

# THE CSDA Signet

“And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO YAH” (Exodus 28:36)

*A bi-monthly publication of The Creation Seventh Day and Adventist Church*



**A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (Matthew 7:18.)**

From the very beginning of time there have been two trees. In the Garden of Eden, the trees were "the tree of life...and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. 2:9). The "tree of life" was intended to provide everlasting life (Gen. 3:22), and "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" was a potential for death. Man was created to live, and therefore eat from the life-giving Source. On the other hand, man was free to choose death by eating of the forbidden tree. He was well instructed regarding his well-being.

You have probably read the story of how "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety" (2 Cor. 11:3), and how "Adam was not deceived" (1 Tim. 2:14), but willfully transgressed God's command not to eat of the forbidden tree. "...Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord". What was the cause of that? There was something about them that would avoid the presence of God, something that was not in harmony with God, and caused them to hide themselves rather than to welcome Him. "And [YAH, their Father] called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" (Gen. 3:9-11). Now the question: "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" And [Adam] said, Yes, I have; and I am inclined to think that it was not exactly right; and I am sorry. Did he say this?

No! But why did Adam not confess his sin? He did not answer yes; though that is all the answer there was any

room for. All he could answer was, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (verse 12). In all this he was simply saying, in substance, "I would not have done it if it had not been for the woman; because she gave it to me; and if the woman had not been here, she would not have done it; and if You had not put the woman here, she would not have been here. Therefore if she had not been here, she would not have given it to me; and if she had not given it to me, I would not have done it: so, of course, as a matter of fact, I did eat; but the responsibility is back yonder."

## *In this issue...*

**The Two Trees**  
*The Divine and Human Natures... Page 1*

**Reaching the Heart**  
*The Principles of Evangelism... Page 4*

What was it in him, and about that, that would lead him to involve everybody else in the universe before himself, and before admitting that he had any part in it at all? --Nothing but love of self, self-defense, self-protection. "And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (verse 13). She answered the question the same way that Adam did. The same thing caused her to dodge the question and involve somebody else, which caused Adam to do so. Nothing but love of self - self-defense, self-protection.

Why did they not answer God's question straight? They could not do it. And they could not do it, because the mind with which they were actuated, which had taken possession of them, which held them in bondage, and enslaved them under its power, is the mind that originated self-exaltation in the place of God, and never will allow itself the second place even where God is. That mind is the mind of Satan. This mind of Satan, which takes a self-assertive course, is

confirmed in sin and rebellion against God.

This mind is called in Romans 8:7 the carnal mind, which means "the mind of the flesh". So the verse reads, "The mind of the flesh is hostility against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Compare this verse with James 4:4. "...know ye not that the friendship of the world is [hostility] with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Then "the mind of the flesh" is the same as "the friendship of the world", and both are hostility against YAH, our Father.

Remember, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." "Do men gather grapes of thorns..." [No!] Do men gather "figs of thistles?" [No!] (Matt. 7:16) "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things [should not happen]. Doth a fountain send forth at the [opening] sweet water and bitter? [No!] Can the fig tree...bear olive berries? [No!] either [can] a vine [bear] figs? [No!] so no fountain [can] yield both salt water and fresh." (James 3:10-12) There are only two choices in this life: 1) "the tree of life", and 2) "the forbidden fruit". What you eat is what you are, and "Ye shall know them by their fruits..." (Matt. 7:16) "No one can serve two masters..." (Matt. 6:24)

What you do tells which tree you have become, and one cannot eat from both trees at the same time. After Adam and Eve fell, their accessibility to the tree of life was restricted "lest [they] put forth [their] hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever". Without this mandate the fallen pair would have become immortal sinners. Rebellion and corruption would have ruled the universe. Only through repentance and death to self could life be renewed. The "hostility" which separated man from God must be destroyed so that the life God intended for him could be restored.

