepped off the platform of eternal truth and that they were the ones in a new organization. A study of our history reveals that Ellen White, at times, called for reorganization in the work and that the work 1889 HSDA is doing is to reorganize the work among faithful brothers and sisters. We talked about how a local church and a local conference can be organized and united in such a manner that they, instead of working as independent atoms, can work as a unified army.

The interest to put the work in order in Uganda is at a high level, as well as it is among many of the brethren in neighboring Kenya. Pastors Zaddoch Opiyo and Tom Mose came from Kenya and were very supportive of the local efforts. Pastor Opiyo gave a rousing sermon on the latter rain and what we would need to see in the church to experience it.

As noted earlier, there were studies on the trumpets of Revelation. These were done by Brother Jordan and presented in the clearest manner I had ever heard on the issue of the Trinitarian v. Arian controversy in the battle for supremacy in the western empire of Rome. Most professed *historical Adventists* today accept the Trinity doctrine but fail to realize how much of the book of Revelation is dedicated to revealing it as a power that fought against those who worshiped the true God.

One special experience occurred on Sabbath. A sister we will call Ruth was very ill but wanted to be baptized. Sitting in the baptismal class, she was full of smiles and

was joyous at the thought of belonging to Christ. Satan, however, desperately wanted to prevent her baptism. Friday night she was quite sick and began to violently thrash about on a mattress during a health treatment. Then a demon began to speak from her mouth stating that he would not allow her to be baptized, that she had unforgiven sins that had not been confessed or forsaken, and that she had no right to be baptized. Several of us gathered around her for prayer, and after many prayers she was restful, and the demon seemed to leave her. Some of us were fasting and praying for her, and we continued the night in prayer. Once more, later that night, Satan attacked her, and through prayer there was deliverance. On Sabbath morning, a baptism was planned for about twenty souls. Ruth was so exhausted and weak that she had to have several sisters help her to the large bus which would take us to a river for the service.

When we arrived at the river, we organized the people and had prayer. I was chosen to be the one who would administer the right, and so I asked if Ruth could be baptized first before Satan could attack her again. With the help of several people, we got her into the river and lowered her into the watery grave. God gave her a great victory and by the time we left, she was doing better both physically and spiritually. She still has serious health issues, but one of my last pictures with the people was with Ruth, whose whole countenance had changed.

The work in Uganda is going forward a step at a time. They realize the value of the literature work, and Brother N. Lambert has a publishing ministry where they make copies of books like *Christ's Object Lessons*, *Last Day Events*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *The Great Controversy*. Because they lack many standard publishing tools, they use pocket knives to trim books and regular glue to bind books together, but God is blessing as they are making these available to the believers as inexpensively as possible.

The church in the USA was able to provide a computer, a video camera, wireless microphones, and other helpful pieces of AV equipment to the believers in Uganda. We thank you for helping to make this possible.

The effects of disease in Uganda were glaring at times. Many suffer on a regular basis from malaria



Brother Ben shared on the sanctuary

Uganda: the F



Sisters Sheri and Julie



Congregation



Brother Eric presenting



Sister Juviah with youth

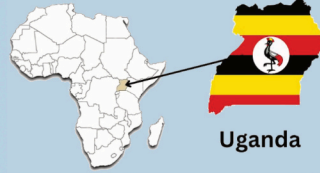


Beautiful children

Pearl of Africa



Ready for study



Sister Opio and Sister Sheri



Baptism in the Manafwa River



Brother Stephen Omondi



Making flat bread in the "kitchen"

and other such diseases. One sister appeared to have elephantiasis, but this did not stop her from singing, praising God, and serving as a very efficient translator for Sheri during her meetings with some of the non-English speaking sisters.

I have been on many mission trips and attended camp meetings literally all over the world, but this trip was perhaps the most rewarding set of meetings I have ever attended in the sense of making a difference in the lives of the believers. Sheri and I felt we had to be the most blessed of all and yet when we left, there were dozens of selfies to be taken with all the appreciative brothers and sisters.

Please keep the work in Uganda in prayer. If any would like to help with means for the work there, you can make donations through either Smyrna or 1889 HSDA and just mark it for the work in Uganda. 卐

A Request for Help from Uganda

My name is Paul Ngong. I am writing to request assistance for my sister, Rebecca Ngong who has rheumatic heart disease. This is a condition resulting from rheumatic fever where the heart valves become damaged from a bacterial infection, such as group A streptococcal (GAS) infections. This infection triggers the body's immune response, causing inflammation throughout the body, including in the heart. My sister has suffered from this disease until her mitral valve was damaged as a result of her body's immune response. Our best treatment option, according to her doctors, is to send her to Cairo, Egypt, for heart surgery.

Therefore I am here asking for your help with the travel and medical costs. The total amount needed is \$3,900. Anything you can do to help would be appreciated.

Your support towards my sister will save her life! Thank you so much. Christian regards, Paul Ngong

Editor's Note: Any help you wish to send can be forwarded via Smyrna Gospel Ministries 卐



Rebecca Ngong and her brother, Paul

“Youth's Corner,” continued from page 17 these questions, the tears came to their eyes. But the appeal to them to return to Christ was apparently without effect. The conviction came to me, however, that God had led me to this home for the purpose of reaching these backsliding children whom He desired to bring back to the fold, and this conviction was deepened by succeeding events.

