



Youth Messenger

*The International
Youth Congress of
2001*

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2001

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Real Freedom

Rules! Rules! Rules! Why does the church have to have rules and restrictions?" some may wonder. Any rule is based on a standard—a basic minimum to which all agree. To be lower than that is to be substandard—to render poor performance. If you really want to excel in any given area, you won't just grudgingly comply with the lowest level possible. You will press on to the top. In spiritual matters, this is where the Master is.


The word "church" comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, meaning a "calling out." Called out from what? The Bible says that God is calling out "a peculiar people . . . out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9) where we can see better how to live a happy life.

If you analyze the standards of the SDA Reform Movement, you will find them to be based on principles solely from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. Are you willing to prayerfully study these questions? Are you willing to go to your church elder or minister and ask him to show you from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy why we believe and practice this? Are you willing to ask God to give you understanding and grace to live a Christian life based on the truth presented?

Even if you have studied mathematics for years, you probably will not be able to understand calculus or trigonometry before you have taken the first year of algebra. If you do not mind not being able to under-

stand higher mathematics when you haven't studied all of the prerequisites yet, then why be surprised when church standards seem a mystery? If it were schoolwork, you would just improve yourself by calmly going back to the textbooks and teachers, asking questions and pressing on until you reach your goal.

The same method works in the spiritual realm. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:31–36). Standards are no longer obstacles when we understand and allow Jesus to make us strong enough to live by them!

"In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466. 

—B. Monteiro.

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“Let Your Speech Be Always With Grace”

He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 3:10–12; 1:13–16).

by E. G. White
as published in *The Youth's
Instructor*, June 27, 1895

How is it that many who profess the name of Christ utter so many vain, idle words? Satan watches to obtain an advantage over those who speak in a reckless manner. Those who jest and joke and indulge in cheap conversation place themselves upon a level where Satan can give access to them. He is playing the game of life for their souls. Can we wonder that the word of God cautions us, and warns us against sinning with our tongues?

We are to feed upon Christ, the living bread from heaven. Our souls are to thirst for the waters of salvation, and we are to study the Scriptures, and practice the truths they teach in our daily life. Those who do this will reveal the fact that they are feasting upon the bread of life, eating the flesh of the Son of God, and drinking daily of the waters of salvation. If we closely study the words of Christ, and take heed to His lessons, we shall feed upon His flesh; for the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. Christ says: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). When we utter meaningless and silly words, we encourage others to indulge in the same kind of conversation; but it is a great sin in the sight of God to allow ourselves to utter words that do not suggest pure, choice thoughts which will elevate, ennoble, and sanctify our characters and


the characters of those who hear. The only words that come from our lips should be pure, clean words. No one can tell how much sin is created by careless, foolish, unmeaning words. The character of those who utter these senseless words is indexed by them. Sensible people are ashamed to listen to such words, and disgusted that their precious time should be wasted in listening to frivolous utterances.

O that every one of our youth would realize the evil of foolish conversation, and correct the habit of speaking idle words! Let every one who has indulged in this sin repent of it, confess it before God, and put it far from him. In speaking foolish words, you have dishonored the name of Christ; for you have misrepresented Him in character. No word of guile was found in His lips, no word of prevarication or falsehood. The people that are described as making up the one hundred and forty-four thousand, have the Father's name written in their foreheads, and of them it is said: “In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5). If they had been speaking foolish, senseless, false words, they would not have been found without guile, and without fault before the throne of God. John also wrote, saying: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all

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nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:9–17).

