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What a Great Time to Be a Young Adventist

Lawrence Maxwell

Those of us who help produce Adventists Affirm have worked fast to produce this issue in time for the GYC convention in December at San Jose, California. GYC, for those who don’t know it, stands for Generation of Youth for Christ. It’s the name young Adventists are calling themselves these days. Their goal is to tell the world about Jesus.

Six or seven decades ago when I was a young Adventist, we called ourselves Missionary Volunteers. Our goal was, “The advent message to all the world in this generation.” We didn’t quite accomplish it, but, with God’s help, we came close.

That is one reason why this is such a great time to be a young Adventist. With their energy and enthusiasm and dedication to the Lord, they are certain to get the advent message to all the world in their generation. We have every reason to believe that those living today will fulfill Jesus’ prophecy: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world; . . . and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

Live to see the grand climax of the ages!

See Jesus riding in majesty through the sky!

Hear Him play His trumpet solo as He and His hosts of heavenly angels descend closer to the earth! (See Early Writings, p. 16).

Hear His commanding voice call, “Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!” (The Great Controversy, p. 644).

Be caught up into the clouds, with the older folks, and hear Jesus say, “Well done, good and faithful servants; enter into the joy of your Lord.”

What a privilege to be a young Adventist today!

In this issue we have a choice selection of stimulating and encouraging articles. Randy Skeete asks the significant question: “How can a non-Christian know how to become a Christian if he never sees one?” He urges us all, young and old, to follow Paul’s advice and be separate from the world.

Doug Batchelor of Amazing Facts lists some 20 amazing coincidences between the lives of American Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy—born 100 years apart, elected president 100 years apart, assassinated 100 years apart, etc. Then he goes on to show twelve remarkable similarities among the Bible’s three Elijahs: Elijah the prophet, John the Baptist—and us!

Samuel Koranteng-Pipim shows how to overcome sin as Christ did—by being out of our minds. Yes, that
is what he recommends, with good reason. Read his article and you will agree!

In addition, don’t miss the exciting piece by Jerry Page. Elder Page is president of the conference where the GYC convention is being held. He shares one experience after another that shows the tremendous power of united prayer.

Well, there’s much more, but I must stop writing so you can start reading. May God bless us all, especially the young people at GYC. May they leave the convention fully Affirmed in the glorious message God has given Adventists to tell the world.

What young men and women need is Christian heroism. God’s Word declares that he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city. To rule the spirit means to keep self under discipline. . . . They need to seek earnestly to bring into their lives the perfection that is seen in the life of the Saviour, so that when Christ shall come, they will be prepared to enter in through the gates into the city of God. God’s abounding love and presence in the heart will give the power of self-control and will mold and fashion the mind and character. The grace of Christ in the life will direct the aims and purposes and capabilities into channels that will give moral and spiritual power—power which the youth will not have to leave in this world, but which they can carry with them into the future life and retain through the eternal ages.

—My Life Today, p. 70
Randy Skeete
Evangelist for Public Campus Ministries, Michigan Conference,
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Introduction
Perhaps the most flamboyant preacher in the United States in
the 1970s was Rev. Frederick "Ike" Eikerenkoetter; he was
widely known for preaching prosperity via a change in attitudes.
A famous quote attributed to him is "The best thing you can do
for the poor is not to be one of them!" This statement is
profoundly biblical and undergirds God’s call to Abraham: "Now
the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country, and your kindred and your father's house to the land that
I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing'" (Genesis 12:1-3, RSV, emphasis supplied).1 In order for him to be a
blessing to the world, Abraham had to be separate from the world.

This requirement of separation from the world in order to save applies also to the spiritual descendants
of Abraham, Seventh-day Adventists (SDA). In order for SDA youth (and adults) to be a blessing to the
world, they must be as different from the world as light is from darkness.

The purpose of this brief article is to address the issue of “separate to save” because the best thing
genuine SDA youth can do for the world is not to be of the world!

Principles of Divine Expression

Many of the founding fathers of the United States of America believed in deism. Among them were
Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, James Madison, Thomas Paine, and George
Washington. Prior to his conversion, William Miller, a “founding father” of the SDA church, was a deist.
The essence of deism is the belief that God created the universe, and then left it to run itself. He
separates Himself from His creation.

The biblical view is absolutely different. The Bible presents God as a mysterious Being who can be known
to a degree that saves (John 17:3). To this end, He has made Himself very predictable. This
predictability, while not absolute, is the essential basis for faith in Him and is enshrined in His
"principles of divine expression." In other words, God can be expected to "behave" or interact with
created beings in certain ways, and He may refer to them as fixed principles—"fixed" because they are
fully reliable. One such principle is this:

God takes care of what He makes. He who creates (Hebrews1:2) is the one who sustains (Hebrews1:3).
This is precisely expressed in Colossians 1:16, 17. He who creates (verse 16) is the One in whom all
things consist or are held together (verse 17). In the same vein, though with an eye to judgment, Peter
wrote, "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the
earth standing out of the water and in the water . . . but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by
the same word are kept in store" (2 Peter 3:5-7, emphasis supplied). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus
said of the birds, "Your heavenly father feedeth them" (Matthew 6:26).2

Another principle: God teaches spiritual lessons through the physical. Isaiah wrote, "As the earth
bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the
Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth” (Isaiah 61:11). Of this text Ellen White
wrote, “As in the natural, so in the spiritual sowing . . . the power that alone can produce life is from
God.”4 James said, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also”
(James 2:26). His physical symbol comes directly from Genesis 2:7.

Perhaps with little or no expectation of his word ever being taken seriously, Solomon advised, “Go to the
ant, thou sluggard [physical]; consider her ways [mental], and be wise [spiritual]” (Proverbs 6:6). The
wisdom that comes from this observation of nature must be the kind that comes from above (James
3:17).

The verse that perhaps most securely establishes this principle of the physical explaining the spiritual is
Romans 1:20: “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being
understood by the things that are made” (emphasis supplied). For this crucial principle of the physical
explaining the spiritual, Ellen White wrote, “As in the natural, so in the spiritual world.” 4 Christ’s use of
parables was based on this principle.—

In the Beginning
The principle that the physical world contains spiritual lessons can be traced all the way back to the first
day of creation, and is most pertinent to this article. Genesis 1:3, 4 states, “God said, Let there be light;
and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the
darkness” (emphasis supplied). The ear of the imaginative reader can hear God say on that first day,
“What communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14). The first day of God’s physical
creation teaches the spiritual lesson that light and darkness must not—indeed, cannot—dwell together!
Any commingling or cohabitation makes both of them darkness!

God repeated His dividing activity on
the second and third days of creation.

Spiritual Application of the Principle
Perhaps no other passage more clearly expresses this discriminating attitude of God than 2 Corinthians
6:14-17. It is worth quoting in full:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers [separation]: for what fellowship hath
righteousness with unrighteousness [opposites]? and what communion hath light with
darkness [opposites]? or what concord hath Christ with Belial [opposites]? And what part
hath he that believeth with an infidel [opposites]? And what agreement hath the temple of
God with idols [opposites]? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will
dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Wherefore come out from among them [the world], and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and
touch not the unclean thing [the world and all things worldly]; and I will receive you.

To each of the five rhetorical questions in verses 14-16 the resounding answer is NONE! God requires a
separation between His people and the world because fellowship between light and darkness is
impossible. Why is this separation so vital?

Twin Towers of Purpose
Let all SDA youth study the reasons why God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees (Babylon) and
the Israelites out of Egypt (spiritually where Christ was crucified, Revelation 11:8). God desired to make
Abraham and his descendants His personal covenant people and to prepare them to be a light to the rest
of the world. Both purposes were inseparably connected, and God could do neither while the Israelites
were in Egyptian bondage. They had to be separated from the Egyptians (the world) as verily as God
separated the light from the darkness in order that the light might do its appointed task. To prepare
them to be what God wanted them to be (His covenant people), and to do what He wanted them to do
(shine as a light to the Gentiles), they had to be separated from the darkness of Egypt. God loved the
Egyptians and all other heathen nations and desired to shine the light of His love on them through the
ministry of the separated Israelites. These things were "written for our admonition” (1 Corinthians
10:11).

SDA youth should beware of the criminal act of hindering the work of God for the world by becoming
part of the world, which is so overwhelmingly represented on secular campuses! By being like their
unsaved associates, they deny the unsaved an opportunity to observe a righteous life. This denial may
lead to eternal ruin. This is criminal and will be severely punished in the final judgment. An Egyptianized Israelite is useless to God!—

Separation from the world is not only required for proper training of God’s people, but it is also required for the right and privilege to be called the people of God. Speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, God said, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” (Exodus 19:4, emphasis supplied). Leviticus 20:26 uses the word “sever”: “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” (emphasis supplied). The Hebrew word for “severed” means “to put a difference between” or “to distinguish.” No man can claim to be God’s if he is not severed from the world. The call of the Israelites was not only practical; it was highly personal and intimate.