“The next morning I started out in my work, hoping to find a suitable lodging place for my coworker and myself for the weekend, and again called at a home which I had visited the day before without any success, and this time readily made arrangements to secure board and lodging in exchange for a book. This was a surprise to me, and was the first indication that the Lord was leading me back over the territory.

“But the Lord's plan concerning my arrangements was not yet completed. On Friday I went to the place as appointed for meeting my fellow worker, but learned, to my surprise, that he had passed that point on Tuesday, and had gone on without leaving any word as to why he left or where he went. I was truly disappointed, for having secured, as I thought, a pleasant lodging place over Sabbath and Sunday for us both, was counting on his companionship. But here was a disappointment which proved to serve as God's appointment.

“I returned to the new boarding place, as arranged, but found everything in confusion. The people were packing up to go to New York City, and they explained that it was an unexpected, but necessary, move on their part. I soon saw that to stay with them was impossible, and was thankful that my fellow worker had, for some unknown reason, gone on, and there was only myself to look out for. But here I was with less than twenty cents in my pocket, among strangers, and it was nearly sunset on Friday. How was I to spend the Sabbath? What had become of my prayers? Had God forsaken me?

“All during the week the message on the slip of paper found by the side of the road had been in my mind and brought courage to me. Now it seemed to mock me. Why was God permitting all these reverses? But it was the Lord's plan that I return to that distant home where lived the man and his wife who had lost their way on the road to the kingdom.

“At the time I was there, on that stormy evening, I thought it useless to try to make arrangements to get lodging there, as their house was very small and they had a large family of children, although they did provide temporary accommodations for the night. But now I decided to return, and see if I might be permitted to find a comfortable place in the hay barn until after the Sabbath, when I could resume my search.

“To my surprise, these people gave me a warm welcome, and fixed up a comfortable room for me. They urged to me

Continued on page 23, column 2

Voting? Harris? Trump?

By Allen Stump

This earth is certainly experiencing volatile times. With wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, and various monumental events happening elsewhere, people are looking for direction from the United States of America. The upcoming election is polarizing the citizens as they anticipate voting soon. As Christians, should we be involved in these political matters and if so, should we be supporting someone like Vice President Harris or former President Trump, or what should we do?

One of the first points of instruction from the history of Adventism comes from a diary entry by Ellen White:

Attended meeting in the eve. Had quite a free, interesting meeting. After it was time to close, the subject of voting was considered and dwelt upon. James first talked, then Brother [J. N.] Andrews talked, and it was thought by them best to give their influence in favor of right and against wrong. They think it right to vote in favor of temperance men being in office in our city instead of by their silence running the risk of having intemperate men put in office. Brother [David] Hewitt tells his experience of a few days [since] and is settled that [it] is right to cast his vote. Brother [Josiah] Hart talks well. Brother [Henry] Lyon opposes. No others object to voting, but Brother [J. P.] Kellogg begins to feel that it is right. Pleasant feelings exist among all the brethren. O that they may all act in the fear of God.

Men of intemperance have been in the office today in a flattering manner expressing their approbation of the course of the Sabbathkeepers not voting and expressed hopes that they will stick to their course and, like the Quakers, not cast their vote. Satan and his evil angels are busy at this time, and he has workers upon the earth. May Satan be disappointed, is my prayer.—E. G. White diary, Sunday, March 6, 1859. (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 337.2–.3; brackets in original)

Historically Seventh-day Adventists did not make voting or not voting a test of faith, but being involved in political matters was certainly discouraged. For example, A. T. Jones noted:

In Judea, over eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus Christ walked among the people, and taught them of the kingdom of God. He is the perfect example for every Christian. To the extent to which he engaged in politics, the Christian may rightfully engage in politics. To the extent to which he sought to get control of earthly power, the Christian may properly exert himself for the purpose to-day.

Jesus Christ was the mystery of the manifestation of God in human flesh. And every true Christian presents the same mystery to-day, for in him Christ lives and manifests himself to the world. In his true followers Jesus Christ lives on earth to-day, and what he does to-day is what he did in Judea so long ago. For he changes not, but is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.” If he was a politician then, the Christian will be one now. But if not, then the Christian will not concern himself in that way. (A. T. Jones, *The American Sentinel*, September 23, 1897, page 581.6–.7)

Was Jones correct? The example of Jesus certainly is clear. Notice what Jesus said to Pilate:

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. (John 18:36)

If we are servants of Christ and if his kingdom is not of this world, then is our allegiance, our loyalty, to the kingdoms of this world? Paul wrote: “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20 ESV). The Greek word translated *citizenship* is *πολίτευμα* (*politeuma*). *Politeuma* means *government* or *citizenship*. It is easy to see the word politics in it. We can couple this with what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:

Now then we are **ambassadors for Christ**, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

An ambassador’s responsibility is to represent their own government in a foreign land. Their work is not to change that government or to meddle in its internal affairs, except as it relates to the citizens of the country he or she represents. Therefore, Christians are never, in the fullest sense, citizens of any kingdom of this world, for they belong to the kingdom of Christ and are to stay out of the temporal affairs of the land they live in, except where it affects the kingdom of Christ and his citizens.

