

# Youth messenger

Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1



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## Choose the Best



Hello Youth,

This year is passing quickly. Let us ask ourselves, “What kind of year will 2019 be for me personally? What kind of fruit will I show in my life? What will my influence upon others? Will I bring someone to Christ this year? Paul counsels us, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves?” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

The eyes of the world are upon us. Are we living epistles [letters] of Christ known and read of all men? Do we follow the example of Jesus in self-denial, in meekness, in humility, in forbearance [self-control], in cross-bearing, in devotion? Will the world be compelled to acknowledge us to be the servants of Christ?”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 15.

We live in a critical time of this world’s history. In 2018, natural disasters have occurred at an increasing rate around the world. Every few weeks, we’ve witnessed either earthquakes, cyclones, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, floods or wildfires in different parts of our globe. In the past few months we’ve seen wildfires burning thousands of acres, in Southern and Northern California. Violence and mass shootings have increased with alarming rates. There were 307 mass shootings in the U.S. in 2018 (*USA Today*, Nov. 8, 2018).

In the wake of the disasters and violence, individuals are grieving the losses of loved ones and their destroyed property. People are fearful as they ask, “Why are natural disasters happening with such rapidity? Why is violence increasing in our country? What can I do to protect my family?”

Do we have solid answers for them? Yes, we do! Can we give them hope? With God’s help, we can. Are we pointing people to the fast fulfillment of prophecy and the soon coming of our Lord? But most importantly are we reflecting the lovely character of Jesus to them? We can’t do this in our own strength, but if Jesus lives in our heart, our life will show it.

In this issue of the *Youth Messenger*, you will discover ways to bring hope to a broken world and how to “Choose What’s Best in Life.” As you read an eyewitness account of a nurse who survived the Campfire in Paradise, California, you will get a glimpse of the vision of what you should be doing with your life right now. Also, you’ll discover why God allows pain and how to receive healing. Lastly, find out from an insect how you can share the gospel.

We have not time to lose, dear youth. Let us lift up Jesus. Let us lift Him up in our **conversations**, in our **phone calls**, in our **text messages** and on **social media**. Let’s lift Him up in our Bible studies, in our songs and prayers. Let all our energy be directed to pointing lost, confused and bewildered people to “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29) and to His soon return!

—Liliane Balbach



# *Narrow Escape From Paradise*

JAEWON CHA

**W**here do I even start? It's November 8, 2018. My alarm rings at 5:30 a.m. I'm so tired, I consider going back to sleep, but tell myself "no." So I get up, wash my face, and brush my teeth so I can wake up and spend time with God. I study something along the lines of how we are spending our time daily and that time is short. I am glad I woke up and studied. Next, I get ready for work and get to the hospital by 6:47 a.m. where I work as a registered nurse.

I manage to get reports on my patients and start my day when Sarah, the supervisor comes to the unit and tells the staff, "There is a fire but don't panic." I continue doing my morning routine and go to get medications for my patients when the charge nurse comes in and says, "There is a fire and we might have to evacuate, but continue working and listen for further orders." So, I focus on assessing my patients, giving them meds, and charting before we might have to evacuate.

A while later, I am in a patient's room, giving her meds, when I overhear the news from her TV, "There has been a mass shooting in southern California." I then look outside her window and can't see



anything clearly due to all the smoke. I warn my patient, "Don't panic, but we might have to evacuate the hospital. There is a fire, but don't worry, I'll take you with me." She thinks I am kidding, but I change the tone of my voice, and she realizes that I am serious.

I go out to the nurses' station where I can look outside, and when I do, my mouth, my heart, and all my organs drop. The fire is burning right outside—higher than the hospital building! I tell the charge nurse, "Look outside, we've got to go, NOW!" She says that she doesn't want to look so she could focus on her tasks, but I convince her to look and that's when the supervisor comes and tells everyone, "Get EVERYONE INTO WHEELCHAIRS AND GET THEM OUT NOW!!!"

So, we all scramble to get the charts, then we let the patients hold their own charts while we put them into wheelchairs. I have never seen directors, students, staff, and coworkers work that fast. I think it took us less than ten minutes to clear the whole unit! In the meantime, while we are inhaling smoke that had already started creeping into the hospital, I see looks of fear, compassion, and panic in many people's eyes.



We evacuate everyone to the Emergency Room (ER), and check each patient room to make sure that they are empty; then we all run to the ER and get anyone—police, staff—with cars to take the patients to our neighboring hospital.

### RUSHING HOME

I then rush back home because there was another fire and plenty of smoke in that direction. On the way there, I see houses burning rapidly right next to me and lots of smoke. I come home, and my family is there, unpacked, waiting for authorities to tell them to get out. I say "MOM!!! Houses are burning around our house! Get everything and let's GO!!!" I must have had less than five minutes to pack my belongings. I throw them into my suitcase and run out; then I go to get my chickens and my dog. My mom drives the other car with my sister, and my dad drives the third car. My mom is following me down Pentz Road while I stop a moment to watch my town turning to ashes. Suddenly, I realize that my dad isn't with us! I ask my mom where he is and she says, "He had to go back to Paradise Adventist Academy to save the computer servers he had built," "WHAT?!?" Then I ask, "Where are our birds??" At that moment, I realize that Frostie and Pickles—our pet birds—and our bearded dragon, Amber, are still back at home.

I break out in tears and tell my mom, "Mom, take the stuff from my car and put it in your car. I have to go back to the hospital and help out. I also have to get the birds." But she says, "No, you'll get stuck on the road."

With tears . . . fear . . . worry . . . thanksgiving, and a constant calling out to God, we head down the mountain, hoping that my dad makes it. I am so torn between my family, coworkers, patients, and my pet birds.