The mind of Satan accepted by Adam and Eve took in the whole world; because they, in that acceptance, surrendered this world to Satan, and thus, he became the god of this world. Accordingly, that is the mind of this world; that is the mind that controls the world. This mind of Satan, the mind of the god of this world, is the mind that controls mankind, as mankind is in and of this world; and mankind in itself is "hostility against God."

"That is why Adam and Eve could not answer God's straight question straight. Men can answer that question straight now. But at that time they could not, for the reason that Satan had taken them under his dominion, and there was no other power to control them. His control was absolute, and there at that moment was "total depravity." But God did not leave him there; he did not leave the race in that condition. God says to the serpent, "I will put hostility between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed; [He] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." (Gen. 3:15).

Thus there are two hostilities in this world, just as there are two trees. One is from Satan, and is hostility against God; the other is from God, and is hostility against Satan. And through these two hostilities, come the two mysteries--the mystery of God,

and the mystery of iniquity. Man was set free to choose which authority he would follow with the promise, "I will put [hostility] between [Satan] and the [human race in Christ]." That hostility, being "the righteousness of God," came in the form of Jesus, the Christ.

Through Him, man could choose which king and which world he will have. And since the time of that promise of Christ in Genesis 3:15, the man who will choose God's way, and yield his will to the control of God, can answer a straight question unto the Lord, so that when the Lord comes and asks, Did you do so and so? He can answer, "Yes", without bringing anybody else into it at all. This is confession of sin. And thus came the ability to confess sin, and reveals the blessed truth that the power to confess sin and turn from evil is the gift of God." (Adapted from A.T. Jones, 1895)

Jesus is consistent in His teaching on the two trees. The trees represent people, and only two classes of people--those with the mind of Satan, and those with the mind of Christ. The blessed man "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalms 1:3). "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of [YAH] shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age..." (Psalms 92:12-14). The cursed man "shall be like the [shrub] in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness..." (Jer. 17:6). "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13)

The blessed man "shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not [fear] when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. 17:8). What is the fruit that "the good tree" yields? We find this answer in Galatians 5:22,23, "...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (in emotions as well as eating and drinking)...". "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.' The vine-branch, nourished from the parent stock, becomes flourishing and fruitful. Its rich and fragrant clusters attest its union with the living vine. So the Christian, abiding in Jesus, will bring forth fruit. In character and life will be manifested, like the teeming cluster of the vine, the precious graces of the Spirit. Not one of these fruits will be missing in the life of one in whose soul the Spirit of Christ abides." (*Review & Herald*, 09-11-83) "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are past away...all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5:17)

By contrast, there is the evil or corrupt tree. This person experiences the opposite of the fruits from the good tree, because he has the mind of Satan. His life is in a condition of "hostility against God". Galatians 5:19-21 describes some of these "deeds of the flesh." They "are evident, which are: immorality (business ethics), impurity (sexual), sensuality (uncontrolled appetite),

idolatry (opinionated), sorcery (drug-taking/dealing), enmities (hostility), strife (stress), jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes (arguments), dissensions (shunning), factions (separations without righteous cause), envying, drunkenness (gluttony), carousing (flirting), and things like these (hate, nervousness, worry, impatience, harshness, unkindness, pride, self-indulgence, bitterness, condemnation, etc.), of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In parentheses we have added some possible amplifications to enhance your understanding.

The line of distinction between the two trees in the New Testament is clearly drawn by Jesus. In one place He refers to the evil tree as "the slave" and the good tree as "the son". "Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever." (John 8:34,35). At another time He says, "Either make the tree good and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit...The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil." (Matt. 12:33,35). And "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." (Matt. 7:19) This is not by the will or choice of God but of the man, himself. The mind of Satan could never be satisfied in an atmosphere of heaven--it is too peaceful.

"As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, 'As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.' Eze. 34:12" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 187).

The two trees can no longer be a "mystery" to any man. He might fool himself or some other man, but never will he fool God. Just as Moses, the prophet, long ago, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So [will you not] choose life in order that you may live...by loving [YAH ], your Maker, by obeying His voice, and holding fast to Him..."? Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.