O that all our youth would form characters after the divine similitude! O that Christ may be in you a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Begin at once the work of soul-purification. Put from you all nonsense, and refrain from trifling words. Every word you

speak is as a seed that will germinate and produce either good or bad fruit, according to its character. The words we utter encourage the feelings that prompted them. Exaggeration is a terrible sin. Passionate words sow seeds that produce a bad crop which no one will care to garner. Our own words have an effect upon our character, but they act still more powerfully upon the characters of others. The Infinite God alone can measure the mischief that is done by careless words. These words fall from our lips, and we do not perhaps mean any harm; yet they are the index of our inward thoughts, and work on the side of evil. What unhappiness has been produced by the speaking of thoughtless, unkind words in the family circle! Harsh words rankle in the mind, it may be for years, and never lose their sting. As professed Christians, we should consider the influence our words have upon those with whom we come into association, whether they are believers or unbelievers. Our words are watched, and mischief is done by thoughtless utterances. No after association with believers or unbelievers will wholly counteract the unfavorable influence of thoughtless, foolish words. Our words evidence the manner of food upon which the soul feeds. 

"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Matthew 12:36, 37.



The International Youth Congress of 2001

BY RADU IONITA

By God's grace, for the fourth time in eight years, the Hungarian Field has hosted this international gathering for youth, from August 5–12, 2001. Over 460 people attended the eight days of the congress, representing young people from 21 countries: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United States of America, and Yugoslavia. Imagine the work of the translators into and from so many languages!

We had the chance to study together very important themes under the titles "The Power of Liberty": "The Seat of Liberty" (or as he thinketh in his heart, so is he"), "Liberty or Liberality?" (courtship that pleases God), "A Yoke or a Crown?" "To Love, or to Be Loved" (mar-

riage and family). So, dealing with courtship and marriage, together with Br. Sas, we started the workshops which were very interesting. These were followed by other studies: "The Family and the Gospel" and "Marriage in the Light of the Cross of Calvary."

Other presentations were made on true liberty and on conversion—as the Scripture says, "meat in due season"! The open discussions in





the workshops were so deep and interesting that some times we had to adjust the program schedule in order to have enough time for them.

Meanwhile, almost everybody was also squeezing in time for the choir practice. Each evening featured a “surprise,” which turned out to be some practical lessons, such as how to do massage, or as you may see in the picture above, when Martha, from Novi Sad, Serbia, was teaching us how to make a good loaf of bread. Some volunteers were helping her, and finally everybody tasted that they had really done a good job, when the baked breads were served in the evening meal!

But the enemy was not happy with what we were doing in this Congress, and we noticed it in a very unpleasant way Wednesday morning when the amplifier and two keyboards disappeared from the church. We had special prayers, and each one was carefully searching his own heart, trying to understand why God had permitted this to happen. . . . But one thing was

clear: This would not cause us to sing any less! The choir practice continued without the keyboard, and a special offering was collected to purchase new equipment.

For Sabbath we had a wonderful international musical team, with brethren—and instruments—from Austria, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Yugoslavia and Hungary. We believe that there now was as much music as if nothing sad had happened at all! The church was almost full on Sabbath, and we enjoyed Sabbath school in classes, followed by a study with Bro. Jaksic dealing with true liberty. In the afternoon there was an unforgettable praise service, with more than 35 musical items, poems, etc., all the way until sunset. The only sorrow was that part of the people now present had not been able to join us throughout the whole week, so they had missed out on some of the joy! Sitting there and attending the program we were remembering all the studies and the discussions—sometimes “hot”—during



the week. . . . We were remembering the wonderful day of Thursday after the sad-enough day of Wednesday. . . . That Thursday for sure is going to remain in the memory of all that took part! We started very punctually in the morning, by train and by metro, up to the Danube River. Then started a very pleasant experience, to travel by boat, through the city of Budapest, seeing many beautiful historical places. There were at least 200 people present, many of whom were not of our group. We had a chance to sing for them, practicing with the choir, and enjoying the gift of being together. We got to know each other better, and build up friendships. Following the boat ride we had an unforgettable walk. In the beginning it started off along a wide, easy pathway, which after

some kilometers changed little by little into a narrow and difficult path as it went deep into the forest. The greatest lesson was to remember the journey of the Advent believers as shown to the Lord’s messenger in vision. (See *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 594–597.) In that dream the faithful company pressed on under increasing hardship, symbolic of casting off more and more of the things of this world to come on higher ground.



