



A translated version of the International Christian periodical

MARANATHA

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DIVINE AUTHORITY IN THE MINISTRY

.....PÁG.06

ACTIVITY REPORTS

.....PAGE.10

YOUTH Section PSALMS 119:9

.....PAGE.13

Women OF GOD

.....PAGE.13

GOD'S PROPHETIC Clock

.....PÁG.03



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EDITORIAL

Esteemed readers of this periodical, "Maranatha," I greet you in the powerful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring that you persevere in His glorious Word and presence until the end. We thank our Lord Jesus Christ for giving us the inspiration through His Spirit to continue serving you the Word of God through this publication. God bless the readers, pastors, and congregations who supported this periodical with prayers and financial assistance during the year 2015. With the Lord's help we will continue to serve you, moved by the love of Christ our Lord until He returns. We love and appreciate you with the love of the Lord.

Upon completing one more chapter in time, the year 2015, in which we witnessed many drastic changes around the world which shook nations and peoples, the people who should have been shaken the most with a spiritual awakening is the people of God. Following the terrorist attack which occurred in France in November of last year in which 120 people were killed, the terrorist group **ISIS, made the following statement, threatening** to attack and to destroy the United States. "To the states which participate in the crusade campaign, that by Allah, god willing, you will have a day like France, and just as we struck France in the center of its abode in Paris, then we swear that we will strike America at its center in Washington," a spokesperson for ISIS warned in a video. And concerning the White House, he stated: "We will blow it up." He underscored: "The people of the United States will not enjoy peace and security until the Muslims live safely." A few days later,



PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, III AND FAMILY

fourteen people lost their lives during an attack in which a heavily armed couple opened fire upon a group of people in San Bernardino, California. The terrorist group ISIS praised the attack saying that this was the work of a couple of their compatriots.

Last year produced events which are challenging us Christians to experience a great spiritual awakening and these challenges continue into this year. There are laws that have already changed and others that are about to change which are challenging the children of God to rise up in the power of the presence of the Lord. There are political, military, economic and moral changes occurring throughout the world. We can see how physical persecution has begun to manifest itself in a greater manner during the past few months. It is time to seek the Lord and to serve Him with an unconditional surrender like we have never done before in our lives. It is definitely not a time to be passively seeking God!

Even now the Lord continues to proclaim: *"Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments: and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of*

the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him; even a meat offering, and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet, let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, spare thy people, oh Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God? (Joel 2:12-17).

The following are words written by my grandfather when he proclaimed **and provoked** the "Convocation, A Challenge to the spiritually Violent Christians": "My Lord knows that I have never been in agreement to living a passive and conformist life. Much less when I see the tremendous example the Orthodox Jews, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, are giving to us. Even though they have a "veil" (2 Cor. 3:15) placed upon their understanding which does not allow them to recognize that our Lord Jesus is the Messiah of Israel, they are calling upon God with a tremendous intensity in the midst of an indescribable spiritual, economic, political and military

tension that Israel is experiencing, being pressured and threatened by the entire world. But I have a great zeal as I observe multitudes among a Christianity based upon erroneous doctrines, as well as other multitudes among large false religions, including those who are a part of Satanic cults, who accomplish goals through great effort and sacrifice, which sometimes border on the ridiculous, as they obey their leaders, who are mere mortal, sinful humans. In contrast, I see the little or no appreciation and minimal level of obedience evident among many of the Christians and preachers toward the Supreme Leader of the Church: Jesus Christ the Lord.

The statistics show how many false religions are increasing greatly in numbers. On the other hand, among those who profess the "doctrine of the apostles" (Acts 2:42), this is not happening. The reason is that there is a lack of spiritual incentive. There is a lack of fervor and "spiritual violence." There is a lack of the fire of the Holy Spirit, conviction, and spiritual maturity, as well as of supernatural signs through the Holy Spirit. As we see this, we must understand what the Apostles and our early church brethren understood, and be willing to pay the price of unconditional obedience and total surrender to the Lord just as they did."

In this new beginning of the year 2016, let us ask the Lord to give us His strength to serve Him better in all aspects of our lives. The tremendous changes we experienced in 2015 paved the way for what we will experience in this year 2016. The Lord is at the doors, expecting us to be prepared for His manifestation in glory!

"May the God of peace sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).