Abraham’s Seed in the Twenty-first Century
Like their spiritual father Abraham, SDA youths must leave the world in heart and body. It is not enough to say, “I am an SDA.” Assuming that this claim comes from the heart, it must be externally supported by an active lifestyle of avoidance of places, things, and people (except for evangelism) that endanger their spiritual growth and imperil their status as children of God.—

Hours before He went to Gethsemane, Christ said to His disciples, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John 15:19). Moments later, He said to the Father, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word” (John 17:6). No man can serve two masters, said Christ. That is impossible! So, too, is it impossible to be a child of God while connecting oneself to the world.

Identity Crisis
A sense of belonging and identity is placed in all humans’ and animals’ hearts, and many SDA youths enrolled in secular schools seek their identity in the party crowd, the drug crowd, the endless recreation crowd, in the Babylonian church group crowd, or, yes, even in the crime crowd. They have no earthly clue that Ellen White wrote, “Seventh-day Adventists have been chosen by God as a peculiar people, separate from the world. By the great cleaver of truth He has cut them out from the quarry of the world and brought them into connection with Himself. He has made them His representatives and has called them to be ambassadors for Him in the last work of salvation. The greatest wealth of truth ever entrusted to mortals, the most solemn and fearful warnings ever sent by God to man, have been committed to them to be given to the world.”

God chose the Seventh-day Adventist Church above all other people on earth to represent Him to the world and to proclaim His special end-time truths. This is the glorious legacy and heritage of the SDA youth—of which many are so woefully and dangerously ignorant! This call to “separate to save” extends all the way back to the call of Abraham, to the call of the Israelites out of Egypt, to the call of the Jews out of Medo-Persia, to the call of the disciples, and finally to the call of this church in the nineteenth century. The SDA youth who does not understand this may be a dutiful Sabbath-keeper, but he or she is not truly an SDA.

Wielding the Cleaver
Without hiccup or hesitation, Ellen White added, “God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the mighty cleaver of truth, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself.” If God has called His church in this day as He called ancient Israel, then the Seventh-day Adventist Church stands in precisely the same relation to God today as ancient Israel stood in its day.

God separated the SDA church by swinging the great and mighty cleaver of truth, which is the messages of the first, second, and third angels. To a great degree, it is the dreadful and self-inflicted ignorance of this cleaver of truth that lies at the foundation of so much apostasy in the church at large and among the youth in particular. Truly “my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). This destruction is largely suicidal, for it may be said of many, “For this they willingly are ignorant” (2 Peter 3:5).
Learning to Use the Cleaver

To be lifesavers on secular campuses, SDA youths must know the truth for these last days: present truth. Worldly academic degrees are fine as far as they go, but they cannot be as important as the knowledge that saves and that may be gained without costly tuition. To gain the world at the loss of one’s soul is surely the highest expression of folly in an “educated” SDA young person. This writer is not saying that SDA youth should never, ever attend non-SDA schools. Some firmly grounded SDA youths should attend these secular schools—but for the primary purpose of the salvation of their unsaved campus mates. To accomplish the goal, they must know what they believe, not merely as theory but as practice. This theory/practice calls for separation from the world.

Let decisions now be made with each youth to “acquaint now thyself with him” (Job 22:21). Nothing will more surely guarantee this saving acquaintance than a deep knowledge of the cleaver of truth: the three angels’ messages, otherwise known as “the greatest wealth of truth ever entrusted to mortals.” Educated firewood in the furnace of hell would surely be laughable if the very thought were not so tragic.

In education, family life, administration, liturgy, health practices, social life, finances, recreation, romantic matters, doctrine, the church must be different form the world. It must give compelling evidence that it has indeed been called out of the world and has heeded that call 100 percent.

Let all who faithfully claim the name Seventh-day Adventist separate themselves from the world in order to be a blessing to that world. Unless they do this, they are a curse to the world.

NOTES

1 Unless otherwise stated, all texts are from the King James Version. Author’s emphasis is in italics.
2 This principle applies with equal certainty at the spiritual level. Since salvation is a work of creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) accomplished by the same creative word that said, “Let there be light” (2 Corinthians 4:6), it follows that God will take care of the person He creates spiritually. None need to fear giving his or her life to Christ. He will take care of all who surrender. He is bound by His fixed principle of caring for that which He creates.
5 Ellen White wrote, “Animals have a kind of dignity and self-respect, akin to that possessed by human beings. If abused, under the influence of blind passion, their spirits will be crushed, and they will become nervous, irritable, and ungovernable” (Signs of the Times, November 25, 1880, par. 21).
8 Last Day Events, 45.
Many historians have noted some uncanny similarities between Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy:
- Abraham Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846.
- John F. Kennedy was elected to Congress in 1946.
- Lincoln was elected President in 1860.
- Kennedy was elected President in 1960.
- Lincoln’s wife lost a child while living in the White House.
- Kennedy’s wife lost a child while living in the White House.
- Lincoln had a secretary named Kennedy who urged him not to go to the theater.
- Kennedy had a secretary named Lincoln who urged him not to go to Dallas.
- Both Lincoln and Kennedy were shot in the back of the head in the presence of their wives.
- Lincoln was shot in the Ford’s Theatre.
- Kennedy was shot in a Lincoln, made by Ford.
- The names Lincoln and Kennedy each contain seven letters.
- Both Lincoln and Kennedy were killed on a Friday and were assassinated by southerners.
- Lincoln’s assassin was known by three names, John Wilkes Booth, comprised of fifteen letters.
- Kennedy’s assassin was known by three names, Lee Harvey Oswald, comprised of fifteen letters.
- Booth shot Lincoln in a theater and fled to a warehouse.
- Oswald shot Kennedy from a warehouse and fled to a theater.
- Both Oswald and Booth were killed before being taken to trial.
- Lincoln’s successor was Andrew Johnson, born in 1808.
- Kennedy’s successor was Lyndon Johnson, born in 1908.

Are all these parallels coincidence? Probably. But did you know that in the Bible there are some prophets that would have very similar ministries?

The last words of the Old Testament reveal a stirring and powerful prophecy that has often been misunderstood. Take a moment to become familiar with this passage. With the Spirit’s help, we intend to inject new life to these words: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 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” (Malachi 4:5, 6).

Reincarnation?
Perhaps we should first spend a moment explaining what this verse does not mean. In the time of Jesus, many people believed that Elijah would literally return from heaven to live again on earth, or possibly be reborn into a new man. Jesus once asked the disciples, “Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias [the Greek form of Elijah]; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again” (Luke 9:18, 19).

The Jews lived with a sense of expectancy that Elijah would soon come to announce the advent of the
Messiah. However, this prophecy in Malachi was never intended to imply that the Old Testament prophet would be reincarnated.

Instead, Elijah’s spirit of revival and reform was predicted in Scripture to return. Speaking of the birth of John the Baptist, the angel Gabriel said to Zacharias: “He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).

Gabriel was the first to identify that John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy in Malachi. John was to precede the Lord to do a special work of revival and reform. Jesus later confirmed this fact when He said, “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come” (Matthew 11:13, 14).

Malachi’s prophecy, however, did not end with John the Baptist because there is also a modern-day fulfillment. Notice that the prophecy says, “I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” The “great and dreadful day of the Lord,” which is also called “the great day of his wrath” in Revelation 6:17 is synonymous with the second coming. So this other fulfillment points us to a period just prior to the return of Jesus the second time.

**Spirit and Power of Elijah**

To better understand this prophecy, we need to look back at the time of Elijah. Here we discover that the first person filled with the “spirit and power of Elijah” was not John the Baptist, but rather Elisha, the servant of Elijah.

When God revealed that He was about to take Elijah to heaven, Elisha asked that he might receive a double portion of Elijah’s spirit. "Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he [Elijah] said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so" (2 Kings 2:9, 10).

As Elisha witnessed Elijah’s rapture, he was baptized with the double portion of Elijah’s spirit that he had requested. "When the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha" (2 Kings 2:15).

What will the Spirit and power of Elijah do? “He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:6). In a literal sense, real revival brings about a new expression of love to the family and then spreads from there into the community. The most basic unit of any society, government, or church is the family.

The outpouring of God’s Spirit will always result in love that leads to obedience to His commandments. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

This would, of course, include the commands that say: "Honor thy father and thy mother,” and “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Exodus 20:12; Colossians 3:21).

The Elijah message will bestow the power of love and blessing into the families who receive it, and a curse upon those who reject it (Malachi 4:6). “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:5, 6). The angel Gabriel rewords the prophecy a little: “And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:16, 17). So in a spiritual sense, the Elijah message will also work to unite disobedient earthly children with their heavenly Father.

**Twelve Characteristics of the Elijah Message**

Let’s look at the twelve outstanding characteristics of Elijah and John the Baptist that will also be present in the Elijah message of the last days. Amazing Facts has adopted these points as a prominent part of its aim and mission.
1. **They were bold and fearless in preaching, even before kings.**

   *Elijah*: Elijah told King Ahab, “I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim” (1 Kings 18:18).

   *John*: “John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife” (Mark 6:18).