Bro. Daniele Campodonico speaking about the Italian youth



Bro. David Zic updating us on Canada

we still came together in fellowship to try to know each other better. Each country represented had the chance to give some brief information about the young people of their country, and their interests and activities, to answer questions, and to sing (as the German group did). . . . The last day meeting for questions and

answers, and to remember the reality of the power that God is willing to give to everyone, the power of liberty in all aspects of our life, and for victorious liberty from sin and the defilement of this world!

May the Lord help us to live a life of godly freedom in Christ, to experience it daily for our present and eternal joy, and for the glory of our Lord. This is our wish and prayer for all our young brethren from all over the world!

In our experience, improper shoes were put off and some clothes got a bit soiled as we ascended. But everybody was finally able to return to the ship fully satisfied and, as you can imagine, tired, yet with the great feeling of having overtaken what had seemed almost impossible!

On Friday we studied together with Bro. David Zic on how to build a truly successful career, and on Saturday night after a full day,



SPANISH YOUTH CONGRESS

From August 22–26, the Spanish Mission held its Youth Congress in the majestic Sierra Nevada, a wonderful mountain region about 2500 m high, outside of the city of Granada. Young people gathered from Germany, Italy, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Ukraine and the United States. The presentations dealt with practical godliness under the convention theme of “Life on the Wings of Eagles.” The key text of the Congress was Isaiah 40:31: “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Speakers for the convention included Brother Liviu Popa (Spanish Mission Youth Leader), Pascal (Spanish Mission Treasurer), Marin Barbu (European Regional Secretary), Radu Ionita (GC Youth Leader) and David Zic (GC Sabbath School Secretary), as well as many others. Among the musical items presented was the praise offered by

the Madrid Church Choir and the European Youth Choir.

The weather was splendid for this convention. On Friday the whole group took a 14 km uphill outing, up to the 3400 m. high top of the mountain. There, while delighting in the monumental landscape, was time for sharing experiences, singing, and for better understanding what it is meant by true greatness.

According to the testimony of the youth from the Spanish Mission, this was the greatest event experienced in their country and they really enjoyed it, and thanked the Lord who made it possible. They promised it would be followed by similar events in the future. As a sign of welcome to the next Convention, the Madrid Choir was singing outside, Sunday afternoon, while the brethren were departing. Traveling down the Sierra Nevada mountains, everybody was keeping the goal, which was fitting not only for them in Spain, but for all of us: To live a life of faith, of courage, as on the wings of eagles, and nothing less! 



The Blessing of Dress Reform

by Lesley Johnson
Writing from North Carolina,
U.S.A.

One day in the supermarket a young man approached two older ladies and complimented them on their dress, which consisted of midcalf-length skirts,



long-sleeved blouses, and low-heeled shoes. Nothing unusual, but his comment was to the effect that it was refreshing to see women looking like women. He was accompanied by a young woman wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and tennis shoes. Could it be that the younger generation are seeing that there has been a deterioration in standards and are saddened by it? Does clothing exert any special power of influence upon ourselves and others? What reasons are there for dress reform?

A short history. Adam and Eve wore no artificial garments in the beginning, yet they had no need of shame (Genesis 2:25). They were clothed in glorious garments of light, characteristic of their pure innocence. Sadly, however, this innocence did not last, for Satan, using the serpent as a medium, deceived them. Then they realized that they were suddenly naked—and they were ashamed (Genesis 3:7). Satan said that they would know good and evil. However, knowing evil is not a thing to be desired, as mankind soon discovered. There is no deceit more powerful than the mixing of truth and error, good and evil. Now dress reform became necessary, and was initiated by God. Adam and Eve had fashioned “aprons” for themselves, but God fully clothed them with “coats of skins.” This is also the first record of a sacrifice; some animal had to die to furnish them with those coats, symbolic of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary.

As men depart from God, they remove their clothing more and more as their apostasy increases. Many think of women in regard to

dress; however, it only takes a quick look at shoppers in the mall to realize that men have become just as immodest and outlandish in their dress as women. The principles of modest dress apply to both sexes.