Pastor Efraim Valverde III. ■



"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (the Jews) and upon thy holy city (the Old City of Jerusalem)..." (Dan. 9:24)

Time is running out on God's clock. The time allotted for us to work is rapidly coming to an end. Through God's Spirit we must work in strengthening and preparing our family, marriage, children, congregation, careless Christians and those who are lost without Christ. We must have a sense of urgency and be moved by this urgency to personalize the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said: *"I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day (while there is time): the night cometh (the day of our death, or the day of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ), when no man can work"* (John 9:4).

That which is occurring to His beloved chosen people, the Jews, God's prophetic clock, is signaling to us that soon *"time shall be no more"* (Rev. 10:6). *"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love..." (Jer. 31:3) for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth..." (Deut. 7:6).* His beloved chosen land, the land of Israel, *"the land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine"* (Lev. 25:23), and His beloved chosen city, the Old City of Jerusalem, belong to the Lord. He stated: *"But I have chosen Jerusalem, that My Name might be there"* (2 Chron. 6:6). *"When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it"* (Luke 19:41).

During the past three months the world has placed a monumental pressure and tension upon the Jewish state of Israel. During the past 70th General Assembly of the United Nations, which took place between the 15th of September and the 6th of October, there were 20 resolutions emitted by the UN condemning Israel for supposedly violating human rights, and only one such resolution issued against each of the following countries: the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Arab Republic of Syria and the Popular Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea), condemning them

for similar violations. Meanwhile, serious violations against human rights committed by the nations of Russia, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, China, Cuba and many other nations were ignored and not condemned by the UN General Assembly.

Having received time to speak before the world leaders of the UN General Assembly on September 29th, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, spoke passionately in a way that no other world leader had previously done. Then on the 1st of October, in response to Netanyahu's passionate speech, the enemies of Israel launched a furious wave of violence against the Jewish people, beginning with the diabolic terrorist act of murdering Rabbi Eitam and his wife, Naama Henkins, who were shot in cold blood while driving in their car near the town of Itamar in the region of Samaria. This young couple who were in their thirties were murdered in front of their four children, ages nine, seven, four and an infant who was only four months at the time. By this time the list of atrocious terrorist acts which have followed this macabre killing has greatly increased. All of this violence has been fueled by the hatred their enemies have directed against the people of God.

This same furious attack which the enemy has launched against the Jewish people is also increasing in the spiritual realm against the children of God in the Church. Satan seeks to distract, to cause to be careless, confused, lazy, lukewarm, seeking to bring slumber and diffuse the children of God. *"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you (unto the children of God), having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time"* (Rev. 12:12) *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take*

unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 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: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:12-18).

As this spirit of violence against God's chosen people spreads amongst individuals, races, leaders, and nations, we see how the God of Israel continues to awaken in His people a desire to return to Him and to His chosen land, the land of Israel. The number of French olim (Jews who are immigrating to Israel) increased by 118% as 7,500 French Jews moved to Israel. In addition to this, almost 7,000 new immigrants have entered from Ukraine, along with 6,300 from Russia and 2,900 from the United States of America. In total, more than 30,000 Jews immigrated to Israel in 2015. This is an increase of 16% compared to the year 2014. As the wave of persecution reaches other regions of the world where it is not yet evident, we pray that the hearts of many others will turn once again to the God of Israel.

The eyes of all the world leaders are focused on Mount Moriah, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The Muslims have accused Israel of attempting to take control of the Temple Mount. What they should really be concerned about is the day the LORD of hosts comes and takes control of the Temple Mount.

The UN has tried to form a coalition of armies to monitor the Mountain of the Lord. Jordan has tried to establish a guard from among its army to watch over the Jews. Israel, after the Six Day War in June of 1967, gave custody of the Temple Mount to Jordan, trying to show goodwill to the Arab world and to the rest of the world. Currently, Jordan is planning to install video cameras on the Temple Mount "to monitor acts of incitement" by the Jews. The purpose of all of this is to show the UN that Israel is the "instigator" in an attempt to cause the UN to ban the Jews from ascending the Mountain of the Lord completely. We know that Jordan will only show the UN video footage that will support their case against Israel. Even now they accuse the Jews, claiming that they only go up to the Temple Mount to incite, when in reality all the Jews desire is to pray on the Mount. This intense desire to pray to the God of Israel on the Temple Mount is what Jordan and other nations refer to as "incitement." It is prohibited for Jews to pray on the Temple Mount.

