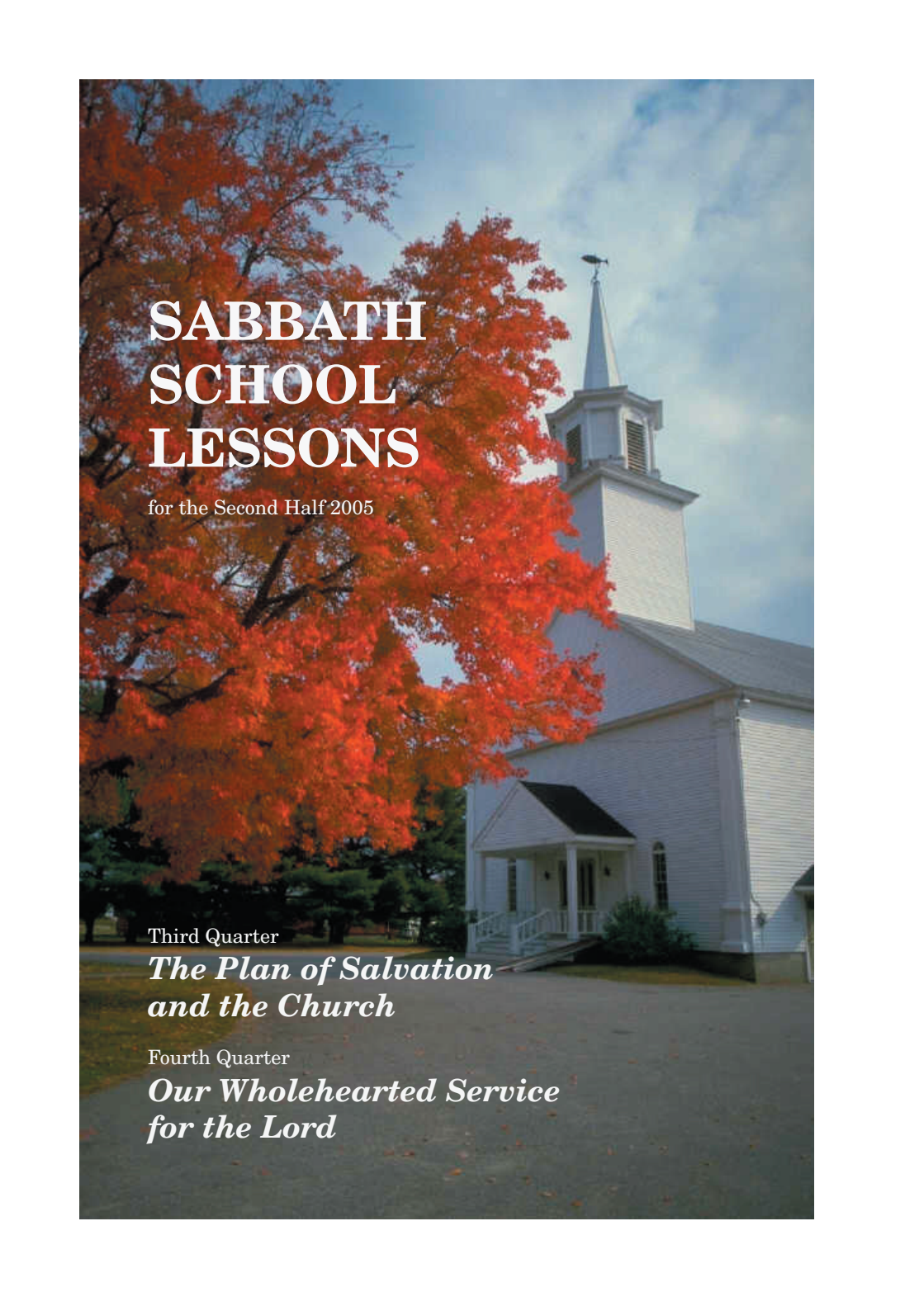




SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the Second Half 2005

Third Quarter

***The Plan of Salvation
and the Church***

Fourth Quarter

***Our Wholehearted Service
for the Lord***

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by the Publishing Department of the General Conference

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Issued by the
General Conference
International Missionary Society
of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement

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INTRODUCTION

“‘God is love.’ (1 John 4:16). His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 33.

All the creatures of God, and the plan of salvation, testify that God is love. By giving His only begotten Son to save the world that is in enmity with God, He has demonstrated what love is. In order to reveal this mysterious love, God established the church, through which He will display His ultimate and bountiful love in the future.

“God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory.” –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 356.

“From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to ‘the principalities and powers in heavenly places,’ the final and full display of the love of God. Ephesians 3:10.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

Satan, therefore, reveals his enmity against God on His church so that His plan of salvation wouldn’t be fulfilled. The church has been the target of Satan’s attack throughout the ages. But God always had His own faithful people, through whom He has been fulfilling His purpose.

Satan’s works in the last days are increasing. The Laodicean church, that represents this period, has progressively lost its strength to perform God’s purpose and is drifting without the compass. As a consequence, at the present time, numerous churches and independent organizations are coming into existence, claiming to represent the work of the remnant.

Considering these circumstances, these Sabbath School Lessons were prepared to reassure our faith, to reconfirm our mission, and to help carry out our purpose as a remnant people. In this quarter, for thirteen Sabbaths, we shall study the important theme “The Plan of Salvation and the Church”.

A faithful student of this subject will understand and realize who God’s remnant people are, and will cooperate with firm understanding in the fulfillment of the mission entrusted to the church.

Every lesson of this quarter will present its objectives and is composed of eight questions, two questions under each subtitle, so that we can study on a regular time and content basis.

A section “For Our Thoughts” is located at the end of each lesson, to review the most essential points in a limited time. Each point comes from a subtitle, and the answer can be found in the two questions under a subtitle.

Dear students, a glorious victory is promised for the future of the church. The mission and privilege of the Sabbath School are going to be great. We must remember that Christ died for the church as surely as He died to save us. It is my prayer that each one of us will be glorified and victorious with the church.

“Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” Ephesians 5:25.

“In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God’s remnant church. ...

“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:4).” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 590, 591.

—*The Brethren of the General Conference*

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1

Sabbath, July 2, 2005

God's Purpose for the Church

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” Ephesians 1:9, 10.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that, from the beginning, God has planned to reveal His character of love through His church.
- To consider that it is our privilege to understand God's purpose in establishing a church on earth, so that we will be inspired to have affection and cherish our duty toward the church.

ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

- 1. On which foundation was the church built, and by whose power? Matthew 16:16, 18; 1 Corinthians 3:11.**

“The word ‘Peter’ signifies a loose stone. Christ did not refer to Peter as being the rock upon which He would found His church. His expression ‘this rock,’ applied to Himself as the foundation of the Christian church.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1095.

“Human power and human might did not establish the church of God, and neither can they destroy it. Not on the rock of human strength, but on Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, was the church founded, ‘and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ (Matthew 16:18).” –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 595, 596.

2. Who is the Chief Cornerstone of the church of the living God? What kind of stones are we expected to be? 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:20-22.

“To be sons and daughters of God, growing into an holy temple to the Lord, ‘no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;’ ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone’ this is our privilege.

“How amazed is heaven at the present condition of the church that could be so much to the world if every stone were in its proper place, a living stone to emit light! A stone that does not shine is worthless. That which constitutes the value of our churches is not dead, lusterless stones, but living stones, stones that catch the bright beams from the Chief Cornerstone, even the Sun of Righteousness- the bright glory in which are combined the beams of mercy and truth that have met together, of righteousness and peace that have kissed each other.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1116.

GOD’S PURPOSE FOR BUILDING THE CHURCH

3. What is God’s purpose for establishing His church on earth? How should the believers meet this purpose? Matthew 5:14; 1 Peter 2:9.

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be

reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places,” the final and full display of the love of God (Ephesians 3:10).” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

“God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 50.

4. Tell another purpose of God for the church. What advantages did God provide the church for this purpose? Ezekiel 47: 8, 9.

“Christ designs that heaven’s order, heaven’s plan of government, heaven’s divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth. Thus in His people He is glorified. Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. He has bestowed upon His people capabilities and blessings that they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His humiliation, and the supplement of His glory, Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 680.

GOD’S PURPOSE FOR THIS AGE

5. What mission did God give to His church in this special time? Revelation 14:6-12.

“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositaries of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of Revelation 14 represent the people who accept the light of God’s messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth. Christ declares to His followers: ‘Ye are the light of the world.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 455, 456.

6. What other missions does the church of God have for this time? What does ‘building up old waste places’ mean? Isaiah 51:7; 58:12.

“God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depositary of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.

“There is but one church in the world who are at the present time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 356.

PRIVILEGE OF THE CHURCH

7. Explain what final privilege and mission the church has. By what power will the Loud Cry be fulfilled? Revelation 18:1-4.

“As the members of the body of Christ approach the period of their last conflict, ‘the time of Jacob’s trouble,’ they will grow up into Christ, and will

partake largely of His Spirit. As the third message swells to a loud cry, and as great power and glory attend the closing work, the faithful people of God will partake of that glory. It is the latter rain which revives and strengthens them to pass through the time of trouble. Their faces will shine with the glory of that light which attends the third angel.

“The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. During the proclamation of the third angel’s message, ‘another angel’ is to ‘come down from heaven, having great power,’ and the earth is to be ‘lightened with his glory.’ The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984.

8. What preparation is required of the church for the last conflict? What does it mean for the church to be clothed with righteousness? Ephesians 5:27.

“Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners’ (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.

“She [the church] will prophesy in sackcloth. But although she must meet heresies and persecutions, although she must battle with the infidel and the apostate, yet by the help of God she is bruising the head of Satan. The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation.” –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 590.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Discuss what consists of the foundation and basis of the church.
- Apply God’s purpose for the church to yourself.
- Relate your feelings as you consider the mission of the church for this time.
- Discuss the importance of the mission of the church in proportion to its privilege.

God's Visible Church and its Organization

“Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” Song of Solomon 6:10.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that the church established on earth doesn't mean the people scattered here and there, but has an international organization and order.
- To understand the beautiful truth that the church has so that everyone who understands the truth can do his service in the church with love and understanding.

THE CHURCH, BUILT BY THE FAITHFUL

1. **By whom, was the church built? Consider that the church on earth is united with the heavenly one. Genesis 6:9; Hebrews 11:8, 10.**

“From the beginning, faithful souls have constituted the church on earth. In every age the Lord has had His watchmen, who have borne a faithful testimony to the generation in which they lived. These sentinels gave the message of warning; and when they were called to lay off their armor, others took up the work. God brought these witnesses into covenant relation with Himself, uniting the church on earth with the church in heaven. He has sent forth His angels to minister to His church, and the gates of hell have not been able to prevail against His people.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

2. How does God take care of and consider the church built by the faithful people? What feeling does this promise give to the members? Deuteronomy 32:9, 10; Zechariah 2:8.

“Jesus sees His true church on the earth, whose greatest ambition is to cooperate with Him in the grand work of saving souls. He hears their prayers, presented in contrition and power, and Omnipotence cannot resist their plea for the salvation of any tried, tempted member of Christ’s body...Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for us. Through our Redeemer what blessings may not the true believer receive? The church, soon to enter upon her most severe conflict, will be the object most dear to God upon earth.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 19, 20.

“Although there are evils existing in the church, and will be until the end of the world, the church in these last days is to be the light of the world that is polluted and demoralized by sin. The church, enfeebled and defective, needing to be reproved, warned, and counseled, is the only object upon earth upon which Christ bestows His supreme regard.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 49.

ORGANIZATION AND ORDER

3. In developing his mission on the earth, how does the church that God has established have to act? 1 Corinthians 14:40.

“God is a God of order. Everything connected with heaven is in perfect order; subjection and thorough discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. Success can only attend order and harmonious action. God requires order and system in His work now no less than in the days of Israel. All who are working for Him are to labor intelligently, not in a careless, haphazard manner. He would have his work done with faith and exactness, that He may place the seal of His approval upon it.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 376.

“God has a church upon the earth who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant is not the church triumphant.” –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 362.

“The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

4. May you explain some reasons why organization is needed for the church? 1 Corinthians 14:33.

“As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work would not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable”. —*Testimonies for Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 26.

“God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” 1 Corinthians 14:33. He requires that order and system be observed in the conduct of church affairs today no less than in the days of old. He desires His work to be carried forward with thoroughness and exactness so that He may place upon it the seal of His approval. Christian is to be united with Christian, church with church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency subordinate to the Holy Spirit, and all combined in giving to the world the good tidings of the grace of God. —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 96.

“A most solemn message has been entrusted to those who have received the light of present truth. Our light should shine forth to brighten the pathway of those who are in darkness. As members of the visible church, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord, all professed Christians should do their utmost to preserve peace, harmony, and love in the church.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 619, 620.

CHURCH AUTHORITY AND RESPECT

5. Although it is made up with people of infirmities, has God given authority to the church on earth? Matthew 18:18; Colossians 1:18 (first part).

“Christ gives power to the voice of the church. ‘Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.’ No such thing is countenanced as one man’s starting out upon his own individual responsibility and advocating what views he chooses, irrespective of the judgment of the church.

God has bestowed the highest power under heaven upon His church. It is the voice of God in His united people in church capacity which is to be respected.”
–*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 450, 451.

6. Which other spiritual and moral authority will be good to recognize in the church, developing a relationship of full respect and love? Titus 2:15; 2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 5:5.

“The Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They simply wanted their own way, to follow the leadings of their own mind, and be controlled by their own judgment. Could they have been left free to do this, no complaints would have been made of Moses; but they were restless under restraint.

“God would have His people disciplined and brought into harmony of action, that they may see eye to eye and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. In order to bring about this state of things, there is much to be done. The carnal heart must be subdued and transformed. God designs that there shall ever be a living testimony in the church. It will be necessary to reprove and exhort, and some will need to be rebuked sharply, as the case demands...The Lord would not have us yield up our individuality. But what man is a proper judge of how far this matter of individual independence should be carried?” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 360.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORDER

7. What attitude should the members take toward those serving, in responsible positions, for the administration and order? 2 Timothy 2:24, 25; Hebrews 13:7, 17.

“Many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship and are loath to submit to restraint and discipline. Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church, and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice. Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that

cannot be lightly esteemed. Christ, after His resurrection, delegated power unto His church, saying: 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' (John 20:23).

"Church relationship is not to be lightly cancelled ... true, in leaving the church they would themselves be the greatest sufferers; for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence, they subject themselves to the full temptations of the world." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 444, 445.

8. Although people with responsibilities also have weaknesses, like all other members, how should the members treat the decision of church? Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:2-4.

"On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 3, p. 203.

"The world's Redeemer has invested great power with His church..."

"The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body. There have ever been individuals of independent minds who have claimed that they were right, that God had especially taught, impressed, and led them. Each has a theory of his own, views peculiar to himself, and each claims that his views are in accordance with the word of God. Each one has a different theory and faith, yet each claims special light from God. These draw away from the body, and each one is a separate church of himself." —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 390.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Explain God's purposes in establishing a visible church with organization and not people scattered here and there.
- Discuss the extent of His interest for the church of the last days.
- Explain the need of administration and order in the life and operation of the church.
- Although leaders in the church may have their weaknesses, do we still have a reason to respect their correct decisions?

Need of Organization and Order

“If I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1 Timothy 3:15.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the necessity of organization and church order.
- To cooperate for the benefit of the whole body and for the missionary work.

THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS

1. **How do we understand that the church existed in a form of family in ancient times? Genesis 18:19.**

“In early times the father was the ruler and priest of his own family, and he exercised authority over his children, even after they had families of their own. His descendants were taught to look up to him as their head, in both religious and secular matters. This patriarchal system of government Abraham endeavored to perpetuate, as it tended to preserve the knowledge of God. It was necessary to bind the members of the household together, in order to build up a barrier against the idolatry that had become so widespread and so deep-seated.” *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 141.

2. **How do we know that the family functioned as a church, and the worship system was observed in rules and order? Genesis 28:14; 12:3.**

“He [God] had separated Abraham from his idolatrous kindred, that the patriarch might train and educate his family apart from the seductive influences which would have surrounded them in Mesopotamia, and that the true faith may be preserved in its purity by his descendants from generation to generation.

“Abraham’s affection to his children and his household led him to guard their religious faith, to impart to them a knowledge of the divine statutes, as the most precious legacy he could transmit to them, and through them to the world. All were taught that they were under the rule of the God of heaven. There was to be no oppression on the part of parents and no disobedience on the part of children.” *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 141, 142.

THE CHURCH IN THE WILDERNESS

- 3. As Israel was still in Egypt, who was carrying certain leadership functions among the people? Exodus 3:16, 18; 12:21.**

- 4. Considering the great necessity of order, what kind of organization was given to the people in the wilderness? Exodus 24:1, 9; 18:25, 26; Deuteronomy 1:9-16.**

“The government of Israel was characterized by the most thorough organization, wonderful alike for its completeness and its simplicity. The order so strikingly displayed in the perfection and arrangement of all God’s created works was manifest in the Hebrew economy...Next came the priests, who consulted the Lord in the sanctuary. Chiefs, or princes, ruled over the tribes. Under these were ‘captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens,’ and, lastly, officers who might be employed for special duties.” *—Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 374.

“From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His ‘good Spirit to instruct them.’ (Nehemiah 9:20). And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit.” *—The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 53.

5. Are the instructions given to the wilderness church also a lesson and a mirror for us? 1 Corinthians 10:1-3, 6 (first part), 11.

“Has God changed from a God of order? No; He is the same in the present dispensation as in the former. Paul says: ‘God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.’ He is as particular now as then. And He designs that we should learn lessons of order and organization from the perfect order instituted in the days of Moses for the benefit of the children of Israel.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 653.

“We want to hold the lines evenly, that there shall be no breaking down of the system of organization and order that has been built up by wise, careful labor. License must not be given to disorderly elements that desire to control the work at this time.

“The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 258.

6. What important matter should the church consider if it wants to cooperate with the angels? 1 Corinthians 14:40.

“Angels work harmoniously. Perfect order characterizes all their movements. The more closely we imitate the harmony and order of the angelic host, the more successful will be the efforts of these heavenly agents in our behalf. If we see no necessity for harmonious action, and are disorderly, undisciplined, and disorganized in our course of action, angels, who are thoroughly organized and move in perfect order, cannot work for us successfully ...

“Satan well knows that success can only attend order and harmonious action. He well knows that everything connected with heaven is in perfect order, that subjection and perfect discipline mark the movements of the angelic host. It is his studied effort to lead professed Christians just as far from heaven’s arrangement as he can.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 28, 29.