Power and influence in clothing. The way we dress has power either to command respect or cause it to be lost. At a job interview, proper dress could determine the outcome. At some restaurants, certain standards in clothing are required—shoes and shirts, ties and jackets. Thinking about this power involved in clothing, we can see that it can be a ready tool for good or evil. As with any tool, we must use it correctly to honor God and bring glory to Him. Our clothing should be “without spot or wrinkle” as His church is to be.

How may we be dishonoring God in our dress? Nakedness is equated with sin and evil. In Revelation 16:15, Jesus declares, “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” Remember in the gospel according to Luke the man at the tombs who wore no clothes. He was demon-possessed. (See Luke 8:27.)

Ironically, the shame of nakedness has become desirable to many. Movie stars and singers—the modern replacement for pagan gods and goddesses—are practically

naked in public and flaunt their bodies before anyone who will look. Unfortunately, many of the youth desire to be just like them. Our world is morally turned upside down. What does God say about it in the message to Laodicea? He appeals for us to buy of Him the righteousness of Christ “that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear” (Revelation 3:18).

“The path of error often appears to lie close to the path of truth. It is hardly distinguishable from the path that leads to holiness and

heaven” (*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 290). How can this possibly apply to us? There is a style of clothing worn frequently even among professed Christian young women which, when compared to acceptable standards, at first seems to conform. But in reality, it is totally immodest. It is the very popular long, straight skirt—which is a misnomer, as on a young woman, there

is no such thing as a “straight” skirt. It comes in proper lengths, about midcalf or longer, is made of many lovely subdued colors, prints, and materials. But as often as not, it has a deep slit on the side or back as if putting the slit out of sight of the wearer would make it alright. The skirt clings to the body, leaving the female anatomy provocatively outlined. When sitting, these young women thus attired often cross their legs and the immodesty increases, sometimes exposing bare the

How may we be dishonoring God in our dress?

thighs. Many are choosing to wear such skirts along with extremely tight-fitting, short-sleeved blouses, even in God's designated sanctuary. Such is not proper attire. Young sisters, have you thought upon your responsibility toward others in tempting to sensuous thoughts? Attracting men by seductive means attracts the wrong kind of men, or can sometimes lower the right kind to become the wrong kind. Either way, God cannot bless you. Is your dress expressing your commitment to God or to the lusts of the world?

God covers Himself with light (Psalm 104:1, 2). Jesus was covered with shining raiment, exceeding white at the mount of transfiguration (Mark 9:3), symbolic of spotless purity. We can learn from this. What are the reasons for dress reform? Is it to make us unhappy and different—or protected and blessed? The reasons are multiple and are for the benefit of men, women and children:

Reasons for dress reform.

1. Improper fashion separates us from God. Notice that the following counsel is for "our people," not just the women: "Fashion is deteriorating the intellect and eating out the spirituality of our people. Obedience to fashion is pervading our Seventh-day Adventist churches and is doing more than any other power to

separate our people from God" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 647).

2. Dressing differently than we have been instructed is sin.

"There is a terrible sin upon us as a people, that we have permitted our church members to dress in a manner inconsistent with their faith. We must arise at once and close the door to the allurements of fashion. Unless we do this, our churches will become demoralized."—*Ibid.*, p. 648.

3. To some, dress reform is a cross. We need to pick up our cross and carry it, not shun it. (Luke 9:23.)

4. Then, there is our physical health. "Women should clothe their limbs with regard to health and comfort. Their feet and limbs need to be clad as warmly as men's" (*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 459).

"The character of the climate, the surroundings, the conditions of health, the age and the occupation must all be considered. Every article of dress should fit easily, obstructing neither the circulation of the blood nor a free, full, natural respiration. Everything worn should be so loose that when the arms are raised the clothing will be correspondingly lifted."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 293.

"Perfect health depends upon perfect circulation."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 531.

Simplicity in dress . . . in comeliness can be compared with the flowers of the field.

How do we interfere with that perfect circulation? Constricting clothes. Cancer, sterility, lung disease, and general debility are just a few of the diseases effected by constricting clothing, in both men and women.