## Lawsuit Update:

Judge James D. Todd has denied the General Conference's motion to strike the jury demand from the trial.

What this essentially means is that when the case does go to court. it will be decided by a jury instead of a judge.

You may read more about the lawsuit being brought against us by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and all members of their denomination, at [www.csdadventistchurch.us/Lawsuit](http://www.csdadventistchurch.us/Lawsuit) as well as keep up with future updates as they are posted.

## Rwandan Mission Update:

Due to health complications, Pastor "Chick" McGill and Br. Lucan Chartier have returned from their trip to Africa earlier than planned. They arrived home safely and hope to see considerable results from their labors overseas, having made many contacts in the country.

A second missionary trip is planned for sometime in the near future.

## Publishing Update:

Book One of the Sar'im Chronicles series, entitled "The Emyrean War" is in the process of being published, and will soon be available in bookstores.

The entire series to date is available to read freely at <http://www.csdachurch.org/binary/books/>

*"A company was presented before me under the name of Seventh-day Adventists, who were advising that the banner, or sign, which makes us a distinct people should not be held out so strikingly; for they claimed that this was not the best policy in order to secure success to our institutions. But this is not a time to haul down our colors, to be ashamed of our faith. This distinctive banner, described in the words, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," is to be borne through the world to the close of probation. While efforts should be increased to advance in different localities, there must be no cloaking of our faith to secure patronage. Truth must come to souls ready to perish; and if it is in any way hidden, God is dishonored, and the blood of souls will be upon our garments."*

— **Ellen G. White**

[*Testimonies for the Church* vol. 6, p. 144]

# Reaching the Heart



## Introduction

This article is an adaptation of a sermon that I recently delivered over the CSDA Internet Radio, the transcript of which may be found at this address:

<http://csda.us/binary/sermons/SN06.html>

The sermon itself is an introduction to a series on evangelism, however as an article I wish to present it as a stand-alone message, and for several reasons. This introductory talk introduced what I consider to be the most basic principles that must underlie our efforts to reach out to others, for what is the purpose of the Church, except to teach the Gospel, and to facilitate the salvation of souls by Yahshua the Messiah? (Mark 16:15, Rom 16:25) It also re-emphasizes the defining characteristics of the mission of Elijah, a topic first introduced in the book *The Highway of Holiness, Volume 1*, by which the true church of the last days can be distinguished from the multitudes of spurious movements, self-sent messengers, and erroneous interpreters of the Word. Finally, a number of individuals who heard the original sermon testified that they were blessed by the simple yet meaningful explanation of what it is that makes an effective evangelist, and I wish to have these ideas communicated beyond the number of those who were able to hear the Sabbath presentation, and who are aware of the archive of transcripts.

## Elijah's Ministry

We are told in the very last passage of the Old Testament: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Yahweh, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal 4:5, 6) While it is true that John the Baptist was a fulfillment of this prophecy, (Mat 17:12, 13) it is also the case that one must come in the spirit of Elijah before "the great and dreadful day of Yahweh," as the Scriptures declare. This can refer only to the Day of Judgment, the closing scenes of earth's history, which is referred to as both "the great day," (Rev 6:17) and the "terrible day," (Joel 2:31) where "terrible" and "dreadful" are merely synonyms, and the same word in Hebrew.

Seventh-day Adventists are certainly expecting a latter-day fulfillment of Malachi 4, for "Somebody is to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and when he appears, men may say, 'You are too earnest, you do not interpret the Scriptures in the proper way. Let me tell you how to teach your message.'" [*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, page 534] And again, "The work of

John the Baptist, and the work of those who in the last days go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to arouse the people from their apathy, are in many respects the same. His work is a type of the work that must be done in this age." [*Maranatha*, page 22]

Elijah's ministry is to have several attributes, such as those described above. It will be a harder message than many can bear. It will rebuke the hypocrites and nominal Christians of the age, and it will arouse the people from their Laodicean attitude – some to salvation and others (unfortunately) to oppose the straight testimony of the True Witness. Elijah's mission, as described in the book of 1Kings, consists of a number of other characteristics in addition to those mentioned above, by which the true and false prophets may be distinguished. We find, with Bible references, that the Elijah ministry:

