

Youth messenger

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**BORN WITH A
PURPOSE**

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Dear friends,

I remember, as a child, dreaming to becoming a mechanic like my father. I looked up to him; it was the highest standard I could compare myself to and all I wanted was to be the best, as my dad was. I didn't know there was a higher standard I could reach until I got to compare myself to others whom I believed had even more respectable jobs or positions, like my teachers and the mayor of the town.

Then I met Jesus, who has taught me that higher was not high enough and better was not good enough. He convinced me that I should not be thinking in comparative but in superlative terms, that I should strive to reach the highest and to be the best, the maximum of my potential, the purpose He had for me since my birth. It took a lot of personal struggle and disappointments, but as I was introduced to the message of Christ Our Righteousness presented in Minneapolis in 1888, I understood that my purpose is clear and that the resources to fulfill it are unlimited as long as I trust the source, Jesus Christ.

—Adrian Finaru



SAMSON, THE LIBERATOR

by Stephen Andrew Jacobs

In the life of every person, there is a constant battle between this world and salvation, and it begins even before we are born, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26).

As the title indicates, we are going to look at the life of Samson and identify some lessons to apply to our lives, especially for those of us who have grown up in the faith.

WHO WAS SAMSON?

The more we study about the life of Samson, putting aside his extraordinary strength and the fact that he was called by God to be a Judge for Israel, we discover that he was just a normal person. He was relatively young, living only a short life. “And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years” (Judges 15:20).

With this understanding of Samson, I believe we can say that

Samson was just like you and me. Then what made him so special?

THE CALLING

Samson had a special calling; “The child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judges 13:5).

FREE WILL

Despite being called to do such a great work, Samson was given the freedom to make his own decisions in life. “God’s providential care had been over Samson, that he might be prepared to accomplish the work which he was called to do. At the very outset of life he was surrounded with favorable conditions for physical strength, intellectual vigor, and moral purity. But under the influence of wicked associates he let go that hold upon God which is man’s only safeguard, and he was swept away



by the tide of evil. Those who in the way of duty are brought into trial may be sure that God will preserve them; but if men willfully place themselves under the power of temptation, they will fall sooner or later.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 460.

“Samson in his peril had the same source of strength as had Joseph. He could choose the right or the wrong as he pleased. But instead of taking hold of the strength of God, he permitted the wild passions of his nature to have full sway. The reasoning powers were perverted, the morals corrupted.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 131.

How did Samson compromise his faith?

COMPROMISE

I am sure we all may know the saying: “With great power comes great responsibility.” Samson had an important calling with a divine gift of physical strength, yet he decided to be irresponsible with it. There is not much said about Samson’s life as a child; however, I believe that his parents followed the instructions given them by God. So, what went wrong?

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33). “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou

not” (Proverbs 1:10). “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

The Spirit of Prophecy points out that, “The town of Zorah being near the country of the Philistines, Samson came to mingle with them on friendly terms. Thus in his youth intimacies sprang up, the influence of which darkened his whole life. A young woman dwelling in the Philistine town of Timnath engaged Samson’s affections, and he determined to make her his wife. To his God-fearing parents, who endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, his only answer was, ‘She pleaseth me well.’ The parents at last yielded to his wishes, and the marriage took place.”—*Ibid.*, p. 131.

Here we can see that through the uncontrolled practice of free will, Samson allowed the influence of his companions to direct his attentions further and further away from the calling God had made for his life, until there was a complete compromise of his beliefs and faith.

“Just as he was entering upon manhood, the time when he must execute his divine mission—the time above all others when he should have been true to God—Samson connected himself with the enemies of Israel. He did not ask whether he could better glorify God when united with the object of his choice, or whether he was placing himself in a position where he could not fulfill the purpose to be accomplished by

his life. To all who seek first to honor Him, God has promised wisdom; but there is no promise to those who are bent upon self-pleasing.”—Ibid.

In short, Samson was influenced to compromise through his friendships with the enemies of God and the infatuation he had with his wives. One thing to note is that compromising is a gradual process until it is too late.

What happens after compromise?

DEFEAT

In the story of Samson’s life many successes are recorded—how he killed the lion with his bare hands, the killing of 30 men in Ashkelon, removing the city gates with their posts in Gaza and defeating 1,000 men with the jawbone of a donkey, just to mention a few.

However, the consequences of his compromising decisions led him to the point where he was eventually defeated, captured, tortured, and imprisoned.

“And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee. . . .

“And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound. . . .

“And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. . . .

“And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother’s womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand. And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

“But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house” (Judges 16:6, 10, 13, 15–21).

“But the blinding passions which make even the strongest

THOSE WHO IN THE WAY OF DUTY ARE BROUGHT INTO TRIAL MAY BE SURE THAT GOD WILL PRESERVE THEM; BUT IF MEN WILLFULLY PLACE THEMSELVES UNDER THE POWER OF TEMPTATION, THEY WILL FALL SOONER OR LATER.

weak, had gained control of reason and of conscience. . . . Samson's infatuation seems almost incredible. At first he was not so wholly enthralled as to reveal the secret; but he had deliberately walked into the net of the betrayer of souls, and its meshes were drawing close about him at every step."—*Ibid.*, p. 133.

"Samson, that mighty man of valor, was under a solemn vow to be a Nazarite during the period of his life; but becoming infatuated by the charms of a lewd woman, he rashly broke that sacred pledge. Satan worked through his agents to destroy this ruler of Israel, that the mysterious power which he possessed might no longer intimidate the enemies of God's people. It was the influence of this bold woman that separated him from God, her artifices that proved his ruin. The love and service which God claims, Samson gave to this woman. This was idolatry. He lost all sense of the sacred character and work of God, and sacrificed honor, conscience, and every valuable interest, to base passion."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1007.