5. To overcome pride. "Oh, the pride that was shown me of God's professed people! It has increased every year, until it is now impossible to designate professed Advent Sabbathkeepers from all the world around them. I saw that this pride must be torn out of our families."—*Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 135.

6. To minimize expenses. Anyone who has shopped for clothes recently knows the extremes that clothing prices have reached. What is worse, the quality is such that "moth and rust doth corrupt."

7. Here is an exceptional reason—to prevent our men from falling in war. The messenger of the Lord writes, "The prophecy of Isaiah 3 was presented before me as applying to these last days, and the reproofs are given to the daughters of Zion who have thought only of appearance and display. Read verse 25: 'Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.' I was shown that this scripture will be strictly fulfilled" (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p.

270). This may mean falling in the spiritual battle at the thought-level, but either way spells great loss and accountability.

8. To identify us as God's people. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3, 4). "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Timothy 2:9, 10).

9. To prevent compromising situations.

If you look like a tramp, you will be treated like a tramp. And men who may think this doesn't apply to them—Remember, this is an age of immorality, perversion and homosexuality. These practices are taught in the public school system as alternative lifestyles. It is not uncommon to hear of men raping men. Be careful how you dress.

10. To distinguish men from women. "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto

Our clothing is an indication of our moral and spiritual state.


a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 22:5). It does not say that the clothing is an abomination, but the wearer! Even when you are alone at home, are you really alone or is God there? Whom are you trying to please—worldly people when you go out in public—or God who wants to be with you always? It is important to keep in mind the spirit of the principles even though no one else is visible to your sight.

11. To prevent lust and base passion. "The love of dress endangers the morals and makes woman the opposite of the Christian lady characterized by modesty and sobriety. Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder. God sees that the ruin of the character is frequently preceded by the indulgence of pride and vanity in dress."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 645.

12. To make us truly beautiful. "Simplicity of dress will make a sensible woman appear to the best advantage. We judge of a person's character by the style of dress worn. A modest, godly woman will dress modestly. A refined taste, a cultivated mind, will be revealed in the choice of a simple, appropriate attire. The young women who break away from the slavery of fashion will be ornaments to society. The one who is simple and unpretending

in her dress and in her manners shows that she understands that a true woman is characterized by moral worth. How charming, how interesting, is simplicity in dress, which in comeliness can be compared with the flowers of the field."—*Messages to Young People*, p. 353. "Christ has warned us against the pride of life, but not against its grace and natural beauty."—*Ibid.*, p. 352.

Summary. Our clothing is an indication of our moral and spiritual state. We know that God is clothed in light and where we have record of His garments, they reflected His purity and holiness. Reasons for dress reform include: avoiding separation from God, avoiding sin, to bear a cross, for health, to overcome pride, to save money, so our men won't die in war, to identify us as God's, to keep us safe from immorality, to distinguish between men and women, to prevent lust in ourselves and others, and to be truly beautiful.


The ultimate reason for dress reform is to hasten our Lord's return. Our outward appearance is an index to our inward character, and Christ is waiting for His character of meekness and purity to be reproduced in His people. He is watching us, waiting for us to glorify Him in the earth. Let us take up the cross of dress reform cheerfully, in the realization that we will be cooperating with God in His plan to bring a conclusion to the sinfulness of this world. Let us welcome the Lord our Righteousness and wear the garments He has chosen for us, both physically and spiritually. 

Quick Bible Studies

PART IV

Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Here is a quick Bible study that you can give to anyone, if the chance should arise unexpectedly. Remember, if you pray for opportunities, the Lord will provide them!