Both John the Baptist and Elijah were fearless in preaching a straight message before rulers and governors. Jesus said that this would happen again in the last days. “Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them” (Mark 13:9). We must not seek to find our approval among men but rather with God. In order to effect a great revival, the Elijah message must be a bold proclamation of clear, uncompromising, and sometimes unpopular truth.

   For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (2 Timothy 4:3, 4)

2. **They had a simple diet and lifestyle.**

   *Elijah*: “Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand” (1 Kings 17:11).

   *John*: “He did eat locusts and wild honey” (Mark 1:6).

Both Elijah and John were known for their simplicity in diet and for wilderness living. These basic rigors kept their mental faculties clear and their bodies strong, so that they might be prepared for the special work God called them to do.

Likewise, the church in the last days must be revived to the truth so that a strong connection links the body and the spirit. What we eat and drink, as well as our personal living habits, have a direct effect on our mental clarity and ability to discern truth. The power to resist temptation can be traced in part to a simple diet and moderate lifestyle. Remember, sin came upon the human race as a result of eating the wrong thing.

   Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! (Ecclesiastes 10:17)

   Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

3. **They dressed in modest, simple clothing.**

   *Elijah*: “He was an hairy man [with a garment of hair], and girt with a girdle [belt] of leather about his loins [waist]” 2 Kings 1:8.

   *John*: “John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin [leather belt] about his loins [waist]” (Mark 1:6).

In the time when kings and priests loved to wear ornaments and long, flowing robes, Elijah and John’s modesty and simplicity were a stinging rebuke. We live in an age when there has never been more arrogant attention given to flamboyance and fashion. The main goal of modern clothing designers is to highlight a person’s sexuality. Sadly, everything from body piercing to tattoos is being indulged even among professed Christians. Once again, the church desperately needs last-day Elijahs to witness for Christ by their example of humility and simplicity through modest clothing and appearance.

   Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)

   In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness [propriety] and sobriety [moderation]; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array [clothing]. (1 Timothy 2:9)

4. **They believed in discipling others.**

   *Elijah*: “So he departed thence, and found Elisha . . . and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him” (1 Kings 19:19).

   *John*: “And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things” (Luke 7:18).
The Scriptures record that Elijah not only discipled Elisha, but he also visited the schools of the prophets (also translated "the disciples of the prophets"), which were in the land of Israel (2 Kings, chapter 2). These training centers combined spiritual instruction with practical work skills. The young men trained at the schools of the prophets traveled throughout Israel, teaching others the ways of God.

John, likewise, reproduced his faith by teaching the disciples who followed him. Both John and Elijah spent most of their time training the common people rather than the priests and the Levites. Similarly, the last great movement of God will not only be led by clergy alone, but also by Spirit-filled lay persons. This is why the Elijah message must give attention to training, discipling, and mobilizing every member of God’s church.

5. **They preached a baptism of repentance and death to self.**

   *Elijah:* “Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan” (2 Kings 2:6).

   *John:* “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matthew 3:5, 6).

One identifying mark of the Elijah message is that it calls people to the Jordan River—a symbol of repentance and baptism. The children of Israel had to cross the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land, just as we enter the waters of baptism to cross from our sinful lives to new lives in Jesus. The great commission of Jesus to the church will have its finest hour in the future when once again these modern Elijahs will baptize converts to Christ in explosive, Pentecostal numbers.

   Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2 Kings 5:14)

   Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19)

6. **They both manifested humility.**

   *Elijah:* “And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees” (1 Kings 18:42).

   *John:* “He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear” (Matthew 3:11).

Before Jesus comes again, the people of God will have learned to reflect the meek and humble character of Jesus in an age of arrogance and pride.

   He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:8)

7. **They both endured religious persecution.**

   *Elijah:* “Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them [who had been killed] by to morrow about this time” (1 Kings 19:2).

   *John:* “She went forth, and said unto her mother [Herodias], What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist” (Mark 6:24).

In the Old Testament, a pagan queen named Jezebel married Ahab, the king of Israel. Jezebel and her daughter, Athaliah, persecuted God’s people and tried to entice Ahab to kill Elijah and the other prophets. In the New Testament, Herodias, the pagan wife of king Herod, and her daughter Salome succeeded in enticing Herod to kill John the Baptist.

The persecution experienced by Elijah and John will soon be repeated. In the last days, Revelation tells us, the “Mother of harlots” and her daughters will persecute God’s remnant people, the last-day Elijahs.

   The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of
her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 12:17)

Upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Revelation 17:5, 6)

8. They both ran before the king.
   
   Elijah: "The hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel" (1 Kings 18:46).
   
   John: "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Luke 3:4).

   When a monarch traveled in Bible times, servants often ran ahead to prepare the path for the approaching king. They cleared the road of rocks and obstacles, filled in potholes, cut down high spots, and straightened the crooked turns. In the same way, those preaching the Elijah message in the last days will help prepare people for the coming of our King Jesus. They will proclaim a message that makes the way of salvation clear, plain, and easy to understand.

   And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. (Revelation 14:6)

9. They were both supremely interested in glorifying God.
   
   Elijah: "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again" (1 Kings 18:37).
   
   John: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

   Those preaching the Elijah message will make glorifying God their top priority. They will be wholly consecrated to God's cause, just as were John and Elijah. They will be willing to make any sacrifice in order that others might be saved—in other words, to spend and be spent in the work of God.

   I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1)

10. They repaired the altar of God.
    
    Elijah: "Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down" (1 Kings 18:30).
    
    John: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1, 2).

   The Elijah message will be a trumpet call to return to "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Today, when so many tell us that the teachings of the Bible are old-fashioned and need to be revised to better fit our times, we desperately need to be reminded that God said, "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6).

   They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. (Isaiah 58:12)

11. Their messages sparked revival and reformation.
    
    Elijah: "Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel," "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:19, 21).
    
    John: "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark 1:4, 5).
In the days of Elijah and John the Baptist, God’s people had been corrupted by the pagan influences around them and had compromised God’s truth (1 Kings 19:14; Matthew 3:1, 2). These two brave prophets delivered a message that sparked revival and reform among God’s people.

Today, once again, it seems that much of Christianity is lukewarm and worldly. If judgment is going to begin at God’s house (Ezekiel 9:6; 1 Peter 4:17), then certainly the revival must start there too! Since God’s plan is for His people to reach the entire world, He must first send the Elijah message to reach the church.

In the Old Testament, Elijah led the people to repent and return to God on Mount Carmel. Then he prayed, and God sent abundant rain to end the drought. Likewise, John the Baptist called upon the people of his day to repent and accept Jesus. Shortly thereafter, they received the former rain of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Modern Elijahs will also preach a message of repentance. Then, when the church humbles itself, the latter rain of God’s Spirit will fall.

12. The Elijah message will point people to Christ.

   Elijah: “Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God” (1 Kings 18:36).

   John: “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

The burning desire of modern Elijahs will be to turn people to Jesus that they might know Him and have everlasting life.

God’s Army

If the Lord deemed it important to send a special messenger to prepare Israel for Jesus’ first coming, how much more important is it for Him to send a special message and messengers to awaken the church for Jesus’ second coming, the very climax of redemption?

In the same way that the Lord empowered Elijah, Elisha, and John the Baptist to do a work of revival and preparation, God is today preparing an army of last-day Elijahs to do a great work of revival! Jesus invites every one of you in this great gathering of Adventist youth to be a part of delivering this great, end-time Elijah message: “To make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).

When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. — 6SDA Bible Commentary, pp. 1117, 1118
Awakening to a “Power Greater”

Jerry N. Page
President of Central California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

In attending a ministers’ meeting in Colorado, Bob and I were sharing a room that had two double beds. In the middle of the night I dreamed that my wife Janet was in the other bed. Still sleeping, I got up, walked to the other bed, and stood looking down at Bob.

Sensing my presence, he awoke, and at the same moment, so did I. With his sense of humor in full swing, he said with a smirk, “Jerry, I won’t tell a soul.”

To which I shot back with a laugh, “I’m going to tell all the pastors tomorrow at breakfast about my sleepwalking episode, so you don’t distort it!”

Looking back over life, I realize that I have often thought I was awake when really I was sound asleep! Janet and I also have discovered that when we start “spiritual sleepwalking,” our Lord provides spiritual awakenings for us along the journey. With Jesus’ return so near, we believe that one of the greatest awakenings our Lord has brought into our lives is also one of the most important needs of His last-day remnant movement.

It is true that the Lord is doing amazing things around the globe as God’s people cooperate with Him. My wife and I believe that the haunting reality is that, as we search our own hearts and talk with other leaders and members of this movement, we are only scratching the surface of what our God longs to do. How can we unleash His vision and power to turn our portion of the world—North America—upside down as in the days of Acts? For what is God waiting before He will pour out the great revival that ushers in His coming?

A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of all our needs. To seek this should be our first work. . . . it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer 1 (emphasis supplied).

Through prayer, the baptism and infilling of the Holy Spirit will lead to unleashing His power in these last days. As we study the Scriptures and the Spirit of Prophecy, we find that not only is more personal and private prayer needed, but united prayer is so much more needed. The focus of this article is on that specific need in the current remnant movement.