"Had Samson's head been shaven without fault on his part, his strength would have remained. But his course had

shown contempt for the favor and authority of God as much as if he had in disdain himself severed his locks from his head. Therefore God left him to endure the results of his own folly."—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 134.

DEFEATED BUT NOT DESTROYED

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8, 9). "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief" (Proverbs 24:16).

"The contest, instead of being between Samson and the Philistines, was now between Jehovah and Dagon, and thus the Lord was moved to assert His almighty power and His supreme authority."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1007.

"In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance. As his hair grew, his power gradually returned. . . .

"A feast was appointed in honor of Dagon, the fish god, 'the protector of the sea.' . . .

Samson was brought in. Shouts of exultation greeted his appearance. People and rulers mocked his misery and adored the god who had overthrown 'the destroyer of their country.' After a time, as if weary, Samson asked permission to rest against the two central pillars which supported the temple roof. Then he silently uttered the prayer, 'O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines.' With these words he encircled the pillars with his mighty arms; and crying, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' he bowed himself, and the roof fell, destroying at one crash all that vast multitude. 'So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.' . . .

"God's promise that through Samson He would 'begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines' was fulfilled; but how dark and terrible the record of that life which might have been a praise to God and a glory to the nation! Had Samson been true to his divine calling, the purpose of God could have been accomplished in his honor and exaltation. But he yielded to temptation and proved untrue to his trust, and his mission was fulfilled in defeat, bondage, and death."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 566, 567.

YOU AND I

Today, in many respects, the experience of Samson is not unlike our own. We are actively


being targeted by the enemy of God's people. The warning to us is given: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The question we should be asking ourselves is, have I allowed myself to compromise?

If yes, we have an opportunity now to repent and turn to God for help. The same way God showed mercy to Samson, He will do the same for us. No matter our age, as we go through life let our motto be with every decision: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9, last part).

Sadly, Israel, too, "had basely neglected the work which God had commanded them to perform with diligence, thoroughness, and valor; not only failing to dispossess the heathen, but uniting with them in their degrading practices. . .

. . . When at last the tyrant power was triumphant, Israel submitted to the degradation which they might have escaped, had they only obeyed God. Even when the Lord raised up a deliverer for them, they would frequently desert the one chosen to set things in order, and would unite with their bitterest oppressors."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 564. What a sad reality it must have been for Samson!

Dear friend, " 'Press together, press together, be of one mind, of one judgment,' Christ is the leader, and you are brethren; follow Him."—*Evangelism*, p. 102. Amen. 

Jeremiah, the Prophet

by Ebenezer Bulaya

Whenever we are going through certain situations regarding our education, work and social life, we tend to ask ourselves what God wants for us, especially whenever we are going through some excruciating moments. Nevertheless, when we read the Bible, we are vividly reminded that God's plans for us are pure and good. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11).

BORN FOR A PURPOSE?

Once we have realized that God's plans for us are pure and good, we start asking ourselves what is the purpose of our lives. Sometimes we tend to think that others have got a greater purpose than we do, but all in all we must understand that "Every youth, every child, has a work to do for the honor of God and the uplifting of humanity."

—*Education*, p. 58.

This simply means that existence for each of us—whether young or old—is for a purpose, regardless of who you really think you are, whether

capable or incapable. One of the greatest prophets who ever lived is Jeremiah. He was born to a priestly family in Anathoth, about three miles from Jerusalem. Jeremiah was called as a prophet in the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah. For around 40 years, he spoke for God to the people of Judah. Jeremiah never knew what his purpose was, just like you and I. When called by God to be His mouthpiece, his response was, "I, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child." He never knew that being God's mouthpiece was the reason for his existence until God explained: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Nevertheless, the Lord had to make him realize that it was not what he himself would do, but what God would do through him, "But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 1:5-8).

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU CAN DO

Often when called upon to do something for the Lord, we tend to look at our incapacities—forgetting that it is not what we can do but rather what God may do through us just as it was in the case of Jeremiah. “But when we give ourselves wholly to God and in our work follow His directions, He makes Himself responsible for its accomplishment. He would not have us conjecture as to the success of our honest endeavors. Not once should we even think of failure. We are to co-operate with One who knows no failure. We should not talk of our own weakness and inability. This is a manifest distrust of God, a denial of His word. When we murmur because of our burdens, or refuse the responsibilities He calls upon us to bear, we are virtually saying that He is a hard master, that He requires what He has not given us power to do.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 363.

What God expects from us is not perfection, but doing all to the uttermost best of our abilities. “Our heavenly Father requires no more nor less than He has given us

ability to do. He lays upon His servants no burdens that they are not able to bear. ‘He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust’ (Psalm 103:14). All that He claims from us we through divine grace can render.”—*Ibid.*, p. 362.

A VESSEL FOR THE MASTER'S USE

As we live in this world, we mostly think about our future prospects and how efficiently we may work for God as devout Christians. For this reason we are often compelled to think about the following issues:

OUR UNFAITHFULNESS AND FRAILTIES

With all the unfaithfulness and frailties we possess,



to be a vessel for the Master's use is not an easy thing. But it is indeed doable and this is why you and I should go to the One who is faithful and learn of Him; "When you give up your own will, your own wisdom, and learn of Christ, you will find admittance into the kingdom of God. He requires entire, unreserved surrender. Give up your life for Him to order, mold, and fashion. Take upon your neck His yoke. Submit to be led and taught by Him. . . .

"Abiding in Christ is choosing only the disposition of Christ, so that His interests are identified with yours. Abide in Him, to be and to do only what He wills. These are the conditions of discipleship, and unless they are complied with, you can never find rest. . . .

