

GOSPEL ASSEMBLY CHURCH, MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO. CANADA

# THE MIDNIGHT CRY

Matthew 25:6

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*“And judgment is turned  
away backward, and  
justice standeth afar  
off: for truth is fallen  
in the street, and  
equity cannot enter.”*

*- Isaiah 59:14 -*



## Editor's Note

Carol  
Isaacs



Throughout the years, Brother Singh has admonished our local assembly to awake to the subtlety of the Adversary in our day. We have been warned about the war that is being waged on the saints, and that wasting time studying the theory about the war may cause us to be consumed in the actual battle. With the steady decline of truth in the church, we are so thankful that God still has messengers in the Earth. *“The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.”* (Eccl. 12:10).

The *Midnight Cry* magazine has provided us with messages that confront us with present truth about the evils we face and must overcome in our day. Messages like these are vital to our spiritual survival. We have learnt that truth cannot be compromised for numerical growth or fellowship, and that our sanctification will be stagnant if the ministry becomes *“a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”* (Ezek. 33:32).

Often, it is our extensive ‘knowledge’ of the word of God and our familiarity with the scriptures used in a lesson that causes us to miss out on what God is saying. *“For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.”* (Job 33:14). As a result, many of us return from a service without receiving the good things that God had prepared for us. (Lk. 1:53).

But, in spite of these challenges, we give God thanks that He can still inspire men to deliver messages that can assist His people to overcome the darkness of this age, and be established in the **present truth**.

# TRUTH IN DECLINE?

## Personal Concern

Almost an hour elapsed while I sat motionless with pencil and notepad in hand. I was trying to harmonize my jumbled thoughts and mixed desires in preparation for this issue of *The Midnight Cry* magazine. As with previous issues I had anticipated that the Lord would have spontaneously touched my mind and allowed me to select the most appropriate articles, but sadly this was not the case.

You see, I understood what Peter meant when he stated, *“...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

To write anything that would benefit the church today, one must be inspired of God to do so. Of course, this may exclude many Christian writers of our day. As such, it would be against my deepest spiritual conviction to have my pen **imprisoned by tradition or apostate dogma**.

Therefore, I have concluded that my temporary lapse in writing was the result of two major considerations. The first was **the passive attitude of God’s people to messages on ‘present truth,’** and the second being **the continuous drifting of our assemblies into the ‘spirit of the age,’ with worldliness, materialism and spiritual drunkenness being predominant**.

**Present truth**, as is mentioned in 2 Peter 1:12, is not

just the study of fundamental Christian doctrines, but rather a message that enhances godliness in an ungodly society. According to Biblical history, **present truth was given directly to the prophets and apostles by God. It exposed sin and evil in their own time and presented God’s active demands for holiness.** Careful notice should be given to the uniqueness of each God-sent man in the Bible and the distinct identity of his message.

Unlike the ministers of our day, **Bible prophets and apostles were not limited to the messages of those who preceded them**, but were expected to fulfill their own divine commission. Except for prophetic utterances and issues relating to the violation of God’s moral laws, there was absolutely no need to overemphasize messages of the past. The past was great for example but **present truth established holiness and sanctification**. Paul said: *“...That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation...”* (Phil. 2:15).

These were the facts that rested heavily on my mind and caused me to question the effectiveness of *The Midnight*

**Were the messages presented in the magazine any benefit to the Body of Christ?**

*Cry* magazine.

Is it that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century church does not like to read being **too full**, and those of

us that do read simply allow our minds to feed on **religious profanity?**

Are those of us in the ministry so impressed and **obsessed with the numerical and materialistic flamboyance of religious Babylon** that it has generated a perverted ambition in us, crippling our appreciation for truth and holiness?

This attitude will transform our ministers into entertainers, our congregations into audiences and the church will deteriorate into a backslidden and iniquitous mode. **Truth will eventually be spurned and every God-called minister despised.**

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he foretold of *“perilous times”* coming to the church as well as society. *“For men shall be lovers of their own selves...”*

**Is this spirit of perverted ambition and self-exaltation among us?**

*more than lovers of God...”* (2 Tim. 3:1-4).

Timothy was admonished to preach **“the word”** at all times without compromise in light of this future apostasy when Christians *“will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers...and they shall turn away their ears from the*

**Does the child of God prefer when the truth that exposes current sin and worldliness is better left unspoken?**

*truth...”* (2 Tim. 4:2-4). Are we living in the *“perilous times”* foretold by scripture?

Then why publish a magazine that will dislodge the peaceful foundations of traditionalism or disrupt the tranquility of spiritual decline?

**Should true God-called men allow worldliness and backsliding among God's people to continue undisturbed?** It has been correctly stated that, "Evil will triumph when good men remain passive."

In the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Ezekiel, the prophet is described as a **watchman**. His duty was a spiritual one and, similar to the natural watchman, he was expected to **keep vigil and warn God's people of enemy invasion**. Failure to do so would result in him being guilty for the people's destruction. Therefore, it was necessary for him to be, first of all, **spiritual enough to identify the enemy, then bold enough to sound the warning trumpet** – even at the expense of public acceptance. Of course, a blind watchman would not even know what I am talking about.

Tragically, **the people in Ezekiel's day preferred not to be disturbed from their deep, backslidden slumber**. The Lord told Ezekiel that, "*They come unto thee as the people cometh, and sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their*

**Are there God-called watchmen in our day who are presenting God's people with messages that will save them from the countless evils of this present age?**

*covetousness.*" (Ezek. 33:31-32). **Have we fallen into this identical rut?**

Are the people responding positively to messages of truth and sanctification?

During the days of Isaiah, Israel was no role model. In exposing their presumptuous

and independent attitude the Lord told Isaiah, "*Woe to the rebellious children...that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit....that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt!*" (Isa. 30:1-2). **Are we positive that the covering we feel in our services is the genuine Spirit of God and not just pumped up emotionalism?** I suppose that the fruits produced from our services will determine the authenticity of what really transpired in them. Failure to recognize and correct this spirit of hypocrisy will result in stronger spiritual rebellion.

The prophet Isaiah exposed this **rejection of truth** in Israel by declaring, "*this is a rebellious people, lying children ...that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits...*" (Isa. 30:9-10).

The book of Jeremiah also uncovered rebellion among God's people by stating that, "*the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so...*" (Jer. 5:30-31).

Unless we too are apostate and are drifting into spiritual blindness, hindsight would allow us to recognize that the rejection of both Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles was due to their blunt and unapologetic condemnation of the evils of their day. **True, God-called men were commissioned by God with a specific message and had little reason to rehash the messages of past prophets.**

Unfortunately, the ministry of our day appears to be doing quite the opposite.

In light of these scriptures, as well as many more, I again wonder whether God's people in our day need or appreciate the bluntness of *The Midnight Cry*?

**Truth is oftentimes blunt and hypocrisy hard to admit to, but it is truth that will set us free; not truth about someone else's era or someone else's sin, but our own.** In all honesty, let us accept the truth about ourselves and then submit to the truth of God's word by making the required changes.

I am convinced that it was the Lord who inspired me to introduce this most needed and timely publication of present truth. I felt that the Body of Christ should recognize and accept the reality that **God will not judge today's generation on the premise of yesterday's evil.**

Because it was economically impossible for me to personally communicate this message to our assemblies around the world, I was convinced that the publication of a magazine would suffice.

My prayer is that ministers who are truly called of God will be enlightened by the Holy Ghost to recognize the subtlety of present day evil and hypocrisy, then preach appropriately.

Although the responsibility of exposing and correcting false doctrine in our day should be treated as a major issue, **truth that deals with sin and worldliness in the lives of God's people should always hold priority.**

These were some of my

**Do we recognize the subtlety of evil in our day and are we preaching present truth?**

concerns that inspired the publication of *The Midnight Cry* in the first place.

I do hope that the day will never arrive when *The Midnight Cry* will become a mere family magazine that will only cater to the reading pleasure of God's chosen people.

### Guided by Scripture

If fulfilling God's calling in my life was dependent on public acceptance I would have altered my message and methodology a long time ago. Fortunately this is not the case, seeing as I have always relied fervently on the scriptures for example and guidance. There are many areas of the scriptures that will assist us today if they are properly applied.

The Apostle Paul made reference to Old Testament scriptures as offering a wonderful source of inspiration. He stated, "*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*" (Rom. 15:4).

Today, the church is more privileged in that we have both the Old and New Testament to rely on for example and guid-

(Continued on page 4)



Desmond R. Singh  
PASTOR



## TRUTH IN DECLINE?

(Continued from page 3)

ance. **It would be a tragedy if the Body of Christ ignores the pattern set forth in the Bible and instead looks to Babylon for instruction and example.**

I exhort every sincere child of God, whether saint or preacher, to carefully examine the scriptures in order to determine the lifestyle and example left us by every man of God in the Bible. **The greatest of all examples was our Lord Jesus Himself.** Isaiah described Him as being, *“despised and rejected of*

**Is Jesus the pattern for our ministers or are we simply copying the spirit of present day Pentecostalism?**

*men”*. (Isa. 53:3). Yet he emphatically declared himself to be, *“the way, the truth and the life”*. (Jn. 14:6).

