

the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out . . . The sinner must be led to look to Calvary . . . believing in His mercy.”¹¹

Thirty years ago a woman had a child out of wedlock. She was told by her pastor that both she and her bastard son were destined to burn in hell with no hope of eternal salvation. This woman came to me after the seventh meeting of my series in Clarksburg. That night’s topic had been God’s prevenient forgiveness for us. She told me, with tears streaming down her face, how she (for the first time in those thirty long years) truly felt God’s forgiveness and she now believed that both she and her son could go to heaven. We prayed right there and changed that “could” into a “would.”

Dear fellow Adventist, this is what we are to be about! Not just changing people’s minds, but changing their hearts! “Those who wait for the Bridegroom’s coming are to say to the people, ‘Behold your God.’ The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.”¹²

¹ John 12:40.
² 2 Corinthians 5:15.
³ Hebrews 4:9.
⁴ Hebrews 2:9.
⁵ 2 Timothy 1:10.
⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:22.
⁷ Romans 8:2.
⁸ Matthew 1:21.
⁹ This may not be the context that introduced you to the Adventist message, but this is the intended purpose of our teachings.
¹⁰ *Gospel Workers*, pg. 315.
¹¹ *Gospel Workers*, pg. 156.
¹² *Christ Object Lessons*, pg. 415.

JANUARY 2006

Events Schedule

- **January 6-7**
Glendale SDA Church, Phoenix, AZ
Herb Montgomery—☎(623)934-3295
- **January 13-14**
Colton SDA Church, CA
James Rafferty—☎(951)849-6650
- **January 20-21**
Desert Valley SDA Church, Tucson, AZ
Herb Montgomery—☎(520)327-5719
- **January 20-21**
3 Angels SDA Church, St. Joseph, MO
James Rafferty—☎(816)279-1716
- **January 30–February 4**
Thailand—Week of Prayer
James Rafferty—abelpan@missioncollege.edu
- **January 31–February 4**
Grace Point SDA Church, Franklin, TN
Herb Montgomery—☎(615)476-9100
- **February 10-11**
University of Georgia Campus Ministry
Herb Montgomery—☎(678)525-4026
- **March 3-5**
Westminster SDA Church, SC
James Rafferty—☎(864)638-0653
- **March 10-12**
North Florida Camp Meeting
James Rafferty—☎(386)454-1351
- **March 11-25**
Seattle, WA—Evangelism
Ty Gibson—☎(206)423-1991
- **March 17-18**
Diamond Lake SDA Church, WA
James Rafferty—☎(208)437-2034
- **March 20-25**
Highland Academy Week of Prayer, Portland, TN
Herb Montgomery—☎(615)325-2036

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PO Box 1888 • Malo, WA 99150 • USA
Phone: (509)779-4444 or (509)779-4795
Fax: (509)779-4140
E-mail: lbm@starband.net
www.lbm.org

Light Bearers is a non-profit ministry based in the beautiful northeastern mountains of Washington State. Our purpose is to help proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ through the spoken and published word.

MISSION UPDATE

The Newsletter of Light Bearers Ministry

Seasonal Pleasure

By James Rafferty

In the great faith chapter of Hebrews II we find that Moses chose “to suffer affliction with the people of God, [rather] than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Hebrews II:25, KJV).

Have you ever wondered where Moses would be now if he had chosen “to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter”? (Hebrews II:24). Most likely he’d be mummified and carted from museum to museum, along with all the possessions and wealth he once owned. His seasonal life of sin would be long gone, along with the pleasure it bought him. We’d be spending money to ooh and aah over all his stuff. After all, that’s what gives us pleasure—oohing and aahing over stuff. But again, all our oohing and aahing is also just seasonal.

Of course, Moses did choose to suffer with God’s people, rather than to enjoy sin for a season. That’s why he is alive and well in heaven, instead of

inhabiting some exhibit hall wrapped in gauze.

We can look at this verse in Hebrews and admit that, yes, sin is pleasurable. But we miss the heart of the message if we focus on sin’s pleasure. This is because pleasure is not automatically sinful. God is the Master designer of our bodies. He designed us to have pleasure, to experience feelings of happiness, delight and satisfaction. He wants us to enjoy pleasure without end, to be “abundantly satisfied” by drinking from “the river” of His “pleasures” (Psalm 36:8). And when you think about it, sin’s pleasures are seasonal—only to be had during a particular time or circumstance, and are therefore not available all the time. Seasonal pleasure is something God never intended.

“You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever” (Ps 16:11, NAS).