"You must have an inward, higher experience. You must obtain a growth in grace by abiding in Christ. When you are converted, you will not be a hindrance, but will strengthen your brethren.' "—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 110, 111. This means that whenever we are compelled not to live according to the purpose

of our lives as ordained by God because of our unfaithfulness and frailties, there is remedy in the school of Christ which should be utilized by us.

PEOPLE'S COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

In general, we tend to evaluate the abilities and incapacities of others when it comes to certain things and it is for this reason that many have failed to pursue their dreams, their calling, and their careers because their limitations have been pointed out by the people close to them. Aside from that, often we prefer to undertake a cause just because our friends and family wants us to, irrespective of what God wants for us. But this should not be the case with us as Christians because the Bible says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). This simply means that whatever decision we make in life should be made to the glory of God. This, of course, can trigger mockery so a constant reminder should be given that




“A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 317. In short, God’s mandate is our mission. As His children, we must fully meet His expectations irrespective of people’s words and opinions about us.

YOU HAD A PURPOSE BEFORE ANYONE HAD AN OPINION

We must be fully aware of the reality that even before we were born, God already had a purpose for our existence. That alone should make us more determined to live according to the purpose of our lives as ordained by Him. Not even our unfaithfulness, frailties, or people’s comments and opinions should make us lose focus on living according to the purpose of our lives because it is not what **we** can do but rather what **God** can do through us, “for with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

What you are doing may seem small and insignificant, and people may not applaud you for it, but there should always be a constant reminder that we are not doing things for men to applaud us. Rather, we should live according to how God wants us to live and work because we are fully aware that we must work the works of him that sent us, while it is day. According to John 9:4,

the night cometh, when no man can work. All of this is possible, only if we adhere to the words of Christ, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). This means that living according to God’s purpose is only possible if we abide in Christ and He in us. “Abiding in Christ means a constant receiving of His Spirit, a life of unreserved surrender to His service. The channel of communication must be open continually between man and his God. As the vine branch constantly draws the sap from the living vine, so are we to cling to Jesus, and receive from Him by faith the strength and perfection of His own character.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 676.

Dear child of God, our Heavenly Father in His omniscience saw it needful, “that man might not lose the blessed results of benevolence, our Redeemer formed the plan of enlisting him as His coworker.”—*The Review and Herald*, August 25, 1874. Therefore, let us utilize this opportunity given us—that should not make us weary in well doing, whether or not people applaud us for what we are doing. Prayerfully and devotedly, let us utilize every opportunity which comes our way, that by God’s grace we may identify our talents and determine how well we can put them to use to live according to the purpose of our existence as ordained by God. Amen! 

Chosen

For a Marvelous Work



by Gabriel Serban

Every time a child is born, we try to observe their personality. At times we may assume that they may become a doctor, another may say they are better fitted for a teacher, so we keep assuming, then when they grow older, they choose something for themselves, which might change numerous times until they reach adulthood. Knowing what course to follow is important both for a meaningful and healthy life. Of John the Baptist we read that even before he was born his parents were informed about the course their son should follow. Of him it is written that “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).

“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord. Just such a work as that which John did, is to be carried on in these last days. . . . In preparing the way for Christ’s first advent, he was a representative of those who are to prepare a people for our Lord’s second coming.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 101.

Since we live in the last moments of this earth’s history, we may be sure that we were born for the same purpose as was John the Baptist. This implies that whatever we do and wherever we go, we should always keep in mind the purpose for which we were born, and prepare ourselves and our children to be fitted for this great work of preparation that is needed prior to the Lord’s appearing.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORK

A HEALTHY MIND AND BODY

As we consider the matter of his work, “John was to go forth as Jehovah’s messenger, to bring to men the light of God. He must give a new direction to their thoughts. He must impress them with the holiness of God’s requirements, and their need of His perfect righteousness. Such a messenger must be holy. He must be a temple for the indwelling Spirit of God. In order to fulfill his mission, he must have a sound physical constitution, and mental and spiritual strength.

Therefore it would be necessary for him to control the appetites and passions. He must be able so to control all his powers that he could stand among men as unmoved by surrounding circumstances as the rocks and mountains of the wilderness.”—*Ibid.*, p. 100.

When the angel came to Zacharias, he also gave him some valuable instruction in regards to his diet: “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15). Why is abstinence from wine and strong drink important in the life of those who prepare the way for Christ’s second coming? Solomon declares that “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1).

“Mental confusion and dullness are often the result of errors in diet.”—*Education*, p. 204. “Peace of mind is lost. There is dissension, strife, and discord. Impatient words are spoken, and unkind deeds are done; dishonest practices are followed, and anger is manifested—and all because the nerves of the brain are disturbed by the abuse heaped on the stomach. . . The affliction of the stomach afflicts the brain.”—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 53.

To Zacharias and Elizabeth was impressed the fact that their son was preparing for a sacred work, and it was important for him to have a healthy diet in order to


be fitted for it. As we consider our generation, we are weaker physically than any previous generation and on the other hand, the enemy with whom we are battling has gained more cunning. Therefore, as we are preparing for the same work, it is important to live a healthy lifestyle, to be always aware of the spiritual warfare and aware of the signs of the times that are fast fulfilling.

EDUCATION

“In the natural order of things, the son of Zacharias would have been educated for the priesthood. But the training of the rabbinical schools would have unfitted him for his work. God did not send him to the teachers of theology to learn how to interpret the Scriptures. He called him to the desert, that he might learn of nature and nature’s God.

“[John] chose to forgo the enjoyments and luxuries of life for the stern discipline of the wilderness. Here his surroundings were favorable to habits of simplicity and self-denial. Uninterrupted by the clamor of the world, he could here study the lessons of nature, of revelation, and of Providence.”—*Ibid.*, p. 101.