It is no new phenomenon that truth is rejected and despised in our day. The whole volume of scripture tells the same. But, like the stalwarts of old, **the ministry today should never sacrifice truth in exchange for growth, fellowship or popularity.**

However, the greatest disappointment is still to come. Our Lord prophesied that *“iniquity shall abound”* and a deception will be so great that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived. (Mt. 24:12 & 24). It is quite possible that day is already upon us and we are just too naïve to recognize it.

Let us not ignore prophecies that refer to the time when the church will have concluded its public witness — the two witnesses will be killed and the woman will flee

into the wilderness. (Rev. 11 & 12).

In plain language, the Gentile church as we know it will come to a conclusion. **God will restore the literal nation of Israel to a spiritual standing** in order to carry on His work in the Earth. He will pour out the *“spirit of grace and of supplication”* by sealing one hundred and forty four thousand natural Jews with the Holy Ghost. This will be the ultimate fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel. (Joel 2:28-32, Zech. 12:10, Rev. 7:3-8).

Unless we understand these prophecies correctly and **draw genuine distinction between the Gentile church and restored Israel**, we will be deceived and pursue a misguided vision. Eventually, we could find ourselves embracing the ‘abounding of iniquity’ as a great move of God. This will cause us to drift further into Babylon and ultimately receive the marks of the Beast — some in our right hand of fellowship and others in our very thought pattern.

**How can we be guided by scripture if our concept of scripture is incorrect?**

Poor discernment and an exalted overconfidence in our so-called amazing ability to handle the word can blind our eyes to spiritual reality.

Isaiah declared, *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and*

**Have we deceived ourselves into believing that we alone have the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?**

*good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness... Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and*

*prudent in their own sight!”* (Isa. 5:20-21).

### Being Too Full

It has been correctly stated that any church that convinces itself it has reached the apex of its existence will eventually peak-out and start on a downhill journey. In simpler language, a church or fellowship that feels it has it all, spiritually speaking, and needs nothing more, will fail to pursue further goals and will stagnate and die eventually.

This spirit of arrogance and misconstrued spiritual superiority was prevalent among the Jews and contributed to their rejection of present truth as it was presented by the Lord Jesus. **Their failure to recognize that truth was pro-**

**Can we possibly reject truth by arrogantly limiting our belief only to the teachings of the past?**

**gressive influenced an over-emphasis on traditional teachings, and resulted in an almost total rejection of present truth.**

In dealing with the spiritual stagnancy among the scholars of His day, Jesus declared, *“Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.”* (Lk. 11:52).

The absence of prophets from Malachi to Matthew resulted in a rapid decline of present truth in Israel since no one was exposing evil or giving spiritual guidance to God’s people for approximately 430 years.

In man’s futile effort to substitute for the lack of active divine intervention, spiri-

tual shrines were erected to perpetuate the past. But, as we have often said, “The past is good to contemplate and may offer a great foundation to build on, but it is a terrible place to dwell.”

With the **absence of present truth** to influence godly lifestyle, the work of God will collapse into a mode of ineffectiveness. The subtle advancement of evil will go undetected and mere human genius will never sanctify God’s people.

Some of the characteristics of the **decline of truth** are:

♣ **Present truth fades into obscurity while the past is glorified.**

♣ **Illumination is replaced** by education and spiritual blindness becomes predominant.

♣ Divine calling is replaced by human genius and results in **the uncalled dominating the pulpit.**

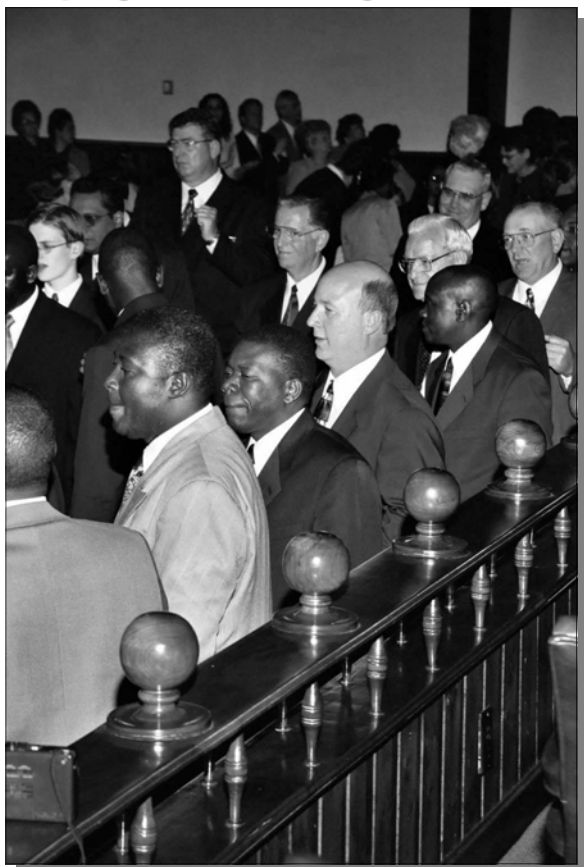
♣ **God becomes the object of study** rather than the supreme authority for obedience.

♣ The work of God becomes **captive to the spirit and fashions of an ungodly world.**

♣ Worst of all is the **development of a sense of completeness and sufficiency** that becomes the greatest obstacle to sincere repentance and renewal.

As we examine our present standing in light of all of the aforementioned scriptural facts, we too can ask: **Are we absolutely content with our present standing in God?** Do we really have it all or is there any room for God to give us more and lead us further on?

# Des Moines Convention



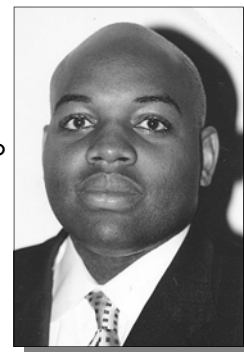
**T**he expectation level was very high during this year's convention, not only from the local saints in Des Moines, but for all those who came ready to receive. The attendance from many of the local assemblies from around the world displayed a vision to see this fellowship advance further on. There were many international ministers in attendance, and we saw from the lessons they taught that truth was still burning in their hearts.

As is customary in our fellowship meetings, the host minister led the meeting with opening remarks. Brother Glenn Goodwin began with the thought that we as the Body of Christ never want to find ourselves drifting away from the foundation that has been so deeply embedded in our hearts. I was reminded of the scripture that reads, "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them!" (Jer. 9:2a).

We all know that we are in the Body of Christ. The Lord's Body has boundaries. We are His people. The truth is proclaimed in our assembly, yet when lulls come, and the world is tugging on the church, it is easy to begin drifting or maybe even run away from the calling, responsibility, overcoming and striving meant for us.

However, because of the grace of God that has been extended to us, we will not find ourselves drifting into the wilderness of worldliness and apostasy. Now is not the time to withdraw our shoulders from the burden of God's work. We must focus and press toward the hope that is set before us.

The brethren upheld this thought throughout the entire meeting and the spirit that was manifest left a good taste in our mouths, together with a hunger in our hearts to receive more from God. The tone of the meeting was "Let's move on!" We must be a final witness before the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.



By Alex Brintley

# WAR

When it comes to the political climate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century it would be wise of us to remember one thing: appearances are always to the contrary – *always*. Politics, whether on the side of the aggressor or pacifist, has become the art of political correctness, and catering to the popular will of the masses which is often fickle and easily moulded. Maybe this is why the “sea” of scriptural imagery – unstable, easily tossed and without foundation – is used to depict the populace of mankind. And so, while the politically correct response is given in most situations, the real underlying motive often remains hidden from the masses, at least for a time.

This is not a criticism, but simply a statement of fact. Because of a global demand to know whatever can be known, a leader has little choice but to play along in this game of politics.

As we have heard so often, we are living in a day of information overload. And yet it is amazing that so few of us are able to genuinely contrive our own opinions. Just take a listen to people talk about the latest crisis and you will quickly realize that most of what you hear is simply regurgitated information from another source. Rarely are our thoughts our own.

In fact, the whole concept of propaganda is that if you are bombarded with an idea or statement hard and long enough, you will most likely accept it as normal at the very least, and embrace it at best.

But as Christians who are striving to maintain vigilance in all things, a global issue such as the war in Iraq is a good opportunity for us to see where we stand in terms of our

ability to not only think for ourselves, but to see things through the light of God’s word. Whenever a crisis strikes, a person’s first impulse is to try to quickly formulate an opinion on the matter. It seems people actually expect to be involved in every backroom discussion and decision their leaders are involved in. You’ll notice that suddenly everyone knows the history leading up to the event, what all the contributing factors are and what the outcome is likely to be. But yet, for every expert that is right, ten are wrong.

So when it comes to war in our day, what should the Christian attitude and perspective be?