My dad ends up getting stuck as he went back into town. He calls and says, "If I don't see you again, I love you all." I start to cry! He says that there are fires on both sides of the road, and on the road itself. Traffic is very heavy and barely moving. He says that it looks like midnight when in fact it is 9–10 a.m. My mother says, "Don't worry, God will protect him because He is being faithful to God and preaching the three angels' messages."

With our prayers and those of our family and friends, my dad was able to come out safely; I gave him the biggest hug ever when I saw him.

As the day progressed the fire kept growing, blocking all three exit routes from Paradise. Over 500 people that we knew, were still stuck and congregating in different locations, while firefighters were pouring water over those buildings in an attempt to save them.

Later, I found out that some of my coworkers were also stuck at the hospital with patients in critical conditions. The hospital had caught on fire, and so they had to move to the helipad and wait there for hours, hoping that help would come.

### IT BREAKS MY HEART

As I'm reading so many stories of what my coworkers and friends went through, it breaks my heart. It broke my heart when I heard a news reporter saying, "Paradise has been wiped from the map," and "this fire is the fastest growing fire in history, growing at 80 football fields per minute."

It breaks my heart that people were stuck in traffic in thick smoke while attempting to escape the fire, but the fire caught up to them. It breaks my heart that some people burned in their cars, while others chose to stay in their homes because they were elderly or too tired to escape. It also breaks my heart when I think of all those pets that were left behind to be burned.

### I AM THANKFUL

We may have nothing left, but do you know what I'm thankful for? I am thankful for so many things:

1. God is keeping me alive every day. He wakes me up, and helps me to refocus my life and learn so many spiritual lessons in the process.
2. I am thankful that my family is with me.
3. I thank God my coworkers are alive.
4. I am grateful we have a place to stay. Thanks to those who offered and contributed to our needs.
5. I am thankful that our three cars survived the fire.
6. I praise God for prayers from loved ones.
7. I am thankful for prayers that our home didn't burn, and that it's still standing.
8. Thank you, God, for angels, for firefighters, for police, for hospital staff, and all others who helped.

Life is simple now. All I can say is praise the Lord. You may ask, "How can I help?" I say, pray and get ready! Get ready! Get ready!!! Let's get ready, wake up, focus on the important things. You could be next.

## *Update from November 16, 2018*

### CHECKING ON OUR HOUSE

Our neighbor called a few days after the fire and told my dad that a policeman had gone to our neighborhood and there were no houses standing. We had already thought that would be the case unless God had saved it. The fire was in our neighborhood already when we left.

Despite the news that our home was burned, we still kept praying and decided not to believe the report until we actually saw the house for ourselves. People kept posting photos of their burnt homes on Facebook, and I asked each of them to please check on our house and to feed our birds. People responded with, “I’m sorry, we can’t.”

Finally, my atheist coworker replied, “My husband is fighting the fire, I’m not sure where he is but I’ll see if he can check your house.” The next day she told me, “My husband checked on your house, and it is the only one standing in the neighborhood. It’s crazy! How is that possible?”

“I don’t know!” I told her, “but I’ve been praying so much!” I still wasn’t completely positive that they were in our neighborhood, so I asked if they could feed the birds. She answered, “They went to the garage and fed two birds and gave them water.”

As soon as those words registered in my brain, my mouth

just dropped, my hand covered my mouth and I started shivering and crying like a little baby. I have never cried like that in my life. I went into the bedroom where we were staying, knelt beside the bed and just sobbed and cried out to God, “Oh God! You are too good to me! You are Almighty! You truly care for even the little sparrows! I don’t deserve it! I don’t deserve it! I don’t deserve it, but I thank you so much! I choose to serve you fully. Oh God, You are faithful to us, but why are we so unfaithful to You? Please help me not to be an Israelite who always makes promises and breaks them.”

### LESSONS I LEARNED

From that experience I learned we should praise God and count our blessings even through trials and when we think we have lost everything in this world. As I was evacuating from the flaming town of Paradise, I told God, “God, this is Your time to SHINE. I know You can do miracles, but let Your will be done.”

Another day passed and we tried to check on our house and the birds, but a policeman said that it was not possible. The next day, a friend asked for my address. She would try to see if her contact—a policeman—could go check on the birds. My dad and sister also decided to go. When the policeman saw my dad, he got out of his car, and



# *We see prophecy fulfilling right before our eyes. What are we doing?*


gave him the biggest hug ever, even though they didn't know each other. Then, he looked my dad in the eye and asked, "Do you believe in God? Because nothing, nothing is standing in your neighborhood except your house. The fire burned everything right to your fence and everything inside was not touched!"

Wow, that is another lesson I learned. Instead of letting us enter our home to get our birds, God wanted the policeman to see His works! Instead of someone else going to see if the house was okay, God used my atheist coworker to see the power of God! I am truly in awe of our God, and I realize that when things don't go our way, we just have to believe that He has a bigger and better plan in mind.

There are many calamities happening around the world, causing mass destruction. We see prophecy fulfilling right before our eyes. What are we doing? Will we wait until our town/city/state/nation is affected? Shouldn't we be proving faithful to God and keeping His commandments before it's too late? Our every

word and action is being registered in the books of heaven. Are we pleading with God to forgive us our sins and those of our loved ones?

This major fire is a wake-up call for all of us! Study the word of God, plead with God. Repent! Jesus is getting ready to finish His work in the Most Holy Place and to take His people home. I am so blessed by my father, who has given himself to God, and is working to get the people ready for the time of the end. What is holding you back? I plead with ALL of you—the time is at hand! Get ready, get ready, get ready!!!