- 1) Restores the true worship of Yahweh from an earlier apostasy. (1Kings 18:38, 39)
- 2) Unites God's people according to the twelve Tribes of Israel. (1Kings 18:30, 31)
- 3) Pronounces judgment against wicked organizational leaders. (1Kings 18:17, 18)
- 4) Denounces false prophets and corrupt spiritual leaders. (1Kings 18:40)
- 5) Announces the appearance of much-needed rain. (1Kings 18:41)
- 6) Ascends into Heaven at the end of the ministry. (2Kings 2:11)

This is the pattern of Elijah's ministry, and all are vital; but one of the elements we need to focus on as evangelists is found here: "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, 'Yahweh, Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, Yahweh, hear me, that this people may know that thou art Yahweh Elohim, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.'" (1Kings 18:36, 37)

As the people of Yahweh, the Elijah-people whose ministry matches the above criteria in every respect, we must have it ever before us that the idea behind true evangelism, whether we are reaching out to individuals of different faiths or the completely irreligious, is to demonstrate to others that love that we ourselves have received. Our work is to "turn their heart back again" to He who originally created them, and then redeemed them at infinite cost. In this article we will look at some basic

principles for accomplishing this.

## The Core Principles

### 1) *Demonstrate genuine affection*

If we don't genuinely care about people, we shouldn't try to win them. I recall in my early experiences with Seventh-day Adventists in my home country of Belize that I did not always feel that I was genuinely cared-for by those who were bringing these "strange, new ideas" to my ears. The inexperienced youths, though their hearts were more-or-less in the right place, gave an impression that they were doing their duty by spreading the word, rather than seeking to win me as a person.

They spoke more about obedience and judgment for failure to obey, than about God's love and desire for my safety. Of course, talk of judgment has its place; the First Angel's message, which forms the foundation of the Gospel, encourages worship by pointing to the coming judgment. We may read Acts 24:24, 25 and Jude 1:22, 23 to see that it is sometimes necessary to "save by fear."

Judgment must come to the hard-hearted, and the slow to hear, but as Jude points out, the first approach should always be the compassionate one. Judgment gets attention in many cases, but by itself it does not retain true, spiritual interest, or necessarily stimulate the growth of love.

We read: "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom 2:2-4) Yes, judgment has its place, but it is the goodness of Yahweh, as demonstrated in our lives, that leads to true conversion.

Christ showed true affection for humanity, the word for which in the Scriptures is often translated "compassion." We find an example here: "In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Yahshua called His disciples unto Him and saith unto them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat.'" (Mark 8:1, 2) Other, similar verses include Luke 7:13 and Mark 1:41

We must, if we wish to work effectively in His name, do likewise. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," says the Savior, and we may recall the parable of the Good Samaritan if we are ever tempted to think that "one to another" refers only to the baptized brethren. Peter writes, "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." (1Pet 2:17) and the word "honor" there means "esteem," or "value."



### 2) *Never show contempt*

That last verse from Peter leads smoothly to the second point: the only thing a Christian must hold in contempt is sin. We may read of Peter's experience when Cornelius received an angels' instruction to send for him: "On the morrow, as [Cornelius' messengers] went on their journey, and drew night unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten, but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

"And there came a voice to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.' But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.' And the voice spake unto him again the second time, 'What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.' This was done thrice; and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

"And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, 'Stand up; I myself also am a man.' And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, 'Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'" (Acts 10:9-16, 25-28)

That text above really gets to the heart of this second principle. From the Hebrews' ritual perspective, Gentiles *are* unclean. From a Christian's perspective, the unrepentant sinners *are* unclean; at the same time, we are to be Christ-like in character. If uncleanness were a barrier to interaction, or a reason to avoid people how could Yahshua have come to earth for our sakes? Consider carefully His actions toward us when tempted to think any man beyond hope, or unworthy of hearing our message.