## Can you stand alone?

Try this test. The next time you hear a debate, see if you are able to stand against the temptation to side with one party or another. The illusion that prevails is that if you don’t quickly shape an opinion you are indecisive, out of touch or just plain ignorant. But what if you decide to listen and wait to understand what God is doing, refusing to be manipulated by the dishonesty and trickery that comes from both sides? Today, one of the **greatest weapons** in any nation’s arsenal is its ability to use the media to shape the minds and opinions of its *own* people in an effort to gain support. And so far it appears that fear-mongering is the greatest strategy for immediate action.

Now this does not mean that a Christian ought to be passive. Far from it. But unlike the masses who immediately flock to one of two camps, we should look more deeply into the matter before making rash decisions and

formulating a position, *especially* as we draw closer to the end of the age where it seems deception will be the name of the game. In the case of politics or a political war, ask yourself, “**As a disciple of Jesus Christ, do I choose the greater evil or the lesser evil?**”

Today is not quite as simple as the days of biblical war or even wars fought 200 years ago. Nowadays, a carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign must first be launched *months* in advance in order to lay the groundwork before the official declaration. In the end, what the masses get is what the media refers to as the “spin,” perhaps so called because of its dizzying effects on the hearers! To separate truth from lies or half-truths is like trying to separate the milk from your tea once it’s been poured.

We must resist the urge to follow blindly and do all we can to maintain vigilance and support for what is right. This may mean standing alone against the onrushing tidal wave of media, debate, talk show conversations, people on the job... As the psalmist wrote, “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*” (Ps. 1:1).

## The Right Attitude

From the time Cain slew Abel until now, war has been a part of humanity. And until the Lord Jesus Christ comes to establish His kingdom on this earth it will continue to play a major role. It is even fair to say that in such a world as ours, war is necessary. Anyone who blindly takes a pacifist stance on all matters is naïve since some cases require

action without reservation.

War is never a pleasant event, and for those who suffer innocently it can be absolutely disastrous, carrying harmful effects for several generations. Yet war is a reality in a world where people are aggressive, evil, oppressive, manipulative, greedy and self-satisfying. Without a doubt, destructive leaders and their governments *should be* deposed by force by those who have the ability to do so.

When faced with war, we ought to pray for our leaders, that their decisions be properly guided, and for the brave soldiers who are fighting on the front lines, many of whom might also be Christians themselves. Nothing is wrong with being patriotic and proud of our heritage as long as our first allegiance is to our citizenship in heaven. This point cannot be overstated: God must hold priority and allegiance to any state, group, person or thing.

The problem is that in our age things are very complex. We all like to put things into neat little categories so we can understand them better, but this does not always work. People will accuse America of entering Iraq solely out of greed, others will see the “freedom” of Iraq’s people and getting rid of the ruthless Saddam as a major motive, while others will look at weapons of mass destruction, Israel, or Iraq’s strategic position in the region as legitimate factors. The fact is that a number of factors may be in play— some motives may be good and upstanding while others are shockingly sinister. Remember, we are dealing with a beastly system.

Today, both sweet and bitter waters appear to come from the same fountain. **How much should we, as Christians,**

**drink from this source?** In truth, God and His word is our only refuge if truth is what we're after.

Another important aspect we must consider when it comes to a nation's international policy is that it is often driven where gain is to be had. This is where human nature rears its head again. True, self-defense is also a necessary reason as well, but overwhelmingly gain is a main driver. We may look at the removal of a horrible dictator as a noble undertaking, and it is, but we can't be so naïve as to think there are no other motives at work. Look at the Congo for a comparison where more than 3 million people have been brutally killed in civil war since 1998. Most of us don't even know there is a brutal war going on in Central Africa even though it is the scene of the world's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

Let it first be said that much of the blame lies with the region's ultra-corrupt leaders. But why is there no moral outrage, no marching in the streets, no calls for peace or intervention by force, no impassioned speeches by Western leaders? Simply because there is no economic or political gain to be had. In turn, the media has lent little resources to the region. There are really no bandwagons to jump on. The news of more than 3 million people dead in 4 ½ years boggles the mind; apparently it's easier for the West to focus on the fate of Congo's gorillas and the loss of rainforests.

In this world we are living in, despite what we are told and the heart strings that politicians so effectively pull, international policy is driven where gain is to be had for the most part. That goes for war and humanitarian aid. Again, we don't have to get upset about

this fact—it is the way things have always been.

Consider this for a moment. **In scripture, is it not remarkable that the representation of the Gentile nations are all beasts and birds of prey from the beginning of humanity to the end?** (Dan. 7:3-7, Rev. 13:2). As one writer correctly put it: "The true character of Gentile world-government is rapacious and warlike, established and maintained by force." This was true in the days of Egyptian, Roman and Greek glory, and it is still true today, though diplomacy does a good job of covering it up.

We must always remember that the beast is called a beast for a reason. And the fact that the beast has the wherewithal to adorn itself with **"two horns like a lamb"** should alarm us all. (Rev 13:11). There is only one motive for this: deception or the need to cater to the masses on the surface in order to accomplish a more sinister and self-interested will.

Again, as Christians do we choose the greater evil or the lesser evil? I suggest neither. Is there anything wrong with refusing to be manipulated? Our position should always be on the side of right, never compromised by mainstream media or religion.

### **Self-Righteous?**

Another critical area to consider is our personal outlook on the villains of other nations. A person like Saddam Hussein is disgusting, and undoubtedly the world is better off without him in power. To recount all of his crimes against his own people alone would be sickening, putting him in the same category as Hitler, Stalin and

other notorious "leaders" in recent history.

The fact is that in the face of these outrageous crimes against human beings, we often lose sight of our own backsliding and departure from the things of God, especially on a national level. In times of war it seems there is little time for introspection.

Though many leaders recently tried it—both religious and secular—it is unbalanced and dangerous to invoke God's name and assume His blessing on our acts while we wallow in immorality and filth. As self-proclaimed "freedom-loving people" our nations seem to feel quite comfortable even though our bondage is of a much different, yet equally destructive sort.

On our recent journey to Des Moines for the May Convention, it was astounding to see the number of billboards promoting gambling, alcohol, sex or a combination of all. Apparently, this is what sells. Look at the movies and television programs promoted. Consider the music and the way people dress. Look at the Internet. **It appears that to a great extent, North America prefers to coddle itself in its heritage while it slips further and further from God, almost like the backslider who constantly looks back to his days of active service in the church as a means of soothing his own conscience.**

The plain fact of the matter is that, more than any other nation, Canada and America are in drastic need of repentance. But, of course, the need for repentance only comes through introspection and that is something we prefer not to do. (John 3:19). Let us not think for a moment

that our heritage or religious façade will shelter us against the judgment of God. (Rom. 2:1-3). Nevertheless, in His mercy, God has left us as a remnant in an apostate land that does not know where to find its "master's crib", which may have once had "righteousness lodged in it" but is now a "people laden with iniquity... children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord..." (Is. 1). For this reason, we will be judged along with other nations who depart from God, His laws and His truth.

### **Our Responsibility**

Beyond the physical war we see raging around us, Christians must not lose sight of where the real battle is being fought and get involved accordingly. Today, the challenge lies in identifying the truth in a matter and not being the simple victims of well-put-together propaganda campaigns. Of course, to jump on the so-called pacifist bandwagon and hypocritically condemn leaders of a war effort is just as bad.

It is our responsibility to get our lives right, not be distracted, spread the gospel, seek out and relieve needs and oppression where they arise, resist evil, stand for right even though it may mean standing alone, and to remain vigilant as we see the events unfolding.

War will continue to play a major role in world politics and in some cases it might be wholly justified and right. Nevertheless, let us be wary and wise to the methods used to gain our support for or against a matter, lest we be deceived.

But most of all, let us pray for the people who are the victims of war. The value of a single human life should never be lost on us.

# The Armour of God

In Matthew 24, Jesus said, “*And ye shall hear of wars and rumour of wars...for nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom...*” (vs. 6-7). As it were, war has indeed plagued the human race from the cradle of civilization to the present time, and while peace activists are clamouring for diplomatic ways to settle disputes, war will never cease until Jesus returns and establishes the Kingdom of God.

As preparation is necessary in physical warfare, even so it is necessary to prepare for spiritual warfare. Scripture states, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world...*” (Eph. 6:12). It is important to note that, “*though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)...*” (11 Cor. 10:3-4).

In our preparation for spiritual warfare, it is imperative that we give attention to the following scriptural exhortations.

## Considerations

In discussing the cost of discipleship, Jesus said: “*Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*” (Lk. 14:31). The insinuation here is that we should evaluate our spiritual military capability before engaging in combat with the Adversary. There are three basic principles to consider in this

passage. We are to:

- (1) Know about war.
- (2) Appraise our own strength and ability.
- (3) Know the enemy – his strength and capability.

Without knowing these principles, it is doubtful whether we will arm ourselves sufficiently for spiritual warfare.

