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On October 11, 2019, Elder Idel Suarez, Jr., visited California and preached God's word to the people on matters of disaster. The church in Riverside, California, hosted the services for the weekend. Before beginning his service on Sabbath, he gave greetings from the Livingston, Georgia, church. There are about 40 churches in the IMS in the U.S., and Elder Suarez included wonderful news in his salutation. It was a joy for all to hear that God's message is being carried to more states. Besides the new church in Livingston, Georgia, new churches have been established in Ohio and Michigan; this is a blessing indeed. "... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:16), Jesus said to His disciples. May God bless all of our beloved laborers who are giving Heaven's message to others around the world.

On this particular weekend, a fire had erupted in the Los Angeles area due to a power line; the fire was named "Saddle Ridge Fire." Freeways were closed, it was reported that 8,391 acres were burned, and thousands of residents had to evacuate their homes. Elder Suarez used this event as the backdrop of his message. He began by asking, "Why does God permit fires?" Opening the Holy Scriptures to Isaiah 5:24, he read: "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." When God's holy law is not obeyed, when people

depart from His commandments and statutes, disaster comes and consumes their property. Elder Suarez told the congregation to look at the meaning of this verse as well as that of Isaiah 24:5-6: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." Such fires are a message to everyone that the word of God is being broken and we must change. We must return to God.

Furthermore, another disaster has broken out, and it sparks a warning from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) of an epidemic that is occurring in the United States. Elder Suarez referred to the great problem that has arisen from STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) among young people, also referred to as STIs (sexually transmitted infections). The CDC reported that Americans aged 15-24 constitute the population with the highest sexual activity and represent 50 percent of all sexually transmitted diseases. Among these diseases are gonorrhea, chlamydia, genital herpes, AIDS, and syphilis. Every year there is a rise in the number of reported cases of these diseases, the most recent being 2.4 million. Sadly, this affects especially the female population, as every year 24 thousand young women become infertile as a result of diseases transmitted by many partners. A typical American female has 6-8 sexual partners before she marries. "We have reached the time of Sodom and Gomorrah," said Elder Suarez.

1 Corinthians 7:2 contains the solution for this terrible situation: "Nevertheless,

to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Furthermore, "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." 1 Corinthians 7:9. The modern world no longer uses the term "fornication." Instead, such illicit relationships are called an "affair" or a "fling." Many young people in this world are burning—suffering greatly—due to promiscuity, and faithfulness in marriage is given less and less respect and honor. There are two institutions that were highly regarded in Eden; one is the Sabbath, and the other is marriage. They were both given as gifts from God, and they are the ones that Satan most wants to destroy. Society will continue to degrade and defy these two institutions until the second coming of Christ. We read in 1 Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." The issue of STD/STIs is the biggest danger among young people in the United States; and if we do not educate the young people in our churches concerning this matter, they will be influenced by the world.

Let us also consider 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20: "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." How are we taking care of our bodies? They are to honor God, from what we ingest to what we wear. Thus we show that we honor God and truly represent what we claim to be—Christians.

We cannot be Christians only for the Wednesday, Friday, and Sabbath services



*Elder Idel Suarez, Jr.*

# Disaster Outbreaks

and then be careless and part of the world on the other four days of the week. We must be faithful representatives of Jesus in every respect, including on social media. If we claim to be Seventh-day Adventists of the International Missionary Society, Reform Movement, then we must believe that we are and really live out our beliefs.

What about modesty? Elder Suarez referred to the royal families of Spain and England; they adhere to a specific protocol on how the princes and princesses are to dress, and behave. How much more are we, as princes and princesses of God, called to adhere to the high ideals of God's royal priesthood? Personally, from the thoughts presented by Elder Suarez, I have a new appreciation for dress reform with its modesty and decency, for I am a child of God, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, the King of kings!

Furthermore, in Hosea 1:2, God told the prophet: "... Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord." One may think, This does not apply to me; I am not in this "fornication" category. But fornication does not apply only to illicit relationships. It also applies to the action of departing from God, departing from His law mentally or spiritually to participate in other things that occupy the mind. We can learn from Hosea's marriage, for he bought Gomer as a slave so that she would no longer be in fornication. Their marriage was saved, and he forgave her. Is this not what God does with us? He buys us from sin, from evil, forgives us, reconciles us, and tells us that He will now walk with us so that we do not fall into such evil again.