The Jews who have been ascending to the Mount of the Lord to pray are causing the demons of hell to be stirred up! Satan is fighting hard to silence the prayers, pleadings, supplications, and the cry of the children of God. *"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth"* (Isa. 62:1). Satan does not want us to ascend unto the Lord's presence, and he will continue trying to stop us from seeking the Lord with all our heart. But in the Name of Jesus Christ, who is our refuge and strength, we will not be stopped! *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* (Rom. 8:35).

We unite ourselves with the Jews who are "spiritually violent," and who are ascending unto the Temple Mount to seek the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. In the midst of opposition and prohibitions, Jews are pleading for the coming of the Messiah of Israel. God bless you ■



"He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps. 126:5-6).

Among all the doctrinal articles I have written throughout the course of my ministry, I'm able to confidently say that this is one of the messages that is a direct reflection of my own life. Since the beginnings of my journey on the path of Christ my Lord, God has moved me to *"go forth weeping"* (Ps. 126:6). In the days of my youth, when I did not yet know the Lord, I was one of those persons who believed that men should not cry (although I realize now that this is just a front that men put up). However, one day my Lord came into my life and everything changed.

As human beings, whether male or female, there are many reasons why we weep. We weep due to pain, sadness and desperation. We also cry due to joy, but also due to rage and impotence. So many reasons for us to cry! But here, the Word of God speaks about another type of weeping which is distinct from all the rest. It speaks of a weeping that the world does not understand. This is the same type of weeping the Lord referred to when He declared: *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted"* (Matt. 5:4).

This type of weeping can only be understood by someone who truly knows the Lord. This weeping cannot be experienced by those who do not truly understand what it means to *"walk with God."* The weeping I am referring to is the *"weeping with which God weeps"* of which He has made partakers all those in whom resides *"the mind which was also in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 2:5). When I previously stated

"HE THAT GOETH FORTH WEeping"

Pastor Efraim Valverde, Sr.

that the time had arrived in which everything changed in my life, I was referring precisely to the day in which I first tasted the sweetness of this kind of weeping which still remains with me to this day.

I remember that during my childhood (from 7 to 11 years of age) I wept on many occasions. At times I wept from pain. On other occasions I wept from sadness or from desperation. On certain occasions I wept with excitement. Then, as a youth, I rarely cried, but on those few occasions that I was overcome by weeping, this weeping was a result of negative emotions such as bitterness, rage or hatred. But one joyful day, that Being, whom Isaiah referred to as *"a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief"* (Isa. 53:3), came into my miserable life and He caused me to weep that type of weeping that satisfies the soul. From that moment on I have truly understood what the Scripture means by *"going forth weeping"* (Ps. 126:6).

I have walked with the Lord for a lifetime now, throughout which I have seen two kinds of Christians: those who know how to weep before the Lord and those who don't. I have seen those who know how to pour out their soul before the Lord, weeping at the altar, and those who are ashamed to do so, thereby depriving themselves of the blessing that this brings. Such Christians avoid weeping, seeking to preserve their "dignity" and

"composure." This type of Christian voluntarily ignores the example the Master gave as He wept while standing in front of the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). He also wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), and during His intercessory prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38-39). There is no better, perfect example than that of the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures do not record His laughter, but they do record His weeping.

I once again emphasize that the weeping I am speaking about here is a weeping that the world does not understand. Our initial verse speaks of those *"who sow in tears"* and adds that *"he goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed."* We understand that this *"precious seed"* is the Word of God, and that it is Christ Himself. Therefore, he who truly has the Lord Jesus in his heart invariably will *"sow in tears."* Without a doubt he will *"go forth weeping,"* since he is *"bearing precious seed."* It is precisely this *"precious seed"* which makes this kind of weeping unique. Those who have experienced this type of weeping fully understand this message.

This kind of weeping is the result of an acknowledgement of the Almighty. It is also due to a gratitude to our Savior because His grace has reached us. It also stems from a profound love for Him who, on the cross at Calvary, demonstrated His love for us. This

weeping is also due to a divine compassion toward those who are suffering, first of all, those among the *"household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10), but also among a miserable world which surrounds us. This weeping is not out of bitterness, neither does it imply desperation in the human sense. It is a weeping which brings a supreme satisfaction to the soul in a way that nothing else in this life can provide. It is also an offering and sweet perfume which pleasantly ascends before the presence of the Eternal One, just as it did with the tearful prayer which Hannah, Samuel's mother, offered unto the Lord (1 Sam. 1:10-15).