In understanding the importance of having **the right armour** when fighting the enemy, David rejected King Saul’s armour because he did not “*prove it.*” (1 Sam. 17:38-40). Likewise, we cannot arm ourselves with the wrong armour. **Spiritual warfare is fought with spiritual weapons, which only God provides.** The Apostle Paul made this clear when he wrote, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*” (Eph. 6:10). **The armour is not of man, but of God!**

Paul used the word “*finally*” to imply that the armour of God is to be worn by those who understand and follow what was said in the preceding chapters in the book of Ephesians. **First**, the armour is for those who:

- (1) Accept Christ’s position and provision for salvation. (Eph. 1).
- (2) Understand their position in Christ. (Eph. 2-3).
- (3) Implement the prerequisites of walking with Christ. (Eph. 4-6:1-9).

**Secondly**, the armour of God is **not for weaklings**, but for those who are “*strong in*

*the Lord and in the power of his might.*” Before one arms himself for spiritual warfare, he must be endued with God’s inherent power and strength to overcome resistance. **The armour of God does not give us strength but protection!** Our strength comes from the Lord. David said, “*For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle...*” (Ps. 18:39).

**Thirdly**, if we are to survive the relentless onslaught of the enemy, then arming ourselves for spiritual warfare is not a choice, but an **urgent requirement!**

**Fourthly**, we are to be **fully armed** in order to stand against the wiles of the Devil. In this context, “**to stand**” does not mean to advance against Satan, but to stand firm; to be of a steadfast mind. We are to **stand firm** “*against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*” In other words, we are expected to protect the territories that Christ and His church have already conquered.

## Preparation

The garments and weapons that Paul described for spiritual combat are analogous to the armour of a Roman soldier. He said, “*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...*” (Eph. 6:14-17). **Note that there is no armour for the back!** The

reason for this is that a Christian soldier is not expected to retreat. (Luke 9:62; cf. Heb. 10:38-39).

Before a Roman soldier puts on his armour, he wears a belt or **girdle around his waist** to hold his garment together, and to provide a place to hang his weapon. The loin or the hip is the place where the Hebrews thought the generative or procreative power resides. It is considered the most powerful part of both human and beast. When Paul said, “*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth*”, he meant that the child of God should equip and fortify the most powerful and procreative part of his being – the mind – with truth! (1 Pet. 1:13)

The **girdle of truth** is both subjective and objective armour. It holds the rest of the armour of God together and provides support and security for the sword of the Spirit. **Objective truth** refers to the doctrines and teachings which only intellectualize the believer. On the other hand, **subjective truth** enhances lifestyle, Christian integrity and faithfulness. It is subjective truth that Paul wrote about in Ephesians 6:1-9 – truth that transforms by the renewing of the mind. (Romans 12:1-2). Jesus said, “*And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*” (John 8:32). **Truth frees us from sin, doctrinal misconceptions, and the spirit of the age.** Without the girdle of truth, the rest of the armour becomes an impediment to free movement and successful warfare!

The **breastplate** protects the vital organs such as the heart and lungs, as well as the upper arms and a part of the back. These organs are essential to life and good health, and if not properly protected, injury and death are inevitable. In illus-



trating the importance of the heart the Lord said, “*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man...*” (Matt. 15:18-20a). After the heart is cleansed by asking for forgiveness, it is necessary to protect it from the pestiferous intrusion of the enemy. (Psalm 51:10-11, 17, & Rom. 10:10)

It is noteworthy that the breastplate of righteousness is not ours, but God’s. It is Christ’s instantaneous justification and progressive sanctification which makes us righteous. (Rom. 3:19-25, 1 Cor. 1:30-31). The baptism of the Holy Ghost followed by a life of continuous obedience to God’s Word will guard our hearts from the “*fiery darts*” of sin, worldliness and religious contamination. (see Romans 6:12-22).

Paul continued by saying that our feet should be “*shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace...*” (vs. 15). Not only to go out and spread the good news of salvation, but to stand sure-footedly on the Word of God and to be prepared to meet the attacks of Satan. The word rendered *preparation* indicated a readiness to walk in the gospel of peace. The Christian footwear was intended to generate a peaceful confidence similar to that experienced by a Roman soldier. It was first of all designed to take him through obstructions and thorny pathways without impeding his progress, but also to enable him to stand firm so he does not slip back while fighting the enemy.

The fourth piece of armour is the **shield**, which was oblong or door-like in shape, designed to protect the entire person. The Roman shield was made of wood, then overlaid with linen and leather. It was a piece of defensive armour intended to

parry off blows and arrows and put out all the “*fiery darts*” hurled against it.

Paul said, “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, where-with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*” (v. 16). “*Above all*” does not mean above all in the sense of importance or value, but *overall*, as a soldier holds his shield and turns it in every direction to defend himself.

The **shield of faith** is not intended for spectacular miracles, signs and wonders. Rather, it is the faith which gives conviction, assurance and confidence. Faith is the firm conviction that the word of God is a sure foundation for Christian lifestyle. This is the true faith which will keep us protected from the onslaught of the wicked one.

In a world of secular humanism, political correctness and religious ecumenism, it is easy for Satan to use these as fiery darts to weaken our confidence in the ministry as well as mimic sound biblical teaching. “*Fiery darts of the wicked*” can also refer to many other temptations from the Adversary that are intended to deceive and destroy the child of God. The “*shield of faith*” will ward off these fiery darts of Satan and assist us in overcoming the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The fifth part of the Roman armour mentioned here is the **helmet**, which was a cap made of thick leather or brass, fitted to the head, and usually crowned with a plume or crest. Its use was to guard the head from being struck by a sword, a war club, or a battleaxe.

The “*helmet of salvation*” protects the mind from the fiery darts of evil thoughts that can distort our perception of spiritual things. Jesus admonished the disciples to, “*Take*

*heed what you hear...*” (Mk. 4:24).

Satan not only affects our hearing but our spiritual eyes as well. In speaking of the Devil, Paul said, “*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*” (2 Cor. 4:4). Therefore we should “*gird up the loins*” of our minds and “*be sober, and hope to the end...*” (1 Pet. 1:13).

Again in Romans 12:2, we are exhorted not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the **renewing of our minds**. We are to allow our minds to feed only on that which is true, honest, just and pure, as described in Philippians 4:8-9.

The helmet of salvation is not meant to give us salvation, but to protect that which we have already received from God through Christ.

Our ultimate goal is to achieve the Father’s name (nature) “*written in*” our foreheads. We are to be capable of thinking and making judgment like God the Father. (Rev. 14:3).

Finally, the last part of the armour is the **sword of the Spirit** which is the Word of God. Failure to comprehend the Word of God and implement it in our daily lives will impede the work of the Holy Ghost in assisting us against satanic onslaught.

It is an absolute necessity that each of us put on the whole armour of God as a means of defense against relentless attacks from Satan. Being partially armed will result in defeat and destruction at the hands of the enemy. On the flip side, putting on the whole armour of God assures

us that God will fight for us and that victory is certain.

Paul’s description of the word of God as the “*sword of the Spirit*” would imply a necessary bonding between the Word and the Holy Ghost. It takes a definite influence of the Spirit of God to illuminate the word of God to the mind of the believer. This will affect a correct understanding of doctrine as well as give guidance for Christian living. The Psalmist declared, “*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*” (Ps. 119:105).

The armour of God is intended to protect us from the influence of the Devil so that **we do not walk** in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the scornful. (Ps. 1:1).

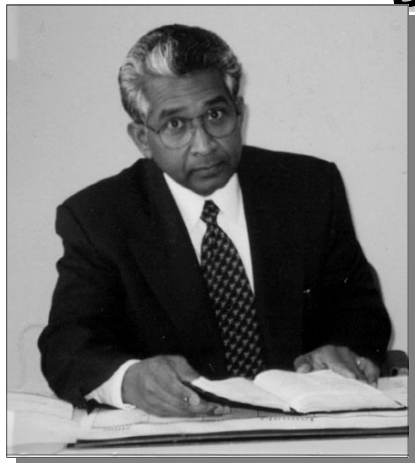
## The Battle

Now that we have a better understanding of all that entails the armour of God, we must face the reality of the actual battle. It is quite possible that one may be fully clad with a complete suite of armour, and yet not be capable of effectively doing battle. To be victorious in our spiritual warfare, we must first of all put on the whole armour of God, then **be able to identify the enemy and lastly, have the ability to war**. David said, “*He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken in mine arms.*” (Ps. 18:34).