It is human nature to follow in the steps of one's parents, committing sin and indulging in vices, such as alcohol, fornication, thievery, etc. But with Christ, while there is life, there is hope to break these chains, to be freed, and to be saved.

Elder Suarez's final message to the congregation was this: "Dear youth, dear children, dear adults, let us carry out our purpose to honor God and keep His law by His grace." Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself. Make the same resolution, and decide to keep yourself pure and holy. We must repeat this purpose to ourselves daily.

There will be more fires to come and conquer, and it depends on us as parents, ministers, educators, and leaders, to call everyone to place himself and herself under the wings of Jesus. Under His wings He will give salvation. In Him there is forgiveness and a new beginning. May God bless you all!

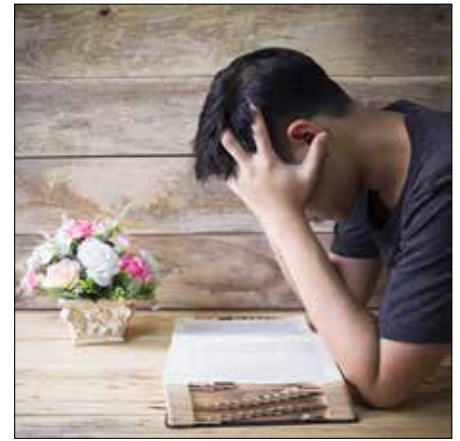
# Gratitude amid Trials and Tribulations

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There was once a young lady who felt that it was impossible for her ever to be happy again. She had been a happy child, a cheerful teen, and a contented young adult. One day she decided to give herself to Jesus, just as she had been raised to believe. After her baptism, she never anticipated that there would be so many temptations and so much tribulation. Hanging on, she experienced so much gossip, so many expectations, and so much work that, all of a sudden, her life became so overwhelming that she often failed to pray and eventually fell into a dark pit of despair.

Everyone told her, "Pray more," "Trust God," "Have patience to wait for God's answer," and "Trust and obey, for there's no other way." To her, such words were frustrating. In fact, they became so frustrating that she gave up and refused to listen to anyone anymore. She seemed to be in a dark world; and the things that happened seemed insurmountable to her, to the point where she began to believe that God was no longer with her. She felt so distant from Jesus that she soon had thoughts of leaving everything behind and running away. But where would she go? With nowhere to go, she attended church every Sabbath, but that was not a joy her, for she felt completely disconnected. She fulfilled her church responsibilities, but it felt like a huge burden; she found herself complaining at times. She failed to be thankful during her trials and tribulations.

This is what Satan does to us when we leave unoccupied spaces open to temptation in our hearts, minds, and lives and are not constantly in prayer. The importance of a reborn life with Jesus is not just to fulfill God's law, but to believe it, live it, and be happy in it. When we fall in various trials



and temptations, what does God tell us to do? "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." James 1:2, 3.

There are days when we feel overwhelmed and want to give up, so we must hold tightly to Jesus' hand. Some may ask, "How can I count any of this joy?" For starters, prayer is extremely important. It is joyful to go through these things, because during these hardships, we gain patience, inner peace, and the ability be a blessing to others through God living within us. More importantly, God is refining us and preparing us for greater things ahead. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;..." 1 Peter 4:12, 13.

In our sinful human nature, we try to control every situation, taking matters into our own hands and not letting God control. This is why we fail! Our minds are totally weak when compared to that of God, who can do anything, even that which is impossible for man. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Often it is hard to believe this promise. Why? Because, with our weak minds and sinful natures, we think we can just pray once and then all of our problems will be gone within months, weeks, days, or even an instant. While this may be true in some cases, those whose prayers are not answered so quickly may feel lost and stop praying. Then, the tempter comes, and it is easy to yield and fall into sin. Once we fall, we are led into utter loss and darkness, becoming one of Satan's subjects and feeling hopeless.

In the words of the apostle Paul, our Heavenly Father, who loves us very much and gave us His only begotten Son, says, "Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

I want to emphasize the words “without ceasing,” because we tend to forget what this actually means. To not cease means exactly that—not to stop praying! If we are exhausted and want to fall and cry, pray. If an individual prays, he feels better. Then, a few minutes or hours later, he feels weak again, which can happen in cases of terrible tribulation, so the individual must pray yet again.