Our God, the Creator, gave us the emotions which are an integral part of our being. Among those emotions the outward demonstration which stands out the most is that of weeping. Weeping makes an impact on human emotions which no other emotional demonstration can match. Only an extremely hardened heart will not be moved when it hears the desperate cry of a child. It is not easy to ignore the sobbing cries of a weeping woman. Upon seeing a man cry, other men are going to pause to consider the reason behind that man's tears. God, Himself, is moved to compassion when He hears the cries of His creation, who do so without even knowing Him. How much more are His ears attentive to the tearful prayers of His children! God heard Joseph when he cried from the bottom of the well where his brothers had placed him. It was there in the well that Joseph learned to weep in a way which is pleasing to the Lord. There in the "school of the well" he learned how to trust solely in God. Oh how Jeremiah wept throughout the course of his ministry! Weeping



overwhelmed his life due to the deviation of God's people, but this same weeping was what brought a spiritual refreshing to his own soul. In due time, it was Daniel's tear-filled prayers which brought restitution to the exiled children of Israel and a fulfillment of God's promises to them. For the most part weeping has been the instrument God has used to positively change the lives of His people in general (**Jer. 4:19, Lam. 3:48-51, Dan. 9:3**).

We are told in God's Word that the apostle Peter *"wept bitterly"* (**Matt. 26:75**). But God doesn't make mistakes and His Word cannot fail. In due time Peter's weeping became his greatest treasure, because only by humbling himself was he able to be used by the Lord in a manner that would not have been possible any other way. Many times I have observed persons who, even though they are carrying the *"precious seed"* (**Psa. 126:6**), do not want to voluntarily weep as the Word indicates, therefore God Himself has caused them to weep. This is never something negative, because if anyone knows what is best for His children, it is our God. But I believe that it is wise not to wait for our Heavenly Father to force us to humble ourselves and to weep. It is better for us to lend ourselves to *"go forth weeping"* and *"to sow (here) the precious seed with tears"* (**Psa. 126:5-6**).

In the times and places where we currently live, we are surrounded by a Christianity and a ministry with a "professional spirit" in which there is "much intellect" and very little true emotion. There are Christians and ministers who delight themselves, who rejoice and who celebrate in the joy of Pentecost, but there are not many who are willing to weep in the suffering of Calvary. The great

majority are happy to be a part of the noise, the laughter and the joy, but very few are willing to *"weep with those who weep"* (**Rom. 12:15**). There are many shiny, intellectual, but dry pulpits. Those pulpits that are covered with the tears of the ministers who preach from behind them are very rare. God is observing all of this with a painful heart.

The Holy Spirit, speaking through Ezekiel the prophet about the *"mark of God,"* declares: *"Go throughout the midst of the city, throughout the midst of Jerusalem (the people of God): and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof"* (**Eze. 9:4**). Here we are told of the special and unique mark which distinguishes the true servants of the Lord: *"those who sigh and that cry."* What an exact reflection we find here of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Himself! Where are these men and women who are special to God? The answer is that they should be here on earth and they are precisely the true members of the people of the saints of the Most High.

What I have written here, my brother and my sister, is not merely a sentimental article. It is a groaning which has come from the very depths of my soul. If you are one of those who has learned to *"go forth weeping"* (**Psa. 126:6**), God bless you, because I know you have understood my motive. Don't dismay, don't decrease and don't change, my dear brother and my dear sister. Keep your banner of tears lifted up high. Let no one or nothing discourage you. Do no fear. Don't be ashamed. If the devil accuses you because of your weeping, don't let him convince you. Remember that he envies you because he cannot cry with the

divine weeping. If our God causes you to weep using any method He chooses, thank Him for this. If you love your Lord, all things work for good (**Rom. 8:28**).

Now, directing my words to the *"wise"* (**Dan. 12:10**), I say: remember that we are surrounded by people who also weep, but they cry the cry of those who *"do not have hope"* (**1 Thess. 4:13**). They are in desperate need of experiencing the *"divine weeping"* that you and I are already experiencing so that they can weep with tears of peace and trust as we do. But if you are counted among the "professional" Christians and ministers "who know it all," except knowing how to humble yourself before the Lord with weeping and groaning, moved by the compassion of Christ the Lord, how can you help that mother who cries, seeing her drug addict son in prison? How can you effectively comfort that young lady who is physically and morally destroyed, being a victim of certain circumstances in her life? Do you think that with your dry, professional Christian spirit you can reach the heart of that child who cries for his mother who did not return home? Would you be able to convince that poor miserable man who lost his family and everything else in a moment of foolishness, that you truly understand his tears of bitterness? During a lifetime in the ministry, I am fully aware (and I am totally certain of what I say) that the most excellent way to be able to help and to comfort those who cry without hope is when we weep the tears of compassion of Christ that mark the life of a true child of God. For that reason the Holy Spirit continues to exhort us, speaking through the prophet Joel who exclaimed: *"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn*

assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar" (**Joel 2:15-17**).