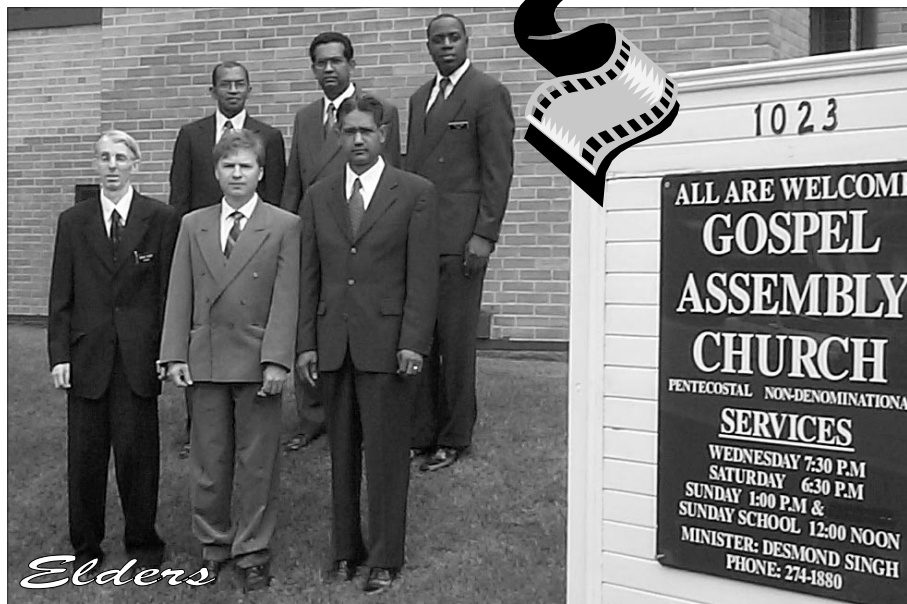
The enemy we war against is very powerful and subtle. He will do everything within his power to defeat us. One of his greatest schemes is to **disguise himself**, and by doing so influences the child of God to wage war against the wrong element. This was a good enough reason for Paul to introduce this sub-

(Continued on page 11)

# Knowing Us...



*Desmond R. Singh  
Pastor*



*Elders*

Our local Mississauga Assembly continues to trust God to help us through these perilous times of materialism, immorality and worldliness. Our battle to maintain Christian integrity and pursue holiness is becoming even more difficult. If ever there was a time that we covet the prayers of our friends it is now.

God has opened our eyes through the ministry of His word to understand that our warfare is a spiritual one and we can vividly recognize Revelation 13:5-8 being played out before our very eyes.

The beast is making war on the saints and many are already seriously wounded by his vicious onslaughts on the church. Of course, the 'many' excludes those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world.

We give thanks to God that the Mississauga Assembly is still a beacon of hope.



*Ushers*



*Some of the Band Members*



*Clean Up Crew*



Sunday School Kids



Brother & Sister Singh



Sister Chandre Singh

## The Armour of God

(Continued from page 9)  
 ject of warfare by telling the Ephesians, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world...” (Eph. 6:12). **Our battle is not carnal** or natural, but spiritual. Therefore, “though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal...” (1 Cor. 10:3-4).

The battle cannot be fought mechanically even if we do our best to follow the correct procedures and methods. Let us always remember that it is “not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.” (Zech 3:6). The Christian soldier must rely heavily on God and not on mere human strength or wisdom. **Pretence and hypocrisy must be eliminated while prayer and dedication are pursued desperately.**

We should not ignore the fact that it is the **anointing** that will destroy the yoke — not intelligence or emotional gimmicks. Our weapons cannot be carnal and our methods must not be fleshly. Let us cease from being charlatans for in itself this is the workings of the Devil.

Let us consider the closing remarks of the Apostle Paul as he concluded this lesson to the Ephesians and may God give us understanding.

“Praying always with all **prayer and supplication** in the Spirit, and **watching** thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that **utterance may be given unto me**, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.” (Eph. 6:18-19).

# THE RACE

A 'race' is one of the many Biblical symbols used to describe the Christian life and entails a **start, a course and a finish**. With rewards being the ultimate goal, **persistence and endurance** are two essential requirements for everyone involved in running a race. It is important to note that although everyone who finishes the Christian race receives their reward, the demands for dedication and commitment are in no way lessened. As a matter of fact, **the level of success during this spiritual race is greatly dependent on our persistent yielding and dedication to God's process of sanctification in our lives.**

As in the natural field of athletics we should not enter our race to lose, but rather to win. Also we should bear in mind that rewards are received at the completion instead of the start. The Christian race is likened to a lengthy and hazardous cross-country marathon rather than a mere 'short dash.' There are hardly any smooth tracks, but mostly jagged hills to climb and desolate valleys to cross.

The main objective of this spiritual race, or to be more specific, our salvation, is to **conform to the image of Christ**. Scripture tells us, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be confirmed to the image of his son..." (Rom. 8:29). After we accept the Lord as our Saviour, we are not to be passive in our sanctification, but are exhorted to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14). The word of God continuously exhorts us to do everything within our human capabilities to assist in our sanctification. In regards to per-

sonal involvement there are many scriptural terminologies such as, "let us cleanse ourselves" (2 Cor. 7:1), "mortify therefore your members" (Col. 3:5), "Lay aside every weight, and the sin" (Heb. 12:1), and "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice..." (Col. 3:8). Etc.

As someone correctly stated, **"We are to work as if everything depends on us and pray as if everything depends on God."** There is no negation of our responsibility in the process of sanctification but a conscious and deliberate effort on our part is required. Spiritual maturity will not be achieved by a single act, but rather by a gradual and continuous process. In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul stated, "[God] will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life..." (Rom. 2:7).

Let us not view conversion as the completion of our walk with God, but as the beginning. By faith we accept the Lord as our Saviour and a new life begins. We are then expected to grow and mature into the "fullness and stature of Christ", as we submit to the Spirit, the Word and the Ministry. **Perfection is not achieved outside the church**, and there can be no advancement in holiness until the Word of God goes beyond education and effects sanctification. **The believer must advance beyond a mental acceptance of truth and walk in it.**

Christian conversion is a lifelong journey of mortifying the flesh. We who once walked according to the course of this world, and were

formatted to its trends are now being changed into new creatures. **The purpose of the church is to make us holy**, sanctified and fit for the Kingdom of God. There is no magical formula or any single master key for our spiritual development. God's Word addresses all our faculties: "set your affections on things above" (Col. 3:2); "If your right hand offends you, cut it off" (Matt. 5:30); "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. 9:27); "yield ...your members as instruments of righteousness" (Rom. 6:13); "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. 6:18).

**Personal involvement** is of great importance in the Christian race.

In a clear and sober self-examination, David said, "I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Psalm 119:59). When we discover a pattern in our lives that is contrary to the Word of God, we must make changes to our attitudes and behaviour. Everything that constitutes the fabric of our lives must be viewed in the light of God's Word.

In a natural race one has to be fit, disciplined and temperate. Likewise, in the Christian life, everything that will inhibit or slow us down must be removed. The Apostle Paul stated, "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us..." (Heb. 12:1). To "lay aside" means to get rid of or to put away. We have to **examine our lives daily to identify the things that will hinder our progress with God** and remove them. "Weights" may not necessarily be sin, but could include many legitimate needs that have become hindrances in

our Christian life.

After conversion we will discover that the pollutions of this world, and a desire to return to the old lifestyle will always haunt us. Therefore, we are to resist these drives and make deliberate efforts to walk in the ways of the Lord. We are to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1).

**The Christian race demands a continuous advancement in godliness:** "...though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. 4:16).

## The Cost

**Discipleship should be viewed as the hallmark of the Christian life.** Our Lord said, "...if any man will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt. 16:24). Denial of self being the first requirement in discipleship, demands extreme sacrifice. It means giving up much of our rights, desires, goals and privileges. To take up our cross is to willingly embrace the instrument of death to self. This is not forced upon us, but we are to take it up willingly, fully knowing that it will work against our instincts of self-preservation. (Lk. 9:24). Spirituality will only be achieved by yielding to God's will. It is a painful process, yet profitable, for God will prune our lives that we may be more fruitful in Christ.

**Evaluating the cost** is also an essential requirement, "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he has sufficient to finish it?" (Lk 14:28). No one will successfully follow the Lord without paying a price. We must give up the pleasures



of the ungodly lifestyle and cease from pursuing our carnal desires. We are to become less materialistic knowing that, “*godliness with contentment is great gain.*” (1 Tim. 6:6). Developing Christ-likeness is not without cost.

### No Retirement

The final depository of the cross life is the grave. In our Christian walk **there is no retirement from activity and service in the work of the Lord.** At the end of his ministry the Apostle Paul was still pressing forward – an intense action on his part. Sadly, the spirit of retirement that has permeated this ungodly world has also infected God’s people as it relates to His work. **Quitting from church activity should be considered unacceptable conduct** in the life of a child of God. Anna, the aged prophetess, was a widow for 84 years and yet she was busy in the temple serving God night and day. Starting the Christian race with great zeal is not as important as being able to reach the finish line. **We must endure unto the end.**

### The Potter’s House

The potter’s house is probably the best description in the Bible of how God works with His elect. In the potter’s house we see the wheel, the clay and the potter. The clay represents our humanity, the wheel is symbolic to many divinely arranged circumstances of life, and the Potter is God. God has a plan for the clay, and will fashion the vessels as it pleases Him. Scripture states, “*Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!...Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou?*” (Isa. 45:9). In reality, we are to be pliable in the hands of God as **He fashions us according to His will.**

In its raw form clay is shapeless, but God makes it into a thing of form and beauty. We are His workmanship.