The following are some counsels from Christ through his servant which should be well considered:

The Lord would have His people bury political questions. On these themes silence is eloquence. Christ calls upon His followers to come into unity on the pure gospel principles which are plainly revealed in the word of God. We cannot with safety vote for political parties; for we do not know whom we are voting for. We cannot with safety take part in any political scheme. We cannot labor to please men who will use their influence to re-

press religious liberty, and to set in operation oppressive measures to lead or compel their fellow-men to keep Sunday as the Sabbath. The first day of the week is not a day to be revered. It is a spurious sabbath, and the members of the Lord's family cannot participate with the men who exalt this day, and violate the law of God by trampling upon His Sabbath. The people of God are not to vote to place such men in office; for when they do this, they are partakers with them of the sins which they commit while in office.

We are not to compromise principle by yielding to the opinions and prejudices which we may have encouraged before we united with God's commandment-keeping people. We have enlisted in the army of the Lord, and we are not to fight on the enemy's side, but on the side of Christ, where we can be a united whole, in sentiment, in action, in spirit, in fellowship. Those who are Christians indeed will be branches of the true vine, and will bear the same fruit as the vine. They will act in harmony, in Christian fellowship. They will not wear political badges, but the badge of Christ.

What are we to do, then?—Let political questions alone. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” [2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.] What can there be in common between these parties? There can be no fellowship, no communion.

The word “fellowship” means participation, partnership. God employs the strongest figures to show that there should be no union between worldly parties and those who are seeking the righteousness of Christ. What communion can there be between light and darkness, truth and unrighteousness? None whatever. Light represents righteousness; darkness, unrighteousness. Christians have come out of darkness into the light. They have put on Christ, and they wear the badge of truth and obedience. They are governed by the elevated and holy principles which Christ expressed in His life. . . . (Ellen White, *Gospel Workers*, pp. 391.2–392.3; brackets and ellipsis in original)

I call upon my brethren who are appointed to educate, to change their course of action. It is a mistake for you to link your interests with any political party, to cast your vote with them or for them. Those who stand as educators, as ministers, as laborers together with God in any line, have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven. The Lord calls upon them to stand as a separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers. His people are

to possess the elements of reconciliation. (Ibid., p. 393.2)

The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.3–4)

Our work is to watch, and wait, and pray. Search the Scriptures. Christ has given you warning not to mingle with the world. We are to come out from among them and be separate, “and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18). Whatever the opinions you may entertain in regard to casting your vote in political questions, you are not to proclaim it by pen or voice. Our people need to be silent upon questions which have no relation to the third angel's message. If ever a people needed to draw nigh to God, it is Seventh-day Adventists. There have been wonderful devices and plans made. A burning desire has taken hold of men or women to proclaim something, or bind up with something; they do not know what. But the silence of Christ upon many subjects was true eloquence. (White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 2, p. 336.1)

We are not as a people to become mixed up with political questions. All would do well to take heed to the Word of God, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers in political strife, nor bind with them in their attachments. There is no safe ground in which they can stand and work together. The loyal and the disloyal have no equal ground on which to meet. (Ibid., p. 336.3)

Youth's Corner—On the Trail of the Colporteur Evangelist—A Story of Miracles and Providences

(On the Trail of the Colporteur Evangelist was compiled by the General Conference Publishing Department of Seventh-day Adventists. We are sharing Chapter 9 this month.)

A colporteur in the British field relates an experience in a small village in the Western Highlands of Argyllshire, Scotland:

“I had canvassed the district thoroughly, and was waiting for the arrival of my books from the tract society. I had planned for my books to reach me early in the week, that I might leave the district on Friday for another center. The books, however, did not arrive until Thursday, and I felt disappointed that my plans could not be carried out. But I soon learned that the Lord had another plan for me. The delay caused me to remain in the village until the next week. On Sunday morning, one of the villagers with whom I had become acquainted, asked me if I would take charge of the evening church service, as the minister had suddenly been called away. At once the impression came to me that here was the reason that my books had been delayed in reaching me, and I felt quite clear as to my duty. I willingly complied with the request.

“I had attended services in the Scottish churches previously, and was somewhat familiar with their form of service. After seeking the Lord for guidance, I was led to choose for my subject, ‘The Signs of the Times.’ During the meeting the Spirit of the Lord came very near. My brother canvasser and I both felt assured that the Lord had planned for that meeting. The next day, as we went about our delivery, the people expressed deep interest in the message presented, and regretted that we were about to leave the district, as they wanted to learn more about the Bible. We were enabled to scatter our books generously throughout the neighborhood, however, and believe that our disappointment was according to His appointment, and that the seed sown will bring forth a bountiful harvest of souls.”

