

HAPPY NEW YEAR American Union Newsletter

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A New Year, a New Beginning

Athai Finch, American Union Newsletter Editor, Valencia, California

Dearest brothers and sisters in the faith, Greetings from the book of Galatians: “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” Galatians 1:3.

Happy New Year!! It is with joy that I welcome all of you, from the eldest to the youngest, to 2018. Another year has again passed; and as we begin 2018, I hope everyone is as excited as I am to enter into more blessings from above. It is my desire and hope that with this introductory letter we feel a new beginning, a new breath of fresh air.

Many blessings were bestowed upon us in 2017, especially with baptisms. A baptism is also another beginning to an entirely new life, a renewed life in Jesus Christ! If anyone is struggling with grief, spiritual weakness, trials, and hardships, let us not dwell on these things but remember what God has promised us: Nothing is insurmountable if we have faith. Do not let the trials and hardships weaken your spirit, but look up to God and tell Him, “Whatever You want, whatever Your way is for me, it will be well with me, for You will guide me.” Then trust that He will. It is easier said than done, but I can testify that with patience, perseverance, and prayer, God will reveal His power to you.

Not long ago, I was at a Barnes and Noble Bookstore and came across a book of daily devotions. I

was not intending to purchase it; I was just curious to see what the author had written for a whole year. The book is called *Jesus Calling*, and I only read the first devotion, for January 1. It said: “Come to Me with a reachable spirit, eager to be changed. A close walk with Me is a life of continual newness. Do not cling to old ways as you step into a new year. Instead, seek My face with an open mind, knowing that your journey with Me involves being transformed by the renewing of your mind. As you focus your thoughts on Me, be aware that I am fully attentive to you. I see you with a steady eye because My attention span is infinite. I know and understand you completely; My thoughts embrace you in everlasting Love. –Young p. 3. The reference verses used for this devotional reading were a reminder that God’s love is infinite.

Psalm 27:8: “When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.” Many times we kneel down and seek God when we need something; we seek Him for our wants and then complain when our prayers are not answered. How about trying a different approach in 2018? Let’s practice seeking His face. God already knows our lives and our hearts. Let’s apply the concept of seeking His face and petitioning Him to guide us, rather than just telling Him what we want or expect. Seeking God does not mean asking for what we

want or making demands of heavenly Father. Seeking Him means that we make a full commitment to Him and say, "God, you already know what I want. I see no way out. Guide me, and tell me what you want me to do." And with patience and daily prayer, let's watch in silence and see what God reveals.

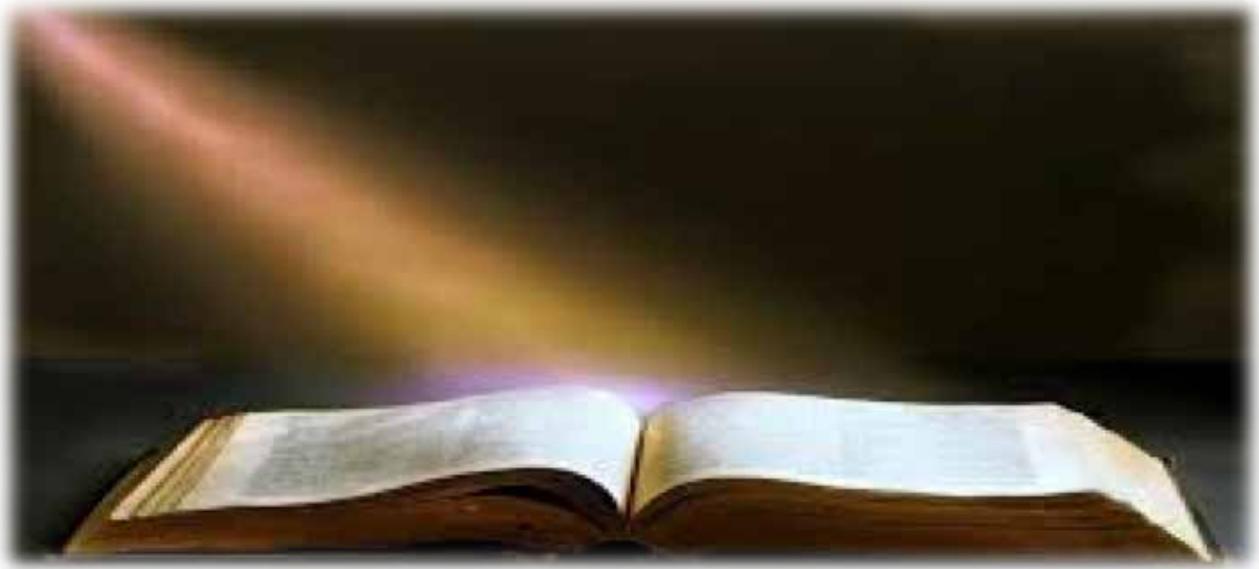
"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" Romans 12:2. This year, let's apply this verse and try to make 2018 a year in which we throw out every sin that we are prone to cling to. Let's repair tarnished relationships with our families or with one another. Let's give hope to the hopeless and spread the gospel, instead of taking selfish trips for vacations while so much of God's work needs to be done. We must not be taken away by the world's advice. Many people believe in "getting rid" of those who have hurt them; but we must learn to forgive and pray for our enemies and hope that torn relationships can be mended through Jesus. Jesus is our example of great love. Through the study of the Scriptures, we see this perfect will of God in Jesus, and we can learn to apply it.