THE FATHER'S LOVE

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1 John 3:1 | "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God." |
| Hebrews 12:6-9 | When parents are strict in training their children for Heaven, they are showing more love for them than those who allow them to go wild. God is this loving type of parent. |
| 2 Peter 3:9 | God wants our hearts to be touched by His patience with us, that we may be drawn by His love and amend our ways. |
| 1 Samuel 15:22, 23 | Obedience is better than sacrifice, and rebellion (disobedience) is as witchcraft. To give an offering of a million dollars would amount to nothing in God's sight if we are stubbornly rebelling against His commandments. |
| 1 John 4:7, 8 | God's love is contagious! To know Him is to love Him—and to love others. |
| John 17:3 | Jesus said that to truly know Him and His Father brings life eternal. |
| Zephaniah 3:17 | "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." He delights in preparing surprises for His saints. |
| 1 Corinthians 2:9 | "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared" for His people. He wants us with Him forever. |
| 1 Thessalonians 4:17 | ". . . and so shall we ever be with the Lord." But until then, we can be |
| 1 Peter 5:7 | "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."  |

Lessons from the Past (III)

EGYPT IN THE TIME OF JOSEPH

by David Zic
Writing from Virginia, USA

Egypt has always been a land that has excited explorers. In the last issue we studied the foundations of the Egyptian empire, and in this issue we will discuss a period of great transformation in the Egyptian society. To understand this great change we will have to leave Egypt for a moment to travel to a land on its northern border.

Joseph. Abraham had traveled from the land of Ur, in Mesopotamia, and was dwelling in the land of Canaan, northeast of Egypt. As mentioned in our last article in this series, he went to Egypt during the twelfth dynasty. His son Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob had deceived his brother and was forced to flee to his mother's ancestral home in Padan-Aram. After serving a harsh apprenticeship, he returned to the land of his father and reconciled with his brother Esau.

For the next thirty odd years Jacob dwelt in various places of the "southern country" which would later be called Samaria and Judaea. Jacob had twelve sons, but one was his favorite: Joseph.

Joseph was the second youngest of the twelve boys, but was the elder of the two born to Jacob's wife Rachel. His other brothers were much older than he was, and they hated the fact that their father cared more for Joseph than for them. He was given a great coat of expensive material as a gift from his father, and his brothers became even more jealous. To make matters worse Joseph told his family about dreams he was having, showing that they would be bowing down to him.

Some time after this, the older brothers were sent to find better pasture for the flocks. Joseph acted as a courier/messenger for his

aged father between the main camp and the brothers in the distant pastures. It was on one of these missions that the soon-to-be-important young man, clad in his very distinctive cloak, hurried north to Sechem. Not finding his brothers there, he went 20 miles further to Dothan, and there he found them. The brothers decided that this was the time finally to be rid of their younger brother. But Joseph's life was spared, and instead of being killed he was sent to Egypt in a state of living death—slavery.

Joseph's purchasers were a group of Ishmaelite traders who had forded the Jordan and were heading for the main trail into Egypt running down through the seacoast plains. The transaction they had just completed was not an unusual one for those times. Canaan was a thinly populated land with virtually no regular rulers or law. It fluctuated between control by Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Asia Minor powers. This state of flux made it easy for someone to sell another person into slavery.

Joseph arrives. Joseph presumably arrived in Egypt during the 15th and 16th dynasties in the period between the Middle and New Kingdoms during the rule of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings. The Hyksos were foreign rulers who had conquered Egypt, and the Pharaoh Joseph encountered was

one of these foreign rulers, not a native Egyptian.

Josephus quotes Manetho in describing how the Hyksos came to power. "There was a king of ours whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how, that God was opposed to us, and there came in most surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the East, who were bold enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a

battle with them. So, when they had those that governed us under their power, they burned down our cities, demolished the temples of the gods, and treated the people most barbarously. . . . At length they made one of their number king, whose name was Salatis. He also lived at Memphis, and put both Upper and Lower Egypt under tribute, and left gar-

risons at all strategic places" (*Against Apion*, 1, 14).

These new rulers from the East were of the same Semitic blood as Joseph. Joseph was sold to a man named Potiphar, but circumstances went against the young man and he ended up in prison. While "serving time" he had the opportunity to interpret the dreams of two other prisoners. One of these men, the king's butler, promised to remember Joseph. But after being released the butler forgot the man who had interpreted the dream of his deliv-

Joseph is an example of how the youth may stand unspotted, amid the evil of the world, and add to their faith, virtue.

erance, until one day the king himself had a bad dream.