As he was preparing for this marvelous work, in the midst of nature, his life “was not spent in idleness, in ascetic gloom, or in selfish isolation. From time to time he went forth to mingle with men; and he was ever an interested observer of what was passing in the world. From his quiet retreat he watched the unfolding of events. With vision illuminated by the divine Spirit he studied the characters of men, that he might understand how to reach their hearts with the message of heaven. The burden of his mission was upon him. In solitude, by meditation and prayer, he sought to gird up his soul for the lifework before him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 102.

As we approach the end times, we realize that to progress in our knowledge of God and prepare for this work, we should look for secluded places in nature where we can be reminded about God’s love and be daily taught by Him. “There is not one family in a hundred who will be improved physically, mentally, or spiritually, by residing in the city. Faith, hope, love, happiness, can far better be gained in retired places, where there are fields and hills and trees.”—*The*

Adventist Home,
p. 137.

Another important aspect in his preparation was the faithful work of his righteous parents. They understood the mission of their son and the responsibility that was in their hands to rightly educate him. Therefore, they kept reminding him about the great work that he must do so he would always bear that in mind whatever decisions he would make: “The words of the angel to Zacharias had been often repeated to John by his Godfearing parents. From childhood his mission had been kept before him, and he had accepted the holy trust.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 101.

Many times, we tend to forget the reasons why we are here, and we need a constant reminder that we are just pilgrims on this earth longing for a better country, and while we are here we are to be used as God’s messengers to prepare the way for the second coming. We need to constantly be reminded about our mission as we go about our daily business. If we keep this thought in our mind, we will notice that our Christian experience would be quite different: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

When the time came, a voice was heard in the wilderness. There are many voices that we hear throughout the day, but what made John's voice so noticeable? With a heart filled with love for sinners, earnestly he called his listeners to a genuine change. "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). This was the voice of God calling sinners to repentance. This voice is heard throughout the Bible spoken by the mouth of His servants. This voice is to sound courageously in this age more than ever before. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1).

John the Baptist was so faithful to his mission that even "Herod was affected as he listened to the powerful, pointed testimonies of John, and with deep interest he inquired what he must do to become his disciple. John was acquainted with the fact that he was about to marry his brother's wife, while her husband was yet living, and faithfully told Herod that this was not lawful."—*Early Writings*, p. 145

John's mission was brief but of great value. Jesus declared that among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist (Luke 7:28). His most precious truth was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). While pointing people to the Savior, he himself looked unto Him

and became transformed. Self was lost in Christ, and he lived for the sole purpose of faithfully fulfilling his mission. Therefore, his success and popularity didn't affect his precious soul. When asked about himself, he was ever pointing to only One, to the Saviour to come, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear. "Looking in faith to the Redeemer, John had risen to the height of **self-abnegation**. He sought not to attract men to himself, but to lift their thoughts higher and still higher, until they should rest upon the Lamb of God. He himself had been only a voice, a cry in the wilderness. Now with joy he accepted silence and obscurity, that the eyes of all might be turned to the Light of life."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 179. [Emphasis added.]

"Thus the Baptist declared God's message to Israel. Many gave heed to his instruction. Many sacrificed all in order to obey. Multitudes followed this new teacher from place to place, and not a few cherished the hope that he might be the Messiah. But as John saw the people turning to him, he sought every opportunity of directing their faith to Him who was to come."—*Ibid.*, p. 108.

PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN

John understood his mission and didn't allow anything to come in between him and the work. When his disciples begun, to follow Jesus he was comforted, knowing that his mission was fulfilled. Soon after that, he was

put into prison and his faith was tried again: "There were hours when **the whisperings of demons tortured his spirit, and the shadow of a terrible fear crept over him.** Could it be that the long-hoped-for Deliverer had not yet appeared? Then what meant the message that he himself had been impelled to bear? John had been bitterly disappointed in the result of his mission. . . . Had it been in vain?"—Ibid., p. 216. It is important to understand that Satan tries to discourage us all at times. Especially as we approach the crisis before us, he will try with all power to make us take our eyes from Jesus and look at self. As John battled with these thoughts, he "would not discuss his doubts and anxieties with his companions. He determined to send a message of inquiry to Jesus."—Ibid.

"And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another" (Luke 7:19)? Graciously came the answer. "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke 7:22). This answer was enough for him to be encouraged again.


"Satan was permitted to cut short the earthly life of God's messenger; but that life which 'is hid with Christ in God,' the destroyer could not reach. Colossians 3:3. Death itself only placed him forever beyond the power of temptation. Though

no miraculous deliverance was granted John, he was not forsaken. He had always the companionship of heavenly angels, who opened to him the prophecies concerning Christ, and the precious promises of Scripture. These were his stay, as they were to be the stay of God's people through the coming ages."—Ibid., p. 224.

CONCLUSION

Although called by God, the prophet needed to grow just like the rest of us. "John had by nature the faults and weaknesses common to humanity, but the touch of divine love had transformed him."—Ibid., p. 179.

There is a weighty work ahead of us and we must be fitted for it both physically and spiritually. John achieved this by daily looking unto the Saviour, being taught by him amid nature. He was an advocate for the commandments of God, he forgot himself and God was able to use him. Likewise today, God will use such people.

"The great subject of reform is to be agitated, and the public mind is to be stirred. Temperance in all things is to be connected with the message, to turn the people of God from their idolatry, their gluttony, and their extravagance in dress and other things."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 62. May the experience in our hearts and homes faithfully reflect that of John the Baptist and his parents! 

A silhouette of Jesus walking with a staff and a lamb on a hill at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a golden glow. Jesus is on the left, walking towards the right, holding a staff. A lamb is on the right, walking towards the left. The background shows rolling hills under a cloudy sky.

Jesus, the Vindicator and Saviour

by Horia Ionita

WHY ALL THE RELIGIONS?