When we leave our hearts and wounds wide open, without instant prayer, we are allowing evil to come inside us; and this brings us to bitterness, resentment, and, even more, revenge. We must realize that, by themselves, our hearts and minds are corrupt; we need God to control them. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” Proverbs 4:23. Sister Ellen G. White wrote about diligent heart-keeping: “In the work of heart-keeping we must be instant in prayer, unwearied in petitioning the throne of grace for assistance. Those who take the name of Christian should come to God in earnestness and humility, pleading for help. The Saviour has told us to pray without ceasing. The Christian can not always be in the position of prayer, but his thoughts and desires can always be upward. Our self-confidence would vanish, did we talk less and pray more.” —(*The Youth’s Instructor*, March 5, 1903) *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 9.” This is what it means to give all to Christ in prayer, without ceasing. When we pass through trials and tribulations, being constantly in prayer makes it possible to walk through everything humbly and happily.

There are important lessons to learn from the life of Jesus, our greatest example. You see, Jesus grew up in Nazareth, which was known to be a very corrupt place. Even though He went through trials and tribulations and was severely tempted, He always remained happy and in constant prayer to His Father in heaven. He was not excluded from what we must endure when tribulations come to us; He knows exactly everything that we experience. “Jesus was placed where His character would be tested. It was necessary for Him to be constantly on guard in order to preserve His purity. He was subject to all conflicts which we have to meet, that He might be an example to us in childhood, youth, and manhood.” —(*The Desire of Ages*, p. 71. Just as Jesus was placed where He would be tested, so are we. He chose not to sin or waiver in faith. Will you choose the same?

Furthermore, about His life, Sister White writes: “Christ was the only sinless one

who ever dwelt on earth; yet for nearly thirty years He lived among the wicked inhabitants of Nazareth. This fact is a rebuke to those who think themselves dependent upon place, fortune, or prosperity, in order to live a blameless life. Temptation, poverty, adversity, is the very discipline needed to develop purity and firmness.” —(*The Desire of Ages*, p. 72. This proves that in trial, tribulation, and temptation, there is no way to excuse sin, for we have the privilege to be in constant communication with God. We have the opportunity to thank Him for these hardships, for they bring us to our knees, give us peace, strength, and trust in God, and eventually produce in us the fruit of the spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. When we fully rely on Jesus in faith, we will be able to claim what the apostle Paul did: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

When Christ abides within us, we are no longer constantly thinking about ourselves; we no longer suffer or complain; we do not get angry; rather the Holy Spirit controls every thought, action, and impulse. We are no longer in control ourselves but let God control everything; and we live free, happy, sinless lives and abide in Christ. “He possessed a dignity and individuality wholly distinct from earthly pride and assumption; He did not strive for worldly greatness, and in even the lowliest position He was content.” —(*The Desire of Ages*, p. 88.

The young woman mentioned at the beginning of this article started to pray and search the Bible more to find mercy and hope again in Jesus Christ and to feel the joy of her first love in Christ. She prayed for God to search her heart once again and longed for a thankful, joyful walk with Jesus—not so she could take control but so God would take control of her, that she would be calm, at peace, and happy through trials. She has learned about Jesus’ life and the importance of why we must go through trials and tribulations. She now seeks Him in prayer willingly, and the Sabbath is a delight to her and a day of rest from her busy week. In addition, she is learning to give all of her burdens to Jesus and walk uprightly with Him. How amazing it is to learn to have a faith that has a blessed assurance when we learn truly to seek Jesus!

“The Word does not say that we are to count it all joy when we fall under temptation, but when we fall into temptation. It is not necessary to fall under temptation, for temptation comes upon us for the trying of our faith. And the trying of our faith worketh patience, not fretfulness and murmuring. If we put our trust in Jesus, He will keep us at all times, and will be our strength and shield. We are to learn valuable lessons from our trials. Paul says, ‘We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope....’ Romans 5:3-5.

“Many seem to think that it is impossible not to fall under temptation, that they have no power to overcome, and they sin against God with their lips, talking discouragement and doubt instead of faith and courage. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He said, ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.’ John 14:30. What does this mean? It means that the prince of evil could find no vantage ground in Christ for his temptation. And so it may be with us....