CONFLICTS AND SOLUTIONS

7. **What is one of the reasons that sometimes causes trouble in the church? Proverbs 26:12; Isaiah 5:21.**

8. **What is the wise way of solving and avoiding problems? 1 Corinthians 3:18-21; Romans 12:16; 1 Peter 5:5; Ephesians 5:21.**

“There is altogether too little respect paid to the opinion of members of the same church. It is the want of deference for the opinions of the church that causes so much trouble among brethren. The eyes of the church may be able to discern in its individual members that which the erring may not see. A few persons may be as blind as the one in error, but the majority of the church is a power which should control its individual members.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 107.

“I have been shown that no man’s judgment should be surrendered to the judgment of any one man. But when the judgment of the General Conference, which is the highest authority that God has upon the earth, is exercised, private independence and private judgment must not be maintained, but be surrendered. Your error was in persistently maintaining your private judgment of your duty against the voice of the highest authority the Lord has upon the earth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 492.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Discuss the necessity of organization, and how the family system, instituted by God, was used in the work of salvation.
- Relate the purpose of choosing Abraham to make a nation as men became corrupt. Consider God’s providence of building the wilderness church that stands as a lesson for the modern church.
- Remembering that the work of God grew to be more systematical as times went on, try to discover the reasons why it was necessary.
- Consider how individualism in the last days can cause a problem in the church. How should we harmonize the order of the church and personal affairs?

The Church and Christ –Part 1

“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:22, 23.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the important position and mission of the church in the work of salvation by considering the relationship between Christ and the church.
- To grasp that the church and Christ are inseparable in the plan of salvation, as the head is inseparable from the body.

HEAD AND BODY

1. How is the relationship between the church and Christ represented in the Scriptures? Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18.

“ ‘The head of every man is Christ.’ God, who put all things under the Saviour’s feet, ‘gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.’ The church is built upon Christ as its foundation; it is to obey Christ as its head. It is not to depend upon man, or be controlled by man.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 414.

“He has all power, both in heaven and upon earth; but He respects the means which He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men. He directs Saul to the church, thus acknowledging the power that He has invested in it as a channel of light to the world. It is Christ’s organized body upon the earth, and respect is required to be paid to His ordinances.” –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 395.

2. What does it mean for us all to be regular members of the same body? 1 Corinthians 12:27, 21.

“Christ and His church are inseparable.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 418.

“Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church--He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.

“The church is organized for service; and in a life of service to Christ, connection with the church is one of the first steps. Loyalty to Christ demands the faithful performance of church duties.” –*Education*, pp. 268, 269.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

3. After the fall of man, what did God declare and what work would the seed of the woman fulfill? Genesis 3:15.

“To man the first intimation of redemption was communicated in the sentence pronounced upon Satan in the garden. The Lord declared, ‘I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.’ Genesis 3:15. This sentence, uttered in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. While it foretold war between man and Satan, it declared that the power of the great adversary would finally be broken.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 65, 66.

“In the wilderness of temptation, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross, our Saviour measured weapons with the prince of darkness. His wounds became the trophies of His victory in behalf of the race. When Christ hung in agony upon the cross, while evil spirits rejoiced and evil men reviled, then indeed His heel was bruised by Satan. But that very act was crushing the serpent’s head.” –*Prophets and Kings*, p. 701.

4. By the crucifixion of Christ, the head of Satan was morally bruised. How will this prophecy be fulfilled again? Romans 16:20.

“The church will yet see troublous times. She will prophesy in sack-cloth. But although she must meet heresies and persecutions, although she must battle with the infidel and the apostate, yet by the help of God she is bruising the head of Satan. The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation.” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 590.

“Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners’ (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 725.

LIVING UNITY

5. How should the members of the church, who will bruise the head of Satan, unite with the body of Christ? John 8:32; 17:21.

“There are both believers and unbelievers in the church. Christ represents these two classes in His parable of the vine and its branches. He exhorts His followers: ‘Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. 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.’ ” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 228.

6. What is the experience of the believers who are not truly united with Christ? Ezekiel 33:31; Matthew 15:7, 8.

“How amazed is heaven at the present condition of the church that could be so much to the world if every stone were in its proper place, a living stone to emit light! A stone that does not shine is worthless. That which constitutes the value of our churches is not dead, luster less stones, but living stones, stones that catch the bright beams from the Chief Cornerstone, even the Sun of Righteousness -- the bright glory in which are combined the beams of mercy and truth that have met together.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1116.

“Many, from worldly policy, endeavor, by their own efforts, to become as polished stones, but cannot be living stones, because they are not built upon the true foundation. The day of God will reveal that they are, in reality, only hay, wood, and stubble.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1154.

BECOMING ONE

7. What is the experience of the united believers by the true unity with Christ? Mark 4:27, 28.

“Those who, having heard the word, keep it, will bring forth fruit in obedience. The word of God, received into the soul, will be manifest in good works. Its results will be seen in a Christ like character and life.” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 60.

“His holy profession and the truth of God should have blended with all his thoughts, feelings, words, and actions...We gain activity and strength by walking in the light, that we may have energy to run in the way of God's commandments. We may gain an increase of strength at every step we advance heavenward. God will bless His people only when they try to be a blessing to others. Our graces are matured and developed by exercise.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 436, 437.

8. What has to be experienced by those people who will bruise the head of Satan? John 14:20, 21; 13:34, 35.

“It is not the opposition of the world that most endangers the church of Christ. It is the evil cherished in the hearts of believers that works their most grievous disaster and most surely retards the progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening spirituality than by cherishing envy, suspicion, faultfinding, and evil surmising. On the other hand, the strongest witness that God has sent His Son into the world is the existence of harmony and union among men of varied dispositions who form His church. This witness it is the privilege of the followers of Christ to bear. But in order to do this, they must place themselves under Christ's command. Their characters must be conformed to His character and their wills to His will.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 549.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Considering the connection existing between head and body, consider the parallel relationship which should exist between the church and Christ.
- Remembering that the seed of the woman, who bruised Satan's head, is Christ, where is the prophecy that the church will bruise Satan's head once again?
- Discuss why the church has to unite with Christ and consider how the true unity could be fulfilled.
- Analyzing our situation, what do we have to achieve in order to be a powerful church?

5

Sabbath, July 30, 2005

The Church and Christ –Part 2

“There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.” Song of Solomon 6:8, 9.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn the great importance and role of the church in the plan of salvation.
- To study the relation of the church and Christ as illustrated by some examples.
- To understand the sacredness and importance of the church's commission.

HUSBAND AND WIFE

- 1. How does the Bible illustrate the relation between the church and Christ? Ephesians 5:22-24.**

“God is the husband of His church. The church is the bride, the Lamb’s wife. Every true believer is a part of the body of Christ. Christ regards unfaithfulness shown to Him by His people as the unfaithfulness of a wife to her husband. We are to remember that we are members of Christ’s body.

“The church is the bride, the Lamb’s wife. She should keep herself pure, sanctified, holy. Never should she indulge in any foolishness; for she is the bride of a King. Yet she does not realize her exalted position. If she understood this, she would be all-glorious within.

“The church is the bride of Christ, and her members are to yoke up with their Leader. God warns us not to defile our garments.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 985, 986.

2. Considering that the church is the bride of Christ, explain the duty and privilege of the church. Song of Solomon 4:7.

“Christ honored the marriage relation by making it also a symbol of the union between Him and His redeemed ones. He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, ‘Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.’” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 356.

“Another obligation, too often lightly regarded—one that to the youth awakened to the claims of Christ needs to be made plain—is the obligation of church relationship.

“Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church—He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.

“The church is organized for service; and in a life of service to Christ, connection with the church is one of the first steps. Loyalty to Christ demands the faithful performance of church duties.” —*Education*, p. 268, 269.

A MAN AND A WOMAN

3. Considering that in the beginning God created one man and one woman, how should the relationship of Christ and the church be on earth? Genesis 1:27; Song of Solomon 6:8, 9 (first part).

“God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depository of the wealth of the riches of the grace

of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered. The rich dowry of the Holy Spirit will be given, and through its constant supply to the people of God they will become witnesses in the world of the power of God unto salvation.

“There is but one church in the world who are at the present time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places.”
—*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 50.

4. How can we explain so many denominations and churches in the present time? Isaiah 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:3 (first part).

“Where the message of divine truth is spurned or slighted, there the church will be enshrouded in darkness; faith and love grow cold, and estrangement and dissension enter. Church members center their interests and energies in worldly pursuits, and sinners become hardened in their impenitence.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 378, 379.

“The Sanhedrin had rejected Christ’s message and was bent upon His death; therefore Jesus departed from Jerusalem, from the priests, the temple, the religious leaders, the people who had been instructed in the law, and turned to another class to proclaim His message, and to gather out those who should carry the gospel to all nations.

“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.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.

GIVEN FOR HIS CHURCH

5. Which part of Adam’s body was used for the creation of the woman? Genesis 2:18, 21. How much more has Jesus given for His church and what does this means for her? Ephesians 5:25; John 19:33, 34.

“‘Upon this rock,’ said Jesus, ‘I will build My church.’ In the presence of God, and all the heavenly intelligences, in the presence of the unseen army of hell, Christ founded His church upon the living Rock. That Rock is Himself, -His own body, for us broken and bruised. Against the church built upon this foundation, the gates of hell shall not prevail.” *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 413.

“The Saviour has given His precious life in order to establish a church capable of caring for sorrowful, tempted souls.” *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 640.

“The same power that raised Christ from the dead will raise His church, and glorify it with Christ, as His bride, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the heavenly courts, the world above.” *—Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 305.

6. What may be said about the fascinating beauty of Eve as she was created? Genesis 2:22, 23; 1:27. By the grace of God, how will the church be at the second coming of Christ? Ephesians 5: 26, 27.

“Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a ‘glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.’ (Ephesians 5:27). Then she will look ‘forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ (Song of Solomon 6:10).” *—The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

“God’s love for His church is infinite. His care over His heritage is unceasing. He suffers no affliction to come upon the church but such as is essential for her purification, her present and eternal good. He will purify His church even as He purified the temple at the beginning and close of His ministry on earth. All that He brings upon the church in test and trial comes that His people may gain deeper piety and more strength to carry the triumphs of the cross to all parts of the world.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 228.

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

7. How will God purify the believers that constitute His beloved church? Malachi 3:2-4.

“The Master sees wherein we need to be purified for His heavenly kingdom. He will not leave us in the furnace until we are wholly consumed. As a refiner and purifier of silver, He is beholding His children, watching the process of purification, until He shall discern His image reflected in us. Although

we often feel affliction's flame kindling about us, and at times fear that we shall be utterly consumed, yet the loving-kindness of God is just as great toward us at these times as when we are free in spirit and triumphing in Him. The furnace is to purify and refine, but not to consume and destroy. God in His providence would try us, to purify us as the sons of Levi, that we may offer to Him an offering in righteousness." –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1182.

"Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His children that trying experiences come to them. Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 524.

8. Although the church has faults and weaknesses, how does God consider it? Zechariah 3:1, 3, 4.

"Enfeebled and defective, needing constantly to be warned and counseled, the church is nevertheless the object of Christ's supreme regard. He is making experiments of grace on human hearts and is effecting such transformations of character that angels are amazed and express their joy in songs of praise. They rejoice to think that sinful, erring human beings can be so transformed." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 16.

"From age to age, through successive generations, the pure doctrines of heaven have been unfolding within its borders. Enfeebled and defective as it may appear, the church is the one object upon which God bestows in a special sense His supreme regard. It is the theater of His grace, in which He delights to reveal His power to transform hearts." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 12.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Discuss the relations existing between bride and bridegroom and between the church and Christ.
- How do we explain that, although there are numerous denominations in the world, God's true church is only one?
- Considering that the woman should be a "help meet" for Adam, explain how the church can be the help meet of Christ's work. Discuss the present and future image of the church, the wife of the second Adam.
- Tell how the Lord will purify His people in the church. Relate some of the personal experiences made within the church itself.

The Future of the Church

“Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.” Jeremiah 33:6, 7.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that it is the duty and privilege of the church to inspire the faith of believers.
- To prepare the believers, helping them to realize the reason of having to pass through the tribulations and hardship in the future.

PREDICTED TRIBULATION

1. **What is prophesied for the church in the near future? Jeremiah 30:6, 7; Daniel 12:1.**

“Jacob’s night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God’s people in the time of trouble.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 616.

“Zechariah’s vision of Joshua and the Angel applies with peculiar force to the experience of God’s people in the closing up of the great day of atonement. The remnant church will be brought into great trial and distress. Those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus will feel the ire of the dragon and his hosts.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 472.

“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.

“The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob’s trouble.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 615, 616.

2. What will be experienced by the people who will pass through Jacob’s trouble? Daniel 12:1.

“When the third angel’s message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received ‘the latter rain,’ ‘the refreshing from the presence of the Lord,’ and they are prepared for the trying hour before them.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 613.

“When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God’s long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

JACOB’S EXPERIENCE

3. Why did Jacob, at a certain moment of his life, have to pass the trial and what was his experience? Hosea 12:4, 5 (first part).

“Jacob’s night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God’s people in the time of trouble ... it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer. Yet he leaves nothing undone on his own part to atone for the wrong to his brother and to avert the threatened danger. So should the followers of Christ, as they approach the time of trouble, make every exertion to place themselves in a proper light before the people, to disarm prejudice, and to avert the danger which threatens liberty of conscience.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 616.

“Often the church militant is called upon to suffer trial and affliction; for not without severe conflict is the church to triumph.” —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 723.

4. How do you imagine the scene of Jacob wrestling with an Angel at the river Jabbok? Genesis 32:24-28.

“Long has he endured perplexity, remorse, and trouble for his sin; now he must have the assurance that it is pardoned. The divine visitant seems about to depart; but Jacob clings to Him, pleading for a blessing. The Angel urges, ‘Let Me go, for the day breaketh;’ but the patriarch exclaims, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’ What confidence, what firmness and perseverance, are here displayed! ‘He had power over the Angel, and prevailed.’ (Hosea 12:4). Through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal prevailed with the Majesty of heaven. He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God ... And the fact that Jacob had prevailed with God was an assurance that he would prevail with men.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 617, 618.

WITHOUT A MEDIATOR

5. Considering the characteristics of Jacob’s trouble, what will be the experience that the remnant people have to face? Revelation 3:10.

“As Satan influenced Esau to march against Jacob, so he will stir up the wicked to destroy God’s people in the time of trouble. And as he accused Jacob, he will urge his accusations against the people of God.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 618.

“As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. As they review the past, their hopes sink; for in their whole lives they can see little good. They are fully conscious of their weakness and unworthiness. Satan endeavors to terrify them with the thought that their cases are hopeless, that the stain of their defilement will never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations and turn from their allegiance to God.

“Though God’s people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth’s sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfillment of the Saviour’s promise: I ‘will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.’ (Revelation 3:10). If they could have the assurance of pardon they would not shrink from torture or death.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 618, 619.

6. How will the experience of God’s people be without a mediator? What is the preparation of those who will pass Jacob’s trouble? Revelation 16:15; 22:11, 12.

“Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. ...

“Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a preparation for the day of God cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 620.

IMPENDING TRIALS

7. Studying the life of the remnant people, who will result victorious at last? Ezekiel 14:20; Revelation 14:12.

“The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. The period of probation is granted to all to prepare for that

time. Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His victory is an evidence of the power of importunate prayer. All who will lay hold of God's promises, as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Those who are unwilling to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for His blessing, will not obtain it. Wrestling with God--how few know what it is! ...

"Those who exercise but little faith now, are in the greatest danger of falling under the power of satanic delusions and the decree to compel the conscience. And even if they endure the test they will be plunged into deeper distress and anguish in the time of trouble, because they have never made it a habit to trust in God. The lessons of faith which they have neglected they will be forced to learn under a terrible pressure of discouragement." *—The Great Controversy*, pp. 621, 622.

8. What is the resolution of the remnant people before the impending tribulation? Revelation 12:11.

"The 'time of trouble, such as never was,' is soon to open upon us; and we shall need an experience which we do not now possess and which many are too indolent to obtain. It is often the case that trouble is greater in anticipation than in reality; but this is not true of the crisis before us. The most vivid presentation cannot reach the magnitude of the ordeal. ...

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power." *—The Great Controversy*, pp. 622, 623.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- What prophecies will soon be fulfilled at the time of the Sunday law and Jacob's trouble?
- Relate the experiences of Jacob and find out the reason that brought him such a bitter agony.
- Consider what it means to be without a mediator and, consequently, what should our preparation be for this trouble.
- What kind of faith should the church have for the soon-coming trial?

God's Preparation for the Church

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." Joel 2:23.

"It is true that in the time of the end, when God's work in the earth is closing, the earnest efforts put forth by consecrated believers under the guidance of the Holy Spirit are to be accompanied by special tokens of divine favor. Under the figure of the early and the latter rain, that falls in Eastern lands at seedtime and harvest, the Hebrew prophets foretold the bestowal of spiritual grace in extraordinary measure upon God's church. The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.

"But near the close of earth's harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain." *—The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that God has prepared everything for the victory of His church.
- To be united with love, trusting God's promise and prophecy for the future of the church, although in the present it has faults and mistakes.
- To prepare us for the blessing of the latter rain promised to the church.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

1. **Referring to preparation, which condition of the church is presented by Jesus in some of His parables? Matthew 13:24-27; 25:1-4.**

“The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant is not the church triumphant. There are tares among the wheat. ‘Wilt thou then that we ... gather them up?’ was the question of the servant; but the master answered, ‘Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.’ (Matthew 13:28, 29). The gospel net draws not only good fish, but bad ones as well, and the Lord only knows who are His.” –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 362.

“The church militant is not the church triumphant, and earth is not heaven. The church is composed of erring, imperfect men and women, who are but learners in the school of Christ, to be trained, disciplined, educated, for this life and for the future, immortal life” –*Last Day Events*, p. 61.

2. What promise is given about the purification and victory of the church? Ephesians 5:27; Song of Solomon 6:10.

“Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a ‘glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.’ (Ephesians 5:27). Then she will look ‘forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’ (Song of Solomon 6:10).” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 425.

“At last the victory was gained. The army following the banner with the inscription, “The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus,” was gloriously triumphant. The soldiers of Christ were close beside the gates of the city, and with joy the city received her King. The kingdom of peace and joy and everlasting righteousness was established.

“Now the church is militant. Now we are confronted with a world in mid-night darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry. But the day is coming in which the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 41, 42.

“He will purify His church, even as Christ purified the temple during His ministry on earth.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 525.

THE CHURCH HAS TO BE JUSTIFIED AND SANCTIFIED

3. What does every soul need to experience through conversion? What is also said about the church? Ephesians 5:26.

“He [Jesus] also had a request to prefer concerning His chosen ones upon earth. He wished to have the relation clearly defined that His redeemed

should hereafter sustain to heaven, and to His Father. His church must be justified and accepted before He could accept heavenly honor...In the most explicit manner Christ pleaded for His church, identifying His interest with theirs, and advocating, with love and constancy stronger than death, their rights and titles gained through Him...The request of Christ is granted; the church is justified through Him, its representative and head.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1150.