Call to United Prayer

Jesus promised, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:19-20, NKJV).

About this passage, Ellen White commented, “The promise is made on condition that the united prayers
of the church are offered, and in answer to these prayers there may be expected a power greater than that which comes from private prayer. The power given will be proportionate to the unity of the members and their love for God and for one another."\(^2\)

The role of individual prayer is essential for every believer. Following the model of Jesus, we need to spend much more time with our Father if we would see the same results as Jesus and other greats of Scripture.

Throughout the book of Acts and the New Testament, we read about the united prayer of the early church believers, and then we see amazing movings of God. Gathered in an upper room, the unity of 120 souls led to Pentecost (Acts 1:13-2:1). When Peter and John were threatened, the believers cried out together for boldness, and the place where they were was shaken. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke His word with boldness (Acts 4:24-37). After Herod killed James and was about to execute Peter, the believers gathered and prayed. An angel came, Peter’s chains fell off, jail doors swung open, and he went to the praying church in victory (Acts 12:3-19). These few examples exhibit their constant habit of seeking the Lord together in prayer to understand and seek His heart, will, and power to help. (See also Acts1:24; 2:42-47; 6:6; 13:1-3; 14:23; 16:13, 25; 20:36; 21:5.)

Janet and I believe one need our Lord has is for us to make a commitment to spend time together and call on His name. Let us share a few examples from our own experience.

**From $100,000 to $3,300,000**

It is in the order of God that those who bear responsibilities should often meet together to counsel with one another and pray earnestly for that wisdom which He alone can impart. **Unitedly make known your troubles to God.** Talk less: much precious time is lost in talk that brings no light. Let brethren **unite in fasting and prayer** for the wisdom that God has promised to supply liberally\(^3\) (emphasis supplied).

One of the amazing "waymarks" in our spiritual journey has been the miraculous growth of the annual camp meeting evangelism offering in the Central California Conference. This offering has grown from under $100,000 in 1996, to more than $3.3 million in the past two years.

People all over the world ask us, "What are you doing to raise that amount of money for evangelism in ten days?" We say, "It is a miracle of God because so many members pray together."

Often, the reply is, "No, really, what are you doing? Of course you pray, but what are the practical methods you are using to accomplish this?"

Yes, we work hard all year managing, reporting, planning. But the real story is God’s leading through His people who come together and pray, seeking His heart, His vision.

When Janet and I arrived at the Central California Conference in 1995, the Soquel campground was for sale and camp meeting was ending permanently. Since we and many other members were concerned about losing this life-changing ministry, and because we both love camp meeting, the decision was made to hold one more camp meeting.

We wanted camp meeting to be a deeply spiritual event bathed in prayer for the Lord’s presence and power. We called for members around the conference to pray and ask God to show us His will for the future. At camp meeting in 1996, Janet led a volunteer prayer team to pray with campers as they arrived and throughout the ten-day event. Amazing answers to united prayer happened. Camp meeting was so Spirit-filled that a commitment to return to the annual ten-day event was voted and a year-round prayer ministry began in earnest.

**Conference Office Prayer Meetings**

Our Savior follows His lessons of instruction with a promise that if two or three should be united in asking anything of God it should be given them. Christ here shows that there must be union with others, even in our desires for a given object. **Great importance is attached to the united prayer, the union of purpose.** God hears the prayers of individuals,
but on this occasion Jesus was giving special and important lessons that were to have a special bearing upon His newly organized church on the earth. There must be an agreement in the things which they desire and for which they pray. *It was not merely the thoughts and exercises of one mind, liable to deception; but the petition was to be the earnest desire of several minds centered on the same point* (emphasis supplied).

Janet invited volunteers to join her to pray at the conference office for three hours each week. We prayed for the needs of the conference in such areas as mission, personnel, finances, and local church needs. Requests were written and dated, as were the answers. This small, dedicated group began to experience God's power and to see specific answers. They began to learn so much about the Lord. Longing for all the members to realize the power of praying unitedly, they began to ask God to give them a "token" that would show what He could do when His people pray together. One by one, several prayer partners were impressed to pray for the evangelism offering.

When the prayer team met at camp meeting in 1997, they again asked God to give His people a token of what He wanted to do through united prayer. Surprised, but in one accord, they began to pray for the evangelism offering, agreeing that God somehow wanted to use this offering as a token of the power of united prayer. The campers were also asked to pray for the offering, asking God what He wanted each one to do. Hundreds, then thousands, joined in united prayer.

The evangelism goal that year was $100,000—the total was $138,000! Thus, the year-to-year, faith-and-trust journey began. The prayer team would ask God what He wanted for the evangelism offering. Agreeing together confirmed the offering God had in mind. The annual offering began to increase dramatically as each year passed. The prayer team led the way because together they listened to what God was planning to do. (See *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 147.) As these experiences were shared, many, many members began to ask God how He wanted them involved—and the offering increased even more substantially.

The prayer partners prayed for more than $500,000, and it happened! Next they prayed for $1,000,000, and after a couple of years, that happened as well! The Lord has so significantly blessed that the offering of the past two years has exceeded $3.3 million!

As a result of increased evangelism funding, our outreach ministries have expanded enormously. We've seen the following growth:

- increases in public meetings and baptisms,
- 60 lay-training Bible workers,
- student and adult literature evangelism exploding,
- two full-time youth-evangelism teams,
- secular-campus and young-adult ministries,
- children's outreach programming, and
- a myriad of other local church projects to reach new people groups and unreached geographical areas.

Many members have begun to believe that praying unitedly over families, evangelistic projects, schools, and churches does make a major difference in unleashing God's great power.

**God’s Prayer Priorities for Central California**

We must be much in prayer if we would make progress in the divine life. When the message of truth was first proclaimed, how much we prayed. How often was the voice of intercession heard in the chamber, in the barn, in the orchard, or the grove. *Frequently we spent hours in earnest prayer, two or three together claiming the promise; often the sound of weeping was heard and then the voice of thanksgiving and the song of praise. Now the day of God is nearer than when we first believed, and we should be more earnest, more zealous and fervent than in those early days. Our perils are greater now than then. Souls are more hardened. We need now to be imbued with the spirit of Christ, and we should not rest until we receive it* (emphasis supplied).

As a team of conference leaders and prayer team members, in the late 1990s, we believed we were led to involve the entire membership in united prayer. We agreed on eleven conference prayer requests as
God’s priorities for the conference. A Prayer Priorities bookmark was mailed to every home, and we asked members to include these eleven priorities in their individual prayer times. We had no idea how God would provide resources for His priorities for Central. Clearly, God opened the storehouses of heaven through the evangelism offering.

A few women of a Bay Area congregation were praying over the priorities listed on the conference Prayer Priorities bookmark. One day they began asking God what they could do for their spiritually languishing church. God led them to make a bookmark of prayer needs for their own church.

They gave it to the members, and many started praying. Their small weekly prayer group grew. Answers to the God-directed prayer priorities on the bookmark began to happen. Members started reading their Bibles and inspired writings. The men began leading out in both church ministries and outreach activities. Members began to burn with the desire to share Jesus with others. Evangelistic outreaches have now begun!

**Experiencing United Prayer**

One day a wife threw her essential belongings into her car, crying out to God to speak to her as she drove down the highway. Just then a billboard came into view that read, “Turn Back, Next Exit.” She did and called my wife Janet. She was sure her marriage was beyond repair. Janet offered to pray with her once a week for an hour. “We are only going to pray, praise God, and claim His promises,” Janet told her. “There will be no negative talking or bad-mouthing your husband, and you must begin spending personal time with the Lord each morning.” The woman agreed.

The result was miraculous! The wife fell in love with Jesus and was smiling and joyous. Her husband began paying attention to her and spending time with her. They fell in love again—just like when they had first met. Her husband told Janet, “If you’d never prayed with my wife, we’d never have made it.”

When Janet shared this experience in one California meeting, a woman stomped out. Later, she told Janet that she’d been praying for her husband for years to no avail. Janet asked if she’d been praying with two or more. She hadn’t. Janet gathered several women together each week to pray with this discouraged wife. Within two years her husband, a very rough, hard-living man, was converted and baptized. A male church member called him every morning to pray and befriend this new member. Several years later, he is still in the church and calls to pray with us for all of our ministry needs!

**Grassroots Experiences**

Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? 6

Through sharing how God is working through united prayer in small groups, modeling prayer ministries at camp meeting, and the Wednesday intercessory prayer times, united prayer in small groups and churches has grown dramatically.

After camp meeting one year, a man went home determined to be reconnected with Jesus. He’d attended a seminar on prayer and was desperate for God’s power in his personal life. He called an Adventist acquaintance, and those two men met on the phone at 5:00 a.m. every day to pray. They prayed for each other, their families, friends, pastors, churches, jobs, and the physically and spiritually sick. During the next 18 months, they witnessed amazing, miraculous answers. God manifested His presence to each of them, changing them from the inside out and turning their worlds upside down!