“When we talk discouragement and gloom Satan listens with fiendish joy, for it pleases him to know that he has brought us into his bondage. Satan cannot read our thoughts, but he can see our actions, hear our words, and from his long knowledge of the human family he can shape his temptations to take advantage of our weak points of character. And how often do we let him into the secret of how he may obtain the victory over us!

“We must learn to come to God in any and every emergency, as a child would come to its parents.... Don’t go to others with your trials and temptations; God alone can help you. If you fulfill the conditions of God’s promises, the promises will be fulfilled to you.... You will have an anchor to the soul both sure and steadfast.” —(*That I May Know Him*, p. 279.



# Pope Calls for Global Educational Alliance

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“... And all the world wondered after the beast.” Revelation 13:3.

**O**n Thursday, September 12, 2019, Pope Francis issued a video about uniting all of the world’s leaders and invites them to sign a global pact to re-educate the young people of the world. The 18-minute video details the written formalities of this pact and explains why this world needs to be re-educated.

The date set for this pact to be signed is May 14, 2020. In the video, Pope Francis speaks about the environment and all the negative things happening to it, such as global warming, and how re-education can make the world a better place in which to live. He references his Encyclical of 2015 which states, “On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the ‘first day’ of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord’s risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality. It also proclaims ‘man’s eternal rest in God.’”

Furthermore this Encyclical states: “The law of weekly rest forbade work on the seventh day, ‘so that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your maidservant, and the stranger, may be refreshed’ (Exodus 23:12). Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centred on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor” (par. 237).

Pope Francis calls urgently for everyone to cooperate for the “common home,” meaning the world in which everyone lives. He calls for a “new humanism.” So far, it is yet to be seen how the world’s leaders will respond to this invitation, which is to take place at the Vatican. Pope Francis also expresses how this world is divided and a restoration to unity must

take place. He also mentions an old African Proverb: “it takes a whole village to educate a child,” meaning that it would take the leaders of the nations coming together as the village and training the children who are still young. What this entire video for yourself, for there you will see a lot more information that is very relevant to our time: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n31h1ACrUDA>. This video contains a commentary to further explain Pope Francis’ goals on globalization.

“WAKE UP!” was the phrase used by Elders Neptali Acevedo and Idel Suarez when the news about the proposed globalization pact was related in our churches. “It is happening now!” was the phrase used by Elder Henry Dering when he sent this news to my email inbox along with the video.

This is world news. We are getting closer and closer to the end. As the days pass, we should be more excited and eager for the Lord’s second coming! Let us continue in prayer always, for this news is not intended to frighten us but to wake us up, because what is happening now this has been written and studied about within the church for many years

What we read about in the divine Scriptures is coming to pass before our very eyes. The servant of the Lord writes: “Already preparations are advancing, and movements are in progress, which will result in making an image to the beast. Events will be brought about in the earth’s history that will fulfill the predictions of prophecy for these last days.” –*Review and Herald*, April 23, 1889.

Furthermore, “The man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, and who has always oppressed the people of God, will cause laws to be made enforcing the observance of the first day of the week. But God’s people are to stand firm for Him. And the Lord will work in their behalf, showing plainly that He is the God of gods.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 230.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us be firm in faith and quick in understanding, study His divine word, and remain instant in prayer for one another. Read Romans 8:35-39, for these verse ignite courage: “Who shall sep-

arate us from the love of Christ?” “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Amen! Cling to Jesus’ promise: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.” Revelation 3:21.

“... Near the close of earth’s harvest, a special bestowal of spiritual grace is promised to prepare the church for the coming of the Son of man. This outpouring of the Spirit is likened to the falling of the latter rain; and it is for this added power that Christians are to send their petitions to the Lord of the harvest ‘in the time of the latter rain.’ In response, ‘the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain.’ Zechariah 10:1. ‘He will cause to come down ... the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain.’ Joel 2:23.

“But unless the members of God’s church today have a living connection with the Source of all spiritual growth, they will not be ready for the time of reaping. Unless they keep their lamps trimmed and burning, they will fail of receiving added grace in times of special need.” –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 55.

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