THE WEEK WHEN ALL PLANS FAILED

“During the summer of 1915,” says a colporteur, “I put in the hardest but most blessed week in my five years’ experience in the literature ministry. It was the hardest week, because apparently everything was against me and all my plans failed. It was the most blessed, because through it all God’s guiding presence was manifest, and time has revealed His appointment and purpose in all the disappointments, trials, and hardships.

“My colaborer was inexperienced, and somewhat discouraged. We were working a large county, and it was our

custom to secure board and room with the fanners, paying our way with books. Our plan was to separate for work during the week, meeting at some particular point for the Sabbath and Sunday. On this particular week it had become necessary to change our headquarters, and as we separated on Monday morning it was with the understanding that we would meet at a certain railroad station on Friday afternoon, and that during the week I was to make suitable arrangements for our next lodging place.

“On Monday I canvassed in a small village, with fair success; and on Tuesday morning I started toward the territory in which we desired to settle for a time. Just before, my first attempt to secure a boarding place, I sought God in prayer; and as I prayed I was thrilled with a peaceful joy. As I arose from prayer, a piece of writing paper fluttering in the breeze by the side of the road attracted my attention, and the thought flashed through my mind, ‘What if there should be on that paper a message from God to you!’ Rapidly following this thought came the suggestion that such was a foolish notion, and that I must not allow myself to become fanatical. Nevertheless, I stooped and picked up the paper, and there, clearly written with pencil, were the following words: ‘Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.’ Ps. 17:8.

“How this slip of paper came to be there, I do not know; but I accepted it as a message from God to me, and rejoiced in the assurance which it gave that God would care for me under all circumstances; although it occurred to me that possibly some special hardship awaited me, for which I needed special encouragement. The events of the week fully sustained this impression. Every effort to arrange with the people for room and board was a failure. At every house some excuse was given — sickness, moving, cleaning house, entertaining company.

“On Wednesday night, having tried every place in the neighborhood we had chosen, but without success, I was compelled to go to a section of the country at a very inconvenient distance from where we felt that we needed to be, and to which I would not have chosen to go. A heavy rain storm came on, and I was obliged to seek shelter in the nearest house.

“Here in this home I found a man and his wife who at one time were Seventh-day Adventists, but had given up hope and dropped out by the way. We had an interesting but, to me, sad visit. Many questions were asked about the various leaders in the cause of God,—where they were, and if still believing the message, etc., and as I answered

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Who Left Whom?

By Allen Stump

Former United States President Ronald Reagan first voted in the 1932 election for Franklin Roosevelt. The country was in the midst of the great depression. Roosevelt had promised to greatly cut government spending and reduce government regulations and bureaucracy. At that time Reagan aligned himself with the Democratic Party. In later years, explaining his move to become a member of the Republican Party, he stated, “I didn’t leave the Democratic Party, it left me.”¹

My grandfather, Oscar H. Counts, was at one time the chairman of the Democratic Party in Roane County, West Virginia, where I grew up. He named his first son after former President Franklin Roosevelt. All of his children were raised to respect and be loyal to the Democratic Party, including his last son, Oscar. Talking to my uncle recently, he stated, much like Reagan, that the Democratic Party he knew growing up is NOT the same party and that he did not leave his party, his party left him.

Yet, in our American landscape of politics, there is still a party that goes by the name “Democratic Party,” but that party is clearly nothing like the party of early Democrats or even of those fifty years ago. So, while it is still called the Democratic Party, it is indeed a very different organization.²

The point that should be clearly understood is that just because an organization or entity uses a certain name, it does not mean that it still stands for the same purposes and principles upon which it was founded. Today within the Advent movement there is confusion on the issue of what the church is. The General Conference would like you to believe that they are the church which Ellen White helped to establish. But the question begs, what constitutes the true church? We could even ask, what makes the various different denominations different churches? Why are Baptists Baptists, and what makes the Catholics different? Southern Baptists may be known for fried chicken fellowship dinners and Seventh-day Adventists for their veggie trays, but this is not what makes them different.

1. https://www.reaganfoundation.org/programs-events/webcasts-and-podcasts/podcasts/throwback-thursdays-with-president-reagan/throwback-thursday-with-president-reagan-season-1-ep-51-republicanism/?srsltid=AfmBOoo5C58CQ42-ygH-mIG_EdY9UilzuuraopLFpGNFGcB-HqGZRrjwS
2. The same certainly could be said for the Republican Party to some varying degree.

It should be very apparent that it comes down to the different doctrines, or teachings, which each church presents.

True doctrines make the true church, and false doctrines make false churches.

Paul sums this up when he states that “the church of the living God,” is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” If truth is not at the center of a church, it is not the church of God, no matter what its profession. A bar may have the name “Paradise” on a sign in front of its establishment, but that does not make it paradise.

The central truth of Christianity is the teaching that Jesus is the Son of God.

When Jesus questioned the disciples about his identity, Peter responded:

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (Matthew 16:16)

To this Jesus replied:

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:17–18)

Concerning this we are told:

The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer’s faith. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 412.3)

Peter had expressed the truth which is the foundation of the church’s faith . . . (Ibid., p. 413.5)

In the 19th century, Seventh-day Adventists were different from other churches because they kept the seventh-day Sabbath, did not believe in the Trinity doctrine, and believed in the sanctuary message of 1844, with other uncommon positions. If we were to take away those early teachings, would those people still be Seventh-day Adventists? Obviously not!