4. According to the promise, which character should reach the remnant people? Matthew 5:48; 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (first part).

“God has a church on earth who are lifting up the downtrodden law, and presenting to the world the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. The church is the depositary of the wealth of the riches of the grace of Christ, and through the church eventually will be made manifest the final and full display of the love of God to the world that is to be lightened with its glory. The prayer of Christ that His church may be one as He was one with His Father will finally be answered.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 50.

“Christ has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 419.

LATTER RAIN

5. When the church, as a body, will be purified, what special gift will God bestow upon it? James 5:7, 8; Joel 2:23.

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are ‘the times of refreshing’ to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: ‘Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus.’ (Acts 3:19, 20).” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 611, 612.

“Not one of us will ever receive the seal of God while our characters have one spot or stain upon them. It is left with us to remedy the defects in our characters, to cleanse the soul temple of every defilement. Then the latter rain will fall upon us as the early rain fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 214.

6. What is requested, therefore, to everybody in order to receive the fulfillment of the great divine promise? Hosea 6:1-3.

“The third angel’s message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that He may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for His service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 190, 191.

PREPARATION FOR THE CHURCH AND INDIVIDUALS

7. Which heartily call is the Lord making to every believer in order to reach the needed preparation? Acts 1:14; Joel 2:16, 17.

“God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

“A revival and a reformation must take place, under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend. (*The Review and Herald*, February 25, 1902).” —*Select Messages*, vol 1, p. 128.

8. What victory is requested, in the divine work of preparation, so that we may be in condition to receive the latter rain? Acts 3:19; Hebrews 12:1 (last part).

“I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of ‘refreshing’ and the ‘latter rain’ to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord and to live in His sight. Oh, how many I saw in the time of trouble without a shelter! They had neglected the needful preparation; therefore they could not receive the refreshing that all must have to fit them to live in the sight of a holy God. Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth, and who are willing to believe that their condition is far better than it really is, will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building...I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” –*Early Writings*, p. 71.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Consider the situation of our church and discuss in which aspects we are still lacking.
- Classify the experiences of individuals, and of the church, on justification, sanctification, and perfection, and explain the historic events by which it has been justified.
- Consider what is the most precious gift prepared for the church by God and think about the latter rain, which will be poured out for the remnant church in the near future.
- Discover the deep spiritual preparation requested from individuals, and from the church, to be able to receive the promise of the latter rain given by the Lord.

Our Duty Towards the Church as Members –Part 1

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” 1 Peter 5:5, 6.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that to be connected to Christ means to also be connected with the church.
- To inspire each member to fulfill his duty for the church, with love and faithfulness.

GUIDED TO BECOME MEMBERS

- 1. Why as members should we be glad to belong and to carry out the duties for the church? 1 Timothy 3:15.**

“Another obligation, too often lightly regarded--one that to the youth awakened to the claims of Christ needs to be made plain--is the obligation of church relationship.

“Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church--He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.

“The church is organized for service; and in a life of service to Christ, connection with the church is one of the first steps. Loyalty to Christ demands the faithful performance of church duties. This is an important part of one’s training.” *–Education*, pp. 268, 269.

2. In relation with the experience of the apostle Paul, explain the meaning that being connected with Christ involves connection with His church. Acts 9:1-6, 10-12.

“‘And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.’

“Thus Jesus gave sanction to the authority of His organized church and placed Saul in connection with His appointed agencies on earth. Christ had now a church as His representative on earth, and to it belonged the work of directing the repentant sinner in the way of life.

“Many have an idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His recognized followers on earth. Jesus is the friend of sinners, and His heart is touched with their woe. He has all power, both in heaven and on earth; but He respects the means that He has ordained for the enlightenment and salvation of men; He directs sinners to the church, which He has made a channel of light to the world.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 122.

INDEPENDENT ACT

3. How should the members who are connected with the church maintain their relationship with it? John 15:4, 5.

“The Redeemer of the world does not sanction experience and exercise in religious matters independent of His organized and acknowledged church, where He has a church.

“Many have the idea that they are responsible to Christ alone for their light and experience, independent of His acknowledged followers in the world. But this is condemned by Jesus in His teachings and in the examples, the facts, which He has given for our instruction...And when he asks, ‘What wilt Thou have me to do?’ the Saviour does not tell him directly, but places him in connection with His church.” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 394, 395.

4. How did Jesus pray so that the members will not act independently out of relation with the church? John 17:21-23.

“God is leading out a people to stand in perfect unity upon the platform of eternal truth. Christ gave Himself to the world that He might ‘purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ This refining process is designed to purge the church from all unrighteousness and the spirit of discord and contention, that they may build up instead of tear down, and concentrate their energies on the great work before them. God designs that His people should all come into the unity of the faith. The prayer of the Christ just prior to His crucifixion was that His disciples might be one, even as He was one with the Father, that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him. This most touching and wonderful prayer reaches down the ages, even to our day; for His words were: ‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.’” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 17.

DANGER OF INDEPENDENCY

5. How should the danger of independent acts, ignoring the relation with the church, be considered? 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; John 2:19.

“Through apostasy, fallen men and fallen angels are in the same confederacy, leagued to work against good. They are united in a desperate companionship. Through his evil angels, Satan contrives to form an alliance with professedly pious men, and thus he leavens the church of God. He knows that if he can induce men, as he induced the angels, to join in rebellion, under the guise of servants of God, he will have in them his most successful allies in his enterprise against heaven. Under the name of godliness, he can inspire them with his own accusing spirit, and lead them to charge God’s servants with evil and guile. They are his trained detectives; their work is to create feuds, to make charges which create discord and bitterness among brethren, to set tongues in active service for Satan, to sow seeds of dissension by watching for evil, and by speaking of that which will create discord...Thus Satan works today through his evil angels.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1142.

6. If we are true believers, how much should we seek for the unity of the church and growth of the work? Why should members love the church? Ephesians 5:25.

“Every believer should be wholehearted in his attachment to the church. Its prosperity should be his first interest, and unless he feels under sacred obligations to make his connection with the church a benefit to it in preference to himself, it can do far better without him. It is in the power of all to do something for the cause of God. There are those who spend a large amount for needless luxuries; they gratify their appetites, but feel it a great tax to contribute means to sustain the church.

“God surrendered His dearly beloved Son to the agonies of the crucifixion, that all who believe on Him might become one through the name of Jesus. When Christ made so great a sacrifice to save men and bring them into unity with one another, even as He was united with the Father, what sacrifice is too great for His followers to make in order to preserve that unity?” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 445, 446.

FIRST INTEREST

7. What is the important question that has to be applied to every member, who belongs to the church purchased by the blood of His Son? Psalms 84:10.

“The test question for every Christian to ask himself is, ‘Have I, in my inmost soul, supreme love for Christ? Do I love His tabernacle? Will not the Lord be honored by my making His sacred institution my first consideration?’

...

“Self interposes its desire to be first; but the Lord claims the whole heart, the entire affections. He will not come in as second. And should not Christ have our first and highest consideration?” —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 433, 434.

8. What are we specially guarded against in order to not to break the unity of members in the church? Psalms 12:2, 3; Proverbs 15:4.

“I saw that when sisters who are given to talk get together, Satan is generally present, for he finds employment. He stands by to excite the mind and make the most of the advantage he has gained. He knows that all this gossip, and tale-bearing, and revealing of secrets, and dissecting of character, separate the soul from God. It is death to spirituality and a calm religious influence.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 185, 186.

“Christians should be careful in regard to their words. They should never carry unfavorable reports from one of their friends to another, especially if they are aware that there is a lack of union between them. It is cruel to hint and insinuate, as though you knew a great deal in regard to this friend or that acquaintance of which others are ignorant. Such hints go further, and create more unfavorable impressions, than to frankly relate the facts in an unexaggerated manner. What harm has not the church of Christ suffered from these things! The inconsistent, unguarded course of her members has made her weak as water.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 186.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- If we want to be connected with Christ, how must our connection with the church be? Is there any example in the Bible?
- What will happen if we ignore the relationship with the church and act independently? What parable of Jesus can be taken into consideration?
- Why is independence a danger and how much should we try for the unity of the church?
- What efforts is Satan putting to remove the affection between members and to break the unity? How much are we careful on this aspect?

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Sabbath, August 27, 2005

Our Duty Towards the Church as Members –Part 2

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” John 13:34, 35.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand our sacred relationship with the church and respect its principles and rules.
- To recognize that what is counted by God is the godliness and unity of members.

THE CHURCH'S AUTHORITY AND MEMBERS' DUTY

1. According the words of Jesus, why is it necessary to have order and submit personal ideas to the judgment of the church? Matthew 18:18.

"The world's Redeemer has invested great power with His church. He states the rules to be applied in cases of trial with its members. After He has given explicit directions as to the course to be pursued, He says: 'Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever [in church discipline] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' (Matthew 18:18). Thus even the heavenly authority ratifies the discipline of the church in regard to its members when the Bible rule has been followed.

"The word of God does not give license for one man to set up his judgment in opposition to the judgment of the church, neither is he allowed to urge his opinions against the opinions of the church. If there were no church discipline and government, the church would go to fragments; it could not hold together as a body." –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 390.

2. In what dangers can we run into if we do not follow the instruction and rules of the church? How does God consider this? 1 Corinthians 14:40; Hebrews 13:17.

"The church is God's fortress, His city of refuge, which He holds in a revolted world. Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

"Many do not realize the sacredness of church relationship and are loath to submit to restraint and discipline. Their course of action shows that they exalt their own judgment above that of the united church, and they are not careful to guard themselves lest they encourage a spirit of opposition to its voice. Those who hold responsible positions in the church may have faults in common with other people and may err in their decisions; but notwithstanding this, the church of Christ on earth has given to them an authority that cannot be lightly esteemed. Church relationship is not to be lightly cancelled; yet when the path of some professed followers of Christ is crossed, or when their voice has not the controlling influence which they think it deserves, they

will threaten to leave the church. True, in leaving the church they would themselves be the greatest sufferers; for in withdrawing beyond the pale of its influence, they subject themselves to the full temptations of the world.”
—*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, pp. 444, 445.

DUTY OF LOVE

3. What is the reason that we, as members, should love each other? 1 John 3:14-16.

“Jesus says, ‘Love one another, as I have loved you.’ Love is not simply an impulse, a transitory emotion, dependent upon circumstances; it is a living principle, a permanent power. The soul is fed by the streams of pure love that flow from the heart of Christ, as a well-spring that never fails.

“To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1140.

“The church is greatly deficient in love and humanity. Some preserve a cold, chilling reserve, an iron dignity, that repels those who are brought within their influence. This spirit is contagious; it creates an atmosphere that is withering to good impulses and good resolves; it chokes the natural current of human sympathy, cordiality, and love; and under its influence people become constrained, and their social and generous attributes are destroyed for want of exercise.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 63, 64.

4. Why is it so important that members are united in love among themselves in the church? John 13:34, 35.

“True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. ... It is the greatest and most fatal deception to suppose that a man can have faith unto life eternal, without possessing Christ like love for his brethren. ... There is no such thing as a loveless Christian; for ‘God is love,’ and ‘hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1141.

“God has united believers in church capacity in order that one may strengthen another in good and righteous endeavor. The church on earth would indeed be a symbol of the church in heaven if the members were of one mind and of one faith.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 238, 239.

PRECIOUS GODLINESS

5. What is the greatest reason that God values the church as most precious? Psalms 50:23; Malachi 3:17.

“The church is very precious in God’s sight. He values it, not for its external advantages, but for the sincere piety, which distinguishes it from the world. He estimates it according to the growth of the members in the knowledge of Christ, according to their progress in spiritual experience.

“Christ hungers to receive from His vineyard the fruit of holiness and unselfishness. He looks for the principles of love and goodness. Not all the beauty of art can bear comparison with the beauty of temper and character to be revealed in those who are Christ’s representatives. ...

“A congregation may be the poorest in the land. It may be without the attraction of any outward show; but if the members possess the principles of the character of Christ, they will have His joy in their souls. Angels will unite with them in their worship. The praise and thanksgiving from grateful hearts will ascend to God as a sweet oblation.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 298.

6. What should each member do personally in order that our church may be more pure and godly? Philippians 4:8; 2 Peter 1:5-7.

“There should be but one interest in the church; one desire should control all, and that is the desire to conform to the image of Christ.” –*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 298.

“Our work is plainly laid down in the word of God. Christian is to be united to Christian, church to church, the human instrumentality co-operating with the divine, every agency to be subordinate to the Holy Spirit” (General Conference Daily Bulletin, Feb. 28, 1893). –*Christian Service*, p. 14.

“We are under obligation to control our thoughts, and to bring them into subjection to the law of God. ...

“Let every one who desires to be a partaker of the divine nature, appreciate the fact that he must escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. There must be a constant, earnest struggling of the soul against the evil imaginings of the mind. There must be a steadfast resistance of temptation to sin in thought or act.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1145.

OBSTACLES

7. What are the elements that destroy the unity of the church and the love among the members? Philippians 2:14; James 5:9.

“The right culture and use of the power of speech has to do with every line of Christian work; it enters into the home life, and into all our intercourse with one another. We should accustom ourselves to speak in pleasant tones, to use pure and correct language, and words that are kind and courteous. Sweet, kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. ...

“Not one word is to be spoken unadvisedly. No evil speaking, no frivolous talk, no fretful repining or impure suggestion, will escape the lips of him who is following Christ. The apostle Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, ‘Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.’ Ephesians 4:29. A corrupt communication does not mean only words that are vile. It means any expression contrary to holy principles and pure and undefiled religion. It includes impure hints and covert insinuations of evil. Unless instantly resisted, these lead to great sin.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 336, 337.

8. How is Satan constantly seeking to break the unity of the church and the love among the believers? What is our solemn duty? Proverbs 15:1, 2; 1 Peter 4:8-10.

“The plant of love must be carefully nourished, else it will die. Every good principle must be cherished if we would have it thrive in the soul. That which Satan plants in the heart—envy, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, impatience, prejudice, selfishness, covetousness and vanity—must be uprooted. If these evil things are allowed to remain in the soul, they will bear fruit by which many shall be defiled. Oh, how many cultivate the poisonous plants

that kill out the precious fruits of love and defile the soul!" –*The Adventist Home*, pp. 195, 196.

"God is the embodiment of benevolence, mercy, and love. Those who are truly connected with Him cannot be at variance with one another. His Spirit ruling in the heart will create harmony, love, and unity. The opposite of this is seen among the children of Satan. It is his work to stir up envy, strife, and jealousy." –*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 90.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Discuss the necessity of rules and order in the church, as well as the duty of members.
- Reflect on the duty of the members to love each other and its importance.
- By what standard is the church evaluated? Why is it so?
- Try to identify the main elements that destroy the unity of the church, and love among members, and check the present situation of your local church.

10

Sabbath, September 3, 2005

The Church with the Candlestick of Truth –Part 1

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Matthew 5:13, 14.

OBJECTIVES

- Considering that there are numerous churches and religions in our days, we need to discern which church has God's presence and the candlestick of truth.
- To understand the test that distinguishes false churches from the true church.

AN UNDEFILED WOMAN

- 1. How does the Bible symbolize the church? Revelation 12:1, 6, 17; 2 Corinthians 11:2.**

“He Himself is the Bridegroom; the bride is the church, of which, as His chosen one, He says, ‘Thou art all fair, My love; there is no spot in thee.’” –*The Adventist Home*, p. 26.

“The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, were represented as greatly in the minority. In the last days only a remnant still existed. Of these John speaks as they ‘which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ’” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 972.

- 2. Remembering that marriage is a symbol of the relationship between the church and Christ, can you imagine how this should be in light of the seventh commandment? Hosea 2:19, 20; Matthew 19:6.**

“Christ and His church are inseparable.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 418.

“Very close and sacred is the relation between Christ and His church--He the bridegroom, and the church the bride; He the head, and the church the body. Connection with Christ, then, involves connection with His church.” –*Education*, p. 268.

SACRED TRUST

- 3. What are the privileges of the church? Mention the greatest one. Romans 3:1, 2.**

“God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the

first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositories of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 455.

4. What happens when a church or an individual rejects God’s sacred entrusted law and present truth? 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

“Satan has led the minds of the ministers of different churches to cling tenaciously to their popular errors, as he led the Jews in their blindness to cling to their sacrifices, and crucify Christ. The rejection of light and truth leaves men captives, the subjects of Satan’s deception. The greater the light they reject, the greater will be the power of deception and darkness which will come upon them.” –*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 120.

“At this time the church is to put on her beautiful garments--‘Christ our righteousness.’ There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus...His authority should be kept distinct and plain before the world, and no laws are to be acknowledged that come in collision with the laws of Jehovah. If in defiance of God’s arrangements the world be allowed to influence our decisions or our actions, the purpose of God is defeated. However specious the pretext, if the church waver here, there is written against her in the books of heaven a betrayal of the most sacred trusts, and treachery to the kingdom of Christ.” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 16, 17.

THE CANDLESTICK REMOVED

5. What was the greatest and final reason why the candlestick was removed from the Jewish church? John 19:15, 16.

“The one week--seven years--ended in A. D. 34. Then by the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel, ...” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 233.

“The seventy weeks, or 490 years, especially allotted to the Jews, ended, as we have seen, in A.D. 34. At that time, through the action of the

Jewish Sanhedrin, the nation sealed its rejection of the gospel by the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution of the followers of Christ. Then the message of salvation, no longer restricted to the chosen people, was given to the world.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 328.

6. What course did the protestant churches take before they were declared to be Babylon? Revelation 14:8.

“In all my labors,’ said Miller, ‘I never had the desire or thought to establish any separate interest from that of existing denominations, or to benefit one at the expense of another.’ ...” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 375.

“But as ministers and religious leaders decided against the advent doctrine and desired to suppress all agitation of the subject, they do not only opposed it from the pulpit, but denied their members the privilege of attending preaching upon the second advent, or even of speaking of their hope in the social meetings of the church. Thus the believers found themselves in a position of great trial and perplexity. They loved their churches and were loath to separate from them; but as they saw the testimony of God’s word suppressed and their right to investigate the prophecies denied they felt that loyalty to God forbade them to submit. Those who sought to shut out the testimony of God’s word they could not regard as constituting the church of Christ, ‘the pillar and ground of the truth.’ Hence they felt themselves justified in separating from their former connection. In the summer of 1844 about fifty thousand withdrew from the churches.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 376.

LIGHT OPPOSED AND REJECTED

7. What may happen to members in the church when light is resisted? Revelation 3:15-17.

“An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord’s message through Brethren E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones. ... The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 234, 235.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the

True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.

"I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded." —*Early Writings*, p. 270.

"The message preached to us by A.T Jones and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the church of Laodicea." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 15, p. 92.

8. What happened in the Laodicean church when, during World War I, the law was violated and the faithful people were disfellowshipped from the church? Revelation 3:20.

"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." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.

