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THE BIG BOOK AND THE LITTLE BOOK

Pastor Gary Foster

There are two books that point to God and reveal His power and character--the Big Book, which is the book of nature, and the Little Book called the Bible. Psalms 19 divides revelation into two main categories: General Revelation, which refers to the revelation of God in nature, and Special Revelation, which is the revelation of God in Scripture. The first of these is discussed in verses 1-6, the second in verses 7-11.

General Revelation is the term theologians most often use to refer to the revelation of God in nature, which is where Psalm 19 begins. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (New International). Here the psalmist is thinking of the stars, which are visible by night, and the sun, which he will introduce specifically in verses 4b-6.

His teaching is that the heavens, which contain these created objects, witness to the existence of their Creator. Even more than that, they witness to His "glory". The stars and the sun are so glorious that the One who made them must be more glorious still.

In the book of Romans, chapter 1:20, Paul says: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (New International). This is the meaning of the *glory* in Psalm 19. It is a revelation of God's existence and power, so great that it should lead every human being on the face of the earth to seek out God, to thank Him for bringing him or her into existence, and to worship Him.

This General Revelation is continuous, for the psalmist says of the heavens that "day after day they pour forth speech" and of the skies that "night after night they display knowledge" (verse 2). In other words, they are not an intermittent revelation, as if God were to send a prophet one year and then let many silent years go by before sending another. The skies reveal the glory of God every single night of the week, every week of the year, year after year, and they have done this since their creation. There has never been a moment in the history of the human race when the heavens are not testifying to us about God.

In the words of the psalm, "it pours forth speech" (verse 2). This is stronger in the Hebrew text than it appears to be in English, for the image is literally of a gushing spring that copiously pours forth the sweet, refreshing waters of revelation.

This is true in two ways. First, every individual part of nature testifies to its Creator, so that whatever part you happen to be looking at will pour forth knowledge. If you look at the stars, they testify to a God of great power who made them. If you study the human body, you will find that the body testifies to an all-wise Creator.

The petals of a flower, a blade of grass, a snowflake, the intricacies of the atom, the nature of light, physical laws like gravitational attraction and the second law of thermodynamics all testify abundantly to the divine mind that lies behind them.

The General Revelation is universal and can be known everywhere, so everyone in all the world has heard this "General Revelation." This is the basis for the universal ascription of guilt to humanity by Paul in Romans, chapter 1.

C. S. Lewis has rightly pointed out that the key line in this description is the last, which says that "nothing is hidden from (the sun's) heat" (verse 6). The line links the witness of the physical creation to the witness of the *Word*, for the Scriptures are likewise penetrating, warming, and life-giving, while also searching, testing, and purifying.

If we value nature, we should value the Bible even more, and equally important, we should make it the object of our most careful searching and devout, thankful, and obedient meditation every day.



WELCOME!

A welcome is extended to Pastor Joel Barnedo who will be serving the Denver Church. May the Lord bless the work there abundantly.

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"We must let the principles of the third angel's message stand out clear and distinct. The great pillars of our faith will hold all the weight that can be placed on them." *Manuscript 82, 1894*

CALENDAR 2004-2005

1. Northwest/Southwest Field Conference: July 1-4
2. Northwest Youth Campout: July 5-9
3. Youth Conference, Dillard, GA: July 14-18
4. Canadian Field Conference: July 30 - August 1
5. International Youth Conference Sydney, Australia.: December 27-January 2, 2005
6. Northeast Field (see following schedule)

The following is a list of the activities planned for the Northeast Field. For further information, contact, Sr. DHaiti at (718) 282-1412; Fax (718) 282-1353; or 2520 Foster Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

Friday, 6/6/2004: Baptism ceremony in the Bronx, New York. Please pray for a day of commitment. Northeast Field local churches: please work with the visitors and young people, pray for them and see who is ready. Do not leave for tomorrow what your hands can do today for the Master.