A local elder of a small, dying country church was dragged by his wife to a training seminar on united prayer. He was cynical and went begrudgingly. When he listened to a pastor describe how dramatically his church was changed when the elders began to meet regularly and pray, he got excited. He went home and joined his wife in calling his church to pray together. They turned their weekly prayer meeting into a gathering that really did pray.

They prayed over the empty desks in the small Adventist school whose survival depended on a growing enrollment. It wasn’t long before new students, unknown to the church members, began to enroll. The school grew from one teacher to two, and today it is financially sound. Next, they began to pray over the
empty church pews. The experience was the same. People began "walking in off the street," and the membership grew; it is still growing today.

The list of examples of "a power greater" being unleashed when we pray together could go on and on! But what we've learned is that when we do what Jesus and the inspired writings call us to do, we can expect powerful life-changing and church-changing results!

**Urgent Times**

Satan cannot endure to have his powerful rival appealed to, for he fears and trembles before His strength and majesty. At the sound of fervent prayer Satan’s whole host trembles.7

Are there dangers and counterfeits to be avoided by God's last-day people in individual and united prayer? Of course there are. When the Lord has a crucial truth that causes Satan and his host to tremble, the devil always seeks to pervert, distort, and undermine that truth by counterfeits.

The study and interpretation of the Bible, evangelistic outreaches to share this last message, church doctrines, policies, and worship have all been distorted through the generations, as has prayer. However, the truth is only validated by the attacks and counterfeits of Satan.

We must not ignore the "power greater" of praying together that can help unleash God's last great revival because of counterfeits of prayer or false revivals. We must test all our beliefs and actions by Scripture and the inspired writings.

God has a bigger mission than we could ever dream or imagine. We are so privileged to live in these closing days of the great controversy. We believe that this generation will experience the fullness of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, just like what we read about in Acts.

As Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20, KJV). The presence of Jesus always changes everything and brings a "power greater." Amen and Amen!

For more information, or to contact Jerry and Janet Page, go to ccc.adventist.org.

**NOTES**

3 Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers, (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1892), 236.
given them to offer praise and thanksgiving to God, in hurting or discouraging any of God’s children? Have they used the precious gift of God, the voice, to wound the soul of saint or sinner? If they have done this, let them put things right, let them remove the poisonous sting. These efforts to preserve Christian love and unity are essential to a preparedness to come before God in faith and confidence, to seek Him with all the heart.

—The Signs of the Times, 03-15-99
Be Out of Your Mind!

A Radical Concept to Change the World

Samuel Koranteng-Pipim
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Great minds discuss ideas;
Average minds discuss events;
Small minds discuss people.

—Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1884-1962),
32nd US President

Should we really be out of our minds? Yes—that’s what the Bible says! We must have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5), and, in order to have His mind, we must first be out of our minds. This radical concept holds the key to total surrender, true faith, victorious Christian living, and authentic biblical spirituality and lifestyle. It is also the secret to change the church—and the world.

The concept of being out of your mind is so deep that it merits an entire series of seminars at this year’s meeting of young people at GYC.a

But why should we focus on the mind? Why should we be out of our minds? And what are the indicators that we are truly out of our minds? You’ll find the answers during my seminar—one of the nineteen seminar tracks at this year’s GYC convention. However, in the spirit of goodwill that attends the Christmas season, I’ll summarize my answer in this article.

The Mind: The Measure of a Person

John D. Snider is the author of the classic volume I Love Booksb a work that is a must read for every serious person who strives for excellence. In one of the chapters, Snider begins with this insightful sentence:

“It is not how tall a man is or how much he weighs that counts in life, but how much he knows, what he can do, and how good a mind he has” (emphasis supplied).

I underscore the last phrase—“how good a mind he has.” To illustrate the point that the mind—not the stature—is the true measure of a person, Snider recounts a story from the life of Isaac Watts, a man of very little stature. Isaac Watts, you may know, was one of the three greatest hymn-writers in the English language. The other two were Charles Wesley and Fanny Crosby.

Judging from the sheer volume and quality of hymns Watts wrote, very few would have known that he was, indeed, a very little man. Even the Queen of England at that time, who had been desirous to meet this great man, didn't know of Watts’s little stature.

One day, when Watts was ushered into the presence of Queen Anne, the queen was so surprised to see such a little man that she exclaimed, “Is this the great little Doctor Watts!”

Now, from early childhood, Watts had been able to put into rhyme a good share of his everyday
conversation. So without embarrassment, he answered the queen:

"Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean with my span,
I must be measured by my soul:
The mind's the standard of the man."

Isaac Watts was right. The mind is the true measure of a person. No wonder the Bible makes so many references to the mind.

A quick search for the word "mind" in your Bible concordance will reveal many interesting facts and descriptions of mind. For example, we read about "readiness of mind," "humility of mind," "lowliness/humbleness of mind," "sameness/oneness of mind," and others. The Bible also describes a person as possessing either "doubtful mind," "right mind," "reprobate mind," "carnal/fleshly mind," "spiritual mind," "willing mind," "fervent mind," "renewed mind," "sound mind," etc.

The mind must be important to deserve mention so many times. Certainly, in the estimation of God, the mind is the true measure of a man.

Since Jesus Christ is arguably the greatest man who ever lived, it should come as no surprise that the Bible talks about the "mind of Christ" or the "mind of the Lord."

The apostle Paul asked, "Who has known the mind of the Lord? or who has been His counselor?" (Romans 11:34, NIV, emphasis supplied). The same question is repeated in 1 Corinthians 2:16, where Paul referred to "the mind of the Lord" as "the mind of Christ": "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (NIV, emphasis supplied).

If we want to know the true measure of Christ, we must know something about His mind. To find out what exactly is this "mind of the Lord"—this "mind of Christ"—we must study Philippians 2:5-8. It is, perhaps, the most profound passage in all Scripture. It is also the most daring.

The Mind of Christ

Philippians 2:5-8 gives us the most beautiful picture in all Scripture of who Jesus really was. It describes His "mind" and, hence, gives us a measure of His greatness. The passage reads:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

There are a couple of points we need to highlight in this passage:

1. **We are to have the "mind of Christ."** When the Bible says "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," it is unquestionably one of the most daring statements in the whole history of the daring of man's mind. We—human beings—are to have the mind of Christ. We are to think as Christ thinks! We human beings are to think like God!

   But is this really possible? Can we actually have the mind of Christ? Yes we can! God will not ask us to do what is impossible. Moreover, the apostle Paul said elsewhere, "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16), suggesting that others have been able to have this kind of mind.

2. **We are to be "out of our own minds."** This point may not be obvious at first. But in order to have the mind of Christ—in order to have the mind of Christ in us—we must first be out of our minds. This assertion may sound too radical or even outrageous.

   Think a little carefully about the question: Why would someone say you are out of your mind? I can think of at least four major reasons:

   1. You are indeed crazy! That is, the wires of your mind have gone wacky. You've lost your mind or your mind is out of control, either because of the influence of some chemicals,
drugs, demons, even a delusional relationship, or some unexplainable reason. Either way, you are out of your mind!
2. You’ve done something out of character. You are by nature not expected to do certain things, and you just did one of them. So, you’re out of your mind.
3. You’ve done something out of line with society. A person who is counter-cultural is considered out of his mind.
4. Or all of the above!

So, what does the Bible mean when it says we should be “out of our minds” by having the mind of Christ in us? It simply means we should think or do things in a manner that is out of sync with our own nature or societal tendencies in such a manner that an average person might think we are crazy.

3. **We are to have a different “mindset.”** When the Bible invites us to have the mind of Christ—to be out of our own mind—it simply means we are to think the way Christ did. We are to have the same mindset as Jesus. (Dictionaries define mindset as “a set of beliefs or a way of thinking that determines somebody’s behavior and outlook.”)

In the original language of the New Testament, there are two major word groups that are often translated “mind.” Though the two words essentially mean the same things, there is a slight difference between them.

The first word for “mind” is nous (from which we get our English word “noetic”). Generally speaking, nous denotes the “seat of reflective consciousness.” It has to do with the faculties of perception (knowing) and the seat of understanding, feeling, judging, and determining. Nous refers to the whole mental apparatus.

But Nous is not the word Paul used in Philippians 2. Instead, the apostle chose a different word for “mind.” He chose cognates of the Greek word phronema, a word that denotes what one has in the mind; it has to do with the thought (the content of the process expressed in phroneo). It means to think, to be minded in a certain way, or to bear in mind. It implies moral interest or reflection, not mere unreasoning opinion.

In short, when Paul said, “Let this mind be in you,” he basically said, “Think this way; have a certain mindset.” Specifically, think as Christ thought. We are to consider ideas and make judgments, or to “exercise the mind” just as our Lord did. We are to have the same mindset or outlook as Jesus had.

The question we’re going to answer is: What kind of mindset is the “mind of Christ”? As we shall discover in the next section, this “mindset” of Christ is so counter-cultural and counter our self-interests that people may think we’re crazy.

4. **We are to have a mind transplant.** To be “out of our minds” in order to have the mind of Christ implies something is wrong with our current mindset, and this malady requires that we undergo a surgical operation—a mind transplant!