"The Jewish leaders thought themselves too wise to need instruction, too righteous to need salvation, too highly honored to need the honor that comes from Christ. The Savior turned from them to entrust to others the privileges they had abused and the work they had slighted. God's glory must be revealed, His word established. Christ's kingdom must be set up in the world. The salvation of God must be made known in the cities of the wilderness; and the disciples were called to do the work that the Jewish leaders had failed to do." —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 16.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Considering Matthew 16:18, discuss how the Lord has been guiding a visible church with organization in every generation.
- What sacred duty did God entrust to the church? What is its greatest privilege and which consequence will follow for forsaking this privilege and duty?
- Which was the biggest reason of opposition in the Jewish church? Find out and discuss the two most important reasons why the Jewish nation lost its privilege as God's church. Luke 2:34; 1 Peter 2:7,8.
- Harmonize prophecy, history, and causes of why certain experiences took place in the Seventh-day Adventist Church during World War I.

The Church with the Candlestick of Truth –Part 2

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” Isaiah 58:1.

OBJECTIVES

- To make believers realize that the church we are in is the true church of God.
- To be motivated and inspired to become faithful to the church that the Lord has purchased with His blood.

CONDITIONS REVEALED IN THE LAST CHURCH

- 1. Throughout the centuries, what has often been the experience of those who like to believe and live according to the word of God? Matthew 10:22; John 15:20, 21.**

“... 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...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.” *–The Desire of Ages*, p. 232.

- 2. Does the rejection of the message preached in the year 1888 by E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones, and the spirit manifested in that time, have some parallel in the past history of the church? Matthew 23:34.**

"The message given us by A.T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner is the message of God to the Laodicean church." –*Manuscript 24*, 1892.

"I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been so long as false guideposts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ's delegated messengers, you reject Christ." –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 97.

"The same spirit that actuated the rejectors of Christ, rankles in their hearts, and had they lived in the days of Christ, they would have acted toward Him in a manner similar to that of the godless and unbelieving Jews." –*Testimonies to RH Office*, p. 17.

"Satan is working that the history of the Jewish nation may be repeated in the experience of those who claim to believe present truth." –*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 111.

"I can never forget the experience which we had in Minneapolis, or the things which were then revealed to me in regard to the spirit that controlled men, the words spoken, the actions done in obedience to the powers of evil... They were moved at the meeting by another spirit." –*Letter 24*, 1892.

THE REMNANT FOLLOWS GOD'S WAY

3. What can we understand from the experience of the Laodicean church, in the year 1888 and in 1914, and the progress of the work of the remnant? Revelation 3:18, 20, 21.

"I was shown that God's people, who are His peculiar treasure, cannot engage in this perplexing war, for it is opposed to every principle of their faith. In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers. There would be a continual violation of conscience... Those who love God's commandments will conform to every good law of the land. But if the requirements of the rulers are such as conflict with the laws of God, the only question to be settled is: Shall we obey God, or man?" –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 361, 362.

"In every religious crisis some fall under temptation. The shaking of God blows away multitudes like dry leaves." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 89.

4. Due to the fall of the Laodicean church, which solemn mission has been entrusted to us? Isaiah 58:1; Micah 3:8; Psalms 40:9.

“It is true that we are commanded to ‘cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.’ Isaiah 58:1. This message must be given; but while it must be given, we should be careful not to thrust and crowd and condemn those who have not the light that we have. We should not go out of our way to make hard thrusts at the Catholics. Among the Catholics there are many who are most conscientious Christians and who walk in all the light that shines upon them, and God will work in their behalf. Those who have had great privileges and opportunities, and who have failed to improve their physical, mental, and moral powers, but who have lived to please themselves and have refused to bear their responsibility, are in greater danger and in greater condemnation before God than those who are in error upon doctrinal points, yet who seek to live to do good to others. Do not censure others; do not condemn them.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 243.

GOD’S PEOPLE UNITED LIKE A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS

5. Are the remnant people of the Laodicean time represented by scattered independent individuals or groups? Romans 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13.

“Said the angel, ‘Look ye!’ My attention was then turned to the company I had seen, who were mightily shaken. I was shown those whom I had before seen weeping and praying in agony of spirit. The company of guardian angels around them had been doubled, and they were clothed with armor from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order, like a company of soldiers.” —*Early Writings*, p. 271.

“Some have advanced the thought that as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man’s being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord’s work may advance healthfully and solidly, His people must draw together.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 487.

6. In some cases, what are the true reasons of separations and divisions? 1 John 2:19; 1 Corinthians 11:19; Romans 8:17-19.

“In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness. God never designed that one man, or four, or twenty, should take an important work into their own hands, and carry it forward independently of other workers in the cause. God wants His people to counsel together, to be a united church, in Christ a perfect whole. The only safety for us is to enter into the counsels of heaven, ever seeking to do the will of God, to become laborers together with Him. No one company is to form a confederacy, and say, ‘We are going to take this work, and carry it on in our own way; and if it does not go as we want it to, we will not give our influence to have it go at all.’ This is Satan’s voice, not God’s. Do not obey such suggestions.

“... in our separation from one another we are separated from Christ. We want to press together. Oh, how many times, when I have seemed to be in the presence of God and holy angels, I have heard the angel voice saying, ‘Press together, press together, press together. Do not let Satan cast his hellish shadow between brethren. Press together; in unity there is strength.’” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 374.

“Any betrayal of the church is treachery to Him who has bought mankind with the blood of His only-begotten Son.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 11.

FIRM FOUNDATION

7. What is the foundation of the remnant church and of every faithful believer? 1 Timothy 3:15.

“Honest souls will see the straight chain of present truth. They will see its harmonious connections, link after link uniting into a great whole, and will lay hold upon it. The present truth is not difficult to be understood, and the people whom God is leading will be united upon this broad, firm platform. He will not use individuals of different faith, opinions, and views, to scatter and divide. Heaven and holy angels are working to unite, to bring into the unity of the faith, into the one body.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 326.

“I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps—the first, second, and third angels’ messages... I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 258, 259.

8. Are you living in such a way that the church, in which you are, may have and faithfully hold the evidences of the remnant? Revelation 12:17; 14:12.

“I saw a little company traveling a narrow pathway. All seemed to be firmly united, bound together by the truth, in bundles, or companies.” —*Early Writings*, pp. 88, 89.

“This principle bears with equal weight upon a question that has long agitated the Christian world,—the question of apostolic succession. Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character. So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, but upon spiritual relationship. A life actuated by the apostles’ spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 467.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Why is the candlestick removed from the church and privileges are lost? For which reasons did separation take place in the Laodicean church?
- Discuss the relationship between the event in 1888 and that of 1914-18, and describe the history by which the remnant work continued.
- Do you think that whatever reason is enough to justify a separation from the visible church, that the Lord Himself has called into existence?
- Are you following the call of the Adventist pioneers and the footsteps of faithfulness of the International Missionary Society of the Seventh-day Adventists, Reform Movement?

Shaking of the Remnant People

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.” Amos 9:9.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand that in order to possess a pure people, God puts His chosen ones under test and sifts them.
- To consider that the believers are to learn patience by enduring the shaking.

SIFTING OF THE CHURCH

1. **What process are God’s people to go through and for which purposes? Malachi 3:3, 4.**

“In this scripture is portrayed a refining, purifying process, to be carried on in the hearts of men by the Lord of hosts. The process is most trying to the soul, but it is only by this means that the dross can be removed. Of necessity we must endure trials; for through these we are brought close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that we may render to Him an offering in righteousness ...

“The Master sees wherein we need to be purified for His heavenly kingdom. He will not leave us in the furnace until we are wholly consumed. As a refiner and purifier of silver, He is beholding His children, watching the process of purification, until He shall discern His image reflected in us. ... The furnace is to purify and refine, but not to consume and destroy. God in His providence would try us, to purify us as the sons of Levi, that we may offer to Him an offering in righteousness.” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1181, 1182.

2. Considering God's final purpose for His church, what prophecy will be fulfilled in the future? Ephesians 5:26, 27.

“God is sifting His people. He will have a clean and holy church... We all have reason to thank God that a way has been opened to save the church; for the wrath of God must have come upon us if these corrupt pretenders had remained with us.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 99.

“The Lord will have a people as true as steel, and with faith as firm as the granite rock. They are to be His witnesses in the world, His instrumentalities to do a special, a glorious work in the day of His preparation.” *—Testimony Treasures*, vol. 1, p. 590.

SOME KINDS OF SHAKING

3. How was it prophesied that there would be a great shaking among God's people by means of the truth? Find examples from the past history. Revelation 3:18, 20; 2 Thessalonians 2:10.

“It [the shaking] will be the result of refusing the truth presented.” *—Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 13.

“I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people.” *—Early Writings*, p. 270.

4. Explain about the different types of shakings that will happen among God's people. Hosea 4:17.

“There is chaff among us, and this is why we are so weak.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 288.

“The people of God will be tested and proved. A close and searching work must go on among Sabbathkeepers. Like ancient Israel, how soon we forget God and His wondrous works, and rebel against Him. Some look to the world and desire to follow its fashions and participate in its pleasure, just as the children of Israel looked back to Egypt and lusted for the good things which they had enjoyed there, and which God chose to withhold from them to prove them and thereby test their fidelity to Him.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 287, 288.

OTHER KINDS OF SHAKINGS

5. What kind of people will be shaken out? Hebrews 2:1, 3 (first part).

“The great sifting time is just before us. The jealous and the faultfinding, who are watching for evil, will be shaken out.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 251.

“Also the lives of those who professed to be His followers, who had this world’s goods, but considered it so great a thing to help the cause of salvation. The angel said, ‘Can such enter heavens?’ Another angel answered, ‘No, never, never, never. Those who are not interested in the cause of God on earth can never sing the song of redeeming love above.’” –*Early Writings*, p. 50.

“Whatever may be the ecstasies of religious feeling, Jesus cannot abide in the heart that disregards the divine law. God will honor those only who honor Him.

“To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey.’ If we indulge anger, lust, covetousness, hatred, selfishness, or any other sin, we become servants of sin.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 114.

6. How thoroughly will God sift them? 2 Corinthians 5:10.

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be, rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.

“True godliness will be clearly distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat. All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ’s righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 81.

“We are in the shaking time, the time when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. The Lord will not excuse those who know the truth if they do not in word and deed obey His commands.” —*Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, p. 547.

THOROUGH REFORMATION

7. What complete reformation is required from the remnant people? What does the vision shown in the dream of Sister White mean? Deuteronomy 26:16.

“Men of clear understanding are needed now. God calls upon those who are willing to be controlled by the Holy Spirit to lead out in a work of thorough reformation.” —*Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 400.

“As we progressed, the path still continued to grow narrow...

“As the path grew more narrow, we decided that we could no longer go with safety on horseback, and we left the horses and went on foot, in single file, one following in the footsteps of another. At this point small cords were let down from the top of the pure white wall; these we eagerly grasped, to aid us in keeping our balance upon the path. As we traveled, the cord moved along with us. The path finally became so narrow that we concluded that we could travel more safely without our shoes, so we slipped them from our feet and went on some distance without them. Soon it was decided that we could travel more safely without our stockings; these were removed, and we journeyed on with bare feet.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 594, 595.

8. What blessings will God bestow upon the church when the reformation is completed? Joel 2:23.

“The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result. To the end of time the presence of the Spirit is to abide with the true church.” *—The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55.

“The third angel’s message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place...Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord--fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” *—The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- Name the reasons why God is sifting the church and the people. What will be the result?
- Discuss how God cleans His people and what it means for the church to bruise the head of Satan.
- Practically examine the various ways of shaking and consider what situation you consider yourself in this light.
- Why is the progress of thorough reformation necessary and, as a result, how will the church be blessed? What should every individual do to receive the blessing?

**Please,
read the Report from Benin
on page 70.**

Glorious Victory of the Remnant Church

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” Revelation 14:1-3.

OBJECTIVES

- Emphasize that God will reveal His love in the final time through the remnant people and that the plan of salvation will come to an end.
- Remember that in the spiritual battle Christ already reached the victory and the same is promised to us. ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.’ Revelation 3:21.
- To focus that every victorious believer will be invited to partake in this glorious privilege and share the joy.

BATTLE AND VICTORY OF GOD’S PEOPLE

1. **What are the goals of Satan against God’s people? How will the controversy between Christ and Satan develop? Revelation 12:17; 3:21; 12:11.**

“Those who love and keep the commandments of God are most obnoxious to the synagogue of Satan, and the powers of evil will manifest their hatred toward them to the fullest extent possible. John foresaw the conflict between the remnant church and the power of evil, and said, ‘The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’

“There are only two parties upon this earth--those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation is represented the great conflict between the obedient and the disobedient.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 974.

2. How is the victorious scene of the church described in a holy vision? Who are those people? Revelation 15:2, 3.

“In holy vision the prophet saw the ultimate triumph of God’s remnant church. He writes: ‘I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory...stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.’ (Revelation 15:2, 3).

‘And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads.’ (Revelation 14:1)...They are of that number to whom Christ says, ‘Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ He welcomes them as His children, saying, ‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ (Matthew 25:34, 21).

“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:4).” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 590, 591.

SATAN’S DECEPTION EXPOSED

3. Which Satanic deception has also taken root in the modern Christian world? Psalms 119:126; Isaiah 24:5.

“From the first the great controversy had been upon the law of God. Satan had sought to prove that God was unjust, that His law was faulty, and that the good of the universe required it to be changed. In attacking the law he aimed to overthrow the authority of its Author. In the controversy it was to be shown whether the divine statutes were defective and subject to change, or perfect and immutable.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 69.

“In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that,

should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.

- 4. What is the evidence that God’s law is perfect and could be kept? A clear evidence will be revealed by intelligent beings. Who are they? Revelation 14:1-5; 15:2, 3.**

“But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God’s love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 764.

A CLEAR EVIDENCE

- 5. In order to have clear evidence that God’s law can be kept, what experience is required by the remnant people? Imagine the experiences of the 144,000 who, for a time, have to live without a Mediator. Jeremiah 30:5-7.**

“... the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received ‘the seal of the living God.’ Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, ‘It is done;’ and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: ‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.’ (Revelation 22:11). Every case has been decided for life or death...”

“In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God’s long-suffering has ended.” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 613, 614.

6. How does Spirit of Prophecy testify that the 144,000 will keep their faith and overcome in the Jacob's trouble when there is no mediator? What time is this? Revelation 16:17.

“With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, throngs of evil men are about to rush upon their prey, when, lo, a dense blackness, deeper than the darkness of the night, falls upon the earth. Then a rainbow, shining with the glory from the throne of God, spans the heavens and seems to encircle each praying company. The angry multitudes are suddenly arrested. Their mocking cries die away. ...

“By the people of God a voice, clear and melodious, is heard, saying, ‘Look up’ ... Again a voice, musical and triumphant, is heard, saying: ‘They come! they come! holy, harmless, and undefiled. They have kept the word of My patience; they shall walk among the angels;’ and the pale, quivering lips of those who have held fast their faith utter a shout of victory. ...

“In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: ‘It is done.’ (Revelation 16:17).” —*The Great Controversy*, pp. 635, 636.

THE GLORIOUS MORNING

7. What will happen to those who are dead having faith in the third angel's message? Daniel 12:2; Revelation 1:7. What will they experience with their unchanged body? Isaiah 25:9; Job 19:25-27.

“Graves are opened, and ‘many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth...awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.’ (Daniel 12:2). All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's covenant of peace with those who have kept His law. ‘They also which pierced Him’ (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the most violent opposers of His truth and His people, are raised to behold Him in His glory and to see the honor placed upon the loyal and obedient.” —*The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

“The voice of God is heard from heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to His people ...

“Soon there appears in the east a small black cloud, about half the size of a man’s hand. It is the cloud which surrounds the Saviour and which seems in the distance to be shrouded in darkness. The people of God know this to be the sign of the Son of man. In solemn silence they gaze upon it as it draws nearer the earth, becoming lighter and more glorious, until it is a great white cloud, its base a glory like consuming fire, and above it the rainbow of the covenant. Jesus rides forth as a mighty conqueror.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 640, 641.

8. After the victorious will be transformed to an immortal body, with whom will they ascend to the Heavenly city? Philippians 3:21; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

“The living righteous are changed ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.’ At the voice of God they were glorified; now they are made immortal and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air...Friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the City of God.

“On each side of the cloudy chariot are wings, and beneath it are living wheels; and as the chariot rolls upward, the wheels cry, ‘Holy,’ and the wings, as they move, cry, ‘Holy,’ and the retinue of angels cry, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.’ And the redeemed shout, ‘Alleluia!’ as the chariot moves onward toward the New Jerusalem.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 645.

9. How can we enjoy the privilege of joining this glorious rank? Hebrews 3:14; Revelation 14:12.

“As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. A parchment was placed in the angel’s hand, and as he descended to the earth in power and majesty, he proclaimed a fearful warning, with the most terrible threatening ever borne to man. This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, ‘They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image. Their only hope of eternal life is to remain steadfast.

Although their lives are at stake, they must hold fast the truth.' The third angel closes his message thus: 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' ” *—Early Writings*, p. 254.

FOR OUR THOUGHTS

- What is God trying to manage through His remnant people of the last time? Who are they?
- What fault did Satan find in God's law in the beginning and what will be recognized at the end?
- Under what circumstances, should the 144,000 keep the commandments of God and keep their faith?
- What special experiences will the redeemed do at the second coming of Jesus?
- What should we do in order to be able to find ourselves among these glorious people?

MISSIONARY REPORT FROM BENIN

To be read on Sabbath, September 24, 2005

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, October 1, 2005*

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.’” Matthew 9:36-38.

In January 2004, our work extended to a new missionary field. It is the country of Benin, on the West Coast of Africa. Benin is a relatively small country, bordering with Nigeria on the east and Togo on the west. The Atlantic Ocean is to the south, and Burkina Faso is to the north. Economically, the country is very poor and the cost of living is very high.

The country is mainly dominated by idolatry. About 60% of the entire population belongs to voodoo, which is a state religion. This is the typical, pagan religion. Senior government officials belong to this religion. All other religious denominations, including Christians and Moslems, share the remaining 40%. There are relatively few Sabbath keepers.

Upon the call of one interested soul, Bro. Daniel Robert, our General Conference commissioned me to visit Benin to attend this call. Brother Daniel, in conjunction with his collaborator Bro. Allain Bossikponon, organized a small group, of about 15 interested people, who met together to study the Bible and the Reformation truth. Those who attended came from different religious backgrounds, like Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, voodoo, etc.

It was a special opportunity to study the doctrine of Christ’s righteousness from an Adventist approach. They were so impressed that nearly all of them showed a great desire to study more, while attending Sabbath services under the International Missionary Society, S.D.A., Reform Movement.