So, the questions must be answered. Have any of the major fundamental points of 19th-century Adventism been changed in the 20th or in the 21st century? If they have been changed, then it cannot be the same church.

The facts show that there have been major doctrinal changes on the doctrine of God and Christ and on the sanctuary message, with other teachings as well. These are easy to document and even boldly proclaimed by the corporate church.

At the Annual Council in 1979, prior to the 1980 General Conference Session when there were major changes

officially voted by the General Conference in session, the General Conference president at that time, Neal C. Wilson, stated:

Our doctrines cannot be changed without changing the nature of the church. Let the word go out from this Annual Council that any attempt to tear down the pillars of the faith will be resisted. (*Adventist Review*, November 8, 1979, speech given at Annual Council, Washington, D. C., October 1979)

Although Wilson stated that they would attempt to protect the pillars of our faith, that did not happen.

The doctrine of the Trinity was voted as a part of the new statements of belief. No longer would we have the fundamental principles of the pioneers, but now we would have a new theology. This theology, especially on the Trinity doctrine, is so firmly established that former professor George Knight could write:

Most of the founders of Seventh-day Adventism would not be able to join the church today if they had to subscribe to the denomination's Fundamental Beliefs.

More specifically, most would not be able to agree to belief number 2, which deals with the doctrine of the Trinity. (George Knight, *Ministry*, October 1993, p. 10)

Think of what this is saying! Men like Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, and even James White could not belong to the corporate church today! Could that church be the true church? Certainly not! It is no longer the pillar and ground of truth. How could it be the true church today?

In 1903 Ellen White wrote out a prophecy that to some might seem cryptic but, in reality, was straightforward. She wrote:

The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? **The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established.** Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice; **but God being removed**, they would place their dependence on human

The truth which Peter had confessed is the foundation of the believer's faith. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 412.3)

power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure. (Ellen White, *Letters and Manuscripts*, vol. 18, Lt 242, 1903, par. 13; see also *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 204; all emphasis in this article supplied unless otherwise noted)

Ellen White prophesied of an attempt of Satan to change the church. The prophecy does not give an absolute answer to if he would be successful or not, but she writes what would happen were he to succeed.

First point: "The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church would be discarded." This has certainly happened with the new theology on God. There is also a sanctuary theology that comes directly from the apostate book, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*. No longer is the man of sin identified, nor is the mark of the beast identified. The incarnation of Christ has been diluted from prior statements and more.

Second point: "Our religion would be changed." Certainly if the doctrines have been changed, the religion has been changed. In the place of God's standards of holiness and true beauty, we see sanctuaries with the sisters wearing colorful cosmetics and jewelry, and on what should be sacred platforms, we see drums and bass guitars, as well as ministers preaching in blue jeans and tee shirts, and we see fried chicken and meats served at fellowship dinners.

Third point: "The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error." If you dare to believe the truths of the first fifty years of the church, you will be accounted a heretic. Today the Trinity doctrine is considered so orthodox that if you are a vocal opponent to it, you will be disfellowshipped.

Fourth point: "A new organization would be established." Despite retaining the name Seventh-day Adventist, a new organization has been established directly contrary to the counsels given to us.

We cannot now step off the foundation that God has established. We cannot now enter into any new organization; for this would mean apostasy from the truth. (Ibid., vol. 20, Manuscript 129, 1905, par. 6)

Notice that stepping off the foundation that God has established is equivalent to “apostasy from the truth.”

Fifth point: “Books of a new order would be written.” The literature that could qualify is numerous and dangerous to souls. Books like *Questions on Doctrine*, *Movement of Destiny*, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, and more now replace the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible.

Sixth point: “A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.” Today it is seldom a minister can be ordained unless he obtains a Master of Divinity degree. Yet even in Bachelor-level studies, many classes almost totally ignore the Bible and, instead, study what others have written about the Bible or even philosophy.

Seventh point: “The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it.” It is not uncommon now for church members and even ministers to eat at restaurants on Sabbath. Sacred music during Sabbath worship is replaced with modern rock and roll and hip hop type of music. Celebration-style worship is being used more and more at many churches.

Eighth point: “Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement.” The leadership of the church is clearly on record that they will never return to the teachings of the pioneers. The truth once taught will never be allowed within the church again.

Ninth point: “The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice; but God being removed . . .” Lip service is given to virtue, but no true heartfelt sorrow for sin or repentance is experienced. Notice carefully that it says “but God being removed.” It does not say God leaves or has left but, rather, that God has been removed or shut away from the church! Could there be a more terrible indictment? A study of the prophecy of Jesus in Luke 21:24 and several statements from the Testimonies show this has been fulfilled.

Tenth point: “Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure.” The sand represents not building upon the words of Christ but, rather, upon the teachings of men. The only part of this prophecy which has not been fulfilled yet is that “storm and tempest” have not yet swept “away the structure.”