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; **looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;** who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14). [Emphasis added.] 

# CHOOSING THE Best in Life

BY ELI TENORIO

**W**e make choices every moment of our lives.

"What will I wear?

What will I do? Who will be my friends? What profession will I choose and whom will I marry?"

The story is told of a young couple who had just married and were very poor. The husband told his wife, "Honey, I'm going to leave home and look for a job. I will be away until I make enough money to give you a more comfortable life. I only ask you one thing: Be faithful to me while I am gone, and I will also be faithful to you."

So the young man left and found a job with a rich farmer. He told the farmer, "Let me work for as long as I like, and when I must leave, release me from my obligations. I do not want to receive my salary now. Save it for me until the day I leave." The young man worked for twenty years without a vacation, then he told the farmer, "Please give me my wages for I'm going back home."

The farmer replied, "Okay, we made a deal and I'm going to stick to it, but first let me make you a proposal. You can choose to receive all the money you earned or accept three pieces of advice. Think what you want to do and answer me in the morning."



The young man thought about it for two days. Knowing that his boss was a good man who cared for him dearly and who would wish the best for him, the man said to his boss, "I want to take your three pieces of advice."

The farmer then told him, "First, never take shortcuts in your life. Shorter and unfamiliar paths can cost you your life. Secondly, do not be curious about what is evil, for curiosity may be fatal. Thirdly, never make decisions in times of hatred and pain. You may regret it and be too late."

After giving him these three pieces of advice, the farmer said to the man, "Take these three loaves of bread along with you. You may eat two of them during your journey. Wait to eat the third one together with your wife when you get home."

So, the man, who now was no longer so young, left the farm. He had been away for twenty years from home, and the wife he loved so much. As he walked the first day, he met a traveler who asked him, "Where are you going?"

He answered him, "To a very distant place which is more than a twenty-days' walk down this road."

The traveler advised him, "This way is too long, I know a shortcut that will greatly shorten your trip."

The man was happy to take the shortcut when suddenly he remembered the first piece of advice from his boss. Quickly he returned to the original path. When he arrived to the next town, he found out that the shortcut was actually a planned ambush.

After a few more days of traveling, the man found a motel where he stayed for the night. In the middle of the night he awoke with a startling cry. He was about to get out of his room and check what was happening when he remembered the second piece of advice of his boss. He went back to bed and fell asleep.

In the morning, the manager asked him if he had heard the shouting and he answered yes. Then the manager asked him, "Were you not curious what was happening?"

**WE MAKE CHOICES EVERY MOMENT OF OUR LIVES.**

What will I wear? What will I do?  
Who will be my friends?  
What profession will I choose  
and whom will I marry?

“No,” replied the traveler.

The manager told him, “Good for you. Had you been curious, you would have been dead. My son had a madness crisis and started screaming; if any guest comes out, he kills the person and buries the body in the backyard.”

After many days and nights of walking, at last he saw his house among the trees. Smoke was coming from the chimney. He walked a little closer and then noticed the silhouette of his wife. The day was getting dark, but he saw that his wife was not alone. He walked a little closer and noticed there was a man lying down with his head on his wife’s lap, and she was affectionally caressing his hair.

When he witnessed this scene, his heart hardened with hatred and bitterness. He decided to confront and kill his wife and the man without mercy. Taking a deep breath, he hurried on. Just then he remembered the third

piece of advice, “Never make decisions in time of hatred and pain. You may regret it and it will be too late.”

The traveler stopped and thought what to do next. He then decided to sleep that night outside by his house. The next day he would decide what to do. He woke up at dawn and thought to himself, “I’m not going to kill my wife or her lover. I’ll go back to my boss and ask him to take me back. But before I do that, I want to tell my wife that I was faithful to her.”

He went to the door and knocked. His wife opened the door and recognized him. She threw herself on his neck and hugged him affectionately. He tried to push her away, but he could not. With tears in his eyes, he said, “I was faithful to you and you betrayed me!”

His wife was astonished and said to him, “What? I did not betray you. Much to the contrary,





I waited for you these twenty years!"

He asked her, "And who is that man you were caressing last night?"

She told him, "It's our son! When you left, I discovered that I was pregnant, and today he is twenty years old."

The wife introduced their son to the husband and he embraced him. He told them both his whole story while his wife made them breakfast. After a prayer of thanksgiving and with tears of joy, they thanked God that their family was reunited again. The father cut the last loaf of bread to share with his family. As he cut the bread, to their surprise and joy, there fell out a plastic bag with full payment for his twenty years of work!

### MAKING GOOD CHOICES

The young man Moses also had to make a very important choice in his life. He was the

adopted grandson of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Moses was much beloved by the king and all his subjects. In fact, the king was training Moses in the highest military schools of Egypt to become the next pharaoh. But one day, Moses made that fateful decision to walk away from it all—his adopted family who loved him, his military training, his position in the court of Egypt, and his future job as pharaoh. Why? "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

Why and how did Moses exchange the scepter as the prince of Egypt for a shepherd's staff? "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:26, 27). To which reward was Moses looking forward? "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he



# MOSES VALUED THE LESSONS OF HARDSHIPS HE LEARNED WITH THE SHEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS.

had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Moses valued the lessons of hardships he learned with the sheep in the mountains. To him, they were worth far more than all the wealth of Egypt.

Moses was not discouraged at his present circumstances. He looked positively toward the future when he would have eternal life. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

Joseph is another young man who made the right choice. He had the important position of managing Potiphar’s home, property and finances. God blessed his efforts and all of Potiphar’s possessions increased as a result. But when Potiphar’s wife came to tempt him, Joseph said firmly, No, “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). Like Moses, Joseph made the right choice to stand firm for God and principle.

is an example of where a bad choice can lead. As a boy, Hitler sang in the church choir and contemplated becoming a priest. But when he became a man, he made light of religion and spread death across Europe.