I recently sent a part of my personal testimony in an email to an individual with whom I was speaking. A part of that email read as follows:

"I do not consider myself, with all my good feelings and emotional experiences before, to have been converted until that point [when I accepted the Victory message]. God's Spirit, I am certain, leads people who are in the world into greater and greater light. The Father draws people by His love, and gives them tokens in their spirits that they are on the right path... I therefore do not at all doubt the religious convictions of those who are of a faith different than my own. At the same time, there is a conversion experience, something that results in what Ellen White calls being 'fully converted,' and this can ONLY be done when one intelligently and in faith (both together) decides to absolutely renounce sin, and to thereafter live a life of learning what righteousness is, and putting away defects when they are discovered. Through the sacrifice and heavenly

ministry of Christ, we are more than able to do this; this is what it means that we are ‘more than conquerors,’ as the Bible says.”

This experience is everyone’s for the taking. Those who have accepted it are only *one choice* different from those who have not, for there is nothing in us of ourselves that sets us apart from the “vilest offender” as the song we sing describes them. We are to see all men as being just that one choice away from salvation, and deserving of every dignity and honor as a being created in the image of Yahweh, marred though that image may be in some.

The word “contempt,” and extensions of it, occurs several times in the Bible, but you never hear of it used to describe the feelings of the righteous toward anyone else. Only one verse appears to suggest this notion, and that is found in Psalm 15:4, describing a righteous person as one “in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear Yahweh.”

Looking at the context, we see that this is held in opposition to “honoring” those who fear Yahweh, and this is proper. A vile person, one who is known for evil acts, should never be “praised” or held in honor by the righteous, or onlookers will get the impression that his/her actions are acceptable. We are absolutely to rebuke evil wherever it is found, and we cannot sanction wrong acts. At the same time, our attitude must be as the author of that Psalm’s was for the sinner. It was David who wrote, these words, “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” (Psa 51:12, 13) This idea represents exactly our focus in this study, the desire to turn the sinners’ hearts back to Yahweh.

### 3) *Display patience*

The Victory message, if it is not accepted, generally produces one of two results in our hearers. They tend to either:

- a) say, “That’s an interesting idea,” and ignore what it means to their lives, or
- b) get very upset, because our words (and, if we are sincere believers, our actions) bring judgment to the sinner.

It is not, of course, that we are going around judging others, but our words judge them, and our actions judge them – in a *passive* sense. We need never say, “You will not be saved, because you have such-and-such a bad habit.” Instead, we set an example, and we testify that we are walking in what we know is the truth... this is enough. It is enough, anyway, to cause a violent reaction in some people, and this really reveals the character that results from the world’s watered-down version of Christianity.

In every situation, patience is required. This is one of the elements of the fruit of the Spirit, and evidence of genuine conversion, as Paul indicates in Galatians 5:22.

In the situation wherein we are opposed, it is particularly important. Opposition means that people care about what we say – view it in this, more positive light. Remember that we are not

the true objects of their derision, but it is *Christ* who sent us that is truly the target of these attacks by those who claim to know, love and serve Him. We’re just the messengers.

The following verses about Yahweh’s longsuffering and patience should inspire us to treat others the way He treats us: “Yahweh is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.” (2Pet 3:9, 14, 15)

1Tim 1:15, 16 is a key text for evangelism. We read, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Yahshua the Messiah came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Yahshua the Messiah might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.” If we treat others in this way, with this attitude about ourselves, we do not lose any ground, and may actually gain it, when we are attacked and rejected by those who do not accept our testimony as valid.

### 4) *Express familiarity with the doctrines*

We are easily dismissed by some if we seem to be ignorant of doctrinal matters, including those pertaining to the ones with whom we are speaking, and while *we* are never to show contempt for others, the Scriptures make it clear that those who are not of our faith have no reservations about viewing us in this light.