Just as former President Reagan stated that he did not leave the principles of the older Democrat Party but that the party left him, it can be honestly stated that many faithful souls have not left the *church* but the church has left them!

It might be said that the new theology is a better theology, that the changes which have been made in the 19th and 20th centuries are progress, but this does not agree with the

Bible nor the testimony of Jesus. As we have noticed, the platform of truth was established early in our experience, at least fifty years before 1903. Further, writing in 1881, Christ, through his servant, declared:

It is as certain that we have the truth as that God lives; and Satan, with all his arts and hellish power, cannot change the truth of God into a lie. While the great adversary will try his utmost to make of none effect the word of God, truth must go forth as a lamp that burneth. (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 595.4)

Please note that Ellen White did not say merely that *she had the truth*. She wrote that “we have the truth.” There is a school of thought which declares that while the pioneers were non-trinitarian, Ellen White was really a trinitarian and had to slowly bring the truth into the church, but the above statement forbids the honest thinker from believing this. She declared that “we have the truth.” The *we* is the church and herself. How sure was she that they had the truth? As sure as “that God lives!” Further, Satan cannot change that truth into a lie. Though Satan, as the father of lies (John 8:44), would try to deceive the remnant, the faithful will be not taken in by his deceptions.

The idea of separating from a church one has been born in, raised up in, and nurtured in is not easy to contemplate. But that decision is not really one the faithfuls to need to make because it has already been done by the corporate church. They have started a new organization and so separation becomes necessary if we are to honor the command of Revelation 18:4. Concerning early Christians 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.**

Well would it be for the church and the world if the principles that actuated those steadfast souls were revived in the hearts of God’s professed people. There is an alarming indifference in regard to the doctrines which are the pillars of the Christian faith. The opinion is gaining ground, that, after all, these are not of vital importance. *This degeneracy is strengthening the hands of the agents of Satan, so that false theories and fatal delusions*

which the faithful in ages past imperiled their lives to resist and expose, are now regarded with favor by thousands who claim to be followers of Christ. (Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 45.3–46.1))

Unity is a wonderful thing, but it is biblical unity that is needed, unity upon scriptural truth.³ Any other kind of unity should be met with “difference, and even war.”

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ’s withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light, and those that bore it were forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth.** In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching **obliged to leave the church of their fathers**, that they may render obedience. (Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.2)

Are you longing for truth? Is truth more important than institutionalism to you? If truth is vital to you and your church is not teaching vital truth the like the early Reformers, you are “obliged to leave the church” of your fathers. *Obliged* means to “make (someone) legally or morally bound to an action or course of action: doctors are obliged by law to keep patients alive while there is a chance of recovery” (*New Oxford American Dictionary*). To be obliged to do something means it is not optional, if you wish to be in harmony with God.

Perhaps you might not see the truth about God or even the sanctuary teaching as important or as a pillar of our faith, but according to the Bible, the church Christ established teaches that Jesus is the Son of God. Further we are told,

3. “Our church members see that there are differences of opinion among the leading men, and they themselves enter into controversy regarding the subjects under dispute. Christ calls for unity. But He does not call for us to unify on wrong practices. The God of heaven draws a sharp contrast between pure, elevating, ennobling truth and false, misleading doctrines. He calls sin and impenitence by the right name. He does not gloss over wrongdoing with a coat of untempered mortar. I urge our brethren to unify upon a true, scriptural basis.” (Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 175.1)

Those who seek to remove the old landmarks are not holding fast; they are not remembering how they have received and heard. Those who try to bring in theories that would remove **the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary or concerning the personality of God or of Christ are working as blind men.** They are seeking to bring in uncertainties and to set the people of God adrift without an anchor. (Ellen White, *Manuscript 62*, 1905, par. 14; published in *Ye Shall Receive Power*, p. 235.4)

Let us not be as blind men and women. If you are holding to the truth, you have not left the true church, but what has become a false church has left you and, worse, has left God. They have created a new organization even though they still use the same name.

What should the faithful do? While we are counseled to not form a new organization there were times that Ellen White called for reorganization. In 1901 strong calls were made to reorganize the work.

That these men should stand in a sacred place, to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,—that is past. What we want now is a reorganization. We want to begin at the foundation, and to build upon a different principle. (Ellen White, *General Conference Bulletin*, April 3, 1901 par. 25)

There are several brothers and sisters around the world at this time who are trying to reorganize the church under the banner of truth. The corporate church has tried to trademark the name *Seventh-day Adventist* and several other similar titles to keep the faithful from using that name. When some faithful brethren have tried to use this name, the corporate church has sued the loyal brethren in civil court. The corporate church has millions of dollars with which to defend what it calls its *good name*. This makes it almost impossible to use the name *Seventh-day Adventist*. How sad that a church which once believed in religious liberty and would even help the downtrodden with legal expenses and moral support would turn to the state to enforce their decrees.

Those faithful to the truths of the Bible with whom we are working to reorganize have taken the name *1889 HSDA*. The 1889 reflects the truths which our pioneers stood for in that time, and the HSDA stands for **H**istoric **S**eventh **D**ay **A**dventist.