The problem with our mind is the same as the Philippians’ problem: they were not living in “one accord” (Philippians 2:2); they were doing things “through selfish ambition or conceit” (v. 3), and each was looking out “for his own interests” instead of “for the interests of others” (v. 4). This mindset needed to be replaced by Christ’s mindset (v. 5).

Notice also that the passage says in verse 5, “let this mind be in you,” meaning allow someone to do it for you. The mind-replacement surgery must be done by someone. No surgeon can perform surgery on their own brains. Someone must do it for them. So in the Bible, the whole concept of mind-transplant—the Bible calls it the “renewing of the mind”—is an operation carried out by the Holy Spirit. (See Romans 12:2; Titus 3:3-5.) The Spirit renews the mind. It is first and decisively His work. We are radically dependent on Him, for we cannot fix our “mind” problem on our own.
Our New Mind: The Mindset of Christ

When Paul encouraged the Philippian Christians to be "out of their minds" and "into Christ's mind," the implication was that something was wrong with their minds, and that the cure to this mind-problem was the mindset of our Lord Jesus Christ—His attitude of mind, His way of thinking, or His outlook on life.

What exactly is the nature of this new mindset?

The answer can be found by studying the Philippians 2 passage. But first, notice how often the word "mind" appears in the first five verses. In verse 2, we are to be "likeminded," and again we are to be "of one mind." In verse 3, our actions are to be carried out "in lowliness of mind." And in verse 5, we are to possess the "mind" which was in Christ Jesus.

The passage under consideration offers the most beautiful picture in all Scripture of who Christ really was and the mindset that characterized His life. Let's explore "the measure" of Christ a little more:

1. The Identity of Christ: Fully God and Fully Man. To understand the mind of Christ, we must first know the identity of Christ. Before He appeared in this world, Jesus was 100 percent God. He was fully God. The apostle Paul used two Greek words in Philippians 2:6 to emphasize the fact that Jesus was fully God:

   "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

First, the word rendered "being" (huparchon) means innate, essence, or "being originally." It describes the unchangeable characteristic of a person or essence of a thing or person. "Being" denotes that which is from the beginning—that is, a prior existence. In reference to Christ, the word "being" refers to the pre-incarnate deity of Christ which continued, even when He became a human being.

Second, Paul used the word "form" (morphe) twice in this passage—in verse 6, "form of God;" and verse 7, "form of a servant." Whereas, in our common English usage, the word "form" seems to suggest the idea of shape, which is not the sense in which the word is used in Philippians 2. Instead, the word is used in its philosophic sense to express an essential attribute—that which is by nature the essence of a thing. It describes the unchangeable character of a thing.

In the context of Christ's incarnation, the words "being" (huparchon) and "form" (morphe) express the fact that Christ was 100 percent God and, when He assumed the role of a servant, He was also 100 percent human.

Thus, when Paul said that Christ Jesus, being first in the form of God, took the form of a servant, it means that though Christ possessed originally the essential attributes of God, He assumed, in addition, the essential attributes of humanity. He was truly God, and He became truly human. Though He was divine by nature, He became human. Paul, therefore, affirmed that before He became human, Christ possessed the fullness of God; He was fully divine. This is also what the apostle John taught in John 1:1-14 concerning the preexistent Word.

How did Christ as fully God and fully Man live His life when He came to this earth? The answer to this question reveals the true "mind of Christ."

2. The Mindset of Christ: He "Emptied Himself." The second step to understanding the "mind of Christ" is clearly grasping the meaning of His self-emptying act when He became human.

Philippians 2:7 says, "He made himself of no reputation," or "He emptied Himself" (RSV). This profound act of Christ has given rise to all kinds of questions, including questions about His full divinity. Could it be, it is often asked, that He was in some way less than God?

The Greek word is the verb kenōn (from which we get the noun kenosis). The word seems to suggest that Christ at His incarnation "emptied Himself" (RSV) of something. Other English translations render it He "made himself of no reputation" (KJV), "stripped Himself of all privilege" (Phillips) "made himself nothing" (NIV), or "laid aside his mighty power and glory" (LB).
What exactly do these expressions mean? When Christ "emptied Himself," or "laid aside His mighty power and glory," did He have less power on earth than when He was in heaven? Did He empty Himself of some or all of His divine attributes?

Based on this word keno, and the fact that in certain passages of Scripture, Christ is said not to be able to know or do certain things on His own (e.g., Matthew 24:36; John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:28, 29), some have mistakenly concluded that at the time our Lord became human, He "emptied Himself of" or renounced certain elements of His divine abilities, such as His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, retaining only the "moral" ones (justice, holiness, truthfulness, love). This view is technically known as the kenotic theory or the kenotic Christology, after the Greek work kenõo or kenosis (translated, "emptying Himself" in RSV and NJB).

But the kenotic notion that Christ at His incarnation "emptied Himself" of His "omni-" attributes is not biblical, for it makes Jesus partly God—not God Himself (see endnote). However, the evidence from Scripture is that Christ was NOT devoid of divine knowledge, power, or movement, but rather that He exercised these abilities intermittently although most of the time He chose not to do so.

That is, the deity of Christ was not relinquished nor reduced at His incarnation, or as Ellen G. White wrote, "Divinity was not degraded to humanity." Though retaining all His divine abilities, Christ voluntarily restrained the exercise of these divine capacities, choosing to do so only when the Father permitted Him.

3. The Costly Choice of Christ: Total Surrender. The mind (mindset) of Christ is revealed in the costly choice of total surrender when He became a human being. It is here that we find the true biblical meaning of Christ’s "emptying Himself" (kenosis).

The Greek word translated in the King James Version (KJV) as “made Himself of no reputation” (KJV) or “emptied Himself” (RSV) is the word kenõo. It means “to make null and void,” “to make of no effect,” “to empty of power.” Thus used, the verb kenõo is a very strong word to express the entireness of Christ’s self-renunciation. It denotes total surrender of Himself as God when He took the "form" [nature] of man at His incarnation.

When Paul said Jesus "emptied Himself" (RSV) or "made Himself of no reputation" (KJV), the apostle simply said that although Christ possessed the full capabilities as God, at His incarnation our Lord totally surrendered His right to independently exercise these abilities unless permitted by the Father.

Stated differently, the expression, "emptying Himself" simply means a voluntary restraint of His power in submission to the Father’s will. Christ did not shed any aspect of His deity when He took upon Himself human flesh. He was 100 percent God, for "in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). As such, He possessed all the omni-attributes as God.

Therefore, the "emptying of Himself," the real kenosis, must be understood not as a reduction of Christ’s deity at His incarnation but rather as a laying aside of the glory, majesty, and power that He had before the world was created (John 17:5) by a voluntary restraint of divine power. He surrendered His right to independently exercise His divine powers by submitting to God’s will. The New Living Translation correctly captures this idea when it states, "Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God” (Philippians 2:6).

Christ had with Him at all times His divine power, knowledge, ability to move instantaneously, etc. He could have used them if he wished, but He chose not to independently use them without the Father’s permission. He totally surrendered to the Father’s will.

Illustration 1: Let me illustrate this fact with two sons who go to their father with a request:

First Son: “Daddy, can you give me $50 to use?”

Second Son: “Daddy, can I use my own $50 that I have in my pocket?”
Both sons rely on the father. They both seek to submit to their father, but there is a difference in the nature of their dependence upon the father. The first kind of dependence illustrates the reliance all human beings are expected to place upon God. We don't have the ability, wisdom, power, or resources to go it alone in life. We need the Father's help.

In contrast, the second type of reliance illustrates Christ's dependence on God. Though He had all the resources, He consciously chose to depend upon His Father for the exercise of them. He surrendered His rights! Though fully God, He lived a life as totally dependent on the Father as any other human being should live. He lived as though He had no $50.

It may be asked: Since He didn't independently use the $50 without His Father's permission, why didn't He just store it in heaven before coming here? The answer is: If He had done so at His incarnation—if He had renounced His "omni" attributes—He would have ceased to be fully God. So, He kept the $50 with Him (remained fully God), but He chose not to use it (as fully Man). Christ's conscious choice not to depend on Himself—though He was capable of doing so—but fully upon the Father is the true meaning of the self-emptying act of Christ.

All human beings—including prophets—depend on God for their knowledge of certain things and for power to do certain feats or miracles. But Jesus had these abilities in Himself even while on earth. He could exercise them on His own accord, but He voluntarily chose not to do so—unless the Father gave Him permission.

We can account for the voluntary restraint of Christ by the fact that when He became human, Jesus consciously chose to be totally submitted to His Father's will. He was not independent of the Father. He was wholly dependent on the Father's direction in everything that He thought and did. He Himself said:

- "The Son can do nothing of himself"; "I can of my own self do nothing" (John 5:19, 30).
- "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).
- "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. . . . for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:28, 29).
- In the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed: "Not my will, but your will be done" (Matthew 26:53ff).