As we examine the work of the Potter, we see a master craftsman at work, gently shaping the moist clay into a work of art. Notice that He does not throw away the marred clay, but refashions it. We are the clay, full of blemishes, but God is conforming us into the image of His Son. He is gradually removing the filth from our lives until we achieve the fullness of Christ.

### The Course

Any sensible person who enrolls in a college expects to fully complete the prescribed courses and graduate. **Attendance and punctuality** are absolutely necessary. Studying involves research and homework requires discipline. It means sacrificing even our leisure time to obtain our goals, but the reward is worth it all on the day of graduation.

The Christian walk is no different. To gain involves pain. In Philippians 3, the Apostle Paul exemplified the greatest sacrifice a child of God could ever make. He gave up his position in the Pharisee organization to gain Christ. He dismissed his intellectual background as dung. The things that were gain to him in this life he counted loss for the excellency of Christ, and pressed his way “*toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” He did not allow anything in this life to deter his progress in God. He said, “*if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*” (Phil 3:11).

As the apostle saw it, **sanc-tification was the work of a lifetime.** He said, “*Not as*

*though I have already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*” (Phil. 3:12). This statement was made almost 40 years after his conversion. Paul knew that he could not have changed the past, but with certainty looked to the future and was determined to reach the finish line. Just prior to his death he said, “*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith...*” (2 Tim. 4:6-7).

As Christians we too must overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil. We are to recognize that “*friendship with the world is enmity with God.*” (Js. 4:4). Remember that the world is transitory, not permanent; it is not for eternal investment. We must put off the carnal and sinful tendencies that retard our spiritual growth and be more aggressive in pursuing holiness. Because the Devil is eager to devour and destroy our faith, we must put on the whole armour of God in order to resist him. The children of God must be vigilant in their spiritual walk, knowing that they live in an evil and ungodly society.

As we endeavour to conclude these thoughts of self-examination, let us stop for a moment and take a panoramic view of the Christian race. The whole process involves God saving fallen and depraved man who, in himself, is helpless and hopeless. Hindsight allows us to see a very powerful enemy that capitalizes on our depraved nature. Scripture reflects on many great and noble children of God, such as Adam, David,

Samson — just to name a few — who fell prey to the enemy. But there is hope. Paul said, “*For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.*” (Rom 8:3-4). The combination of a sinful heart and a sinful world is devastating. As such we should be vigilant, always examining ourselves and continuously eliminating the “*weights*” and besetting sins from our lives so that we can better run this spiritual race. Sadly, most of us are more careful with our natural lives than the spiritual. Giving preference to our jobs, homes, retirement and other natural things continuously diminish our spirituality. But what will a man give in exchange for his soul? Our soul’s prosperity should be given the highest priority and **temporal things should give way to eternal values.**

As we endeavour to continue in our Christian race, may we remember these words, “*So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.*” (Rom. 9:16). **So run, that ye may obtain!**

“*I therefore so run, not as uncertain; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*” (1



By Rev. Narain Richard

# Modest Apparel



Over the centuries through which the Bible was written, and still to some extent today, a person's character could be determined by the way he or she dressed. **The way the human body is attired is a significant statement that reflects Christian conduct and practice.** In fact, a true Christian can often be identified by their outward appearance alone. In this article we will endeavour to briefly examine this subject.

First of all, it is important to note that **Satan will use any possible means to destroy our faith and testimony.** One of his many schemes is to influence Christians to adapt to the **ungodly fashions** of this world.

Of course, we should not overlook the possibility that a godly outward appearance is no guarantee that the heart has been transformed by the Spirit of God. Many Christians have followed all the rules, so to speak, yet never developed the fruit of the Spirit. However, it is also true that the soul that has been transformed *will* manifest itself in many ways, including **modest appearance.** The human body is the temple of God and

the Holy Ghost will not lead a person to display it as an immodest showpiece. (1 Cor. 3:17, 6:19).

When a Christian gives preference to public witness and pleasing God in the area of clothing and fashion, modesty will be held in high esteem. It will then be **easier to recognize the subtle intentions of ungodly designers and the sensuous stimulations that are intended by their designs.** This includes clothes, cosmetics and jewelry.

Members of the Body of Christ should base their practices and their beliefs upon the Word of God, the Holy Ghost and the judgments of a godly Ministry. We should allow the scriptures to be the guiding principle in every aspect of our lives.

## Guidelines for Women

The New Testament makes several specific statements pertaining to women's dress. Both the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter addressed this important subject.

Paul wrote, *"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in **modest apparel**, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women **professing godliness**) with **good works.**"* (1 Tim. 2:8-10).

The Apostle Peter puts it

like this, *"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your **chaste conversation coupled with fear.** Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, or of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but **let it be the hidden man of the heart**, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a **meek and quiet spirit**, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands..."* (1 Pet. 3:1-5).

These references admonished women to dress according to certain standards which included modesty, inexpensive and non-gaudy attire, and clothing that reflects godliness. To be modest means to be decent and respectful.

**A Christian woman should display the virtues of Christian womanhood.**

She should carefully and prayerfully select her attire in order to not unduly expose her body. She does not have to be excessively old-fashioned, but she should choose clothing that will dignify her womanhood and enhance

her appearance. She should consider that she is to be an **example of godliness to those around her**, without feeling the need to blend with a society that has no regard for modesty.

She is a disciple of Christ. Her dedication means that she does not seek the most expensive and extravagant clothing, and limits the amount of jewellery she displays. By confining herself to **moderate and conservative clothing**, she draws attention to Christ rather than herself. She will not allow the Devil to use her to introduce any fashion or behaviour to the Body of Christ that is inclined to worldly trends.

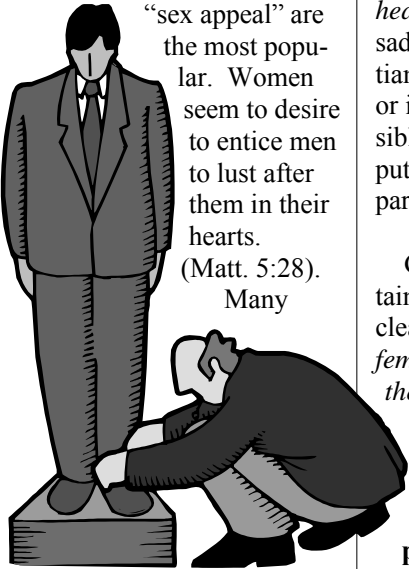
The length of the woman's hair is also predicated on the Bible. Paul asked, *"...is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering."* (1 Cor. 11:13-15).

In a society that is strongly influenced by satanic perversions so that the distinction between man and woman is almost totally lost, the hairstyle of a Christian woman should profoundly manifest her femininity.

Modern society ignores these biblical concepts, and women will push the limits of indecency by every possible means. Clothing that is



inclined toward nudity and “sex appeal” are the most popular. Women seem to desire to entice men to lust after them in their hearts. (Matt. 5:28). Many



authorities believe that this increased exposure of the body has contributed to serious problems of immorality and crime, and threatens the basic foundation of our society.

**Distinction between Male and Female**

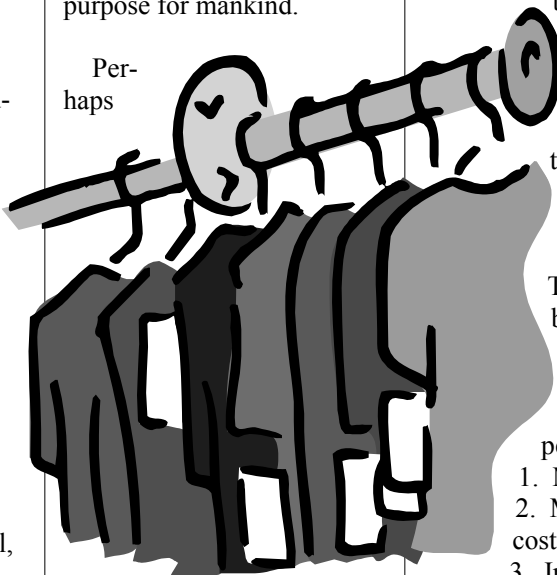
The scriptures also teach that there is a difference between femininity and masculinity as it pertains to dress and that there should be no blurring of the distinction. “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.” (Deut. 22:5).

Modern women seem to desire to wear men’s apparel, especially men’s trousers. Tight fitting jeans and other similar clothing items are not only vulgar and immodest but will stimulate the sexual desires of a carnal mind, sometimes resulting in adultery. Jesus said, “...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adul-

tery with her already in his heart.” (Matt. 5:28). It is sad to know that the Christian woman — either naively or intentionally — is responsible for acts of adultery by putting on immodest apparel.