Different religions have varying perspectives on Jesus. These views can range from seeing Him as a revered prophet to acknowledging His existence but denying His divinity. To better understand why it's important to study about Jesus, His life, His role, and the vital impact on our lives, we will first look briefly at how different religions see Him.

Christians regard Jesus Christ as the central figure of their faith. He is seen as the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Saviour who came to Earth, was crucified for the sins of humanity, and rose from the dead, offering salvation and eternal life.

In Judaism, Jesus is not recognized as the Messiah. While some Jews acknowledge Him as a historical figure, His divinity is

not accepted. The differences in beliefs between Judaism and Christianity largely stem from divergent interpretations of messianic prophecies.

In Islam, Jesus (known as 'Isa' in Arabic) is considered one of the great prophets, but not divine. Muslims believe in Jesus' virgin birth and His miracles, and He is highly esteemed as a prophet. However, Islam rejects the Christian concept that He is divine.

The Bahá'í Faith acknowledges Jesus as a manifestation of God, similar to other major religious figures such as Muhammad, Moses, and Buddha. Bahá'ís believe that these manifestations are messengers of God sent to guide humanity at different times.

Hinduism is diverse, and views on Jesus can vary. Some Hindus may see Jesus as a spiritual



teacher or an enlightened soul, while others may not incorporate Him into their religious framework. Hinduism generally accepts diverse paths to the divine.

Buddhism, like Hinduism, is diverse. Some Buddhists may see Jesus as a moral teacher or a compassionate figure, but Buddhism, as a philosophy, does not incorporate a belief in a personal God.

Outside of religious contexts, Jesus is often acknowledged as a historical figure and influential ethical teacher. Secular views might focus on His impact on history, philosophy, and the development of western civilization.

As expected, not everyone agrees on all aspects regarding the divine status of our Lord and Saviour. However, what is important for us, is what we believe for ourselves. From the summary of beliefs stated above, we can see that all religions have heard about Jesus, but do not fully understand Him and His importance. This is one reason

why there are so many religions, false doctrines and false gods.

THE LOVING LAMB

Let us dive deeper into why Jesus is so important to Christians, and why without Him we would not get the chance at redemption. Let us begin by first looking into why we have the privilege of having a Vindicator and Saviour.

In the wonderful book *The Desire of Ages*, we see an interesting description of the state of humanity without the proper understanding of God, and how God in His love addressed the problem: "The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, 'with healing in His wings.' Malachi 4:2."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 22.

In His love, God put into effect the plan of redemption

immediately after Adam and Eve first sinned. The Old Testament pointed to His sacrifice. The lambs slain as payment for sins would not have any value were it not for the sacrifice of the Lamb of God later to take place. Here we see the underlying foundation and reasoning for the offerings: “As [Adam] slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God.... And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty. A star of hope illumined the dark and terrible future and relieved it of its utter desolation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

For two millennia, the planet was dark and gloomy. Humanity, even though it had the prophets and God’s will presented plainly to them, refused to acknowledge its dependence on Him. The context of the tower of Babel repeated itself in the mind and heart of every individual that wanted to go through life alone, believing that a human is powerful enough to sustain itself, and that God is only an afterthought for the masses, for the poor, for the hopeless and helpless. What a pity that this idea has continued to our days!

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Satan’s deceit carries on, having the same old tricks, now seemingly more effective than ever. Morality, logic, and common sense seem to have lost their meaning in current society. The

world seems to be ruled by people still in kindergarten, going directly against the will of God. The idea of self-governing over one’s opinions, practices and beliefs, basically the concept of freedom in itself, has been cast aside these days. Now “society” wants you to adopt their little laws, their little doctrines, their false gods. Many assume the authority that belongs solely to God. They enforce their will on others, and present their laws as being God’s commands. They strip the freedom that defines God and instead put in its place fear and blind obedience to false commandments. After all, this is what Satan wanted—to present God in a dark light, to deceive people into following Him and His will as being a better alternative. And what a powerful lie that was. The plot is to hide total control under the impression of free will, under the slogan “you are good enough, you can do anything, there is no one that can tell you your limits.” That would be correct, if only we would have Jesus—we are wonderful creatures with true potential, but only with Him and in Him. Without Him, we are lying to ourselves that we are doing fine, when in fact we are blindly following false leaders. We are influenced by the media and by others that pretend to fulfill God’s will, pretend to know Him and lead us to Him, when in fact we are going farther and farther away from His will. By not developing a personal relationship

with God, one is following Satan. There are many flocks, but only one has the proper Shepherd—the one that cares for all His sheep and seeks for the lost and cares for them. All other flocks, although they may seem very different—each one apparently having their spiritual and political leaders—will in fact turn out to be the same big flock that will find itself on the wrong side, being told that God does not know them, being under the command of Satan himself.

Why would anyone choose the illusion of free will when they can indeed be free?! We like to think we have power—we want to vote for our leaders, we want to decide our future. But too often we put our hopes in the hands of corrupt people, who once in power raise themselves above God, leading us astray. History repeats itself, even if the context looks different. There is in fact no difference in blindly following Pharaoh, Caesar, Hitler, the Pope, current presidents, or other so-called gurus or opinion-leaders. Even if the people feel the grip of power on their necks or they do not under the illusion of democracy, that same rage for enforcing Satan's will upon the creation of God was and will always be there, in his puppets.

TRUE FREEDOM

God's creation was and will always be free. God has heaven and earth as witness to the choice that all creation has: we

can choose life, or we can choose death. (See Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.) It is completely our choice, and of course, the consequences that will follow will depend on our decision. However, God's advice to us is to choose life—to choose Him, who is the Creator of Life. Many wonder how an all-loving Father would let His children choose something else other than good. Yet, freedom of will is at the foundation of God's character. Through His tremendous love for us, He does not enforce that love on us. We need to choose His love, and do His will freely, out of our love for Him. Therefore, He offers us a choice. The consequences of that choice will be the manifestation of both His love and justice.