Somewhere between the time he was a boy and became a man he made a choice. That choice was for evil and led to the destruction of about 15 million people during the Holocaust. On April 30, 1945, Hitler went to his suite in an underground bomb shelter and shot himself. At the same time his wife took poison and killed herself.

Have you known Christians who go to church and still make wrong choices? Balaam was one of those people. He was a prophet of God when Balaak came to him and asked him to curse the Israelites. As soon as he was given the opportunity to make money by betraying God’s people, he chose to sell his faith in God and the truth for gold

## WRONG CHOICES

What about people who make wrong choices? Adolph Hitler

and silver. When he made that choice, he became the prophet for the devil. “Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15).

The path Moses and Joseph took led to joy, satisfaction, and a life of usefulness and eventually eternal life. The path that Balaam and Hitler chose led to hatred, disappointment, and eternal death.


Over two thousand years ago, three men were hanging on three crosses. The man on the cross on the right side had to make his last choice; the man on the cross on the left side also had to make his last choice, and the man on the middle cross was the best choice. (Luke 23:39–42).



## TOMORROW MIGHT BE LATE

On Sunday night, October 8, 1871, the famous evangelist, Dwight L. Moody preached to the largest congregation ever in Chicago. His key text was “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” (Matthew 27:22). At the conclusion of his sermon he said, “I will let you take this text home and think about it during the week. Then when you come next Sabbath, we will come to Calvary and decide what to do with Jesus.”

Then Ira D. Sankey, his song evangelist, stood up and began to lead in signing a hymn. While the congregation was singing, there was a rush and roar of fire engines passing by the church. Before morning came, much of the city of Chicago was in ashes. Dwight L. Moody, could never forget to his dying day that he gave the congregation one week to decide what to do with Jesus. I have never since dared,” he said, “to give an audience a week to think of their salvation. If they were lost, they might rise up in judgment against me. . . . But I want to tell you of one lesson that I learned that night which I have never forgotten, and that is, when I preach, to press Christ upon the people then and there and try to bring them to a decision on the spot.”

Dear youth, what will you do with Jesus today? 

# The Saddest Day of My Life

HOW I MET GOD, PART II  
BY GORAN ANDJELIC



Shortly after I started reading the Bible, my friend Mika who gave me the Bible, introduced me to his granduncle, Mr. Velemir Jankic—a Seventh Day Adventist Reformer. He lived down the street from me. We became friends and he started giving me Bible studies. Later, he invited me to visit him on Friday nights for the beginning of the Sabbath. Shortly after, I started attending Sabbath services. Mr. Jankic had dedicated one room in his house as a little chapel, and this is where I went to church.

For the next three years, I was reading the Bible a few days each month; then I would take a break for a month and not read at all. The next month, I was again attracted to God's word and would read it with new zeal. As I was learning more about God and the truth, I was eager to share the good news with others. During

those years, there were good and bad moments in my life which I will share later.

## SHARING THE TRUTH WITH ZELJKO

Mr. Jankic gave me the book *Patriarch and Prophets*. As I started to read this great book, I was fascinated to learn about the fall of Lucifer and how sin came into the world. These truths were new to me and I was eager to share them with others.

One weekend I went out to a café to meet a group of my friends. As I was walking, I met Zeljko my friend.

He greeted me, "Hello Gorane," and I turned to him and said, "Hello Lucifer."

He paused and looked at me, then asked, "What's wrong with you?"

I responded, "Nothing, I just read something that impressed me very much."



Zeljko then asked me, “Why did you call me Lucifer?”

I embraced him and told him, “Let me explain to you what I was reading about these days.”

We spent that evening together and I shared with him who is Lucifer, how he fell, and how sin entered our world. We were up late that night, and Zeljko told me that he would like to continue talking about the subject. So, we agreed to meet the next evening and continue our discussion. As a result of these talks, our friendship deepened and we became inseparable friends. Zeljko and I had some blessed times reading the Bible together or discussing our personal Bible study.

Several months after finishing high school, I began working for the government. In the next four and a half years, some overwhelming and daunting experiences happened in my life.

### MY MOTHER'S LIFE STORY

My mother Aleksia was born on March 30, 1948. She had a difficult life during her childhood which was accompanied by poverty, hunger, and worry about survival. When she was about ten years old, her family moved from Bosnia to Srem. After just 4 months she lost her father, and her mother was left alone with seven children, barely able to make ends meet. After graduating from high school, Mom got married to Peter, my dad. They had a daughter named Milica and eight years later I was born. When

I was one year old, my parents divorced and my mom moved back to live with her mother.

In that small house I spent part of my childhood until my mother remarried and moved to live with her new husband in the same village. My stepfather was like a real father to me. Although he had four adult children, he treated me like his own son.

The atmosphere in our home was not positive. My stepbrothers, Zdravko and Jelenko, were unhappy that their father remarried after their mother had been killed in an accident. They didn't speak to my mother—their stepmother.

My mother was afraid of Jelenko, the younger stepbrother, since he was moody and negative most of the time. For a while we all lived in the same house, but after some years, my stepbrothers got married and moved away. Now my mom, my stepdad and I could live in peace.

One day, while I was at work, Jelenko, came to our home and took a picture of my mom in the backyard. My mother was afraid and ran into the house to look for my stepfather. Jelenko followed her and told her:

“Now that I took a picture of you, I will show it to a witch so she can confirm why I have a bad marriage and all the bad things are happening in my life.” As he was leaving, he added, “If you are the one doing all this evil, I will remove you from the face of the earth in one month.”