Gender must be maintained as the word of God clearly stated, “male and female created he them.” (Gen 1:27). It is necessary for the Christian woman to recognize that certain aspects of clothing can affect **body posture** and develop masculine tendencies. Nothing is better than seeing the femininity of a woman sustained in the midst of a world that has lost its value for that which is natural. Anything that blurs the distinction between a man and a woman in outward attire may eventually lead to the perversion of God’s divine purpose for mankind.

Perhaps



some will say this is an Old Testament standard which no longer applies in the New Testament era, but God’s moral law and His very nature will never change. Godly dress was not a ceremonial ritual that ended at Calvary. When the Apostle

Peter instructed Christian women about proper conduct, he used the Old Testament example of Sarah. (1 Pet. 3:5). Christians today should still reflect on good biblical examples. **When the customs of society conflict with the principles of scripture, scripture should prevail.**

**Scriptural Guidelines Summarized**

Holy women of old gave priority to the inward workings of godliness. That is the reason why the Apostle Peter made reference to the Old Testament women when he admonished those in the New Testament to adorn themselves with a meek and quiet spirit. True beauty originates from within.

We believe that we are within reasonable and scriptural rights to teach that Christian women today should follow the principles of the Word of God.

These are the biblical guidelines regarding the Christian woman’s appearance:

1. Modesty
2. Moderation in cost
3. Inclination toward godliness and decency
4. Avoidance of excessive outward adornment
5. Shamefacedness and sobriety
6. Distinction of femininity

**Guidelines for Men**

The Bible does not provide as much instruction for men’s clothing. In fact, the subject is not mentioned in the New Testament at all. Apparently, immodest dress was not as much a problem for Christian men in those days, even though it seems to be an increasing problem today.

However, the same biblical principles applicable to Christian women should also apply to Christian men. We must face the fact that our society, like Sodom and Gomorrah, is on a continuous moral decline. It is evident that God has already given many over to “vile affections” as the Apostle Paul stated in Romans 1:26. In recognizing this, it becomes necessary for Christian men to maintain their masculine integrity and modesty. As Adam was told to “have dominion”, even so must godly men assume the tremendous responsibility of representing this divine office in appearance and action. **Clothing should reflect the holiness of God and minimize the “macho” and lewd characteristics of the ungodly man.**

For the Christian gentleman stylishness should not be the primary focus, but rather dressing that reflects dignity and godliness. Men should also dress modestly and refrain from using feminine attire.

“And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Col. 3:17).

# IGNORING JUDGEMENT?

## Understanding Judgment

For most Christians the word **'judgment'** seems to imply only bad consequences, especially when reference is made to 'the judgment of God.' This thought pattern is the result of many years of traditional teachings in which an imbalance was placed on the term 'judgment' seeing it was mostly used to describe God's wrath on the ungodly. This one-sided point of view resulted from the use of scriptures such as 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8, in which Paul wrote, "...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ... in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus..."

Peter also made a similar proclamation saying, "But the heavens and the earth...are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (2 Pet. 3:7). These verses, together with many other scriptures, are indeed referring to God's judgment of the ungodly **in the last days**, but should not influence an impartial understanding of the term 'judgment.'

As we endeavour to comprehend and relate to the judgment of God in our lives, it is necessary for us to understand **the following basic facts.**

**First**, we must recognize God the Father as **Judge**. Psalms 58:11 states that God is the One that judges in the Earth. All judgment, whether direct or indirect, at the present time or in the future, comes from Him. The book of Hebrews described God as, "**God the Judge of all**". (Heb. 12:23). Proverbs 29:26 states

that, "**every man's judgment cometh from the Lord.**" Solomon wrote, "**For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.**" (Eccl. 12:14). The biblical fact is that **God is the Judge over all creation.**

The **second** fact to consider is that God is **Just** and as such, **His judgments are executed without partiality.** The Apostle Peter wrote, "And if ye call on the Father, who **without respect of persons** judgeth according to every man's work..." (1 Pet. 1:17). Paul also stated that, "... ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and **there is no respect of persons.**" (Col. 3:24-25). Moses described God this way: "...his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, **just and right is he.**" (Deut. 32:4)

Elihu sums it up by saying, "For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, **neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.**" (Job 34:11-12). Therefore, it can be said of the Lord that He is **Just** and His judgments are never influenced by emotionalism, but by the principles of His word.

**Thirdly**, it is important to know that God the Father **has committed all judgment** to his Son – our Lord and Saviour Jesus. As we study the written Bible we

will constantly come across statements establishing the Son not only as Saviour, but as Judge in the place of His Father.

Paul's speech to the scholars at Athens declared, "...Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained..." (Acts 17:31). In Romans 2:16, he makes a similar statement saying, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." 1 Corinthians 4:5 states, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, **until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts...**" Also, in 2 Corinthians 5:10 Paul **excluded no one from judgment** and wrote, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The epistle to Timothy established **Jesus as the One who will execute God's final judgment on all humanity.** Paul wrote, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom..." (2 Tim. 4:1). In addition to these scriptures there are many prophecies describing Jesus as returning to the Earth to execute judgment on the ungodly.

The **fourth** fact to understand regarding judgment is that God's judgment is not biased, but **includes all of humanity** – both the saved and unsaved. Ecclesiastes 3:17 states, "I said in mine heart, **God shall judge the righteous and the wicked...**"

In chapter 12:14 it continues to say, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, **whether it be good or whether it be evil.**"

## Two Stages of Judgment

It appears from scripture that God's judgment for the whole world is executed in **two stages**. Whether it be for the ungodly or the Christian, **judgment is first received on a daily basis** during one's lifetime, and then the **final judgment at the resurrection**. Man's response to judgment during his lifetime will determine God's reaction to man in the final judgment. **Notice the two distinct categories of judgment** dispensed at the resurrection. Jesus said, "... for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; **they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**" (Jn. 5:28-29, see also Dan. 12:2, Matt. 25:14 and Acts 24:15).

In Revelation, there are two words that are used to distinguish the **final judgment** between the ungodly and the saint. The word "**wrath**" describes God's final action against the ungodly, while the word "**reward**" is used to describe the benefits received by the child of God. John wrote, "And the nations were angry, and thy **wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.**" (Rev. 11:18).

As is stated in Revelation



11:18, eternal judgment is predicated on the way we respond to God during our lifetime. Paul wrote to the Galatians saying, "...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For **he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.**" (Gal. 6:7-8).

### God's Purpose

Because mankind is born with a depraved and sinful nature, **we are all sentenced to die.** "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23). Judgment must be executed! Yet, the goodness and grace of God is extended to fallen man, offering him a way of escape. **God will save and cleanse those who will repent** and respond to His salvaging efforts and destroy those who reject His salvation. Judgment for the Christian during his lifetime is a '**saving judgment**', but for the ungodly it is a '**destroying judgment**'.

In referring to God's daily judgment of the elect, the Apostle Peter declared, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God..." (1 Pet. 4:17). With this execution of 'saving judgment' in the form of chastisement and trials, **transgressions are dealt with at the source.**

**Chastening is not a punishment for sin, but rather a cleansing from the source of sin.** Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was not a punishment for sin, but rather the means of preventing sin. He said, "...lest I should be exalted above measure... there was given to me a thorn in the flesh..." (2 Cor. 12:7). We must bear in mind

that the process of conversion and sanctification is only manifested by **progressive changes** and conforming to the image of Christ.

Paul wrote, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." (1 Tim 5:24). It is absolutely necessary that the child of God be able to recognize and accept chastening as from the Lord, then with God's help make changes. For someone to come forth in the resurrection with immortality, that individual must first **go through the cleansing process of judgment in this life.** This is God's method of producing overcomers.

The primary purpose of this article is to assist us in recognizing God's hand of judgment in our lives so that we can make changes. Paul, in writing to the church at Ephesus, described God's work of salvaging His children by saying, "...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it...that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be **holy and without blemish.**" (Eph. 5:25-27).

Although the judgment executed against the saints and the ungodly may be identical, and for the same acts of disobedience there is great difference in the response and results. The **non-elect** responds negatively to judgment and there is no improvement in his relationship to God. Solomon said, "Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad..." (Eccl. 7:7). Also, the book of Revelation highlights the negative atti-

tude of the ungodly in response to God's judgment stating, "...and they repented not...and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds... and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." (Rev. 16:9,11 & 21). **The same judgment that destroys one saves the other.**

Therefore, **it is necessary for us to be able to recognize the hand of God in judgment and His ultimate purpose.** Failure to do so may result in a prolonged period of judgment. Nebuchadnezzar was a typical example of someone whose resistance to God's demands for change prolonged the extent of his judgment. What could have been accomplished in minutes was extended to seven years of extreme misery. (Dan 4:27-37). But the work was finally accomplished! We either fall on the rock and be broken or let the rock fall on us and grind us to powder. (Lk. 21:44).

### God Speaketh

In the account of Job's process of chastening judgment, Elihu made a remarkable statement. He said, "**For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.**" (Job 33:14).