God sent His only Son to our world to redeem us and reconnect us to Him. Jesus came to our dark world so that we would have in Him not only a Vindicator, but also a Saviour.

OUR PREDICAMENT

We, so many generations after Eden, surely have no chance at saving ourselves. For this reason, a Saviour was needed, and through God's grace, a Saviour was provided to us. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 it is written "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It was not a simple process. Angels wanted to sacrifice themselves to fulfill the plan of redemption, but that would not be sufficient.

“I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

To save humanity, its Creator was needed. Creation gets life from the Creator alone.

Jesus said in John 10 verses 17, 18: “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” Christ being life itself, had the power to lay down His own life, and take it back again because the Father commanded Him to do so. Why is this an important clarification for us?

AN AMAZING SAVIOUR

Is it fair for a man on a scooter to set the time record for a marathon lap? Is it fair for a man in a powered boat to set the goal on how fast some swimmers would have to swim uphill in a river? Would it be fair for a bird to mock a fish because it cannot fly? Probably you would find these examples absurd. But it’s amazing to realize that the same power that our merciful Jesus has He is able and willing to provide to us as well. Hebrews 2:14 states that “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death

he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” Moreover, Romans 8:3 says “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” offers the same idea. What is the central point here? Jesus came to earth with the same nature that we as humans have, yet He depended on His Father for strength, as we can, too.

“As one of us [Jesus] was to give an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. . . . Jesus was ‘in all points tempted like as we are’ (Hebrews 4:15). He endured every trial to which we are subject. And He exercised in His own behalf no power that is not freely offered to us. As man, He met temptation, and overcame in the strength given Him from God. He says, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart’ (Psalm 40:8). As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God’s law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24.

“[Jesus] endured every trial to which we are subject.
And He exercised in His own behalf no power
that is not freely offered to us.”

Jesus was the Son of God; therefore His greatest temptation was to refrain Himself from using His divine power, because He could have done so any time He wanted. His public work, after His baptism, after fasting for forty days, started with Satan tempting Him to prove Himself with some miracles in front of him. When Jesus was physically and mentally the weakest, or exhausted, He pointed Satan to God. He knew that He was the Son of God, and therefore had no reason to prove Himself to Satan, through some miracles that would help no one. He had made Himself like us. He appealed to the power of the Father, a power that we have access to as well. This means that He acted in a way in which we, too, can act. Therefore, at the same time He was both vindicating the loving and just character of God, while also becoming our Saviour. God's Law is just, the requirements of the Law are possible to be fulfilled, and He paid the punishment of our breaking of the Law and strengthens us to obey it.

HE UNDERSTANDS US!

To attain salvation, the requirements are simple: accept Jesus as your Saviour. He gives us strength to resist temptation.

It's not enough to hear about Jesus and smile at the idea of redemption. What we need to do is to actually meet Jesus, to develop a personal relationship with Him, so that it is not us that can be seen, but His life in us. Only by accepting Him in our hearts does He become the Vindicator and Saviour. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12). It is really that simple.

My wish and prayer for us all is to accept the Son, to accept Jesus. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). In the world there are many religions, many churches, many gurus, many leaders, and although all of them are pretending to lead people to God, we sadly understand that the world is still in darkness. Not because there is no light, but because they refuse it. When we accept it, we become God's mirrors spreading that Light into the lives of others, so that when they are watching us, they do not see us anymore, but our Saviour, and our Vindicator, because He is in us, and we identify with Him. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). 🌟



by Isaac
Terceros

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

A different and innovative type of event was developed by the music ministry of our church during the summer of 2023. The goal? To explore the power of music to preach the gospel and inspire as many souls as possible throughout the world.

To provide a little background, this mission trip was the fruition of the many music camps, music schools, music retreats and seminars organized in different parts of the world in the last few years. The music ministry in our church flourished, and our musicians were now ready to take a step further in this work. As a result of inspiring our children and youth to learn music and use their talents to God, we are now blessed with

a new generation of young talents that have decided to devote their lives to music as their profession. God gave them unique and impressive talents, and they play their instrument at the highest level of musicianship. Although scattered in different countries, they face the challenges of the profession, and strive to make their living through music. A selected number of these musicians were invited to volunteer their time and energies serving as members of the SDARM GC Symphony Orchestra and travel to three locations around the world: California, Virginia and Italy.

THE MISSION OF THE MUSIC MISSION TRIP:

The Music Mission Trip aims to take the SDARM GC Symphony Orchestra, composed of 40+ advanced musicians from all around the world, to three different locations with the purpose of developing a variety of programs and/or activities to be used for missionary work such as concerts, music videos, podcasts, spiritual conferences etc., as well as motivate and inspire local musicians to be part of the project as they use their talents for the honor and glory of God.

MUSIC AS A MISSIONARY TOOL

Is it even possible to use music as a missionary tool? Although the answer could be very straightforward, let's consider a few statements from the Spirit of Prophecy in this regard:

"[Music] is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth."—*Education*, p. 168.

"The melody of song, poured forth from many hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's instrumentalities in the work of saving souls."—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 493.

"There are few means more effective for fixing His words in the memory than repeating them in song. And such song has wonderful power."—*Evangelism*, p. 496

"Let the talent of singing be brought into the work. The use of musical instruments is not at all objectionable. These were used in religious services in ancient times. The worshipers praised God upon the harp and cymbal, and music should have its place in our services. It will add to the interest."—Letter 132, 1898.

"In the meetings held, let a number be chosen to take part



in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted; for it is the praise of God in song.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 144.