Can you imagine that? Unending, eternal pleasure forever is what God intended for us. That’s what Moses is about right now. He is, right now, in bodily form in heaven enjoying pleasures at the right hand of God (Jude 9). Think about it from a purely logical perspective: the pleasure of sin for a season vs. pleasure forever. Sounds like Moses made a good choice.

A New Year has come again, bringing with it a host of new seasons that will come and go. For everything there is a season, and on this planet that means that everything is temporary—everything, that is, except what is eternal. God gave the world that one truly lasting gift in His only Son Jesus Christ. And whoever has the Son has eternal life. Nothing seasonal about that.

LIFT HIM UP

3ABN Schedule (Sky Angel Channel 9710)

Tuesday—4:30 p.m. (PST), 10:30 p.m. (PST)
Thursday—11:00 a.m. (PST)
Saturday—10:30 a.m. (PST)

COOL QUOTES

The giving of the white stone with the new name is the communication of what God thinks about the man to the man. It is the divine judgment, the solemn holy doom of the righteous man, the 'Come, thou blessed,' spoken to the individual. . . . The true name is one which expresses the character, the nature, the being, the *meaning* of the person who bears it. It is the man's own symbol,—his soul's picture, in a word—the sign which belongs to him and to no one else. Who can give a man this, his own name? God alone. For no one but God sees what the man is, or even, seeing what he is, could express in a name-word the sum and harmony of what He sees.

George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons*, First Series, "The New Name"

Christ died to save us, not from suffering, but from ourselves; not from injustice, far less from justice, but from being unjust. He died that we might live—but live as He lives, by dying as He died who died to Himself that He might live unto God.

George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons*, Third Series, "Freedom"

Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Savior dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins

to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.

Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 26-27

Once you know Him, Christ is absolutely irresistible. You can no more help trusting Him than you can help breathing. If the whole world would know Him as He is, sinners would fall at His feet in adoring worship. They simply could not help it. His surpassing loveliness would overwhelm them completely.

Hannah Whitall Smith, *The God of All Comfort*, p. 21

Your moods change. . . . That is why daily prayers and religious readings and churchgoing are necessary parts of the Christian life. We have to be continually reminded of what we believe. Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind. It must be fed. And as a matter of fact, if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 141

MISSION UPDATE

BY HERB MONTGOMERY

. . . AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

"In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary."

Where does this New Year find you? It finds me now working from "back East." Last June, Crystal and I decided to move back to West Virginia where I grew up, to take care of our parents. Light Bearers kindly invited me to continue working with them from our new location and that is precisely where this update finds us.

In October I was privileged to conduct a three-week evangelistic seminar in Clarksburg, WV (about three hours from my home). It felt strange. This was a place where I attended academy and then college for a short time. It was where Crystal and I met and fell in love as teenagers. Now fourteen years later here I was holding gospel meetings to help the local church reach out to their community with the message of God's extravagant love.

I am convinced that our evangelism needs to—first and foremost—introduce people to God and His love for them. Through answering their questions and meeting their needs, we need to not only show them His love, but also lead them into deeper and more personal experiences with that

love. This is what changes lives. Our Adventist message was never intended to simply spread intellectual, doctrinal facts. This may produce members that are *convinced*, but it doesn't necessarily mean they are *converted*. Conversion happens as we encounter God's love for us, as we "perceive with [our] hearts."¹ Then the miracle of the new birth takes place, through which we "no longer live for ourselves, but for Him"² who loved us and gave His life for us. Our message is to be centered in helping others "see" what God is truly like; and nothing in my life has contributed more to my understanding of God's love than the truths of the Adventist message. It's powerful! It's heart-awakening! It's life-changing!

Our understanding of the Sabbath teaches us how to "rest" in God's love.³

Our understanding of the nature of man teaches not only what happens when we die, but more importantly what happened when Christ "tasted death for us all."⁴

Our understanding of mortality and immortality points back to the Gospel, through which life and immortality have been brought to light.⁵ For as "in Adam all die, in Christ all will be made alive."⁶

Our understanding of the law of sin and death⁷ reveals that God did not send Jesus to save us from Himself, but rather to "save His people from their sins."⁸

Our understanding of the fate of the lost reconciles the Bible's teachings on hell with God's claims to be a God of love.

Our understanding of free will, the great controversy, and the cross continues to balance how God could love us so passionately, and yet still cannot guarantee that we will never suffer pain.

All these truths piece together like a giant puzzle where a picture of a God whose chief attribute of love mysteriously emerges, overwhelming our hearts, answering the questions

that prevented our hearts from trusting in His love, and setting us free to run in the expanse of His goodness and mercy, to love Him the way He is in love with us.⁹

A wise author wrote, "The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers."¹⁰ "Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel's message calls for

. . . and a Happy New Year continued on page 4