6/29 - 7/4/2004: Campout at Hopeville Campground! Do you have hope? Let's go there! Tuesday, June 29, a lot of young people are going to enjoy nature at Hopeville Campground in Hopeville, Connecticut. **DO NOT MISS IT!** There will be training for the young people to do missionary work. There will also be safe recreation, roundtable discussions where your experienced brethren and teachers will help you with any questions that may frustrate you. The cost is **\$75** per person, which includes food and a camp t-shirt. You will have to make arrangements for the transportation. Please call to make reservations at (718) 282-1412, with Sister Hermite DHaiti.

In June or July: There will be training for lay members, elders, deacons and deaconesses by Pastor Idel Suarez, Jr., in the Bronx, New York Church. How many days? We do not know yet. You will be notified soon. Meanwhile, fill up your missionary notebook with all the difficult questions you may have. Pray for us, pray for Pastor Idel, beginning now. Let your doubts be known and the Lord will help you through His worker. Welcome!

(Editor's note: As soon as more information is available for these activities, you will be informed. The schedule for the rest of the year will be in the June issue of the *Newsletter*.)

ACCEPTANCE

Sister Altagrace Dupr was accepted into fellowship in the Brooklyn, NY, church by Pastor Thomas DHaiti on Sabbath, April 24, 2004. She had been a member of the Adventist church since 1982, and after visiting the Reform for three years, chose to make her commitment with the Lord to be ONE of the Reformers. Praise the Lord!

YOUTH TRAINING

Training for Youth Leaders and Sabbath School teachers was conducted from Friday, May 7 to Sunday, May 9, by the Northeast Field young people's leader, Bro. Raynald Laurent. Seventeen students were in attendance and the classes were very profitable.

PRAYER REQUEST

Special prayer is requested for Charlie Grujich, who resides in San Jose, California, and has been diagnosed with advanced cancer.

NORTHWEST YOUTH CAMPOUT

Don't forget the Youth Campout right after the NWF/SWF conference in July (see calendar) in beautiful Yosemite National Park. The cost is \$50. Space is limited. If you are interested, please contact Br. Christian Nelson at: (916) 687-6069.

CAMP ALTA 2004 NWF/SWF CONFERENCE

The menu for the conference includes food for vegans and lacto-ovo-vegetarians, such as haystacks, veggie burgers and vegetarian teriyaki. The dining hall seats up to 90 at round tables and up to 200 more outside at redwood picnic tables.

All meetings will be held in the lodge. It has a pull-down screen and built-in sound system and seats up to 120 people in comfortable padded chairs.

So far 35 people have reserved their lodgings.

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What is your church or field doing for Jesus? Have there been baptisms or missionary outreaches? What is your schedule for missionary work?

"As a seed you should be faithful to witness to those around you. You could be the answer to another believer's prayer." Anonymous



Keep us informed so you can be an encouragement to your brothers and sisters in the truth.

The *American Union Newsletter* is published for members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Reform Movement, American Union. This publication is complimentary and carries items of interest submitted by members of the church. We reserve the right to make changes as necessary .

To submit news, write to *American Union Newsletter*, c/o Ruth Jennings, 6509 Sutter Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608-2726.

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The original Seventh-day Adventist Movement for Reform of 1914, built upon the firm foundation of the Adventist Movement of 1844.

AMERICAN UNION

GOOD SAMARITAN REPORT

"But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat. . ." Exodus 23:11

Perhaps you have asked yourself where the donations given to the *Good Samaritan* are used? In the following, we provide information to show where your funds flow:

1. HELP TO THE NEEDY:

- _ Widows in Uganda and Tanzania
- _ Orphans in Zambia
- _ The poor in Cameroon, Tanzania and Uganda

2. VICTIMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND POOR POLITICAL DECISIONS:

- _ El Salvador
- _ Nicaragua
- _ Honduras
- _ Bolivia

3. MALARIA AND AIDS VICTIMS:

- _ Uganda

4. HELP TO THE ELDERLY IN ECUADOR.

5. MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND MEDICINE:

- _ Kenya
- _ Tanzania
- _ Uganda
- _ Cameroon

6. CONSTRUCTION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS:

- _ Tanzania
- _ Uganda
- _ Small Cloud Christian School has also received our help.