“I am glad to hear the musical instruments that you have here. God wants us to have them. He wants us to praise Him with heart and soul and voice, magnifying His name before the world.”—*The Review and Herald*, June 15, 1905.

Indeed, music is a powerful tool for missionary work. Through music, we can offer a service for the community, we can inspire people, we can change lives, we can preach the gospel in a new and very effective way. Music can be an incredibly significant way to enrich many aspects to everybody’s lives and make people more sensible to the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, music could be effective not only to impact souls outside the fold still to be reached by a heartwarming entering wedge, but also a way to connect other musicians, as well as artistic, academic and

social groups that we would not influence otherwise.

THE REFORMATION SYMPHONY

Hymn arrangements and sacred songs were part of our repertoire; however, the main and most challenging piece was, certainly, the Reformation Symphony. This is a piece written by Christian composer Felix Mendelssohn and it was inspired by Martin Luther’s famous hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” He wrote this piece when he was only 21 years old as a celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Today, this is one of the most celebrated works of the orchestral repertoire and it is performed by orchestras all over the world. In this event, it was the very first time in the history of our church, when musicians from our institution performed this masterwork.

It was our purpose that the Reformation Symphony and all the other pieces we performed offered an opportunity to reflect on the role of music in the history of our church, the work of Martin Luther, the reformers and the Adventist pioneers, the



prophecies, but most specially, to have an opportunity to thank God for the special and beautiful gift of music, and its tremendous power to preach the gospel.

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

- Colombia
- Brazil
- Peru
- Honduras
- Bolivia
- Chile
- Australia
- Canada
- United States
- Portugal
- Spain
- United Kingdom
- Poland
- Hungary
- Serbia
- Croatia
- Italy
- Romania

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

- 6 concerts in 3 weeks in three different locations (California, Virginia, and Italy)
- 8 mission visits: including home visits, nursing/retirement communities, and an orphanage
- 8 studio productions
- 24 musicians travelled together to all three locations and were joined by local musicians.
- 150 young people dedicated their time and talents to God
- 1000 souls inspired by our concerts around the world

FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Inspired by the Reformation Symphony, the work of Martin Luther, the Reformers and the Advent pioneers, we would like to create our own professional

symphony orchestra. This would be an institution that could have an impact in the community beyond the borders of our buildings. It would be an orchestra that could serve the community and inspire many lives everywhere and that would give the opportunity to young and professional musicians from our church to make a living (or at least part of their living) through the ministry of music. It would be an orchestra that would keep the Sabbath and also open the possibility to do missionary work with other musicians that are not part of our church yet, but that also observe the Sabbath. With an orchestra like this, we will be promoting values, ideals and principles like no other institution in the world. Moreover, we will be promoting and supporting a unique profession that will last for eternity.

GRATITUDE

We express our gratitude to God for all the amazing experiences during this event. We thank him for all the places visited and all the new friendships developed. Thanks also to all the musicians and brethren who made this event possible, especially our generous sponsors and the local fields and churches for their invaluable support and hospitality. We hope that listening to music, singing together, and playing our instruments offered everyone moments of inspiration, delight and encouragement for your daily life, as well as for your spiritual journey. 🎵

“IYC Spain—one of the best experiences so far.”

—Aldo from Mexico

Life is made of little things. However, every now and then, God gives us an opportunity to take part in something significant, something that we will remember for a long time and that will affect the course of our lives. An International Youth Convention (IYC) this summer was one of those experiences.

“It was truly a transformational time,”

—Georgi from Switzerland

The location was in Ciudad Real, a city in

a dry area of Castilla-La Mancha in central Spain. The setting of the IYC was a quiet Christian campus called Betania. While this area of Spain is normally very hot and dry in summer, we enjoyed good weather in a green oasis with plenty of natural shade. This environment of isolation from everyday things of the world contributed to the overall experience.

“The Holy Spirit was definitely in our midst this week,”

—Jason from USA

We are thankful to the Lord that so many young people

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CONVENTION IN SPAIN

BY OZREN BURISA



attended the convention. We know it took serious efforts by some. Others had real challenges that had to be solved before they could arrive. But God opened the door and finally around 250 people made it to the IYC. We pray that the experiences from that week will have a positive and a lasting impact on their lives.

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THIS IYC?

We were privileged in many different ways during the week from Monday, August 28 until Sunday, September 3.

What made this Youth Convention a truly international event was the attendance of young people from 26 different countries. The biggest group came from the host country of Spain, followed by groups from the United States of America, Germany and the United Kingdom. We were also very happy that smaller groups came from distant countries like Mexico, Peru, Canada, Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador. Finally, visitors came from different parts of Europe contributing to the representation of 26 countries.

This was a week-long event and most young people attended from its beginning on Monday. While it is a blessing to spend even just the Sabbath with other believers from around the world, it was a much more profound experience being in that environment for the entire week.

Next, we were privileged to have 3 speakers from the General Conference - brethren Adrian Finaru, David Zic and John Baer. Each of them explored the theme of transformation in a unique way and provided a different perspective on the topic.

Music was also one of the elements that will be remembered. On Sabbath morning, exactly 100 young people formed the international youth choir and presented beautiful songs.

Finally, the IYC logo came to life on Friday as we embarked on a hiking excursion, visiting a traditional Spanish windmill situated on a picturesque hill in Fuente el Fresno.

BE TRANSFORMED

The key verse of this event is found in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

This topic was covered through a series of morning classes and evening sermons. Students were divided into 3 groups and every morning they had 3 hours of studies, rotating from one speaker to another.

Brother John Baer explored the topic of physical transformation. Every morning, he shared lots of new information about how the body can be transformed, talking about homeostasis, the human microbiome, and how our 5 senses

serve as a portal for divine input. In the evening, he talked about the human addiction of wanting to be right—and on the Sabbath, he explored our brain and the topic of restoration of our mind. We can choose to serve God and surrender our will to Him.