## My grandmother's homewhere I grew up

The people in Serbia were superstitious and when things were not going well for them, they believed that someone had put a spell on them.

The next day, my poor mother was so anxious from what Jelenko told her that she became sick and stayed in bed for ten days. When I returned from work, I asked her, "Mom, how are you? Is anything hurting you? Let's go to the doctor." My mom just said, "I'm okay. I am feeling better. It's nothing serious." She did not tell me the whole story about what Jelenko had told her.

Often when I came home from work, I'd go to my room and take a nap. I noticed that my mother would come and just sit there in deep thought. When she saw I was waking up, she quickly went out. I would ask her, "Mom, do you need anything?" She replied, "No, son." I noticed something was bothering my mom, but I did not know what it was or how to help her.

It was autumn and we had so many rainy days that we could

not pick all our corn. At last we had our first sunny day on the Sabbath. My parents got up early to go to the farm and pick corn. They told me to come as soon I eat breakfast. By then I was keeping the Sabbath when it was convenient for me. Although I didn't want to go to work and transgress the Sabbath, I didn't have the courage to tell "no" to my parents.

So, on that Sabbath, October 18, 1997, I went to the farm. As I was picking the corn, my mom, stepdad and neighbor were 200 feet ahead of me when suddenly I heard the neighbor screaming, and then she stopped. For a moment, I thought an animal had jumped out of the corn and she was scared. But she came to me teary-eyed and said, "Your mother is not doing well."

I ran to the spot where my neighbor was and saw my mother lying motionless on the ground; her lips and nails were blue. My stepfather said he did CPR on her, but without success. I picked up

my mom and put her to lay on some corn husks. Then I ran quickly to the village to find a neighbor with a car to drive her to the hospital. As I was running, I was praying, "Lord, please don't let my mother be dead." After some time, I found a neighbor and we drove back to the farm. I was hoping that when I returned my mother would be sitting up, but she was still lying motionless on the ground. I carried her to the car. We drove her to the hospital where they found that she had a heart attack.


At that time, I was 19 and my mother was 50 years old. I was not ready for this heartbreaking event. It was such a shock for me to lose my dear mother so suddenly that for several days I was not accepting this as reality. A few days after the burial, my aunt told me that Jelenko, my stepbrother had threatened to take my mother's life in thirty days. Now she had died from a heart attack before the thirty days were completed.

So why did my mother die? Sadly, she had had heart problems years before this happened. Since my stepbrother threatened her a month before, she was very stressed and anxious thinking how she would die. These negative thoughts of fear, anxiety, worry, and coupled with her heart condition, caused her early death.

I'm sorry that I found all this information too late after my mother's death and burial. Had I known it before, I would have

encouraged and comforted my mother not to fear or believe in that witchcraft Jelenko was threatening her with. There is an all-powerful God Who is stronger than the forces of evil. He would have taken care of her. She would have nothing to fear. But now it was too late. I could not turn back the clock and bring her back to life.

When my mother died, I was very sad, but the Lord comforted me with thoughts like these: "The dead know not anything" (Ecclesiastes 9:5), and she is resting and at peace. He also reminded me that one day all will be judged according to their works. The good news is that my mom was reading the books *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *Acts of the Apostles*. When I tried to talk to her about spiritual things, she avoided the subject. But I don't know what was happening in her mind and heart as she read these books. Did she make peace with God at that time? I do not know, but I do know that my God had comforted me and I had peace.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). 

# Little Giants

BY YURI GESSNER

There's a very small insect that lives underground in large and well-organized social groups. Can you think of an insect that fits that description? We are thinking about ants. Ants are a very peculiar creation of God, which we don't often stop to think about. They are very small and we may step on them without noticing them; we may exterminate them from our homes because they are invading our kitchen and making trails on our floor.

Let me give you a couple of interesting facts about this little insect called "ant." When ants fight, they fight unto death! I can testify to that. When I was a child, I used to watch these little insects crawling all over my backyard. Sometimes I would see them holding on to a much larger insect, like a beetle or a lady bug, and they would not let it go until they died or captured the insect.

Before Christ left this world, He commanded us, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The question is, "Am I willing to die for preaching the gospel?" Are you willing to do the same? Are we fighting to preach the gospel until we die? Are we standing firmly for the truth with all our heart and all our might?

Every moment of every day, ants are ready for battle to protect and serve their companions. Shouldn't that be our daily goal? We are to be ready to stand for the gospel until the end just like the apostle Paul who said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7).

Have you marveled at the sight of a colony of ants moving back and forth along a trail between a source of food and their home? Every time ants go away from their nest, they leave trails of home-finding pheromone as they go. Pheromones are chemicals produced by glands in the ant's body. These chemicals are used by ants to communicate with their family.

Can you think of a person who left trails wherever he lived? Abraham did; he would build an altar in every location he lived. Not only did Abraham build an altar, he