7. SHIPMENT OF CLOTHING AND SHOES:

- _ El Salvador received help again. We sent four big boxes of clothing and shoes and a computer, as well as \$500 for the construction of a tent that will be used by some youth who go voluntarily from city to city giving evangelical campaigns.

- _ Bolivia asked for emergency help and it was sent immediately.

— In Ecuador we provide for an ill older sister who heard the message in Tampa many years ago.

Within the Good Samaritan Department we encourage donations to support new missionaries. We already have brethren in Miami, Orlando, Hayward, and Tampa who are paying the salaries of pastors and missionary workers in Uganda and Zambia. If you feel you are unable to do it alone, unite with other brothers and sisters to support someone who works to win souls for Jesus. We are sending \$50 a month for each worker so he will not encounter financial problems and may dedicate his time fully to the cause of truth.

There is a pastor in Zambia who has taken in orphans and we send \$100 a month to him. Another brother receives \$50 as a health worker. You will receive the names and addresses of your beneficiaries if you so desire. You may then correspond with them and pray that the work may be blessed.

In Tampa, some non-members also began cooperating when we asked for their help with orphans in Africa. Ask others and you will see how willingly they give for these causes.

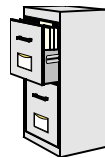
The bank transfers to Africa are made every six months in order to economize. You may be certain that your money all goes to the cause you have chosen. Our only expense is the bank charges incurred in transfers of these funds to other countries. All workers for the Good Samaritan are volunteers.

Please send your help directly to the address below, specifying which project you wish your donation to be applied to.



International Missionary Society
Good Samaritan
c/o Irma Suarez
3316 W. Aileen Street
Tampa, Florida 33607-1812

Or, if you prefer and it is more convenient, you may include funds in your tithe envelope, specifying the amount you are sending and your preference as to where it should be applied, i.e., *Good Samaritan, Africa*, \$100. Your local treasurer will send it to the American Union Treasurer, specifying which fund you are contributing to.



Thanking you in advance for your cooperation,

Your sister in Christ,
Irma Suarez
Director of the Good Samaritan in the United States



Something to consider. . .

Learning to Let Go

Researchers at Stanford University believed that forgiveness could improve health, and they sought 70 Bay Area Women to help them prove it. Specifically, they recruited women who were pre-menopausal, at least 18 years old, who felt stressed and "down" sometimes and who needed to forgive someone in order to let go of an issue. The researchers wanted to learn if women who were angry with others could learn to reduce the stress produced by such anger while also improving their health by forgiving the person who wronged them.

"When we are particularly angry about an event over a long period of time, there is often a psychological cost in terms of stress, hostility, strained relationships and so forth," said Samuel D. Standard, a research fellow in education. "But there is a physical cost as well. When we're especially agitated we produce cortisol, a hormone, which can help us rally and gain brief strength against a threat. However, an elevated level of cortisol for a prolonged period is implicated in several serious diseases, including diabetes, hypertension and cancer," he added. The purpose was to test a method developed by the Stanford team for letting go of the anger and experiencing true forgiveness in terms of psychological and physiological parameters.

This project was headed by Carl Thoreson, PhD.

Reference: http://mednews.stanford.edu/news_releases_html/2001/mayreleases/salivavol.htm

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." Psalms 36:8

"If we expect our prayers for forgiveness to be heard, we must offer them in a forgiving spirit. We must forgive others in the same manner, and to the same extent, that we ourselves hope to be forgiven."

Gospel Workers, p. 430