“Stay in balance,”

—John Baer

Brother David Zic taught on the subject of spiritual transformation. During morning studies in groups, he explored the way our mind works, getting into harmony with the will of God and how our human interactions change in the process. On Sabbath evening, he talked about the transformative touch of Christ, explaining how faith is a starting point and not a conclusion to the Christian journey. The ultimate goal of spiritual transformation is to have the mind of Christ.

“May the Lord continue to lead you all in the transformative process of growing from faith to faith,”

—David Zic

Brother Adrian Finaru spoke about the practical transformation in life. Through a series of 3 morning studies, he talked about the life of Jesus on this earth and the lessons about the influence of our daily decisions, our important

choices, and our dedication in life. On Sabbath morning, he explained how we have different backgrounds, some of us not so favorable, but how an encounter with Jesus reveals to us the purpose in life which transforms everything.

“Take a moment to look at Jesus and you will see in yourself a man or a woman with a purpose,”

—Adrian Finaru

Young people were impressed by the messages and some made important decisions.

“I was grateful for being here in Ciudad Real and for the opportunity and the things we learned or relearned with brother Adrian Finaru, brother David Zic and brother John Baer,”

—Moises from Portugal

PRAYING TOGETHER

Each morning was a special occasion to pray in small groups. This was an opportunity to talk about the importance of prayer and about our needs. After a short study, we would split into groups of 3 and everyone prayed. Although this was an optional part of the program scheduled before sunrise, young people felt the need for prayer and there was a decent number of participants each day.

The next part of the program were morning worship studies presented by the following young people: Emanuel from Spain, Magdiel from Germany, Lara from the UK, Gianni from the USA and Eduardo from Mexico. The topics ranged from contrasting conformation with transformation, understanding the need to work on the transformation of others, having a new heart created, bringing forth fruits of transformation, and having the experience of Christ living in us. This part of the program was attended by everyone and was a way to start the day with a prayer.

SINGING TOGETHER

Music is important. While this was not a musical seminar and the morning classes had no singing, the rest of the day was quite different with choir practice in the afternoon and concerts and free singing in the evenings.

On Tuesday evening, we all gathered in the open air to hear an instrumental concert and enjoy refreshing lemonade. On Thursday we gathered while singing under the open skies. There was no need to leave the premises, as everyone wanted to stay on the campus and

enjoy evening activities with each other.

We were blessed to have brother Isaac Terceros from the GC Music Department. While it seemed to be impossible for him to return to Europe after having led a recent musical event in Italy, God opened the door and he spent the week with us, practicing with the choir and teaching about music.

The songs were presented in both English and Spanish, and the recordings left us with a beautiful reminder of the time at the IYC. The songs presented, “*Si mi pueblo*,” “*In the Name of the Lord*,” and “*The Glory and Majesty of His Name*” can be found online. However, presentation is just a small part of it. The experience of rehearsing was special. I know that some young people sang like never before and they experienced music in a new way.

“Thank you for having pushed us to go further and further with our voices and for having given us the desire and the confidence to do better,”

—Myriam from France



Closing this section with a desire we all share:

“God gave the gift of singing to everyone, and I believe that we need to learn how to use it in the best way possible for His Honor and Glory. (...) I hope you will be ready to sing in Heaven for all eternity,”

—Isaac Terceros

LIVING TOGETHER

One could listen to the sermons or hear songs online. But what can't be transmitted is the friendship experience. Thanks to the condensed time of study in the morning, there was plenty of free time in the afternoons. New and old friends spent time together in long conversations, organized games and sports activities. We learned from each other and bonded through active experiences.

“I am very glad to have met you all, you have given me a great life experience,”

—Milan from Germany

WHY SHOULD YOU GO TO THE NEXT IYC?

You missed this event? If God permits and gives us time, there will be other similar events in the future. You are guaranteed to meet new people and have your life enriched through those friendships. While we may tend to be superficial and shallow in the routine of everyday life, such events will provide you with depth of studies and plenty of opportunities to deepen your understanding of the Word of God.

You will gain new experiences. Many people went out of their comfort zone doing things they've never done before such as giving lectures, translating, praying in public or singing in a big choir. Since this type of event offers a time of isolation from the world, it is a great opportunity to grow in faith and receive blessings that are hard to imagine.

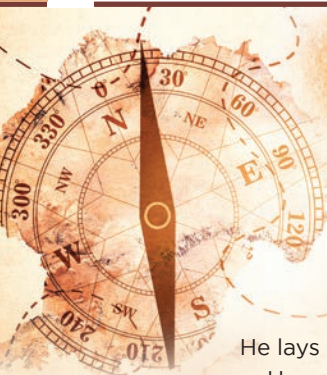
We hope you've had and we pray you will have similar experiences in the future. 🌍

Editor Adrian Finaru, **Layout** Bethany Muresan.

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praying for his purpose

He lays his old, rebellious weapons down,
He casts his trailing colors in the dust;
He supplicates the scepter, throne, and crown
He once despised, with penitential trust.
He now abandons that which he had sought;
His prayer—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"
With holy purpose and contrition fraught;
Has higher aims and nobler ends in view.
"Behold he prayeth"—suing for relief,
Regards his former course with poignant grief.

He pleads for favor like a loyal soul,
He seeks to please Him whom he once did wrong;
His needle's instinct seeks its proper pole,
And thitherward he turns with hope and song.
Behold the man is changed! What can he do,
But follow his convictions to the end?
He has become in Christ a creature new,
And in Him found a constant, faithful Friend,
"Behold he prayeth,"—trusting in God's grace,
He enters now his upward, pilgrim race.

by John Wm. Stein (adapted)
Based on Acts 9:11