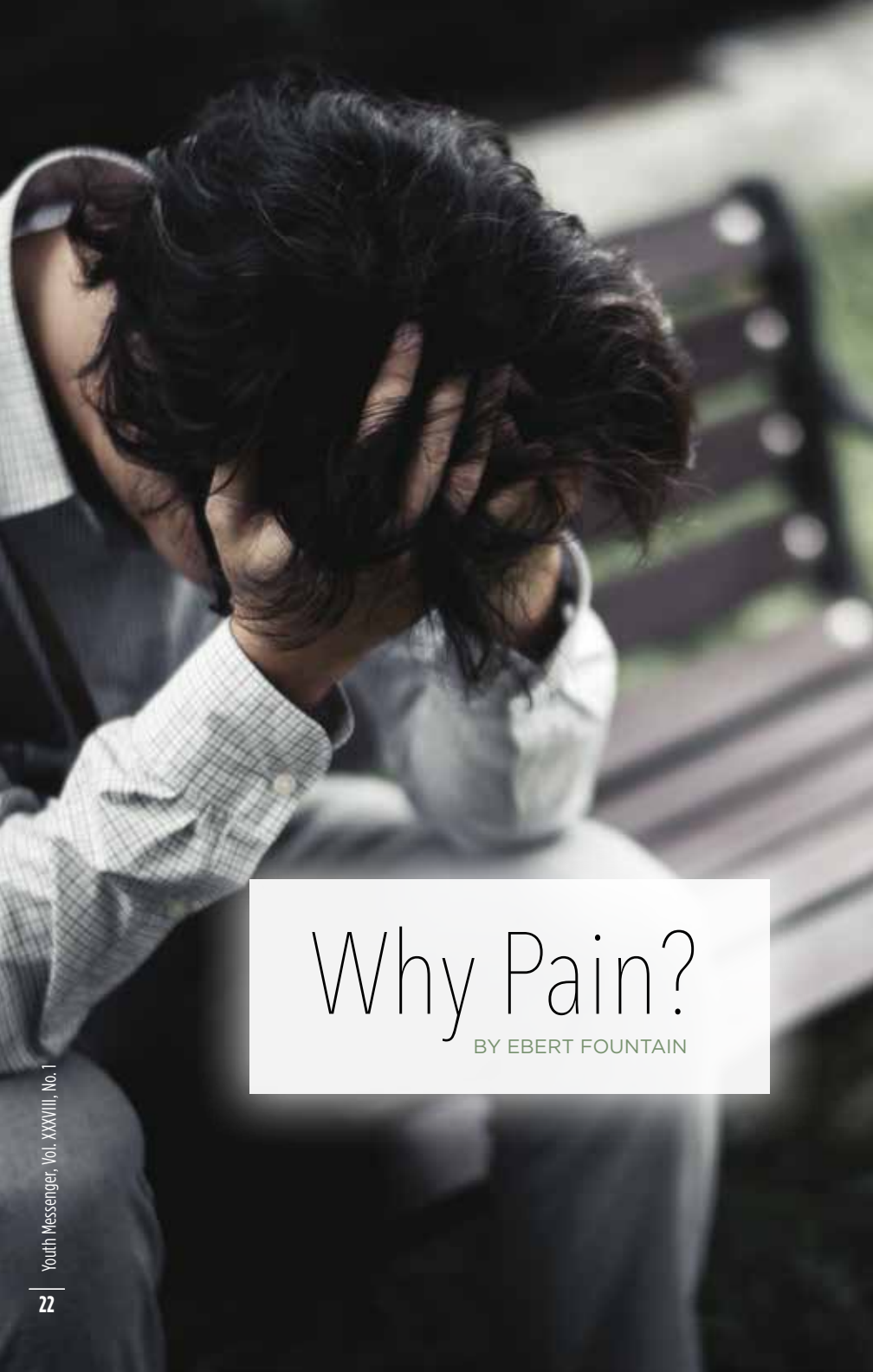
also taught his heathen neighbors about God and invited them to worship with him. Then when he moved away, the altar remained as a memorial to the living God He served.

We also can leave a trail for God wherever we go. No, we don't have to build altars everywhere we go, but we can hand out pamphlets and books about Jesus as we go to school, to work or even shopping. We can go canvassing door-to-door and leave books about Jesus Christ

in neighborhoods around the country. But if you don't have a pamphlet in your hand, there is a powerful way you can leave a trail for Jesus—by being a kind and loving Christian that shines with the love of God. **“The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”**—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 470. [Emphasis added.]

Are you faithful and committed, like the ant in her duties, in carrying the gospel to the world until the Lord comes? 🚫





# Why Pain?

BY EBERT FOUNTAIN

Is it necessary to feel pain to understand God's love? We read in 1 John 4:8 that "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love**." The Bible tells us very plainly that "God is love," yet why then do we doubt this phrase? Is it possible that we must experience this love for ourselves in order to be certain about this truth? Billions of people have walked on this earth. But I venture to say that all of those who have a knowledge of God, including myself, have at one point doubted God's love for them. Why would I make such a bold statement? It's very simple! The whole purpose of Satan—the great deceiver—is to tell lies about God so that we will doubt Him and be led away from Him.

This is what Satan did with the angels who fell in heaven and this has ever been his mission since then. Satan also tempted Eve to mistrust God in the Garden of Eden. He said to Eve: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4), but right there he told a lie about God and led Eve to doubt His Word. When we believe lies about God, we can no longer fully trust Him. Eve was deceived into believing a lie about God; she believed that He did not mean what He said. These doubts made her to sin and brought misery to our world.

**What lie(s) concerning God and His character have you believed?**

## DID GOD FORSAKE ME?

It is sometimes very difficult to perceive the love of God when the walls of darkness seem to engulf us and all hope seems lost! These circumstances should not surprise us for Christ tells us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). When Christ was nailed to the cross, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). As He was dying, Christ felt His Father separating His light and love from Him, allowing Him to suffer the penalty for our sins. So, we may also feel the separation from God when we sin. And often, we may think that He will not accept us back into His favor.

How many of you have felt unworthy to ask God for something? His word tells us: "Let us therefore come **boldly** unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). But what does it mean to "come boldly"? According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word **boldly** simply means: "*a: fearless before danger, and b: showing or requiring a fearless daring spirit.*" We understand that we should have no fear when we come to God in prayer knowing that He will give us what we ask Him if it's according to His will. But we can only have no fear of being rejected when we stop believing lies about God.