If you are interested in helping to reorganize the work and want to join in church membership with others who are banding together to work, not as independent atoms, but rather as a body of believers, please contact us for details on how you can be a part of that body.



Hid in My Heart

By Sheri Stump

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Psalm 119:11)

Many people are convinced that they cannot memorize scripture, especially as they get older. I have always struggled to retain information. I am one of those people who had to study to get good grades in school. I have always admired people who remember names and places and can ace tests without cracking open the book. However, even though I don't learn easily, I can learn.

I have heard how hard it is to learn another language when you are older. Some have even said it is impossible. They say that the brain can't retain a new language and the mouth cannot speak the sounds of another language when you are an adult. Well, I moved to Costa Rica when I was in my early 50's, where I lived for two years, and I moved to Ecuador in my late 50's and lived there eight years. I needed to communicate. I had to study and practice and be embarrassed when I made mistakes. I learned Spanish enough to communicate fairly well.

I have learned many scripture verses and don't plan to stop learning.

I began learning scripture verses when I was young. I wanted to go to a summer church camp when I was just nine years old. Our family was poor and could not afford to send me. The church I attended decided that for any youth who learned fifty memory verses with references they would pay their way to church camp. I didn't think I could do it, but I tried, and little by little I learned those verses and memorized my way to summer camp.

I am convinced that we must store God's Word in our hearts. I have not always been faithful in scripture memorization, but I have had times when I have put forth effort to memorize and have accomplished more than I thought possible. This is true even now in my late 60's.

In this article I will share a technique I use that works well for me.

We will make "Hid in My Heart" a regular feature in *Old Paths*. I will be sharing a few scripture verses each month and will be working to put them into my heart. I invite you to join me. I assure you that with a bit of effort you can memorize too.

First Peter 3:15 says: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with

meekness and fear." I plan to memorize key scripture verses that will prepare us to "give an answer for the hope that is in you".

We will begin with verses about who God is. Each month we will memorize a few key scriptures for each of our fundamental beliefs.

Soon we will have a scriptural answer for what we believe, and we will know where it is found in the Bible.

As we near the end times, I feel an urgency to have this knowledge in my heart. I believe that very soon we will be asked why we believe the way we do. We may be called into court to testify, and we need a foundation based on scripture that is solid. We will each stand alone some day.

Jesus said in John 14:26 that the Comforter will "bring all things to your remembrance." My question is, If we have not made the effort to memorize scripture how will God bring those things to our remembrance? How will the Holy Spirit of God bring scriptures to our remembrance that we have not previously memorized?

There are also many Ellen White quotes about putting God's word into our hearts. Monthly I will include some of these quotes to encourage you, quotes such as:

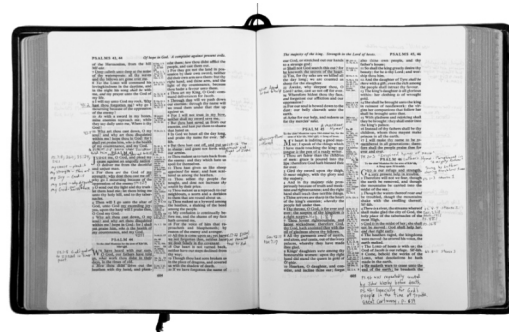
Build a wall of scriptures around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the Scriptures to memory, and then throw right back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, "It is written." This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them. Be determined that you will not live without the presence and light and love of Jesus, and then you will have precious victories, and will know who is the Source of your strength. (Ellen White, *The Review and Herald*, April 10, 1888, par. 9)

The time will come when many will be deprived of the written Word. But if this Word is printed in the memory, no one can take it from us.—Manuscript Releases 20:64 (1906). (Ellen White, *Last Day Events*, p. 67.5)

There are different ways to memorize a verse but one way that has been helpful to me is to write the verse down on an index card and then write the first initial of each word in this scripture verse on the opposite side of the card. I will illustrate this with our five memory verses for this month.

Memory Verse #1

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: (Deuteronomy 6:4)



You can see that the first initial of each word in this scripture verse is bolded.

The text prompt looks as follows: H,OI:T LoGioL:. D 6:4 or if you wish a simpler form: HOITLOGIOL.

With this method I don't miss any words and have a prompt to help me remember what the next word is. It works!

I was delighted one day when I found a small booklet that my husband had. It was on one-initial prompts for the first chapter of Revelation. Without having memorized that chapter, I recognized it and was able to say almost the entire chapter with the one-letter-prompt method. I had heard the first chapter of Revelation enough that it was easy.