Since my stay was short, and I could not bring them to a final decision, an urgent visit is needed to answer their strong Macedonian call. Are many interested souls in other towns, away from the capital city of Cotonou, that we have to visit. The information I received later is that, now, about 20 people are gathering every Sabbath to study together.

They are asking for financial support to acquire a place for worship and an office. Through your sacrificial offering in this quarter, a chapel can

be acquired and missionary activities can be extended in the whole country, which will help the Reformation truth to be established in Benin.

In Matthew 6:19-21, Jesus taught us that by giving our resources to support God's cause, we are actually depositing in the heavenly bank, and we will surely reap eternal joy. Through your offering, you are also helping in spreading the gospel to the dark places of the earth, so that Jesus may come soon. May God inspire your heart as you stretch out your hand to support Benin.

Your brother in Christ,

–Parmenas N. Shirima
Regional Representative

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSONS

for the Second Half 2005

Fourth Quarter
*Our Wholehearted Service
for the Lord*

INTRODUCTION

“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28: 19, 20 (ASV).

“The commission given to the disciples is given also to us. Today, as then, a crucified and risen Saviour is to be uplifted before those who are without God and without hope in the world. The Lord calls for pastors, teachers, and evangelists. From door to door His servants are to proclaim the message of salvation.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 29.

Before Jesus will return to this earth the second time, the gospel commission must be fulfilled by His people. The world needs to know about God’s love for fallen humanity and the plan of redemption. The cross of Jesus is to be uplifted so lost sinners can look and be saved. Since this earth’s history will soon come to an end, God’s servants are to take an active part in missionary work. We need to awaken to the urgent need of our times and use our talents for God’s honor and glory. Isn’t it high time to labor more earnestly and effectively for our loved ones in our families, for our neighbors, at school, at our place of employment, and in the church? The Lord is willing to impart His Holy Spirit to those who have a sincere desire to teach the truth of salvation to the unsaved. Have we been sleeping at our post of duty, or are we motivated by God’s love to go, teach, and baptize?

“There is not one inactive in heaven, and no one will enter the mansions of bliss who has failed to show love for Christ, who has put forth no efforts for the salvation of others.” —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 208.

All can be richly blessed by doing something for the Master. The joy and satisfaction we receive in sharing the good news of salvation will help us to develop a strong faith, patience, courage, and a well-balanced character. The rewards of service are immeasurable and eternal.

“By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

Jesus is waiting for you—won’t you answer His call TODAY? There is a place for you in His work.

Our wish and prayer is that the Holy Spirit will motivate and help us today to prepare for the finishing of the Lord’s work on earth.

—*The Brethren of the General Conference*

**The Special Sabbath School Offering
is dedicated to Benin.**

*Remember to give your offering as an expression
of love and gratitude.*

1

Sabbath, October 1, 2005

God's Call to Service –Part 1

INTRODUCTION

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:19, 20.

OBJECTIVES

- To be partners with God in the work of saving souls.
- To experience the joy and satisfaction of helping others.
- To be motivated to use all the talents God has given us.

A UNIQUE PURPOSE

- 1. What special purpose do God's people have in this world darkened by sin? Matthew 5:14-16.**

“Christ’s followers have been redeemed for service. Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry. Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service--service to God and to their fellow men. Here Christ has presented to the world a higher conception of life than they had ever known. By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ. The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 326.

- 2. What descriptive names are given to those who are fulfilling Christ’s gospel commission? Isaiah 44:8; 2 Corinthians 5:20.**

“Since His ascension, Christ the great Head of the church, has carried forward His work in the world by chosen ambassadors, through whom He speaks to the children of men, and ministers to their needs. The position of those who have been called of God to labor in word and doctrine for the upbuilding of His church, is one of grave responsibility. In Christ’s stead they are to beseech men and women to be reconciled to God; and they can fulfill their mission only as they receive wisdom and power from above.” –*Gospel Workers*, p. 13.

A DIVINE PARTNERSHIP

- 3. What will we personally experience when we fulfill God’s plan by blessing and serving others? Philippians 4:4, 7; Colossians 3:23.**

“All heaven enters into copartnership with those who come to Christ for eternal life, submitting themselves to him as those who have made a surrender of all to God. God requires his servants to stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, striving in his power to keep the principles of truth pure and uncorrupted. They must never step aside from the path of self-denial and humility which every true Christian must travel. As they thus co-operate with God, Christ is formed within, ‘the hope of glory.’ Clad in his meekness and lowliness, they find their highest joy in doing his service. Earthly ambition gives way to a desire to serve the Master.” –*That I May Know Him*, p. 123.

4. What hopes can be realized when we enter into partnership with God? Ephesians 6:6-8; Matthew 25:23.

“To His servants Christ commits ‘His goods’--something to be put to use for Him. He gives ‘to every man his work.’ Each has his place in the eternal plan of heaven. Each is to work in co-operation with Christ for the salvation of souls. Not more surely is the place prepared for us in the heavenly mansions than is the special place designated on earth where we are to work for God.” *—Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 326, 327.

5. Why shouldn’t the responsibility for Christian service rest on the ministers only? Isaiah 52:7; Ephesians 1:3.

“Not upon the ordained minister only rests the responsibility of going forth to fulfill this commission. Everyone who has received Christ is called to work for the salvation of his fellow men. ‘The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.’ Revelation 22:17. The charge to give this invitation includes the entire church. Everyone who has heard the invitation is to echo the message from hill and valley, saying, ‘Come.’” *—The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 110.

“Christ commits to His followers an individual work,--a work that cannot be done by proxy. Ministry to the sick and the poor, the giving of the gospel to the lost, is not to be left to committees or organized charities. Individual responsibility, individual effort, personal sacrifice, is the requirement of the gospel.” *—The Ministry of Healing*, p. 147.

PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

6. Ultimately, how should the Christian view his ministry to others in relation to his accountability before God? Romans 14:10, 12.

“Personal responsibility, personal activity in seeking the salvation of others, must be the education given to all newly come to the faith.... Personal faith is to be acted and practiced, personal holiness is to be culti-

vated, and the meekness and lowliness of Christ is to become a part of our practical life. The work is to be thorough and deep in the heart of every human agent.

“Those who profess to receive and believe the truth are to be shown the deadly influence of selfishness and its tainting, corrupting power. The Holy Spirit must work upon the human agent, else another power will control mind and judgment. Spiritual knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent is the only hope of the soul. Each soul is to be taught of God, line upon line, precept upon precept; he must feel his individual accountability to God to engage in service for his Master, whose he is, and whom he is required to serve in the work of saving souls from death.”
—*Evangelism*, p. 354.

7. In what areas of life do we carry special responsibilities? Matthew 12:36, 37; 25:14, 15, 19; Ephesians 5:16.

“Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He require a more strict account than of our time...

“The power of speech is a talent that should be diligently cultivated. Of all the gifts we have received from God, none is capable of being a greater blessing than this. With the voice we convince and persuade, with it we offer prayer and praise to God, and with it we tell others of the Redeemer’s love. How important, then, that it be so trained as to be most effective for good.

“God also entrusts men with means. He gives them power to get wealth... All we possess is the Lord’s, and we are accountable to Him for the use we make of it.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 335, 342, 351.

8. What blessings will we experience if we keep our attention focused on Jesus and on doing His will? 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 5:20.

“We should live in this world to win souls to the Saviour. If we injure others, we injure ourselves also. If we bless others, we also bless ourselves; for the influence of every good deed is reflected upon our own hearts.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 72.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Have you personally answered the call of God to bring the message of salvation to those living without hope?
- When was the last time you experienced joy in serving others?

2

Sabbath, October 8, 2005

God's Call to Service – Part 2

INTRODUCTION

“The work above all work,--the business above all others which should draw and engage the energies of the soul,--is the work of saving souls for whom Christ has died. Make this the main, the important work of your life. Make it your special life work.” –*Messages to Young People*, p. 227.

OBJECTIVES

- To realize that God calls His laborers into His vineyard.
- To pray for more laborers in the end times.
- To quickly respond to the call of God.

A DIVINE CALL

- 1. Name two men in the Old Testament who were called by God for a specific work. 2 Peter 2:5; Exodus 3:10-12.**
- 2. Did Jesus also make direct and specific calls to certain men? Who were they? Mark 3:13, 14; Acts 9:4, 15, 16.**

“Mark the features of Christ’s work. He moved in the greatest simplicity. Although His followers were fishermen, He did not advise them to go first into the school of the rabbis before entering upon the work. He called His disciples from their fishers’ nets, and said: ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ He called Matthew from the receipt of customs, and said, ‘Follow Me.’ All that they were required to do was to follow Jesus, to do as He commanded them, and thus enter into His school, where God could be their teacher.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 359.

TYPES OF MINISTRY

3. In the end time, what divine calls are being made by God for missionary laborers? Matthew 20:1, 4-6; Isaiah 60:1, 3.

“God calls for ministers, Bible workers, and canvassers. Let our young men and young women go forth as canvassers, evangelists, and Bible workers, in company with laborers of experience, who can show them how to labor successfully.

“The highest of all work is ministry in its various lines, and it should be kept before the youth that there is no work more blessed of God than that of the gospel minister.” —*Messages to Young People*, pp. 208, 224.

“Young men are wanted. God calls them to missionary fields. Being comparatively free from care and responsibilities, they are more favorably situated to engage in the work than are those who must provide for the training and support of a large family. Furthermore, young men can more readily adapt themselves to new climates and new society, and can better endure inconveniences and hardships. By tact and perseverance, they can reach the people where they are.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 393.

4. Is there a part for everyone in the work of representing Christ to the world? 1 Corinthians 12:14-20.

“Let your light shine forth in good works. Said Christ, ‘Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.’ I fear that there are many who are in this condition. All have not the same work to do; different circumstances and

talents qualify individuals for different kinds of work in God's vineyard. There are some who fill more responsible positions than do others; but to each one is given his work, and if he does his work with fidelity and zeal, he is a faithful steward of the grace of God." *—Reflecting Christ*, p. 41.

EQUIPPED FOR SERVICE

5. When God calls His laborers into the gospel field, how will He equip them for service? Matthew 10:1.

"God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God." *—The Desire of Ages*, p. 251.

"One of the very best ways in which young men can obtain a fitness for the ministry is by entering the canvassing field. Let them go into towns and cities to canvass for the books which contain the truth for this time. In this work they will find opportunity to speak the words of life, and the seeds of truth they sow will spring up to bear fruit. By meeting the people and presenting to them our publications, they will gain an experience that they could not gain by preaching...." *—Messages to Young People*, p. 221.

6. After the laborers are called by God, through what agency are they then invested with, along with full ecclesiastical authority? Acts 13:1-3.

"God foresaw the difficulties that His servants would be called to meet; and in order that their work should be above challenge, He instructed the church by revelation to set them apart publicly to the work of the ministry. Their ordination was a public recognition of their divine appointment to bear to the Gentiles the glad tidings of the gospel. Both Paul and Barnabas had already received their commission from God Himself, and the ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office, and a recognition of one's authority in that office. By it the seal of the church was set upon the work of God." *—Gospel Workers*, pp. 441, 442.

SPECIAL PRAYERS NEEDED

- 7. While this earth's history is nearing its end, what should we pray for that will contribute to the finishing of the gospel work? Matthew 9:37, 38.**

“The world is in need of workers who will labor as Christ did for the suffering and the sinful. There is indeed a multitude to be reached. The world is full of sickness, suffering, distress, and sin. It is full of those who need to be ministered unto--the weak, the helpless, the ignorant, the degraded.” *—Counsels on Health*, p. 13.

- 8. What manifold blessings will be realized as the “called of God” take up their appointed duties? Psalms 126:5, 6; Isaiah 58:8.**

“While the great final reward is given at Christ's coming, true-hearted service for God brings a reward, even in this life. Obstacles, opposition, and bitter, heart-breaking discouragements, the worker will have to meet. He may not see the fruit of his toil. But in face of all this he finds in his labor a blessed recompense. All who surrender themselves to God in unselfish service for humanity are in co-operation with the Lord of glory. This thought sweetens all toil, it braces the will, it nerves the spirit for whatever may befall. Working with unselfish heart, ennobled by being partakers of Christ's sufferings, sharing His sympathies, they help to swell the tide of His joy, and bring honor and praise to His exalted name. In fellowship with God, with Christ, and with holy angels, they are surrounded with a heavenly atmosphere, an atmosphere that brings health to the body, vigor to the intellect, and joy to the soul.” *—Gospel Workers*, p. 513.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Are you praying for more laborers to enter into God's vineyard?
- Have you ever seriously considered working for God on a full time basis?
- What blessings have you received by serving others?

Power for Service

INTRODUCTION

“There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord’s promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people ‘to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ (Phil. 2:13).” –*The Faith I Live By*, p. 53.

OBJECTIVES

- To follow the good example of the early disciples.
- To receive the power of God so as to be faithful witnesses.
- To prepare for the latter rain experience.

POWER BESTOWED ON DISCIPLES

1. **What special power was bestowed on the disciples shortly after Jesus was translated to heaven? Acts 1:8; 2:4.**

“The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit’s grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, ‘Herein is love.’ They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 38.

2. How did the believers prepare themselves to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:14; 2:1; Luke 24:53.

“As the disciples waited for the fulfillment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. ...

“The disciples prayed with intense earnestness for a fitness to meet men and in their daily intercourse to speak words that would lead sinners to Christ. Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship. They drew nearer and nearer to God, and as they did this they realized what a privilege had been theirs in being permitted to associate so closely with Christ. Sadness filled their hearts as they thought of how many times they had grieved Him by their slowness of comprehension, their failure to understand the lessons that, for their good, He was trying to teach them.

“These days of preparation were days of deep heart searching. The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36, 37.

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

3. What was the central theme preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost? Acts 2:21, 22.

“Peter urged home upon the convicted people the fact that they had rejected Christ because they had been deceived by priests and rulers; and that if they continued to look to these men for counsel, and waited for them to acknowledge Christ before they dared to do so, they would never accept Him. These powerful men, though making a profession of godliness, were ambitious for earthly riches and glory. They were not willing to come to Christ to receive light.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 43, 44.

4. What solemn appeal was directed to those who heard Peter's timely gospel message? Acts 2:38.

5. What else took place during the Pentecostal outpouring of Gods' Spirit? Acts 2:4-6.

“ ‘There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.’ During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 39, 40.

6. What were the wonderful results of the preaching of the gospel? Acts 2:41; 4:4.

“After the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were so filled with love for Him [Christ] and for those for whom He died, that hearts were melted by the words they spoke and the prayers they offered. They spoke in the power of the Spirit; and under the influence of that power, thousands were converted.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 22.

“The glad tidings of a risen Saviour were carried to the utmost bounds of the known world.... Under their labors there were added to the church chosen men, who, receiving the word of life, consecrated their lives to the work of giving to others the hope that had filled their hearts with peace and joy. Hundreds proclaimed the message, ‘The kingdom of God is at hand.’ They could not be restrained or intimidated by threatenings. The Lord spoke through them; and wherever they went, the sick were healed, and the poor had the gospel preached unto them. So mightily can God work when men give themselves up to the control of His Spirit.” –*Christian Service*, p. 254.

FINAL OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

- 7. What long, looked-for event is forecast to take place at the end of the earth's history? Zechariah 10:1.**

- 8. What will occur during the final outpouring of God's Spirit? Acts 2:17, 18.**

"The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, wholehearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God." —*Christian Service*, p. 253.

- 9. How can we personally obtain the infilling of the Holy Spirit and be used in the service of soul winning? John 16:23, 24.**

"To every one who offers himself to the Lord for service, withholding nothing, is given power for the attainment of measureless results." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 30.

"When we labor diligently for the salvation of our fellow men, God will prosper our very effort." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 86.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Have you been asking God to fill you with His love and His Spirit?
- Are you preparing yourself to receive the fullness of the Spirit during the latter rain?

Sabbath, October 22, 2005

Reaching Out to Our Neighbor

INTRODUCTION

“To every one who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others. Individually we are to stand in our lot and place, saying, ‘Here I am; send me.’ Isaiah 6:8. Upon the minister of the word, the missionary nurse, the Christian physician, the individual Christian, whether he be merchant or farmer, professional man or mechanic,—the responsibility rests upon all. It is our work to reveal to men the gospel of their salvation. Every enterprise in which we engage should be a means to this end.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 148.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine who is our neighbor and to witness to them.
- To discover ways to unlock and soften the hearts of sinners.
- To discover and develop the gift of hospitality.

OUR NEIGHBORS

1. **What urgent command is given by God to His followers so they can find those who are separated from Him? Luke 14:21-23.**

“The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the word unmixed with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do not receive the blessing that God has placed in it for them. The Lord calls upon His servants to carry His message to the people. The word of everlasting life must be given to those who are perishing in their sins.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 228, 229.

2. Missionary work should begin in the family. From that circle of positive influence, where does it extend to? Luke 10:31-37.

“This question Christ answered in the parable of the good Samaritan. He showed that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is every one who is the property of God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 376.

“Wherever a church is established, all the members should engage actively in missionary work. They should visit every family in the neighborhood and know their spiritual condition. If professed Christians had engaged in this work from the time when their names were first placed on the church books, there would not now be such widespread unbelief, such depths of iniquity, such unparalleled wickedness, as is seen in the world at the present time. If every church member had sought to enlighten others, thousands upon thousands would today stand with God’s commandment-keeping people.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 296.

LABORS OF LOVE AND GRACE

3. Those who are employed in secular lines of work generally have limited time for neighborhood evangelism. What particular times (days) would be favorable for them to engage in missionary work? Acts 16:13.

“It will not be possible for all to give their whole time to the work, because of the labor they must do to earn their daily living. Yet these have their holidays and times that they can devote to Christian work, and do good in this way if they cannot give much of their means.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 76.

“According to the fourth commandment the Sabbath was dedicated to rest and religious worship. All secular employment was to be suspended, but works of mercy and benevolence were in accordance with the purpose of the Lord. They were not to be limited to time or place. To relieve the afflicted, to comfort the sorrowing, is a labor of love that does honor to God’s holy day.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 77.

4. Who will give the laborer the appropriate words to speak to his neighbor? Mark 13:11.

“The truth should be presented with divine tact, gentleness, and tenderness. It should come from a heart that has been softened and made sympathetic.... Let our words be gentle as we seek to win souls. God will be wisdom to him who seeks for wisdom from a divine source. We are to seek opportunities on every hand, we are to watch unto prayer, and be ready always to give a reason for the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear. Lest we shall impress unfavorably one soul for whom Christ died we should keep our hearts uplifted to God, so that when the opportunity presents itself, we may have the right words to speak at the right time. If you thus undertake work for God, the Spirit of God will be your helper. The Holy Spirit will apply the word spoken in love for the soul. The truth will have quickening power when spoken under the influence of the grace of Christ.” *—Lift Him Up*, p. 211.

5. What is one of the best gospel themes that will awaken and convict lost sinners of their need of repentance? John 1:29.