## WILL GOD ACCEPT ME?

Does God think like humans? We, for some reason, believe this to be true. When someone offends us, our human nature wants either vengeance or justice. We want to get them back for what they have done to us, or we hold a grudge for years, so the relationship is broken. But God tells us: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8, 9). How can we be certain that He will accept us and forgive us even after we have committed a terrible sin? God's word plainly tells us: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Christ reveals to us His mission very plainly in three different places: (Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17) where He says: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32). Christ's mission is to save sinners from their sinfulness, and to give them a life of everlasting joy and peace, not to condemn them for being sinners. Christ's sacrifice on Calvary is, and will always be, the greatest evidence of God's love for humanity. There is nothing greater that God could have given us than the life of the Prince of peace and Lord of lords. The great I AM stooped so low as to

veil His divinity with our humanity. What greater evidence of God's love for you could you desire?

**If He gave His life for you, why would He ever reject you?** But then, if God is so loving, why is this world in a miserable state? What is the purpose in all this misery and suffering that people experience daily?


## OUR PAIN SENDS US TO THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

If you fell off a two-story building, how would you know if you were injured? It is pain, not a lack of pain that would drive you to the physician to treat your injury. So, it is with our lives here on earth! It is the pain that we encounter in our daily life that shows us there is something drastically wrong in our world.

We realize that we need to put away sin. And through that realization we are led to the foot of the cross of Christ where we can "behold the lamb of God" and from Him we receive the treatment that we so desperately need. The Great Physician can only give us the healing we need! But unfortunately, many people don't realize that Jesus is what they are searching for. They go through life looking for shelter from their troubles, but can only find it in Him.

When you are in trouble, wouldn't you like to go to a safe place where you will be received with open arms? Solomon was often in trouble and he went to such a place: He says:






“The name of the Lord *is* a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10). Remember, it is the great deceiver who wants you to believe that you will not be accepted! Believe not his lies about the great God of the universe. We have before us the greatest evidence of His love, and “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all” (Romans 8:32).

As the pain of a broken leg leads us to seek a remedy, so the pain of life leads us to seek the One who can alleviate and extinguish the pain that sin brings. The Bible says: “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is **none other name** under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, emphasis added).

Through all our pain and trials, we can rest in Christ knowing that He will give us more grace as our burdens grow greater. Annie Johnson Flint wrote the hymn, “He Giveth More Grace” and also some of the most inspiring poems dealing with faith and triumph in times of trial and suffering. She was born in Vineland, New Jersey, and lost both parents before she was six years old. As a teenager she was adopted by a childless couple. She became afflicted with arthritis and soon after became unable to walk. She aspired to be a composer

and concert pianist, but when illness deprived her of her ability to play the piano, she resorted to writing poetry. Some of her poetry she set to music. Later in life, being unable to open her hands, she wrote many of her poems on the typewriter, using her knuckles.

The song “He Giveth More Grace” was based on three Bible promises, “He giveth more grace” (James 4:6); “He increaseth strength” (Isaiah 40:29); and “mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied” (Jude 2).

There is a grace and strength that is not given in the everyday routine of life. But God gives it to us in our hour of need when we trust in Him. When troubles and trials come upon you, may His added grace, His increased strength, and His multiplied peace be upon you. 

# He Giveth More Grace

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,  
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase,  
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

## CHORUS:

His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,  
His power no boundary known unto men,  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,  
He giveth and giveth and giveth again.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere the day is half-done,  
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,  
Our Father's full giving is only begun.

—Annie Johnson Flint

# Sending our Thanks Across the Miles

BY THE YOUTH FROM HUNGARY



**I**n 2017 we were informed that a music camp would be held in California in 2018 and that we were invited to come. We were very happy that a door had opened for us to meet with young people who live in other parts of the world and to praise God together! We didn't even imagine that besides playing music and singing together, we would experience a camaraderie with the youth and brethren. All of us gained unforgettable experiences which will remain in our hearts forever. We are thankful for this opportunity to the Lord, to all the brethren in Moriah Heights, California, and to all those who supported us.

## Noemi Babai

I am thankful to God for that life-changing experience, for I was able to go some places that I had never expected to see with my own eyes. The camp was a blessing to me both musically and spiritually. It was there I truly learned to trust in God. When I came home, some people told me that my relationship with the Lord had improved. The sermons that we heard were very encouraging for me. What I liked the most were the morning worships when young people shared about their conversions. This helped me to confirm my decision to be baptized. Now I can freely talk about my faith to others.





## Dora Balint

When our plane was taking off, I suddenly became teary-eyed as I realized what a wonderful experience was happening to me—I was flying to a far-away California. I was thankful I had the opportunity to visit Sr. Ellen White's home and it had a positive effect on me. We can be thankful for her writings which were given to us as a gift from God. I felt ashamed that we didn't appreciate the hard work that was done for us many years ago. The music camp had lifted me up musically and spiritually. I am thankful to the Lord for the privilege to be there.



## Kata and Eszter Beno

The music camp became one of the most decisive experiences of my life. We made new friends and came closer to our dear God. The personal testimonies which were shared by young people made a strong impression on me. Beside practicing a lot, we also had time for friendships, team building games, hikes, and sightseeing. As the fruit of our hard work we could take part in the concert. I'd like to thank our hosts who took care of us with parental love.



## Bence Bodnar

I would first like to say thanks to those who had worked for us to have so many wonderful experiences and helped us visit many beautiful places. I thank the Lord that I could be there to praise Him by playing music and also meet many young people. During camp my clarinet playing improved and I also came closer to the Lord. I enjoyed hearing the young people sharing their testimonies every day. This gave me spiritual strength. It's been three months since we were in California, but when our youth in Hungary get together, they love to talk about the great experiences they had there.