Memory Verse #2

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; by whom are all things, and we by him. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

The text prompt looks as follows: BtutiboG,tF,owaat,aw-ih;bwaat,awbh. 1C8:6

Memory Verse #3

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)

The text prompt looks as follows: FtioG,aombGam,tmCJ. 1T2:5

Memory Verse #4

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (Ephesians 4:6)

The text prompt looks as follows: OGaFoa,wiaa,ata,aiya. E4:6

Memory Verse #5

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. (1 Corinthians 11:31)

The text prompt looks as follows: TGaFooLJC,wibfe,k-tlln. 1C11:31

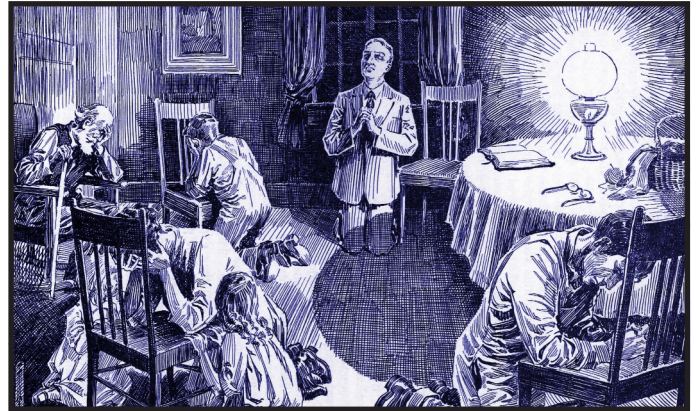
These are the five verses we will be memorizing this month. Please don't forget to memorize the scripture reference. We need to know where to find these important verses. We can do this!

Next month I will include more tips, and if you have other methods that works well for you, let me know, and please let me know if you are memorizing with me. You can reach me at sheri1844@icloud.com.



"Youth's Corner", continued from page 14

make their home my headquarters as long as I was in that vicinity, and I accepted the invitation, and made their home my lodging place for four weeks, prayerfully endeavoring to fulfill the mission which I felt sure God had determined for me.



The Colporteur Evangelist prays with the family.

"My stay in the home produced no immediate results, but I never had the least doubt that God had used the adverse circumstances of the week to send me there. For a time I corresponded with the family, and then, for nearly five years, lost entire trace of them. One day, to my happy surprise, I received the following letter:

"Dear Friend and Brother:

"After many days, your prayer has been answered. God's Spirit has at last prevailed on me to return to the fold. It has been necessary for the death angel to visit us twice, and very nearly several other times; and for many losses to come to us. But I now have turned my face toward God, and my family with me. Of course we are weak,— not in faith, but because of evil practices. But prayer and the Bible shall guide us. We are praying that God will send you to us in the near future, that we may be further strengthened, and that if possible we may arrange for a few cottage meetings, that perchance some of our neighbors may be led to Christ. Pray for us, write to us, and come and see us."

"Thus did God work through various unexpected channels to accomplish His design. Had my companion joined me, as proposed, there would not have been room for both of us with this family; had I been able to find a lodging place earlier in the week, I might never have found them; and had not the people with whom I had arranged to stay, suddenly been called to New York, I might never have returned to the home in which I had of necessity taken refuge during the storm, the inmates of which had strayed beyond the fold, but not beyond the reach of the Good Shepherd."

To Be Continued



The Herb Garden

By Winnifred Anderson

Last month we discussed some about rosemary, a herb that is native to the Mediterranean area. We promised a nice recipe for this month, and it is:

Rosemary Potatoes

Ingredients:

- ☞ garlic
- ☞ rosemary
- ☞ olive oil
- ☞ salt
- ☞ potatoes

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare your potatoes by washing them. (Use Yukon Gold or red potatoes, and you will not need to peel your potatoes). Cut into somewhat uniform wedges.

Make the marinade by placing minced garlic, pink salt, olive oil, and chopped rosemary leaves in a small bowl and mix well.

Place your potato wedges into a large bowl and dress with the marinade.

Use parchment paper to line a baking tray and place potatoes on the parchment paper.

Bake potatoes until crispy on the outside and tender inside (about 30 minutes). Then increase upper temp to 450 degrees Fahrenheit. Watch the potatoes closely until they reach the crispiness you desire.

This marinade goes well with any mixture of vegetables you like roasted. Experiment and enjoy!

Next month we will explore parsley!



Picture courtesy of kae71463 flickr

Rosemary Potatoes

California Meetings

By Allen Stump

Loma Linda

Meetings were held August 24 at the Civic Center Auditorium in Loma Linda, California. Brother Kevin Whang and other helpful brethren made the arrangements. There were three main areas of study: the truth about God, proper baptism, and why keeping the feasts is not an option for believers today.

The meetings were well attended with some even coming from Arizona to attend. The discussion times were lively but always respectful and done in Christian courtesy.



Picture courtesy of Kevin Whang

A wonderful fellowship lunch was provided, and the fellowship was a blessing to all. If you missed out on these meetings, do not lose heart because more meetings are planned.

Pismo Beach

Meetings in the Pismo Beach area are being planned for October 30–November 3. The venue is not yet chosen, but we hope to have it secured very soon. The scheduled speakers are Rob Chisum, Pastor Daniel Mesa, and Pastor Allen Stump. Please contact us at 1-304-732-9204 for the location and further details.

The Lord wants you to come to the meeting and bring your families, . . . Put forth extra exertions. Better, far better let the business suffer than to neglect the opportunity to hear the message God has for you at this time. You need all the light you can obtain. (Ellen White, *Experiences in Australia*, p. 112.4)



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