We read that the Church exists, among other things, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.” (Eph 4:12) A part of the work of the ministry involves having a measure of knowledge of the doctrines of those whom we are evangelizing. This is not, of course, the most important thing; but it is sometimes useful to demonstrate that we have knowledge of the doctrines of others so that we may speak to them intelligently about such things. We must always bear in mind, however, that our purpose is not primarily to expose error, but to promote truth.

We certainly do care enough to know and discuss what those with whom we speak believe, but we do have to be careful in this area. Some groups forbid their members from reading the religious information of other Churches altogether; this is not at all proper, for it is based on fear, the fear of losing members, and the fear placed within members for being “polluted” by the errors.

Mature Christians do not need to worry about that, for we read that those who are firmly in Christ, actively receiving the benefit of the united Body, develop to the point that they are “no

more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” (Eph 4:14)

They are indeed as Christ, of whom it was written in prophecy, “Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.” (Isa 7:15)

There is a balance to be found. Not worrying about being corrupted by falsehood does not mean being presumptuous either, and this can be a fine line. The CSDA Church does not *forbid* its members (or those who study with us) from reading anything at all, but as Paul wrote, “All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” (1Cor 10:23b) This is an example of the true freedom that exists in Biblical Christianity. We advise only that those of our number who wish to read about other faiths at least clearly understand what *we* believe first! It may be useful, as mentioned, to know the doctrines of those we are reaching out toward with the Gospel, but it is absolutely vital in *every* circumstance that we know the truth as it is in Yahshua.

Everyone comes in with baggage, religious instruction of one kind or another that was less than perfect. Those who study other faiths run the risk of recollecting some old bags, or adding to an existing load. We have had experiences with individuals who have tried to come in from the outside and “fix” the CSDA Church with foreign doctrine, little understanding our own beliefs at that point, how they developed, and that we have in fact taken EVERY verse of the Bible into account when receiving and teaching the Gospel.

Other groups may have their interpretations, even other sacred texts, but we have received the Word of Yahweh from the Creator Himself, confirmed by the continuing spirit of prophecy and the individual, victorious testimonies of those who walk alongside us on the path of sanctification. This is, ultimately, what we have to share with others.

### 5) Give a testimony

This last point is the most important one of the set. One of the most effective methods of reaching the heart is to talk about what the truth has done in our lives, and how it has changed us. This cannot be done, of course, unless one IS converted, and living a sanctified, victorious life.

In sharing our testimonies, we must also express the desire for others to share in this experience, and *this is agape made manifest*. This is what that mysterious, but commonly used, word means in practice. This is the heart of Christianity, reaching out to others with a genuine desire that they enter into this experience with us for no other reason than that this joy, the “joy of full salvation,” awakens in us both a sense of profound peace and at the same time a sense of profound agitation that there are those in the world who do not have the same marvelous experience that we do. This seems to be something of a paradox, but these two aspects of the Christian’s character are strangely yet perfectly compatible.

A few verses may be cited here to demonstrate the importance of this idea: “And they overcame [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” (Rev 12:11) This is a very common verse in our teachings, for it is sometimes the case that even those who say they agree with us about the Victory and the Gospel “on paper,” as it were, do not see the necessity of saying, “I have the Victory over all known sin,” declaring it as their personal testimony of abiding in Christ. This demonstrates that error in their claims of agreement, for those who truly understand the Victory know that we cannot be silent about its impact on our lives.

We read, “And [Yahshua] said unto them, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.’” (Mark 16:15) The apostles responded by saying to others, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yahshua the Messiah.” (1John 1:3) “But none of these [bonds or afflictions] move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24) This work of testifying is not, of course, limited to those who saw the Messiah with their physical eyes, for it is written of Christ’s prayer to His Father, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:20, 21)

As our goals are one with Christ’s so let our methods, and our desire for unity, and our zeal to minister unto others, be in harmony with His.

— D. Aguilar

### A Publication of the CSDA Church

#### Church Home Office:

1162 Old Highway 45 South  
Guys, TN 38339

#### Editor:

Lucan Chartier  
claimvictory@hotmail.com  
662-287-9758

#### Distribution:

Barbara McGill  
Barbli@hotmail.com  
731-239-8000