## Anna Kaknics

We got a wonderful opportunity this summer to go to the music camp in California. I really liked playing music, and listening to the beautiful experiences the young people shared during worships. During this camp, I got closer to the Lord and I always felt He was with us. I appreciated very much the love and hospitality of all the local youth and brethren.



## Johanna Banyai

I gained many good experiences at music camp—how to respect each other, to be on time, and how to play well in the orchestra. It impressed me how nice and caring the brethren were to us! My favorite part was the musical rehearsal. The sermons were great and touched my heart. As I was listening to them, I started thinking about the importance of reading God's word, which had never happened to me before. I also better understood the meaning of faith, why worldly things are harmful and why rules are important in our lives. Everything was great, and I will remember this camp my whole life! To God be the glory!



## Fanni Raboczki

The music camp was a great blessing to me. Beside enjoying and playing the wonderful music, I was able to make an important decision in my life. I heard so many experiences from the youth about their baptism. Thank God, we had time to talk about it and to learn about His laws. When I arrived home from California, I felt that it was God's plan for me to go to California and meet the youth and brethren there. Their experiences were an answer to my questions, and I was baptized in September.



## Adam Toth

I am thankful to the Lord that I could take part in the NCC music camp. I especially enjoyed visiting the home of Sr. White. Since then, I feel closer to her in my heart. Her writings touch my soul in a deeper way. It was very nice to get to know other young people at the music camp, to listen to their experiences, and to be encouraged in the faith.







## Annamaria Toth

We had great time at the music camp and I made new friends, which was easy, because everyone was kind and open-hearted. I would like to thank the brethren for their hospitality and caring love. I gained many wonderful experiences and learned that we are able to do anything with God.



## Mate Toth

Looking back at the music camp I have many good memories. I really liked, that beside practicing music, we learned about the plan of redemption. The testimonies by the youth touched me the most and were very spiritually uplifting. The musical level to be achieved was high, and we met it by having many rehearsals. I am grateful for my new friends, for the beautiful places we visited, and for the warm-hearted brothers and sisters we met.



## Oliver Toth

I am very glad I could take part in the music camp in California for the second time. I again felt the love of our brethren and their enthusiasm for music. The discipline and the organization of the music camp were a blessing to me. I felt the Lord blessed our efforts so that we were able to give a quality concert with His help.



## Rebeka Toth

This summer I was blessed to take part in the NCC music camp. At the time I went through some difficulties, but the testimonies I heard every morning encouraged me. As I was listening God's message through the youth, I felt that every word was spoken personally to me. The worships helped me to learn to trust more in my heavenly Father. I believe all of us were inspired by the music that we learned in the choir and orchestra. The song that I really liked was: "There is strength in the name of the Lord."

## Helena Rea Toth

It was great to experience the love of our brethren at the music camp, even though we didn't know each other before. It was very uplifting to work together for two weeks for a noble purpose. I was glad to hear other young people's testimonies with the Lord and to be a part of this program where all praised the Lord together.



## Viktor Toth

I am thankful to the Lord that I was able to go to the music camp in California and that I could play with such a great group of young people.



## Reka Varga

I enjoyed so much all the moments at music camp. It enriched my life with many great experiences, and I was able to meet wonderful young people. I felt the Lord's care during the whole camp, and during our trip.



## Timea Varga

I thank all who helped the Hungarian youth attend and participate in this camp. I am very grateful to the Lord that I could spend such a beautiful vacation with all of you. I had very nice experiences that I will always keep in my memory. In the mornings, when I go to school, I think of the wonderful memories that we had together. When I look at some of the photos, they always cheer me up. 📷



**Editor** Liliane Balbach, **Layout** Bethany Montrose.

**Youth Messenger** ® (USPS 765-030) is published quarterly by the Young People's Department of the Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement General Conference as an educational service for our youth worldwide. **Web:** <http://www.sdarm.org>, **e-mail:** [info@sdarm.org](mailto:info@sdarm.org). The *Youth Messenger* is printed and distributed by Reformation Herald Publishing Association, 5240 Hollins Road, Roanoke, VA 24019-5048. Periodical postage paid at Roanoke, Virginia 24022.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to, *Youth Messenger*, P.O. Box 7240, ROANOKE, VA 24019-0240. Manuscripts, inquiries, address changes, subscription requests, and donations should be mailed to the address above. Vol. XXXVIII, No. 1. Copyright © 2019 January-March issue. **Illustrations:** Adobe Stock on front cover and pp. 2-7, 10-15, 20-23, 25-28, 30, 32; Goran Andjelic on pp. 16, 18; Noemi Babai on p. 27; Dora Balint, Kata and Eszter Beno, and Bence Bodnar on p. 28; Anna Kaknics, Johanna Banyai, Fanni Raboczki, and Adam Toth on p. 29; Annamaria Toth, Mate Toth, Oliver Toth, and Rebeka Toth on p. 30; Helena Rea Toth, Viktor Toth, Reka Varga, and Timea Varga on p. 31; Dreamstime on p. 31.

**Subscriptions:** United States U.S. \$8.95; single issue U.S. \$2.95; foreign (air mail) U.S. \$17.00.

# Choose the Best

Choose to love rather than hate.  
Choose to smile rather than frown.  
Choose to build rather than destroy.  
Choose to persevere rather than quit.  
Choose to praise rather than gossip.  
Choose to heal rather than wound.  
Choose to give rather than grasp.  
Choose to help rather than turn your face.  
Choose to forgive rather than curse.  
Choose to pray rather than despair.