"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. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:11-13.

My dearest brothers and sisters, let us remember these verses every day. They are a beautiful message sent from above. God is telling us, "Seek Me with all your heart, and you will find Me." Has anyone ever asked, "How can I be happy? Why, if I live by faith, am I not happy? Something is missing!" If this has ever been the case with us, let us realize that that is not seeking Him with all our hearts! We are seeking Him vainly, perhaps only when we need something or when something does not go our way. But look at verse 11. If things do not go our way, it is probably because God has planned something better for us. His thoughts toward us are of peace, of good, of love, of allowing us to enjoy a life with Him so that our minds, souls, and hearts are at peace.

In 2018, let's not dwell on what happened before, or what will happen in the future. I hope that, instead, we will seek God daily, thirsting for Him, and asking Him to guide us instead of giving us what we want. It is guaranteed that God's plans for every single individual are plans of great things to come, of prosperity, of happiness, and of health. May God bless you all in 2018!!

I look forward to receiving news items from around the States or articles with Scripture verses that someone has studied. If anyone has news about a new baby, a baptism, a wedding, an anniversary, or a missionary experience, please email it to atramirez829@gmail.com. I hope to hear from many of you! Once again, Happy New Year, and God bless you!



A New Beginning in Christ

Evelyn Arevalo, Orlando, Florida

New beginnings are wonderful experiences, but nothing surpasses a new beginning in Christ! On November 5, 2017, my husband and I and our church family all got to experience a very joyful new beginning for our daughter, Esly Arevalo, as she gave her life to the Lord.

As parents, there are many important events in our children's lives that are wonderful to experience, such as their first steps, first words, first day of school, high school graduation, and so on. They are all important in their own way; and as a homeschool mom, I have been blessed with enjoying all of these events very closely with my daughter. She and I began our homeschooling journey when she was in kindergarten after I was encouraged to do this by a close friend in church.

I had no idea where this journey would lead, and I did not even know if we would be able to finish it. But now, as I look back, I know that the One who guided us through this entire journey was the Lord. It wasn't easy; but as my daughter walked across the stage with other homeschool graduates this past May, I knew that homeschooling was one of the best decisions we made in the lives of our children.

However, even though that day was filled with so much joy, nothing compares to the feeling we had when our daughter entered the baptismal waters. It is a feeling that I cannot put into words. That day we felt that all our hard work paid off and all our prayers were answered.

I would like to encourage all parents to embark on the journey of educating their children for the Lord. There is nothing in the lives of our children that will encompass a better feeling or a greater reward than the day when they give their lives to Jesus. Please pray for our daughter as she begins a new journey with the Lord. We know that journey will not be an easy one, for Satan will try to distract her and push her off of the heavenly path; but we know that she has a great Friend who will help her all the way home, and that is Jesus Christ! May this new year bring many young people to the feet of our Lord. God bless you all!!



“The time in which we live is full of the most solemn importance. There is nothing that can be more acceptable to God than to have the youth dedicate their lives to His service in the bloom and freshness of their years.” –*Signs of the Times*, November 30, 1888.

Come Away for a While

Sandra Nelson, Sacramento, California

Are you ready for an adventure? The Western Field Family Department, Missionary Department, and Youth Department have teamed up to plan an event that you do not want to miss! Come and join us at Apserkaha Park. It is located on the shores of Howard Prairie Lake in southern Oregon. We will be together from June 27 (Wednesday afternoon) through July 1, 2018 (Sunday morning) for fellowship, singing, sharing present truth in nearby towns, nature outings, good food,



and more. Plan NOW to attend! Invite your friends, too! Please email (or snail mail) Sandra Nelson, so you can be sure to get the latest updates. Her addresses are:

Sandra Nelson
12434 Pear Lane
Wilton, CA 95693
Sandra.Nelson@Juno.com.

More details will be coming very soon.

2018 Calendar

- June 27-July 1, 2018: Western Field Family Department, Missionary Department, and Youth Department Nature Outing, Apserkaha Park, Oregon

The *American Union Newsletter* is the official organ of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement, American Union. It is published monthly, is complimentary for members and friends, and carries items of interest submitted by church members.

We reserve the right to make changes as necessary and to refuse to print certain items.

To submit news, send your item in an email to atramirez829@gmail.com.