The king wanted an interpretation of the dream, and the butler remembered the young man in prison. Joseph was brought before the king and was ordered to interpret the dream. He told the ruler that his land would have seven years of plenty, but that this would be followed by seven years of famine. As a reward for his service Joseph was made the third ruler in the land of Egypt and was placed in charge of storing food during the years of plenty, and distributing it during the years of want.

As another reward, he was granted permission by Pharaoh to settle his large and ever-expanding family in a part of the delta called Goshen in the Bible. Joseph was permitted to undertake this resettle-

ment even though the Egyptians despised shepherds, “for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians” (Genesis 46:34).

A societal shift. During the years of plenty, Joseph stored food in warehouses throughout Egypt. The land continued to prosper under her foreign rulers, Joseph amongst them. Great cities were built, wars were fought, art was created, and the people lived in a generally happy state. Each person owned his own animals, his own home, his own property, his own wealth.

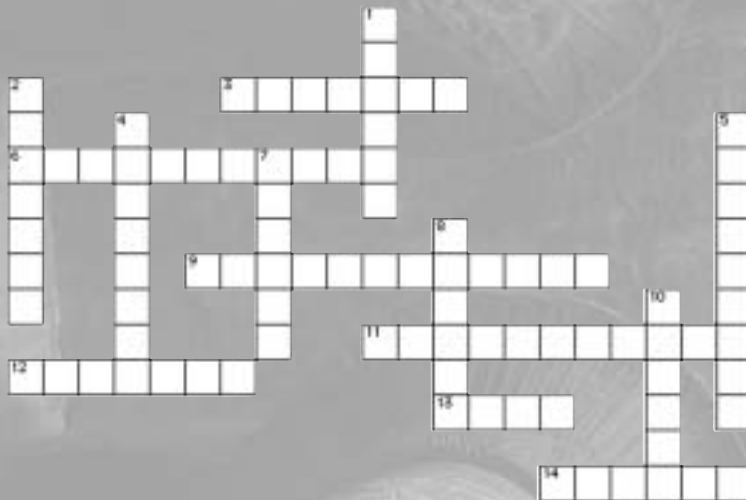
When the time of famine came, the people turned to Joseph for food. This food was not given for free. The people were required to pay for this food. “And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in

the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house” (Genesis 47:14). But eventually time dragged on and the famine continued. When all the money in Egypt had been used to buy food, the people asked Joseph what they should do for food. “And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail” (Genesis 47:16). But after some time all the cattle in Egypt belonged to Pharaoh. “When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and

our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh’s. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof” (Genesis 47:18–21).

This new societal structure would remain with the Egyptian people for many centuries, even after the Hyksos were removed from power. All the land in Egypt belonged to Pharaoh, and even the people themselves were the bondmen of Pharaoh. The only exception to this were the priests of Egypt,

PUZZLE Lessons From the Past (Part III)



Across

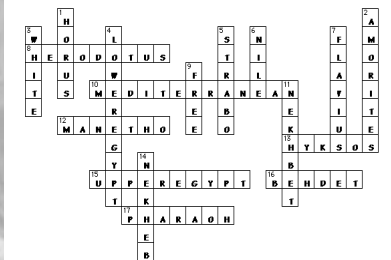
3. Hyksos king
6. location of Ur
7. younger son of Sekenenre
9. banner of Prince Immanuel
11. shepherds to Egyptians
12. owner of all Egyptian land
13. Joseph’s uncle
14. shepherd kings

Down

1. location of brothers
2. seat of Salatis
4. captain of the guard
5. 5 major skull wounds

8. older son of Sekenenre
10. Pharaoh conquered by Hyksos

Answers to last issue’s puzzle entitled, “Lessons From the Past”(Part II).





who were given a portion of the food by Pharaoh free of charge. Over time the priests would become the custodians of the Pharaoh's treasure.