KEYS AND TOOLS OF EVANGELISM

6. What are the keys that will unlock and soften the heart to accept the gospel? 1 John 4:12; 2 Peter 1:7.

“Earnest, persevering effort must be made for the salvation of those in whose hearts an interest is awakened. Many can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be relieved. As they see evidence of our unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ...Eloquence, knowledge of truth, rare talents, mingled with love, are all precious endowments. But ability alone, the choicest talents alone, cannot take the place of love.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 84.

7. What important elements contribute to successful house visitations? Ephesians 6:18; Acts 17:2.

“Go to your neighbors one by one, and come close to them till their hearts are warmed by your unselfish interest and love. Sympathize with them, pray for them, watch for opportunities to do them good, and as you can, gather a few together and open the Word of God to their darkened minds.” —*Christian Service*, p. 116.

HOSPITALITY--A PRIVILEGE AND A BLESSING

8. What effective method of labor will bring rich rewards and blessings? 1 Peter 4:9.

“Even among those who profess to be Christians, true hospitality is little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board without embarrassment or parade. Some plead that ‘it is too much trouble.’ It would not be if you would say, ‘We have made no special preparation, but you are welcome to what we have.’ By the unexpected guest a welcome is appreciated far more than is the most elaborate preparation.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol.6, p. 343.

“Unwise economy and artificial customs often prevent the exercise of hospitality where it is needed and would be a blessing. The regular supply of food for our tables should be such that the unexpected guest can be made welcome without burdening the housewife to make extra preparation.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 322, 323.

9. What special Helper will accompany you as you enter into homes to unfold precious gems of truth? Psalms 34:7; John 14:16, 17.

“Church members are to do evangelistic work in the homes of their neighbors who have not yet received full evidence of the truth for this time.

The presentation of the truth in love and sympathy, from house to house, is in harmony with the instruction that Christ gave to His disciples when He sent them out on their first missionary tour. By songs of praise to God, by humble, heartfelt prayers, by a simple presentation of Bible truth in the family circle, many will be reached. The divine workers will be present to send conviction to hearts. 'I am with you alway' is His promise. With the assurance of the abiding presence of such a Helper, we may labor with hope and faith and courage..." –*Welfare Ministry*, p. 70.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Does your next-door neighbor know that you are a Christian?
- When was the last time you visited your neighbor and unfolded God's love to him?

5

Sabbath, October 29, 2005

Ministry to the Poor

INTRODUCTION

"... we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps." –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 640.

OBJECTIVES

- To come close to those who are suffering want and hardship.
- To follow the example of Job in his ministry to the poor.
- To help the poor to help themselves.

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE POOR

1. What is God's attitude toward the poor? Psalms 72:12, 13.

“Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all, easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 170.

2. Why do so many people neglect the poor? Jeremiah 17:9.

“God has called us to service as well as to right living. He requires all to do with faithfulness, the duties of today; but these duties are much neglected by the majority of professed Christians. They shun the lowly and humble poor, and self-denying, self-sacrificing work for Christ. Their supreme selfishness leads them to choose easier and more agreeable work.” —*The Southern Watchman*, July 9, 1903.

“God desires His children to remember that in order to glorify Him, they must bestow their affection on those who need it most. None with whom we come in contact are to be neglected. No selfishness in look, word, or deed is to be manifested to our fellow beings, whatever their position, whether they be high or low, rich or poor. The love that gives kind words to only a few, while others are treated with coldness and indifference, is not love, but selfishness. It will not in any way work for the good of souls or the glory of God. We are not to confine our love to one or two objects.” —*My Life Today*, p. 80.

AN ACCEPTABLE MINISTRY

3. How does the prophet Isaiah describe an acceptable ministry that is very practical and that needs to be implemented? Isaiah 58:7.

4. How did the patriarch Job learn of the needs of the poor? Job 29:16.

“Your good wishes we will thank you for, but the poor cannot keep comfortable on good wishes alone. They must have tangible proofs of your kind-

ness in food and clothing. God does not mean that any of His followers should beg for bread. He has given you an abundance that you may supply those of their necessities which by industry and economy they are not able to supply. Do not wait for them to call your attention to their needs. Act as did Job. The thing that he knew not he searched out. Go on an inspecting tour and learn what is needed and how it can be best supplied.” –*Welfare Ministry*, p.183.

5. What tangible evidence is produced when one has the love of God in his heart? Matthew 25:35, 36.

“Donations of money cannot take the place of personal ministry. It is right to give our means, and many more should do this; but according to their strength and opportunities, personal service is required of all. The work of gathering in the needy, the oppressed, the suffering, the destitute, is the very work which every church that believes the truth for this time should long since have been doing. We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan in supplying physical necessities, feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, gathering from God every day grace and strength that will enable us to reach to the very depths of human misery and help those who cannot possibly help themselves. In doing this work we have a favorable opportunity to set forth Christ the crucified One.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 275, 276.

WHOM TO HELP AND HOW

6. Of whom should we especially take notice when working among different classes of people? Galatians 6:10.

“In a special sense Christ has laid upon His church the duty of caring for the needy among its own members. He suffers His poor to be in the borders of every church. They are always to be among us, and He places upon the members of the church a personal responsibility to care for them. As the members of a true family care for one another, ministering to the sick, supporting the weak, teaching the ignorant, training the inexperienced, so is the ‘household of faith’ to care for its needy and helpless ones. It is the duty of each church to make careful, judicious arrangements for the care of its poor and sick. Any neglect on the part of those who claim to be followers of Christ, a failure to

relieve the necessities of a brother or a sister who is bearing the yoke of poverty and oppression, is registered in the books of heaven as shown to Christ in the person of His saints. What a reckoning the Lord will have with many, very many, who present the words of Christ to others but fail to manifest tender sympathy and regard for a brother in the faith who is less fortunate and successful than themselves.” —*My Life Today*, p. 245.

7. What can be done to help the poor to help themselves? 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

“Men and women of God, persons of discernment and wisdom, should be appointed to look after the poor and needy, the household of faith first. These should report to the church and counsel as to what should be done. Instead of encouraging the poor to think that they can have their eating and drinking provided free, or nearly so, we should place them where they can help themselves. We should endeavor to provide them with work, and if necessary, teach them how to work. Let the members of poor households be taught how to cook, how to make and mend their own clothing, how to care properly for the home. Let boys and girls be thoroughly taught some useful trade or occupation. We are to educate the poor to become self-reliant. This will be true help, for it will not only make them self-sustaining but will enable them to help others.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p.194.

“In trying to help the needy, we should be careful to give them the right kind of help. There are those who when helped will continue to make themselves special objects of need. They will be dependent as long as they see anything on which to depend. By giving undue time and attention to these, we may encourage idleness, helplessness, extravagance, and intemperance.” —*Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 277, 278.

8. What promises are made to those who consider the poor? Psalms 41:1-3; Proverbs 19:17; 28:27.

“The apportioning of rewards at the last day turns upon the question of our practical benevolence: ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’ Christ puts Himself in the poor man’s place, identifying His interest with that of the poor.... He calls upon each disciple to dispense with grateful liberality the gifts entrusted to him, as if he were bestowing the same upon his Redeemer.” —*Our High Calling*, p. 190.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- When was the last time you personally helped a poor person?
- Does the world owe you a living, or should you, with God's help, find employment?

6

Sabbath, November 5, 2005

Reaching the Wealthy and the Influential

INTRODUCTION

“Mistakes have been made in not seeking to reach ministers and the higher classes with the truth. People not of our faith have been shunned altogether too much. While we should not associate with them to receive their mold, there are honest ones everywhere for whom we should labor cautiously, wisely, and intelligently, full of love for their souls.” —*Christian Service*, p. 203.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn how to approach the wealthy and lead them to Jesus.
- To learn how to appeal to the higher classes for donations that will support God's cause.
- To offer the rich the best and only way to peace and rest.

A NEGLECTED PEOPLE

- 1. Besides the poor, what other class of people should we labor for and not consider them as hopeless and unreachable? 1 Timothy 6:17.**

“We talk and write much of the neglected poor: should not some attention be given also to the neglected rich? Many look upon this class as hopeless, and they do little to open the eyes of those who, blinded and dazed by the power of Satan, have lost eternity out of their reckoning. Thousands of wealthy men have gone to their graves unwarned, because they have been judged by appearance, and passed by as hopeless subjects.” —*Evangelism*, p. 555.

2. Who especially should approach the wealthy and appeal for monetary gifts to support God’s work? Daniel 12:3.

“Persons of this class are often the most difficult of access, but Christ will open ways whereby they may be reached. Let the wisest, the most trustful, the most hopeful laborers seek for these souls.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 282.

“Some are especially fitted to work for the higher classes. These should seek wisdom from God to know how to reach these persons, to have not merely a casual acquaintance with them, but by personal effort and living faith to awaken them to the needs of the soul, to lead them to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 213.

GIFTS FROM THE WEALTHY

3. Should God’s people refuse monetary gifts that come from wealthy unbelievers? Why not? Haggai 2:8.

“You inquire with respect to the propriety of receiving gifts from Gentiles or the heathen. The question is not strange; but I would ask you, Who is that owns our world? Who are the real owners of houses and lands? Is it not God? He has an abundance in our world which He has placed in the hands of men, by which the hungry might be supplied with food, the naked with clothing, the homeless with homes. The Lord would move upon worldly men, even idolaters, to give of their abundance for the support of the work, if we would approach them wisely and give them an opportunity of doing those things which it is their privilege to do. What they would give we should be privileged to receive.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 278.

4. What can those of means do to help in building up the cause of God? Mark 13:10.

“The Lord desires that moneyed men shall be converted, and act as His helping hand in reaching others. He desires that those who can help in the work of reform and restoration shall see the precious light of truth, be transformed in character, and be led to use their entrusted capital in His service. He would have them invest the means He has lent them, in doing good, in opening the way for the gospel to be preached to all classes, nigh and afar off.”
—*Gospel Workers*, p. 349.

5. What positive results can be had when we work faithfully for the higher classes of society? 1 Corinthians 3:6; Acts 6:7.

THE SEARCH GOES ON

6. What is it that the rich and famous do not have, but are searching for? Philippians 4:4,7.

“Most generally the fashionable, the wealthy, the proud, understand by experience that happiness is not to be secured by the amount of money that they possess, or by costly edifices, and ornamental furniture and pictures. They want something they have not. But this class are attracted toward each other, and it is hard to find access to them; and because of this many are perishing in their sins who long for something that will give them rest and peace and quietude of mind. They need Jesus, the light of righteousness.” —*Evangelism*, p. 556.

7. What can we offer them so as to turn their attention toward Christ and be saved? Acts 8:35; 16:31, 32.

“Wherever we go, we are to carry Jesus with us, and to reveal to others the preciousness of our Saviour. . . . Through the social relations, Christianity comes in contact with the world. Everyone who has received the divine illumination is to brighten the pathway of those who know not the Light of life. . . . Christ is pleased with His followers when they show that, though human, they are partakers of the divine nature. . . . The light that shines upon them they reflect upon others in works that are luminous with the love of Christ.”
—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 152, 153.

“Men in high positions of trust in the world will be charmed by a plain, straightforward, Scriptural statement of truth.” —*Evangelism*, p. 557.

8. What is desperately needed in the church, so a good work can be done among the wealthy and influential? Psalms 85:6; James 2: 8.

“There needs to be a waking up among God’s people, that His work may be carried forward with power. We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We need to understand that God will add to the ranks of His people men of ability and influence, who are to act their part in warning the world. All in the world are not lawless and sinful. God has many thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. There are God-fearing men in the fallen churches...

“Much more prayer, much more Christlikeness, much more conformity to God’s will, is to be brought into God’s work.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 558, 559.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Have you prayed to the Lord to give you faith and courage to approach the wealthy in order to help them find Jesus?
- What experiences can you share from your work with wealthy unbelievers?

Medical Missionary Work

INTRODUCTION

“My heart is made sad as I look at our churches, which ought to be connected in heart and soul and practice with the medical missionary work. . . . I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work. The work of a minister is to minister. Our ministers are to work on the gospel plan of ministering.” —*Welfare Ministry*, p. 139.

OBJECTIVES

- To help understand the principles behind medical missionary work.
- To involve more of God’s people in caring for and treating the sick.
- To realize that the health message often opens doors to the gospel.

SUFFERING AND SICKNESS

1. **What particular word does Jesus use to describe the tragic ill-health conditions that will prevail in the end times? Luke 21:11.**

“Famines will increase. Pestilences will sweep away thousands. Dangers are all around us from the powers without and satanic workings within, but the restraining power of God is now being exercised.” —*Last Day Events*, p. 27.

“God has not restrained the powers of darkness from carrying forward their deadly work of vitiating the air, one of the sources of life and nutrition, with a deadly miasma. Not only is vegetable life affected, but man suffers from pestilences. Cholera and unexplainable diseases have broken out. . . . These things are the result of drops from the vials of God’s wrath being sprinkled on the earth, and are but faint representations of what will be in the near future.” —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 304.

**2. Is it God's desire for mankind to be sick and unhealthy?
3 John 2; Ezekiel 33:11.**

"The light God has given on health reform is for our salvation and the salvation of the world. Men and women should be informed in regard to the human habitation, fitted up by our Creator as His dwelling place, and over which He desires us to be faithful stewards. . . . Our bodies are wonderfully made, and the Lord requires us to keep them in order. All are under obligation to Him to keep the human structure in a healthful, wholesome condition, that every muscle, every organ, may be used in the service of God. . . . God, who formed the wonderful structure of the body, will take special care to keep it in order, if men cooperate, instead of working at cross-purposes, with Him." *—Our High Calling*, p. 267.

CHRIST'S WORK

**3. How did Matthew summarize Christ's three-fold ministry?
Matthew 9:35.**

"Thus the Saviour has bound together the work of preaching the truth and healing the sick, and we are never to divorce them. Christ blended ministry and healing, and there is to be no more separation in our work than there was in His. There is to be no division between the medical missionary work and the gospel ministry. Medical missionary work is to be to the third angel's message as the right arm to the body. Both are to work in harmony." *—Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, pp. 141, 142.

"In every sense of the word Christ was a medical missionary. He came to this world to preach the gospel and to heal the sick. He came as a healer of the bodies as well as the souls of human beings. His message was that obedience to the laws of the kingdom of God would bring men and women health and prosperity..." *—Counsel on Health*, p. 317.

4. What constituted the largest part of Christ's ministry? Matthew 4:24.

“The Saviour of the world devoted more time and labor to healing the sick than to preaching.” –*The Review and Herald*, February 1, 1898.

5. What will help open many doors to the truth? Luke 10:33, 34.

“Nothing will open doors for the truth like evangelistic medical missionary work. This will find access to hearts and minds, and will be a means of converting many to the truth. The evangelist who is prepared to minister to a diseased body is given the grandest opportunity of ministering to the sinsick soul. Such an evangelist should be empowered to administer baptism to those who are converted and desire baptism. . . . Medical missionary work is the right, helping hand of the gospel, to open doors for the proclamation of the message. . . . Doors that have been closed to him who merely preaches the gospel will be opened to the intelligent medical missionary. God reaches hearts through the relief of physical suffering.” –*Evangelism*, p. 513.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE SICK

6. As we see the misery and suffering caused by numerous diseases in our world, what counsel is given us to help the sick? Luke 9:2.

“Every church member should be engaged in some line of service for the Master. Some cannot do so much as others, but everyone should do his utmost to roll back the tide of disease and distress that is sweeping over our world.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 149.

“In new fields no work is so successful as medical missionary work. It is the pioneer work. It is the gospel practiced, the compassion of Christ revealed. God grant that the importance of this work shall be understood, and that new fields may immediately be entered. Then will the work of the ministry be after the Lord’s order. The sick will be healed, and poor, suffering humanity will be blessed.” –*Pacific Union Recorder*, August 29, 1901.

7. What practical principles of healthful living can be taught to the sick?

“Good service can be done by teaching the people how to prepare healthful food. This line of work is as essential as any that can be taken up. More cooking schools should be established, and some should labor from house to house, giving instruction in the art of cooking wholesome foods. Many, many will be rescued from physical, mental, and moral degeneracy through the influence of health reform. These principles will commend themselves to those who are seeking for light, and such will advance from this to receive the full truth for this time.” –*Welfare Ministry*, p. 128.

“We need a genuine education in the art of cooking. . . . Form classes, where you may teach the people how to make good bread and how to put together ingredients to make healthful food combinations from the grains and the vegetables.” –*Welfare Ministry*, p. 128.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

8. Although there are many types of treatments used in restoring health, who is the restorer in the recovery of the sick? Exodus 15:26; 23:25

“And we should teach others how to preserve and to recover health. For the sick we should use the remedies which God has provided in nature, and we should point them to Him who alone can restore. It is our work to present the sick and suffering to Christ in the arms of our faith. We should teach them to believe in the Great Healer. We should lay hold on His promise, and pray for the manifestation of His power. The very essence of the gospel is restoration, and the Saviour would have us bid the sick, the hopeless, and the afflicted take hold upon His strength.” –*Lift Him Up*, p. 260.

9. For what will Christ finally commend the righteous? Matthew 25:21, 34, 36.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What wonderful results have you personally experienced in the treatment of the sick?
- What methods of treatment of the sick have been successful and have opened the doors to minister to their spiritual needs?

Sabbath, November 19, 2005

Reaching Out to Foreign Mission Fields

INTRODUCTION

“The Lord’s business requires haste; souls are perishing without a knowledge of the truth....” —*Evangelism*, p. 415.

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage and train the youth for foreign missionary work.
- To support the work in foreign countries.
- To reach out to countries where the gospel has not yet been proclaimed.

WORLD WIDE ILLUMINATION

1. How far should our missionary projects and outreaches extend? Acts 1:8; Matthew 24:14.

“At this time there should be representatives of present truth in every city, and in the remote parts of the earth. The whole earth is to be illuminated with the glory of God’s truth. The light is to shine to all lands and all peoples. And it is from those who have received the light that it is to shine forth. . . .

“The light of truth is to shine to the ends of the earth. Greater and still greater light is beaming with celestial brightness from the Redeemer’s face upon His representatives, to be diffused through the darkness of a benighted world. As laborers together with Him, let us pray for the sanctification of His Spirit, that we may shine more and more brightly. . . .

“Our efforts are not to be confined to a few places where the light has become so abundant that it is not appreciated. The gospel message is to be proclaimed to all nations and kindreds and tongues and peoples.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 407, 413.

2. What urgent call is coming from foreign countries? Acts 16:9.

PLACES TO WORK

3. What lands in particular are waiting to hear the message of truth for this time? Psalms 68:31; Isaiah 42:4, 6.

“In Africa, in China, in India, there are thousands, yes, millions, who have not heard the message of the truth for this time. They must be warned. The islands of the sea are waiting for a knowledge of God. In these islands schools are to be established to prepare students to go to higher schools within reach, there to be educated and trained, and sent back to their island homes to give to others the light they have received.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 51.