He consciously chose not to exercise His divine power to relieve His pain—unless the Father permitted it (Luke 22:43, 44).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only human who totally and completely submitted Himself to the will of God. The apostle Paul recorded the words of Christ: "I came to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). He who was the Lawgiver had to learn obedience. He who instructed the Bible writers had to learn from human instructors. He who possessed all power chose not to exercise it. Ponder over the following insightful statements:

- He who had been the commander of heaven was a willing servant, a loving, obedient son. He learned a trade, and with His own hands worked in the carpenter's shop with Joseph.

- The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee (emphasis supplied).

The omnipotent God was now a dependent child. The Lawgiver at Sinai learned the painful lessons of obedience: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:7-8, emphasis supplied).

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- He [Christ] did not employ His divine power to lessen His burdens or lighten His toil. He had taken upon Himself the form of humanity with all its attendant ills, and He flinched not from its severest trials (emphasis supplied).1

- "He might have helped His human nature to withstand the inroads of disease by pouring
from His divine nature vitality and undecaying vigor to the human. But He humbled Himself to man’s nature. . . . What humility was this! It amazed angels. The tongue can never describe it; the imagination cannot take it in. The eternal Word consented to be made flesh! God became man! It was a wonderful humility” (emphasis supplied).²

Christ’s reliance was so complete that He became, as it were, a slave of the Father.¹ The dictionary defines a slave as “a person who is wholly subject to the will of another; one who has no will of his own, but whose person and services are wholly under the control of another.” As a true servant, Jesus totally surrendered everything to God—His will, His power, knowledge, movement—everything. It was a total self-renunciation.

Christ, therefore, spoke the truth when He said no one, including Himself, knew the day of His coming (Matthew 24:36)—He consciously chose not to know anything unless His Father revealed it to Him. Whatever Jesus did, He did solely in reliance on the Father. This is the same kind of dependence expected of all human beings. The only major difference between Christ and us is that He had the capacity to know and to do; we don’t.

In the total submission of Christ to the Father, we understand the intensity of His trials and temptations and His incredible humility.

**Tempted Like No Other**

This idea (mindset) of Christ to voluntarily restrain Himself from exercising His own independent thoughts, actions, and movements apart from the Father was the greatest trial that He faced. Indeed, inasmuch as Jesus always retained His attributes as God, His decision to totally rely on the Father made His temptations far greater than any we human beings would ever face. Let me explain.

Some have suggested that, perhaps, Jesus had an advantage over us in that He did not face our specific temptations—say on watching TV, marriage, child raising, etc.—or that as God, He had inherent power to overcome His temptations, which we human beings don’t have. These suggestions, however, fail to understand the nature of temptation and the full meaning of Christ’s “self-emptying” act.

While one person’s specific temptation may be different from another’s, there is one thing common to them all. It is this: every temptation demands people to make a decision whether or not to act independently of God, by relying on themselves rather than on God.

Temptation is an attempt to entice us to live independently of God. It is in this respect that Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). Whereas, Jesus was also tempted to act independently of the Father, there is a major difference between His temptations and ours. Unlike every other human being, Jesus, as fully God, possessed all the resources and abilities that could make Him act independently—that is, without His relying on His Father. He had His own $50 in His pocket (using the illustration of the two sons).

For example, when Satan tempted him saying, “If you are the Son of God, turn these stones into bread,” the root of the temptation was to cause Christ to use His own resources independently of the Father. He was no doubt the “Son of God” (or God the Son, as classical theology is in the habit of saying it). He was fully divine. He had not relinquished any of His “omni-” abilities. He was, therefore, capable of actually turning stones into bread. He could have fulfilled His needs by an act of His own will. However, Jesus refused to do so because He submitted fully to the will of God.

Perhaps another illustration will clarify this point.

**Illustration 2:** Two drivers proceed along a highway that has a speed limit of 75 mph. One of them is driving a Yugo or Kia with a maximum speed of, say, 60 mph. The other has a Mercedes or Volvo whose maximum speed is, say, 150 mph. Of these two drivers, which has the greater temptation to drive at or above the 75 mph speed limit?

It is obvious that the one driving the Mercedes or Volvo has a greater temptation than the Yugo or Kia driver. Unlike the latter, the Mercedes driver has the ability to drive at or even exceed the speed limit. Such was the nature of Christ’s temptation when He voluntarily chose to restrain the exercise of His
The thrust of all Satan’s temptations was to cause Christ to independently use His divine powers without God’s permission. The most painful experience Christ faced was the provocation He faced daily to act independently of the Father.

Satan thought that by his temptations he could delude the world’s Redeemer to make one bold move in manifesting His divine power.¹

Christ was put to the closest test, requiring the strength of all His faculties to resist the inclination when in danger, to use His power to deliver Himself from peril, and triumph over the power of the prince of darkness. Satan showed his knowledge of the weak points of the human heart, and put forth his utmost power to take advantage of the weakness of the humanity which Christ had assumed in order to overcome his temptations on man’s account.²

Christ was not just acquainted with power, He was “familiar with absolute power.” It was His by nature. By this power, He commanded the world into existence, and by it He continues to sustain the universe. He had it with Him all the while He was on earth. Yet, He chose not to exercise it without God’s permission.

Think of how painful the temptation was as He was daily tempted to rely on His own wisdom and power.

- Peter rebuked Him—a fallible human being rebuking God!
- Satan asked Him to turn stones to bread.
- People shouted, “He saved others, but can’t save Himself”—when He could actually have done so.
- Herod said, “Don’t you know I have power to set you free and to take your life?” Who had the real power?
- People spat on Him, hit Him, nailed Him to a cross. All these, while angels were waiting for His command to act. On one occasion, He said, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53).

—He Himself could have just pressed His divine button and done whatever He wanted, but He said, “No.”

Reflect on these insightful thoughts:

Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation. Then He could not have been placed in Adam’s position; He could not have gained the victory that Adam failed to gain. If we have in any sense a more trying conflict than had Christ, then He would not be able to succor us. But our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation. We have nothing to bear which He has not endured (emphasis supplied).³

The temptations to which Christ was subjected were a terrible reality. . . . If this were not so, if it had not been possible for Him to fall, He could not have been tempted in all points as the human family is tempted. . . . The temptations of Christ, and His sufferings under them, were proportionate to His exalted, sinless character. . . . Upon the cross Christ knew, as no other can know, the awful power of Satan’s temptations” (emphasis supplied).⁴

Christ alone had experience in all the sorrows and temptations that befall human beings. Never another of woman born was so fiercely beset by temptation; never another bore so heavy a burden of the world’s sin and pain. Never was there another whose sympathies were so broad or so tender. A sharer in all the experiences of humanity, He could feel not only for, but with, every burdened and tempted and struggling one (emphasis supplied).⁵

Christ’s self-emptying act made His temptations far greater than any human being’s. He did not have advantage over us. He relied on the Father for His victory—the same way we also can rely on God for victory over temptation.

The point is that Jesus voluntarily restrained His power, preferring rather to submit his divine abilities totally to the direction of His Father. Just as Jesus did not do all that He could have done, because of His voluntary submission to His Father’s will (see Matthew 26:53ff.), so did He not consciously know all that
He might have known, but only what the Father willed Him to know.

Christ’s total submission to the Father’s will and His voluntary act of self-restraint in the exercise of His power was not simply the greatest trial He faced but the highest expression of humility, for humility is the act of complete self-denial. He essentially adopted the attitude of a SLAVE, and endured its attending humiliation, even to the point of an ignominious death.

**Humility: What It Means to Be Out of Our Minds**

He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:7, 8)

What the apostle Paul is saying is that when Christ condescended to becoming a human being, He surrendered His right to exercise His powers as God, was humiliated as a slave, and was finally murdered in a shameful death.

Observe that Christ’s unreserved obedience to the will of the Father, including the death on the cross, was entirely a voluntary act. He Himself declared, “I lay down my life. . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself” (John 10:17, 18). It was He who emptied Himself; He took the form of a man; He humbled Himself. This voluntary submission of Christ to death is the highest expression of humility.

The following are characteristics of true humility. They are also the indicators that we are truly out of our minds.

1. **Humility is total surrender.** In the humility of Christ, we discover the true meaning of the word surrender. Surrender is giving up what we consider most valuable—our ideas, our rights, our independence, our selves. Humility is a choice we make; it is a mindset we adopt.

2. **Humility is total surrender of self.** Humility is denying self. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not just give up His glories and riches and the adoration He enjoyed above; He consciously chose to give up Himself—His godly Self. When Christ chose to not independently exercise his prerogatives as God, He was in effect denying His divine Self. For a God who does not exercise His divine powers unless He daily obtains permission from a Source above Him, He has essentially renounced the essence of His own “Godness.” Herein lies the true meaning of self-denial or dying to self.

   According to Ellen G. White, Christ’s surrender was so complete that there was “no fiber” of self or selfishness in Him. We are to emulate His example. She wrote:
   
   “All sin is selfishness.”
   “Let selfishness be rooted out of the heart. In the life of Christ there was no fiber of selfishness” (emphasis supplied).
   “No selfishness is of Christ. Selfishness lies at the foundation of all sin.”