The death of Joseph. Both Joseph and his father were embalmed in the Egyptian manner (Genesis 50:2, 3, 26), and Joseph was put in a coffin. During this period of history, Egyptian coffins were anthropoid, made of wood with a conventional portrait-face at the head-end. Joseph extracted a promise from his family, that when they returned to claim the promise land they would take his bones with them to be buried there.

The Hyksos overthrown. During the early Hyksos occupation, the native Egyptians accepted their rule, but after some time the native princes began to make trouble. One of the first to resist the Hyksos rule after the time of Joseph

was the prince of Thebes, Sakenenre. We know that he was unsuccessful in his attempt to throw out the Hyksos and he must have died a very violent death. His mummy shows five major skull wounds, any one of which may have been fatal.

His oldest son, Kamose, had a greater deal of success, but it was the younger son, Ahmose, who would eventually achieve the restoration of native rule to Egypt. Ahmose raised and trained a very large army. Not content with having thrown the Hyksos out of Egypt, he took his army into Canaan and spent many years going up and down the length of Palestine, sacking the cities were the Hyksos had retreated in refuge.

This plunder from Palestine, combined with the large army and a remembrance of the years of humiliating foreign rule led to an Egypt that was more militant and aggressive. In the years ahead Egypt

would be a military power to be reckoned with. Ahmose I founded the 18th dynasty in 1580 B.C. By the time his great-grandson, Thutmose III, died, Egypt extended from the Fourth Cataract of the Nile to the upper shore of the far away Euphrates, including all of the land of Canaan.


The native rulers now wanted to wipe out all memory of their humiliation. By the time Moses was born, the people had forgotten the Hyksos rulers, including Joseph, so that it could be said: "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8). But the Hebrew people were still in Egypt's best land. In the next issue we will examine the history of Egypt in relation to these Hebrew people, and the results of their Exodus on the world's greatest nation of that time.

An example for us. In this issue we have discussed the history of Egypt, but you should take some time to study the life of Joseph. What was his relationship with God and with his family? What was his childhood like? What training did he receive in his home?

"The young Christian will have severe tests and temptations. Satan will not permit you to leave his banner of darkness to march under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel, without making an effort to retain you in his service.

He will present every attraction to cause you to leave the narrow road that leads to eternal life; but you must stand like a faithful soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph is an example of how the youth may stand unspotted, amid the evil of the world, and add to their faith, virtue. Though a captive in a strange land, far from the restraints of home, he kept the fear of God before him, and when he was sorely tempted to indulge in evil, he exclaimed. 'How then can I do this

great wickedness, and sin against God?' The grace of God enabled him to resist the tempter. He was cast into prison, because of his steadfastness of purpose to keep the commandments of God. But prison walls could not shut out the light of Heaven's favor, nor hinder his advancement in the divine life; for 'the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy.' And the

Lord will be with every soul who adds the precious grace of virtue, and who fears to transgress the law of Heaven."—*The Review and Herald*, February 21, 1888. 

*Though a captive
in a strange land,
far from the
restraints of
home, he kept
the fear of God
before him.*



The Christian's Motto

The Christian's motto always is,
"We walk by faith and not by sight."
True happiness doth not consist
In seeking after feeling's flight.

Faith is the cable to our ship,
And hope the anchor in the vail.
Long as our cable does not break,
No storm against us can prevail.

Faith is a shield unto the soul,
Which quenches every fiery dart;
When Satan would thy soul assail,
'Tis faith that shields thy troubled heart.

Faith rests upon the Word of God,
Upon His promises secure;
And, tho the earth may vanish quite,
"By faith we walk," and thus endure.

'Tis faith the blood of Christ applies,
To heal the malady of sin;
'Tis faith that ope's the blinded eyes;
"By faith," eternal life we win.

Faith is a cord from heaven let down,
When by some precipice we walk;
We grasp it as our safety there,
And of its saving power we talk.

In prayer uncoil this blessed cord;
Thy message it will bear to God,
And Christ a message will return,
To guide thee in the path He trod.

Would you your Saviour's presence
share?
Then just unroll that cord each day;
It stronger grows by sincere prayer,
And holds thee safe on life's dark way.

—G. T. Wilson

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