“It seems to me that the necessity of the work in England is a very important question to us in this country. We talk about China and other countries. Let us not forget the English-speaking countries, where, if the truth were presented, many would receive and practice it. Why is it that more work has not been done in England? What has been the matter?” —*Evangelism*, pp. 415, 416.

“And still our General, who never makes a mistake, says to us: ‘Advance. Enter new territory. Lift up the standard in every land. Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.’” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 470.

4. Who will respond to the call from God and labor in a foreign land? Isaiah 6:8.

“God is calling for men who are willing to leave all to become missionaries for Him. And the call will be answered. In every age since the advent of Christ, the gospel commission has impelled men and women to go to the ends of the earth to carry the good news of salvation to those in darkness. Stirred by the love of Christ and the needs of the lost, men have left the comforts of home and the society of friends, even that of wife and children, to go to foreign lands, among idolaters and savages, to proclaim the message of mercy. Many in the attempt have lost their lives, but others have been raised up to carry on the work. Thus step by step the cause of Christ has progressed, and the

seed sown in sorrow has yielded a bountiful harvest. The knowledge of God has been extended, and the banner of the cross planted in heathen lands.”
—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 464, 465.

THE YOUTH IN FOREIGN FIELDS

5. What can motivate and inspire young people to work for foreign missions? Mark 12:30, 31.

“We must labor far more for our children and for the youth; for God will accept them to do great things in His name in teaching the truth to those in foreign lands, to those who are in the darkness of error and superstition.”
—*Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 319.

“We are not, as Christians, doing one-twentieth part that we might do in winning souls to Christ. There is a world to be warned, and every sincere Christian will be a guide and an example to others in faithfulness, in cross-bearing, in prompt and vigorous action, in unswerving fidelity to the cause of truth, and sacrifices and labors to promote the cause of God.” —*Christian Service*, p. 12.

“Real happiness is found only in being good and doing good. The purest, highest enjoyment comes to those who faithfully fulfill their appointed duties.”
—*Messages to Young People*, p. 210.

6. How can missionary work be sustained in a financially poor foreign country? Malachi 3:10; Mark 12:42.

“An American business man, who was an earnest Christian, in conversation with a fellow-worker, remarked that he himself worked for Christ twenty-four hours of the day. ‘In all my business relations,’ he said, ‘I try to represent my Master. As I have opportunity, I try to win others to Him. All day I am working for Christ. And at night, while I sleep, I have a man working for Him in China.’

“Why should not the members of a church, or of several small churches, unite to sustain a missionary in foreign fields? If they will deny themselves, they can do this. My brethren and sisters, will you not help in this great work? I beseech you to do something for Christ, and do it now. Through the teacher whom your money shall sustain in a foreign field, souls may be saved to shine as stars in the Redeemer’s crown. However small your offering, do not hesi-

tate to bring it to the Lord. If given from a heart filled with love to the Saviour, the smallest offering becomes a priceless gift, which God smiles upon and blesses.” —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 466, 467.

TRAINED TO BE SENT

7. Who can be instrumental in training workers for foreign mission fields? 2 Kings 2:7; 4:38.

“Our educational institutions are to do much toward meeting the demands for trained workers for the mission fields. Workers are needed all over the world. The truth of God is to be carried to foreign lands, that those who are in darkness may be enlightened. Cultivated talents are needed in every part of the work of God. God has designed that our schools shall be an instrumentality for developing workers for Him, --workers of whom He will not be ashamed. He calls upon our young people to enter our schools, and quickly fit themselves for service.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 545.

8. From where does help come to prepare us to labor successfully in the Lord’s vineyard? Deuteronomy 31:6; Matthew 28:19, 20.

“The worker in a foreign field must carry in his heart the peace and love of heaven; for this is his only safety. Amid perplexity and trial, discouragement and suffering, with the devotion of a martyr and the courage of a hero, he is to hold fast to the hand that never lets go, saying, ‘I will not fail nor be discouraged.’ He must be a close Bible student, and should be often in prayer. If, before talking with others, he will seek help from above, he may be assured that angels of heaven will be with him. At times he may yearn for human sympathy, but in his loneliness he may find comfort and encouragement through communion with God. Let him be cheered by the words of the Saviour, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. [Matthew 28:20.] From this divine Companion he will receive instruction in the science of soul-saving.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 469.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What are your thoughts about volunteering to work in another country?
- Have you been supporting a foreign mission field with your prayers and means?

9

Sabbath, November 26, 2005

Methods of Working – Past and Present

INTRODUCTION

“All over the world men and women are looking wistfully to heaven. Prayers and tears and inquiries go up from souls longing for light, for grace, for the Holy Spirit. Many are on the verge of the kingdom, waiting only to be gathered in.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 109.

“This work is to be a determined work. The lost sheep are all through the country where you are. You are to seek and to save that which is lost. They know not how to recover themselves.” –*Evangelism*, p. 462.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn about and to use both the old and the new methods of sharing God’s Word with others.
- To pray that the Holy Spirit will impress God’s people to engage in more direct distribution of our gospel-filled literature to the world.
- To preach the gospel in public meetings.
- To pray that there will be a revival among God’s people in conducting Bible studies.

OLD AND NEW WAYS OF LABOR

1. **Why was Jesus, our example, so successful as a soul-winner?
Luke 4:18.**

“From Christ’s methods of labor we may learn many valuable lessons. He did not follow merely one method; in various ways he sought to gain the attention of the multitude; and then he proclaimed to them the truths of the gospel.” –*Evangelism*, p. 123.

“There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing, and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen.” –*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.

2. Are the old methods of missionary work to be abandoned entirely for more modern methods? Matthew 13:52.

“There must be no fixed rules; our work is a progressive work, and there must be room left for methods to be improved upon. But under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, unity must and will be preserved. –*The Review and Herald*, July 23, 1895.

“Means will be devised to reach hearts. Some of the methods used in this work will be different from the methods used in the work in the past; but let no one, because of this, block the way by criticism.” –*The Review and Herald*, September 30, 1902.

“Men are needed who pray to God for wisdom, and who, under the guidance of God, can put new life into the old methods of labor and can invent new plans and new methods of awakening the interest of church members and reaching the men and women of the world.” –*Evangelism*, p. 105.

3. How does a light bearer for Jesus determine which methods to use in his personal missionary work? Matthew 25:14, 15; Ephesians 4:11, 12.

“Let not one man feel that his gift alone is sufficient for the work of God; that he alone can carry through a series of meetings, and give perfection to the work. His methods may be good, and yet varied gifts are essential; one man’s mind is not to mold and fashion the work according to his special ideas. In order for the work to be built up strong and symmetrical, there is need of varied gifts and different agencies, all under the Lord’s direction; He will instruct the workers according to their several ability. Co-operation and unity are essential to a harmonious whole, each laborer doing his God-given work, filling his appropriate position, and supplying the deficiency of another. One worker left to labor alone is in danger of thinking that his talent is sufficient to make a complete whole.” –*Evangelism*, p.104.

4. What specific branch of missionary work has produced satisfactory results in the past and should again be used in our times? Acts 17:2; 18:24-26; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

“A revival in Bible study is needed throughout the world. Attention is to be called, not to the assertions of men, but to the Word of God. As this is done, a mighty work will be wrought. When God declared that His Word should not return unto Him void, He meant all that He said. The gospel is to be preached to all nations. The Bible is to be opened to the people. A knowledge of God is the highest education, and it will cover the earth with its wonderful truth as the waters cover the sea.” —*Evangelism*, p. 456.

“The plan of holding Bible readings was a heaven-born idea. There are many, both men and women, who can engage in this branch of missionary labor. Workers may thus be developed who will become mighty men of God. By this means the Word of God has been given to thousands; and the workers are brought into personal contact with people of all nations and tongues.” —*Gospel Workers*, p.339.

5. Besides the one-to-one audience with sinners, what other outstanding method was used by Jesus to reach the unsaved? Matthew 4:17; 13:34.

“We should make efforts to call together large congregations to hear the words of the gospel minister. And those who preach the Word of the Lord should speak the truth. They should bring their hearers, as it were, to the foot of Sinai, to listen to the words spoken by God amid scenes of awful grandeur.” —*Evangelism*, p. 119.

“A well-balanced work can be carried on best in the cities when a Bible school for the training of workers is in progress while public meetings are being held. Connected with this training school or city mission should be experienced laborers of deep spiritual understanding, who can give the Bible workers daily instruction, and who can also unite wholeheartedly in the general public effort. And as men and women are converted to the truth, those standing at the head of the mission should, with much prayer, show these new converts how to experience the power of the truth in their hearts. Such a mission, if conducted by those who know how to manage wisely, will be a light shining in a dark place.” —*Gospel Workers*, pp. 364, 365.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HOME VISITATIONS

6. During and after an evangelistic campaign, what should be given to all interested visitors? 2 Timothy 4:2, first part.

“It is planned that Elder W. W. Simpson shall begin a series of meetings in Oakland within a very few weeks. With him should be associated a strong force of house-to-house workers. Bible readings should be held in the homes of the people, and our literature should be circulated. Truth, precious truth from the Word of God, is to be presented, both in public and in house-to-house visitation. We have a message that is to prepare a people to stand amid the perils of the last days, and in proclaiming this message we need many men and women filled with the Holy Spirit and with a knowledge of God’s Word.” —*The Review and Herald*, October 4, 1906.

“The great object of our publications is to exalt God, to call men’s attention to the living truths of His word. God calls upon us to lift up, not our own standard, not the standard of this world, but His standard of truth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 151.

7. What labor was the apostle Paul involved in that is still good for God’s people to engage in? Acts 20:20.

“If there is one work more important than another, it is that of getting our publications before the public, thus leading them to search the Scriptures. Missionary work—introducing our publications into families, conversing, and praying with and for them—is a good work and one which will educate men and women to do pastoral labor.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 390.

“When church members realize the importance of the circulation of our literature, they will devote more time to this work. Papers, tracts, and books will be placed in the homes of the people, to preach the gospel in their several lines. . . . The church must give her attention to the canvassing work. This is one way in which she is to shine in the world. Then will she go forth ‘fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.’” —*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 7.

INSTRUCTING THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

8. Are there other ways of witnessing that can give satisfaction and joy to God's servants? Proverbs 22:6.

“Then to those who are accepted as teachers in our schools is opened a field for labor and cultivation, for the sowing of the seed and for the harvesting of the ripening grain. What can give greater satisfaction than to be laborers together with God in educating and training the children and youth to love God and keep His commandments? Lead the children whom you are instructing in the day school and the Sabbath school to Jesus. What can give you greater joy than to see children and youth following Christ, the great Shepherd, who calls, and the sheep and lambs hear His voice and follow Him?” –*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 271.

9. To achieve good and far-reaching results by using varied missionary methods, on whom should the laborer depend totally? Psalms 37: 3, 4.

“Christ is our only hope. We may look to Him, for He is our Saviour. We may take Him at His word, and make Him our dependence. He knows just the help we need, and we can safely put our trust in Him. If we depend on merely human wisdom to guide us, we shall find ourselves on the losing side. But we may come direct to the Lord Jesus, for He has said: ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’ ” –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 486.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- With what methods of labor do you feel comfortable and satisfied when working with your neighbors?
- What blessings have you experienced as you shared the gospel truth through Bible studies?

Jesus Attracted Crowds

INTRODUCTION

“And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.” Matthew 22:33.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand what makes a church grow.
- To learn about and follow the teaching and preaching style of Jesus.
- To teach the truth without compromising.

WHY PEOPLE WERE ATTRACTED TO JESUS

1. **What was one impressive characteristic of Jesus’ ministry? Mark 12:37; Matthew 4:25.**

2. **Why were large crowds attracted to Jesus? Luke 6:17, 18.**

“During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy, but to save. Wherever He went, the tidings of His mercy preceded Him. Where He had passed, the objects of His compassion were rejoicing in health, and making trial of their new-found powers. Crowds were collecting around them to hear from their lips the works that the Lord had wrought. His voice was the first sound that many had ever heard, His name the first word they had ever spoken, His face the first they had ever looked upon. Why should they not love Jesus, and sound His praise? As He passed through the towns and cities, He was like a vital current, diffusing life and joy. . . .” *—Gospel Workers*, p. 43.

3. How did Jesus capture the attention of the multitudes? Matthew 13:34.

“Again, Christ had truths to present which the people were unprepared to accept or even to understand. For this reason also He taught them in parables. By connecting His teaching with the scenes of life, experience, or nature, He secured their attention and impressed their hearts. Afterward, as they looked upon the objects that illustrated His lessons, they recalled the words of the divine Teacher. To minds that were open to the Holy Spirit, the significance of the Saviour’s teaching unfolded more and more. Mysteries grew clear, and that which had been hard to grasp became evident.

Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life. None who listened to the Saviour could feel that they were neglected or forgotten. The humblest, the most sinful, heard in His teaching a voice that spoke to them in sympathy and tenderness.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 21, 22.

4. What style of teaching did Christ use to explain the profound truths to the multitudes? 1 Corinthians 2:4.

“The reception of the gospel does not depend on learned testimonies, eloquent speeches, or deep arguments, but upon its simplicity, and its adaptation to those who are hungering for the bread of life.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 155.

5. Why were Christ’s sermons so powerful? Acts 10:38; Matthew 7:29.

“The officers who were sent to take Jesus reported that never man spake like this man. But the reason of this was, that never man lived like this man; for if he had not so lived, he could not so have spoken. His words bore with them a convincing power, because they came from a heart pure, holy, burdened with love and sympathy, beneficence and truth.” —*The Review and Herald*, May 17, 1887.

TEACH THE OLD GOSPEL

6. What themes should a teacher of the Word of God present to the people? 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:2.

“The Lord desires His servants today to preach the old gospel doctrine, sorrow for sin, repentance, and confession. We want old-fashioned sermons, old-fashioned customs, old-fashioned fathers and mothers in Israel.”

“The third angel’s message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and this truth must be brought before the world; but the great Center of attraction, Jesus Christ, must not be left out of the third angel’s message....

“The sinner must ever look toward Calvary; and with the simple faith of a little child, he must rest in the merits of Christ, accepting His righteousness and believing in His mercy. Laborers in the cause of truth should present the righteousness of Christ.” —*Evangelism*, pp. 179, 180, 184, 185.

7. Should the truths we preach be ever compromised in order for us to gain greater acceptance and popularity? Malachi 3:6; Acts 5:29.

“To lower the standard in order to secure popularity and an increase of numbers, and then to make this increase a cause of rejoicing, shows great blindness. If numbers were an evidence of success, Satan might claim the pre-eminence; for in this world his followers are largely in the majority.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 143.

“As a people we are to stand firm on the platform of eternal truth that has withstood test and trial. We are to hold to the sure pillars of our faith. The principles of truth that God has revealed to us are our only true foundation. They have made us what we are. The lapse of time has not lessened their value.

“No line of truth that has made the Seventh-day Adventist people what they are, is to be weakened. We have the old landmarks of truth, experience, and duty, and we are to stand firmly in defense of our principles, in full view of the world.” —*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 52, 53.

8. What great event will see the conversion of thousands who will take their stand with God's people? Joel 2:23, 28, 29; Revelation 18:1, 4.

“There will be thousands converted to the truth in a day who at the eleventh hour see and acknowledge the truth and the movements of the Spirit of God.” *—Last Day Events*, p. 212.

“The time is coming when there will be as many converted in a day as there were on the day of Pentecost, after the disciples had received the Holy Spirit.” *—Evangelism*, p. 692.

“I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant.” *—Early Writings*, p. 261.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What can I personally do so my church can grow spiritually and increase in numbers?
- Are you willing to teach and preach the truth, by word and example, without compromise?

The Needed Preparation for Service

INTRODUCTION

“Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.” Proverbs 23:12.

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

OBJECTIVES

- To motivate church leaders to educate all believers to take part in some type of missionary activity.
- To educate ourselves to become more effective gospel workers.
- To train those newly come to the faith to become laborers with God.

EDUCATING THE CHURCH

1. **What great need is there among God’s people? Proverbs 4:13; 9:9.**

“The greatest help that can be given our people is to teach them to work for God, and to depend on Him, not on the ministers.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 19.

“There should be no delay in this well-planned effort to educate the church members.” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 119.

2. **Whose responsibility is it to motivate and instruct the church to be successful soul-winners? Acts 14:23; 15:6.**

“Great care should be exercised in selecting officers for the new churches. Let them be men and women who are thoroughly converted. Let those be chosen who are best qualified to give instruction, those who can minister both in word and in deed. There is a deep-seated necessity for work in every line.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 85.

“The elders and those who have leading places in the church should give more thought to their plans for conducting the work. They should arrange matters so that every member of the church shall have a part to act, that none may lead an aimless life, but that all may accomplish what they can according to their several ability.... It is very essential that such an education should be given to the members of the church that they will become unselfish, devoted, efficient workers for God; and it is only through such a course that the church can be prevented from becoming fruitless and dead.... Let every member of the church become an active worker,—a living stone, emitting light in God’s temple” –*Christian Service*, p. 62.

3. Who especially should be trained to become effective and faithful witnesses for God? 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2.

“When men of promise and ability were converted, as in the case of Timothy, Paul and Barnabas sought earnestly to show them the necessity of laboring in the vineyard. And when the apostles left for another place, the faith of these men did not fail, but rather increased. They had been faithfully instructed in the way of the Lord, and had been taught how to labor unselfishly, earnestly, perseveringly, for the salvation of their fellow men. This careful training of new converts was an important factor in the remarkable success that attended Paul and Barnabas as they preached the gospel in heathen lands.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 186, 187.

“The best help that ministers can give the members of our churches is not sermonizing, but planning work for them. Give each one something to do for others. Help all to see that as receivers of the grace of Christ they are under obligation to work for Him. And let all be taught how to work. Especially should those who are newly come to the faith be educated to become laborers together with God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 82.

VARIOUS TYPES OF TRAINING

4. What else can the church members do to educate themselves to work for the salvation of souls? Acts 17:11.

“Church members must work; they must educate themselves, striving to reach the high standard set before them. This the Lord will help them to reach if they will co-operate with Him.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 140.

“We should not let slip even one opportunity of qualifying ourselves intellectually to work for God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 334.

5. What instruction and training, that will contribute to the evangelization of the world, should be given to all believers? 2 Peter 1:12; Isaiah 58:7.

“Those who labor in visiting the churches should give the brethren and sisters instruction in practical methods of doing missionary work.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 117.

“Many would be willing to work if they were taught how to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged. Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts.” —*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 149.

6. Besides the church’s offering training by dedicated elders and ministers, what other supremely important place needs to be a missionary training center? Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

“Parents, help your children to fulfill God’s purpose for them. In the home they are to be trained to do missionary work that will prepare them for wider spheres of usefulness. Train them to be an honor to the One who died to gain for them eternal life in the kingdom of glory. Teach them that God has a part for them to act in His great work. The Lord will bless them as they work for Him. They can be His helping hand.