3. **Humility is total dependence upon God.** Humility is not simply the total surrender of self. It is the giving up of self by choosing to depend upon God. In the humility of Christ, we learn that true humility means relying wholeheartedly upon God in everything we do, think, say, or even are. It is allowing God to control one’s life completely.

   It is a great irony that Jesus, who had power within Him that He could have used, relied constantly upon a Source from above Him. And yet we, who have nothing within us, tend to depend upon what we don’t have. Jesus, as fully God, lived as a man through dependence upon God. And yet we, who are human, try to live as God through our lives of independence from God.

4. **Humility is the total surrender of our rights.** In our culture of rights, one of the most difficult things to surrender is our rights—our prerogatives, our legal claims or entitlements, or the things that are due us by law, tradition, or nature. The New Living Translation correctly captures Christ’s spirit of humility when it states: “Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God” (Philippians 2:6).
Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently.

5. **Humility is surrendering our right to be in charge.** True humility is willingness to serve others, founded upon the willingness to lean totally upon God. When Christ surrendered His rights as God, He simultaneously did something else. Philippians 2:7 tells us that “He emptied Himself and took the form of a servant.”

Humility is being a servant, a slave. In our self-serving culture, greatness is defined by how many people serve you, but in the humility of Christ, we discover that true greatness is measured by how many people we serve. As Ellen White put it: “The only greatness is the greatness of humility. The only distinction is found in devotion to the service of others.”

6. **Humility is total and voluntary obedience.** Christ’s obedience was voluntary, humiliating, persevering, and total. “The Son of God was surrendered to the Father’s will, and dependent upon His power. So utterly was Christ emptied of self that He made no plans for Himself. He accepted God’s plans for Him, and day by day the Father unfolded His plans. So should we depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple outworking of His will.”

7. **Humility is an expression of faith.** Christ’s life of total, voluntary obedience to God is also an expression of faith. For faith trusts God, even though it cannot always explain where God is leading, why He permits certain things to happen, when He will intervene, and how He will move things forward. This kind of faith is evidence of a fully surrendered life; it is the foundation of humility.

8. **Humility is dying to self.** True humility is the crucifixion of self, a willingness to die to our self-importance, self-sufficiency, and all other forms of self-confidence. Because self is dead, a truly humble person sees himself as nothing so that Christ can be everything. Self is not easily wounded when its claims are not recognized, nor easily hurt by unkind words and jeopardized ambitions.

9. **Humility is a way of life.** In Christ’s self-emptying act during His incarnation, we find the true meaning of “the spirit of Christ,” which Christians claim to remember whenever they celebrate Christmas. Today, when we speak of the “Christmas spirit,” it is nothing more than frivolity or some sentimental jollity that we pack into one day, supposedly to remember Christ’s birth. But the “Christmas spirit” ought to mean the reproducing in human lives of the temper of Him who for our sakes became poor, beginning on the night He was born in Bethlehem’s manger. And that spirit of Christ’s self-denial ought to be the mark of every Christian all the year round.

10. **Humility puts our pride to shame.** Christ’s humility rebukes all forms of our pride. “When we see Jesus, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, working to save the lost, slighted, scorned, derided, driven from city to city till His mission was accomplished; when we behold Him in Gethsemane, sweating great drops of blood, and on the cross dying in agony, when we see this, self will no longer clamor to be recognized. Looking unto Jesus, we shall be ashamed of our coldness, our lethargy, our self-seeking. We shall be willing to be anything or nothing, so that we may do heart service for the Master. We shall rejoice to bear the cross after Jesus, to endure trial, shame, or persecution for His dear sake.”

He who beholds Christ in His self-denial, His lowliness of heart, will be constrained to say, as did Daniel, when he beheld One like the sons of men, ‘My comeliness was turned in me into corruption.’ Daniel 10:8. The independence and self-supremacy in which we glory are seen in their true vileness as tokens of servitude to Satan. Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest; but he who learns of Christ is emptied of self, of pride, of love of supremacy, and there is silence in the soul. Self is yielded to the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Then we are not anxious to have the highest place. We have no ambition to crowd and elbow ourselves into notice; but we feel that our highest place is at the feet of our Saviour. We look to Jesus, waiting for His hand to lead, listening for His voice to
**Conclusion**

Such is the measure of the greatness of Christ. Such is His mindset—totally selfless, even to the point of death! This is the mind we are to possess—an outlook of humility that is so counter-self and counter-cultural that when we live that way, an average person will think we are crazy or out of our minds!

The truth, however, is that we are not average people. We are super-average, for the Holy Spirit has done a supernatural mind-transplant in us, a mind operation that elevates us from the realm of mediocre thinking and lifestyle.

So when the average person asks us, "Are you out of your mind?" We must boldly answer, "Yes!" for we are "out of our selfish minds" and have "Christ's selfless mind." Such a radical concept is that which alone can change the world—even as Christ, by the sheer force of His life and teachings, changed the world.

Let’s be out of our minds so we can change our church—and our world!

**NOTES**

a GYC, the Generation of Youth for Christ (formerly General Youth Conference), is a grassroots young people's movement in North America that is radically Bible-based, church-supporting, and mission-driven. This year's (2008) GYC convention is in San Jose, California, where more than 5,000 youth are expected to attend. The philosophy of GYC is spreading across the globe, as an increasing number of young people are rising up to make a difference in their church and in their world. For more on this movement, check it out at: [www.gycweb.org](http://www.gycweb.org). As mentioned in the GYC program, this seminar is not for those who are settling for mediocrity. Rather, it is only for only those who want to be Adventisque—that is, radically biblical, intelligent, classy, and gutsy Adventists. Such young people are the ones who can change the world.


c Let's summarize: (a) Mind (*nous*) denotes the faculties of perception (knowing) and seat of understanding—Luke 24:45; Romans 1:28; 14:5; 1 Corinthians 14:15, 19; Ephesians 4:17; Philippians 4:7; Colossians 2:18; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:8; Titus1:15; Revelation 13:18; 17:9; (b) Mind denotes counsels and purpose—Romans 11:34 (of the mind of God = counsels and purpose of God)—Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2:16; Ephesians 4:23, 2 Thessalonians 2:2 [mind = the determination to be steadfast amidst afflictions]; (c) Mind denotes the new nature, which belongs to the believer by reason of the new birth Romans 7:23-25—where it is contrasted with "the flesh"—the principle of evil which dominates the man. (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of NT Words*).

d Cognates of this second Greek word *phroneo* are used frequently in Paul's epistle to the Philippians. For example: Philippians 1:7 = "to think this" (KJV) or "to be (thus) minded" (RSV); Philippians 2:2a = "being likeminded" (KJV) or "to be of (the same) mind (RSV), and 2:2b "being of one mind"; literally translated as: "minding (the one thing)"; Philippians 2:3 = "humility of mind"; Philippians 2:5 = "let this mind be"; lit. "mind this"; Philippians 3:15 = "have this mind"; Philippians 3:19 = "set (their) mind on"; Philippians 4:2 = "be of the same mind."

e The view that Christ shed some aspects of His deity (the so-called *kenotic theory*) cannot be sustained biblically. (1) If the kenosis (the "self-emptying" act of Christ) meant that at His incarnation Jesus totally or partially abandoned or abdicated Himself of His divine attributes or prerogatives, then at best, He was partly God. As partly God, He couldn't fulfill His mission of fully revealing the Father (cf. John 1:14, 18). (2) The Bible negates this kenotic notion when it teaches that "in Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). He was completely God. It was "God who became flesh," nothing less. (3) The Bible teaches that God cannot change: "I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6; cf. Hebrews 13:8). If accepted, the kenotic theory would also seriously undermine the doctrine of the Trinity; for at one point in time, one of the members of the Godhead ceased to be God. (4) While the New Testament sometimes gives the impression that Jesus' knowledge of things both human and divine was sometimes limited (cf. Matthew 24:36; John 5:19; 8:28-29), the New Testament is clear and emphatic that even in His humanity, Christ sometimes displayed qualities that only deity can possess (e.g, forgives sin, accepts worship, reads human thoughts, and secret purposes, etc.). Christ remained
fully God, even as He was fully Man. He didn’t lose any of His “omni” attributes.


[g] Note that Paul uses this word four times in His writings to suggest that the faith, the cross, or his boasting can be “emptied” (Romans 4:14; 1 Corinthians 1:17; 9:15; 2 Corinthians 9:3).


[l] Christ thus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy about Him as a the "servant of the Lord" (see for example, Isaiah 52:13-53:12). His example calls upon us to surrender our ease, rank, reputation, and even our life for the good of others.


[u] Desire of Ages, 89.

[v] Ibid., 650.

[w] Ibid., 208.

[x] Ibid., 439-440.

[y] Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1896), 15.

When we bring our lives to complete obedience to the law of God, regarding God as our supreme Guide, the clinging to Christ as our hope of righteousness, God will work in our behalf. This is a righteousness of faith, a righteousness hidden in a mystery of which the worldling knows nothing, and which he cannot understand.

—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 66; 7MR, p. 357