We are living in an age of religious arrogance where every religious novice claims to hear from God, yet the many divisions in Christendom indicate otherwise. It is common to hear Christians say, "God spoke to me" or "The Holy Ghost told me." But how can this be when there is so little awareness to

the subtlety of evil in our day? Is it not true that the judgment of God **which plagues the ungodly and forces him into the doctor's office also plagues the so-called godly?** The big question is: why is the child of God and the unbeliever suffering the same consequences resulting from national judgment? The answer is simply because they are both drinking of the **same cup and partaking of the same sins.** God is warning His people in Revelation 18:4, which emphatically declares, "...Come out of her **my people**, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

### Are We Listening?

When a child of God is being judged of God, whether it be sickness, poverty, job loss, or any other form of trial, it is of absolute necessity for such a **one not to ignore the reason for judgment.** Scripture states that, "*the curse causeless shall not come*". (Prov. 26:2). Also in 1 Corinthians 11:31-32, the Apostle Paul suggested that, "*if we would judge ourselves*" by examining our lifestyle in the light of God's word, "*we should not be judged*" by the Lord. "*But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*"

An honest evaluation of our sanctification from sin and the spirit of the world, followed by genuine repentance and a change of lifestyle may be a good place to start. However, **the purpose of God must be sought** in whatever circumstances the child of God faces.

May God help us not to ignore His intervention in our lives by allowing human reasoning to justify our circumstances.

# Progressive Conversion



Sis. Althea Ghirawoo

A song writer once wrote, "My life has never been the same since I met Jesus." I can truly attest to this statement by sharing with you the major transformations that have occurred in my life since my conversion. These life changing experiences took place eleven years ago when I accompanied my friend, Sister Carol, to the Gospel Assembly Church on Kenmuir Avenue. It was then that I finally found strength for my weary soul and received the peace and joy that I longed for.

Prior to my experience with the Lord, my life had been one of much turmoil and tragedy. In my pre-teen years, my family and I encountered a most traumatic experience that severely affected our lives. I was greatly affected by it and in my state of grief and despair, resorted to means which suppressed my pain and sorrow. Consequently, as I grew up and encountered more painful experiences I sought refuge in measures which provided temporary comfort.

My life continued to deteriorate to its lowest ebb until God intervened and

rescued me from a life that was doomed to fail. "*For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.*" (Matt. 18:11). I then received spiritual sustenance from the word of God ministered by my pastor, Bro. Singh. Since then my lifestyle has drastically changed.

I have since come to realize that God is taking me through a sanctification process and is gradually eliminating bad habits that were very much a part of my everyday life. Through Bro. Singh, the Lord has also taught me that sanctification is not instantaneous, but rather a journey from my sinful past to a life that is being conformed to the image of Christ. Throughout this journey I have faced and will continue to face many trials, but the teachings I have received from the Word and my dependency on God will enable me to overcome these obstacles.

My heart continuously rejoices when I consider the miraculous changes that have transpired in my life. My tears of sadness have been replaced with many tears of joy, and though my journey is not yet over, I take comfort in knowing that I am in a church that is enabling me to endure until the end. The Apostle Paul stated: "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the*

I was blessed and privileged to be born to Christian parents and have a Grandpa who was a church deacon. Growing up, I went to church because it was the norm and a part of my upbringing.

When I was in high school, my family and I were converted at a Pentecostal Church, and I was able to develop a greater love for Jesus. Throughout my marriage and years of motherhood, the Christian teachings and doctrines that were instilled during my youth have remained with me.

Since becoming a part of Gospel Assembly Church, I can clearly see that my relocating to Canada was not coincidental. My faith and actions that I thought were acceptable to God have been put to the test. The result has been an inner transformation and a greater understanding of the will of God.

Brother Singh's messages on Christian lifestyle were all geared to cause us to change. Some of these teachings are planted deep in my heart and have affected my life in a positive manner.

These are some of the thoughts I received from Brother Singh.

...I am not to become weary of serving God.

...God and the things pertaining to the church should never become too big a burden.

...The needs of saints should always hold priority to the needs of the unsaved.

...God is not evil but He does permit it, then gives us the power to endure trials and

overcome the Devil.

...Bringing our iniquity into the church can contaminate it and bring judgment on those affected.

...We are judged by our response to God's word.

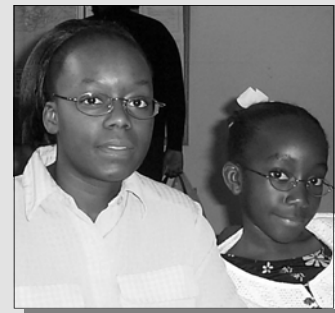
...In all situations I must strive to be 'Christ-like'. I should always take the Christian stand and be conformed to the image of Christ.

...Most of all, I have to adhere to God's will.

In all the messages, the main focus has been on self-examination, and this has helped tremendously to change my life and affect the lives of those around me.

I thank Brother and Sister Singh, and the elders for the work they are doing in the lives of my daughter and me.

I give glory to God who saw it fit that I should have this testimony, and be able to look back and see growth and changes in our lives. I also thank the saints in the church for their testimonies, their steadfastness and their love, for without each other's encouragement, the race cannot be won.



Sis. Florence Nyereyemhuku & Nayasha



Dear Brother Singh,

I have written to thank you for the magazine "The Midnight Cry" issue number 12. It particularly blessed me in a special way. In the last article, "God's People in Babylon", you said, "It is my conviction that there is still much of the spirit of Babylon in our midst and this may be the reason for so many natural and spiritual sicknesses among us." I experienced a change in the intensity of light when I read this. I knew God wanted to draw my attention to that statement. Sir, it is true. May God help us to recognize it and to be delivered from it. Thank God for men of God like you who have the understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do.

God bless you as you labour in His vineyard.

**Sarah Meme  
Mbale Uganda  
East Africa**

Dear Pastor Singh,

I am at a loss for words to express my happiness regarding "The Midnight Cry" magazine. I received a few issues from a sister and read them all. Frankly, I have learned a lot about the word of God through your magazine. Please keep my name on your mailing list.

**Andre Kakina Mbutaki  
Bruxelles, Belgium**

Dear Brother Singh,

I would like to thank you for the newsletters you have been mailing to me - they have been a blessing to me and the ministry. Some of the articles have really found their way to the hearts of God's people, through messages preached over the pulpit and photocopies distributed to those within and outside the camp.

Brother Singh, there is one particular article that, by God's grace, wreaked havoc on the devices of the Devil treading on the lives of many who claim to be Christians within our community - the article entitled, "The Sin of Hypocrisy" by Brother Terry Tombran. With this article, like many others, after being shared and preached among

the saints, I urged them to pass it to all souls that still have breath in their nostrils. We tagged this exercise, 'The total overthrow of hypocrisy among Christianity.'

The campaign attained to good success among many Christian folks and the name of God was highly glorified. Thank you most greatly for this newsletter, issue No. 11 of October 2002. I could go on and on telling you of all the articles that have really blessed the fellowship and my spirit...Thank you very much for this unrelenting voice of "The Midnight Cry" and may God bless you and your ministry for ever and ever.

**Rev. Afolabi Ehikioya  
Ghana, Africa**

Dear Brother Singh,

Thank you very much for "The Midnight Cry" of July 2002...I have been blessed by every article in it, especially the fact that we have to redeem the time...and the healing of the Body of Christ.

The message has inspired and motivated the brethren here in the Body. May the Lord bless you and the editorial staff.

**D. Gweshe  
Gospel Assembly Church  
Mutare, Zimbabwe**

Dear Brother Singh,

I do write to sincerely thank you for putting us on your mailing list for the magazine "The Midnight Cry". I received issue 10...and have been greatly blessed by the warning message given. It was so awakening!...I remember receiving an article... "Faith to Endure" from my pastor Rev. D. Meme. IT WAS SO ENCOURAGING. It offered us hope beyond imagination and caused us to stamp our feet and say that what we're going through is right in line with the Christian life...Thank you for allowing God to use you.

**Rev. Samuel O. Opakasi  
Gulu, Uganda**



**THANK YOU!**

*We would like to express our thanks for all comments made regarding this publication. Although this magazine is available at no charge, we appreciate all the monetary contributions we have received.*

*Thank you, and may the Lord richly bless you!*

*Midnight Cry Staff.*

**Acknowledgments**

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- Des Moines Convention — Rev. Alex Brintley
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- The Race — Rev. Narain Richard
- The Armour of God — Terry Tombran
- Editing — Andrew Mowatt

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*“Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching  
those things which concern our Lord Jesus  
Christ.” Acts 28:31*



**Brother & Sister Singh  
Pastor & Wife**

**SERVICES:**  
WEDNESDAY 7:30 P.M.  
SATURDAY 6:30 P.M.  
SUNDAY 1:00 P.M.  
SUNDAY SCHOOL: 11:30 A.M.

*Please continue to keep them in your prayers...*