“Your home is the first field in which you are called to labor. The precious plants in the home garden demand your first care. Consider carefully your work, its nature, its bearings, its results, ever remembering that your looks,

your words, your actions, have a direct bearing on the future of your dear ones. Your work is not to fashion beauty on canvas, or to chisel it from marble, but to impress upon a human soul the image of the divine.

“Give your children intellectual culture and moral training. Fortify their young minds with firm, pure principles. While you have opportunity, lay the foundation for a noble manhood and womanhood. Your labor will be rewarded a thousandfold.

“This is your day of trust, your day of responsibility and opportunity. Soon will come your day of reckoning. Take up your work with earnest prayer and faithful endeavor. Teach your children that it is their privilege to receive every day the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let Christ find you His helping hand to carry out His purposes. By prayer you may gain an experience that will make your ministry for your children a perfect success.” —*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 130, 131.

THE PURPOSE OF TRUE EDUCATION

7. What should be the true purpose of education obtained at seminars, missionary schools, and in local churches? Matthew 5:14, 16.

“The purpose of education should be to take in light in order that you may impart light by letting it shine forth to others in good works. The highest of all education is the knowledge of God.” —*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 352.

“He who strives to obtain knowledge in order that he may labor for the ignorant and perishing is acting his part in fulfilling God’s great purpose for mankind. In unselfish service for the blessing of others he is meeting the high ideal of Christian education.” —*Pastoral Ministry*, p. 238.

8. Who should be the center of attention in all our educational and missionary training programs? John 8:12.

“No other light ever has shone or ever will shine upon fallen man save that which emanates from Christ. Jesus, the Saviour, is the only light that can illuminate the darkness of a world lying in sin. Of Christ it is written, ‘In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.’ John 1:4. It was by receiving of His life that His disciples could become light bearers. The life of Christ in the soul, His love revealed in the character, would make them the light of the world.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 39, 40.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What instruction have you recently received from a church leader that has helped you to become a more effective witness for God?
- What Bible themes and missionary methods have you personally studied that have motivated you to work with greater zeal and power?

12

Sabbath, December 17, 2005

Successful Missionary Work

INTRODUCTION

“True success in any line of work is not the result of chance or accident or destiny.” —*Christian Service*, p. 257.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the secrets of missionary success.
- To overcome discouragement when no visible results are evident.
- To realize that when we work for God we should leave the results with Him.
- To depend on God for success.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

1. **What assurance of success can God’s messengers claim? Mark 9:23; Isaiah 55:10, 11.**
2. **What was one of Elijah’s secrets of success when he ministered for God? 2 Kings 2:9.**

“The success of the ministry of Elijah was not due to any inherited qualities he possessed, but to the submission of himself to the Holy Spirit, which was given to him as it will be given to all who exercise living faith in God. In his imperfection man has the privilege of linking himself up with God through Jesus Christ.” –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1037.

3. What is another mighty tool that should be used to bring people to Jesus? Ephesians 6:18.

“God’s messengers must tarry long with Him, if they would have success in their work. The story is told of an old Lancashire woman who was listening to the reasons that her neighbors gave for their minister’s success. They spoke of his gifts, of his style of address, of his manners. ‘Nay,’ said the old woman, ‘I will tell you what it is. Your man is very thick with the Almighty.’” –*Gospel Workers*, p. 255.

NO VISIBLE FRUITS

4. In our zeal to find people for God’s kingdom, should we get discouraged when no visible results are evident? Ecclesiastes 11:6.

“The good seed may for a time lie unnoticed in a cold, selfish, worldly heart, giving no evidence that it has taken root; but afterward, as the Spirit of God breathes on the soul, the hidden seed springs up, and at last bears fruit to the glory of God. In our lifework we know not which shall prosper, this or that. This is not a question for us to settle. We are to do our work, and leave the results with God.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 65.

5. Is there a reason to ever entertain thoughts of failure when working for Christ? Mark 11:23.

“Workers for Christ are never to think, much less to speak, of failure in their work. The Lord Jesus is our efficiency in all things; His Spirit is to be our

inspiration; and as we place ourselves in His hands, to be channels of light, our means of doing good will never be exhausted. We may draw upon His fullness, and receive of that grace which has no limit.” —*Gospel Workers*, p. 19.

“... When we give ourselves wholly to God, and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 363.

WHO QUALIFIES THE LABORER?

6. What is more important than eloquence, book knowledge, and talents in the eyes of the Lord? Isaiah 57:15.

“Men may think that they possess superior qualifications. Their splendid talents, great learning, eloquence, activity, and zeal, may dazzle the eye, delight the fancy, and awaken the admiration of those who cannot read beneath the surface; but unless humility and modesty is linked with these other gifts, self-glorification and self-exaltation will be seen. Unless each qualification is consecrated to the Lord, unless those to whom the Lord has entrusted gifts seek that grace which alone can make their qualifications acceptable to God, they are looked upon by the Lord . . . as unprofitable servants.” —*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 68.

7. What should motivate every Christian to labor for the salvation of others? 2 Corinthians 5:14.

“Whatsoever is done out of pure love, be it ever so little or contemptible in the sight of men, is wholly fruitful; for God regards more with how much love one worketh, than the amount he doeth.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 135.

“Ten truly converted, willing-minded, unselfish workers can do more in the missionary field than one hundred who confine their efforts to set forms, and preserve mechanical rules, working without deep love for souls.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 602.

8. Who alone can give missionaries success in their work? 1 Corinthians 3:6, 7.

“If they depend on God for grace and strength, they will succeed.” –*Christian Service*, p. 258.

“Joshua had received the promise that God would surely overthrow these enemies of Israel, yet he put forth as earnest effort as though success depended upon the armies of Israel alone. He did all that human energy could do, and then he cried in faith for divine aid. The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm.” –*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 509.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What is the underlying motive that energizes you to labor for God?
- How have you dealt with negative thoughts of failure?
- What heavenly tools have you used to become a successful laborer for God?

13

Sabbath, December 24, 2005

The Unfinished Task

INTRODUCTION

“Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works, with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Revelation 13:13. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 612.

OBJECTIVES

- To be used as God's instruments in the finishing of the gospel work on earth.
- To prepare ourselves for one of the greatest events in history – the latter rain.
- To see the people we have witnessed to in heaven.

HOW WILL THE WORK BE FINISHED?

- 1. How will spiritual Israel finish the work that has been entrusted to them? Zechariah 4:6; Revelation 18:1.**

“As the time comes for it [the message of the third angel] to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them.” –*The Great Controversy*, p. 606.

- 2. Who will participate in the great final work of calling honest souls out of the fallen churches throughout the world? Joel 2:28, 29; Isaiah 57:15.**

“... for the Lord Himself will call men, as of old He called the humble fishermen, and will Himself give them instruction regarding their field of labor and the methods they should follow. He will call men from the plow and from other occupations to give the last note of warning to perishing souls.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 170.

WHO WILL FINISH THE WORK?

- 3. Besides humble and faithful adults, who else will be given the opportunity to fulfill God's gospel commission? 1 Timothy 4:12.**

“With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!” –*Education*, p. 271.

“The Lord has appointed the youth to be His helping hand.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 64.

- 4. What last day messages need to be heard before probation closes? Romans 1:16, 17; 3:22; Revelation 14:7-11.**

- 5. When God’s people speak the truth with great power, under the latter rain, what will be the grand result? 2 Corinthians 6:17.**

“I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. Many had been bound; some wives by their husbands, and some children by their parents. The honest who had been prevented from hearing the truth now eagerly laid hold upon it. All fear of their relatives was gone, and the truth alone was exalted to them. They had been hungering and thirsting for truth; it was dearer and more precious than life. I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’” –*Early Writings*, p. 271.

“The work which the church has failed to do in a time of peace and prosperity she will have to do in a terrible crisis under most discouraging, forbidding circumstances... The members of the church will individually be tested and proved. They will be placed in circumstances where they will be forced to bear witness for the truth. Many will be called to speak before councils and in courts of justice, perhaps separately and alone.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 463.

HASTENING THE COMING OF JESUS

- 6. How can we hasten (2 Peter 3:12) the second coming of Jesus Christ? Joel 2:12-14.**

“I saw that none could share the ‘refreshing’ unless they obtain the victory over every besetment, over pride, selfishness, love of the world, and over every wrong word and action. We should, therefore, be drawing nearer and nearer to the Lord and be earnestly seeking that preparation necessary to enable us to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Let all remember that God is holy and that none but holy beings can ever dwell in His presence.” –*Early Writings*, p. 71.

“By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord’s return.” –*The Desire of Ages*, p. 633.

“Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.” –*Evangelism*, p. 694.

7. What rich reward awaits the redeemed after their appointed task is accomplished? Revelation 14:1; John 3:15.

“Language is altogether too feeble to attempt a description of heaven. As the scene rises before me, I am lost in amazement. Carried away with the surpassing splendor and excellent glory, I lay down the pen, and exclaim, ‘Oh, what love! what wondrous love!’ The most exalted language fails to describe the glory of heaven or the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love.” –*Early Writings*, p. 289.

8. What words of gratitude will be expressed by those who have been rescued from eternal destruction? Revelation 5:12, 13.

“Wonderful will be the revealing as the lines of holy influence, with their precious results, are brought to view. What will be the gratitude of souls that will meet us in the heavenly courts, as they understand the sympathetic, loving interest which has been taken in their salvation! All praise, honor, and glory will be given to God and to the Lamb for our redemption; but it will not detract from the glory of God to express gratitude to the instrumentality He has employed in the salvation of souls ready to perish.

“The redeemed will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they will have with these souls! ‘I was a sinner,’ it will be said, ‘without God and without hope in the world; and you came to me, and drew my attention to the precious Saviour

as my only hope. And I believed in Him. I repented of my sins, and was made to sit together with His saints in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Others will say: 'I was a heathen in heathen lands. You left your friends and comfortable home, and came to teach me how to find Jesus, and believe in Him as the only true God. I demolished my idols, and worshiped God, and now I see Him face to face. I am saved, eternally saved, ever to behold Him whom I love. I then saw Him only with the eye of faith, but now I see Him as He is. I can now express my gratitude for His redeeming mercy to Him who loved me, and washed me from my sins in His own blood.' " –*Gospel Workers*, p. 518.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Have we been active in leading people to Jesus?
- Do we really want the work on earth to be soon finished and then to go home to be with Jesus?
- Have you been trusting in God to help you find people who are searching for truth and salvation?

**Please,
read the Report from Pakistan
on page 132.**

Sabbath, December 31, 2005

The Reward of Service

INTRODUCTION

“It is not a vain thing to serve God. There is a priceless reward for those who devote their life to His service.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 107.

OBJECTIVES

- To wait patiently for God’s reward.
- To thank God for supplying us with good gifts.
- To serve the Lord for the right motives.

FUTURE REWARD

1. **When will the great final reward be given to those who have labored for the salvation of mankind? Revelation 22:12.**

“His coming is the greatest event in the world’s history. Those who have had respect to all his commandments, are then classed among the loyal and true, and rewarded with eternal life.” —*The Review and Herald*, January 12, 1886.

2. **Why is the future reward not given to us based on our merit and sacrifice? Romans 4:1-5.**

“The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace... It is not the length of time we labor but our willingness and fidelity in the work that makes it acceptable to God.” —*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 401, 402.

3. What words of praise and adoration will issue forth from the redeemed after the harvest of souls has been reaped? Revelation 4:11; 5:12.

“Let every breath of praise, every word of exaltation, flow to him who is worthy, flow to Jesus, the Prince of life, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Elevate the cross of Christ. Elevate the Mediator. Lift up Jesus. In him is everything noble. Contemplate God in Christ. He is surrounded with angels, cherubim and seraphim continually behold him. Angelic voices day and night cry before him: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.... Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’ ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.’ ‘Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee.’ But although God only is holy and worthy to be praised, human tongues are perverted to praise and glorify man rather than God.” —*The Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889.

PRESENT REWARDS

4. Not all rewards are reserved for the future life. What wonderful rewards can be claimed and experienced today? Psalms 32:11; John 14:27; 3 John 2.

“Those who give their lives to Christlike ministry know the meaning of true happiness. Their interests and their prayers reach far beyond self. They themselves are growing as they try to help others. They become familiar with the largest plans, the most stirring enterprises, and how can they but grow when they place themselves in the divine channel of light and blessing?” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 42.

“In doing for others, a sweet satisfaction will be experienced, an inward peace which will be a sufficient reward. When actuated by a high and noble desire to do others good, they will find true happiness in a faithful discharge of life’s manifold duties. This will bring more than an earthly

reward; for every faithful, unselfish performance of duty is noticed by the angels, and shines in the life record.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 132.

“Doing good is an excellent remedy for disease. Those who engage in the work are invited to call upon God, and He has pledged Himself to answer them. Their soul shall be satisfied in drought, and they shall be like a watered garden, whose waters fail not.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 29.

5. What should be the underlying motive for serving the Lord in His vineyard? Hebrews 6:10.

“The Lord desires us to rest in Him without a question as to our measure of reward. When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service....

“Love to God and to our fellow men should be our motive... He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do.” –*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 398, 399, 402.

6. What should be our attitude when our missionary work appears to be fruitless and no results are evident? Galatians 6:9.

“To every worker for God this thought should be a stimulus and an encouragement. In this life our work for God often seems to be almost fruitless. Our efforts to do good may be earnest and persevering, yet we may not be permitted to witness their results. To us the effort may seem to be lost. But the Saviour assures us that our work is noted in heaven, and that the recompense cannot fail.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 305.

A SPECIAL MEETING

7. What wonderful experience will soon be realized by all the redeemed in heaven? What joy will they have? Matthew 5:8.

“The redeemed will meet and recognize those whose attention they have directed to the uplifted Saviour. What blessed converse they have with these souls! ‘I was a sinner,’ it will be said, ‘without God and without hope in the world, and you came to me, and drew my attention to the precious Saviour as my only hope. And I believed in Him. I repented of my sins, and was made to sit together with His saints in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.’ ...

“What rejoicing there will be as these redeemed ones meet and greet those who have had a burden in their behalf! And those who have lived, not to please themselves, but to be a blessing to the unfortunate who have so few blessings--how their hearts will thrill with satisfaction!” *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 311, 312.

8. What preparations should we be making now so that we may be welcomed into God’s kingdom? John 6:37; 2 Timothy 2:19.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Why are you working for Jesus? Is it for the reward?
- What rewards has the Lord already given you?

MISSIONARY REPORT FROM PAKISTAN

To be read on Sabbath, December 31, 2005

*The Special Sabbath School Offering
will be gathered on Sabbath, January 7, 2006*

Pakistan, officially the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, a republic in South Asia, marks the area where South Asia converges with Southwest Asia and Central Asia. The capital of Pakistan is Islamabad; Karachi is the country's largest city.

The area of present-day Pakistan was the cradle of the earliest known civilization of South Asia, the Indus Valley civilization (2500?-1700 BC). The territory was part of the Mughal Empire from 1526 until the 1700s, when it came under British rule. Pakistan gained independence in August 1947. It initially comprised two parts, West Pakistan and East Pakistan, which were separated by about 1,600 km. (1,000 m.) of territory within India. In December 1971, East Pakistan seceded and became the independent republic of Bangladesh.

Pakistan has a population of 153,705,278 (a 2004 estimate). Only 34% of the people live in urban areas. The people of Pakistan are ethnically diverse.

Islam is the faith of about 97% of the people of Pakistan. Hindus and Christians form the largest religious minorities, accounting for about 3 % of the population. Other religious groups include Sikhs, Parsis, and a small number of Buddhists. The constitution defines Pakistan as an Islamic state but guarantees freedom of religion.

Pakistan is a multilingual and multiethnic nation. Most Pakistanis speak at least two languages. A large segment of the population is trilingual, speaking English, Urdu, and an ethnic-based regional language.

As some of you now, I was called to visit some believers in Pakistan. The first invitation came from a lay member, a brother about 35 years of age. After exchanging two letters by airmail, and e-mail, I was introduced to a minister in that country, who had been working for another movement. That brother was ready to resign from his position, but after reading my first two letters, as the answer to the first invitation sent to me, and by giving them the right message about the Reform Movement, both of those brothers sent me an invitation to visit them as soon as it would be possible. That was in February 2003.

At the General Conference Committee meeting, held in California in March 2003, we did agree that I should make that visit to Pakistan. We did not visit that country before. There, I found Seventh-day Adventists up to the fifth generation.

A minister, about 52 years old, has been the third generation in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was there for 11 days, visiting the other place of worship every day. In Islamabad, the capital city, I stayed for four days, and there we had four meetings in different parts of the city. All of the members gladly accepted our message. On Sunday, March 13, 2003, they gathered together to join the church. Twenty-three members were able to be present at that meeting. They were accepted by hand, and a minister was re-ordained. The organization was made into the Pakistan Mission Field. Most members of that area were not able to be present.

The majority of Pakistani Christians are too poor. They live in slum areas near dirty tanks. In the capital city of Islamabad, most of the Christians live on both sides of dirty brooks and in shabby mud houses, where electricity and water very seldom come. They breathe a dirty air, along with bad odors and other unpleasant smells. Sometimes, some children have died in the dirty waters when the brooks are overflowing from too much rainfall. The government raised a high wall around these slum areas, so that they might not be seen. Because they were too poor, people occupied the land illegally, so many houses in some areas were demolished; some are waiting for their turns. Some houses are left for some money. So, the people requested for Bro. Branko Cholich to help in making a housing colony, which consists of 200 families. There will be a church built in the center, a mission headquarters, and an education center. The colony will be in a good condition because, to be better spiritual, God's people need good houses. The church will sell pieces of land to the church members in down payments, or installments, and arrange for a loan to build the houses so that they may live in their own houses and come to the church easily. The second reason for the colony is that land in Islamabad is too expensive and we cannot build the church near our people.

The work is still in its very early stages, and so we urgently need the support and cooperation of our dear brothers and sisters around the world.

"All that we do is to be done willingly. We are to bring our offerings with joy and gratitude, saying as we present them, 'Of Thine own we freely give Thee.' The most costly service we can render is but meager compared to the gift of God to our world. Christ is a gift every day. God gave Him to the world, and He graciously takes the gifts entrusted to His human agents for the advancement of His work in the world. Thus we show that we recognize and acknowledge that every thing belongs to God, absolutely and entirely.

"The offering from the heart that loves, God delights to honor, giving it highest efficiency in service for Him. If we have given our hearts to Jesus, we also shall bring our gifts to Him. Our gold and silver, our most precious earthly possessions, our highest mental and spiritual endowments, will be freely devoted to Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us." —*Counsels on Stewardship*, p.198.

Your brothers in Christ,

—B. Cholich, *President of the General Conference*
—Inayat Daniel, *President of the Pakistan Field*