Also we are told through the apostle James: *"Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands ye sinners (speaking to the people of God); and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up"* (**James 4:8-10**). The Lord's desire is that among His people there be less outward presentation and more true power. That there be less of what can be seen and heard with the natural eyes and ears and more of what only God sees and hears. That there be less of a pharisaical spirit and more of the *"secret of the closet"* (**Matt. 6:5-6**). That there be less human presentation and more of a spirit of contrition and humility. There needs to be more hearts broken by the "divine weeping."

The promise in His Word is that if we *"sow in tears, we shall reap in joy"* on that day (**2 Tim. 2:12**). I believe this with all the strength of my soul. That is why I began this article by mentioning my own life experiences. Now, at this juncture in my journey, I believe that I can summarize what I feel with the lyrics of one the verses of the songs God has given me, "My Celestial Home," which states: "Today, I go forth weeping. You marked this path for me, my Lord. But I will soon experience great rejoicing. I will have my sheaves. I will no longer weep in my celestial home." God bless you.



"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15-18).

There is an urgent need for the minister to have divine authority to fulfill the work of the ministry. Based on this, I write this article using the biblical text above. In recent days, I have felt moved to speak more particularly about this, and I am certain that it is the Holy Spirit who is directing us, especially when we understand that the days are ending and that at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Church will be united with Him.

In the ministry of the Lord's Church there are diverse gifts that have been given by the Lord, and I need not say much for the people of God to believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, much less to accept the vessels who in an extraordinary way are used by the Lord. In fact, in recent times, I have observed a noticeably increased inclination among members of congregations following this kind of environment. I do not criticize or blame them for it, because the reason behind their desire is a good one (although on the other hand, I do not justify those who go to the other extreme and begin to take lightly and to even despise what they have in their own spiritual home). But this current tendency among God's people gives us something to think about and this is precisely the subject that I would like to draw the

DIVINE AUTHORITY IN THE MINISTRY

PASTOR EPHRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

attention of my fellow pastors.

In the verses I use as the basis for this article, we find a perfect, concise description of the message and the divine authority that God has given to each and every one of His ministers. The apostle Paul declared: *"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the power of God"* (1 Cor. 2:4). The initial verses are not referring to a special or extraordinary minister, but they are referring to the common, ordinary work of the man who is called by God to care for His flock and to bring those who are in need of salvation to the feet of the Lord. I repeat, that the special gifts and ministries have their place in the work of the Lord, and we would never do well in ignoring them, much less in despising them. But we also don't do well in taking lightly the authority God with His Holy lips promised to those who believe in His Name.

Each of the responsible pastors and ministers in the Church of the Lord that have believed in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ will preach with all certainty and confidence that *"he who believes and is baptized"* (in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 2:38) *shall be saved"* (Mark 16:16). We believe and teach that all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ should have the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, and that they should be obedient to the Word of the Lord (*"Wherefore by their fruits*

In the verses I use as the basis for this article, we find a perfect, concise description of the message and the divine authority that God has given to each and every one of His ministers

ye shall know them," Matt. 7:20, Gal. 5:22-26). We also believe that they should seek the gift of *"speaking in other tongues"* (Acts 2:4). We do not present this message as something spectacular or extraordinary or as a novelty, but as a part of the common, universal message of salvation. Therefore, if we consider part of this message as "ordinary" for all who believe in the Name of the Lord Jesus, why should we not consider the other part of the message to also be "ordinary?" If we believe that God has given us all the authority to clothe the bride (baptism, Gal. 3:27), and to ask that she receive her dowry (the Holy Spirit, Eph. 1:12-13), we should also believe that He has given all of us the authority to place upon the bride (the Church) the adornments given to her by the Husband, which are precisely the signs and manifestations that the Lord mentioned in the initial verse. We harm ourselves when we tell ourselves that these signs are only for a select group that God has chosen to give these special gifts or that they

are only for "super" ministers who are much holier, who are better and who are more consecrated than we are. This type of thinking causes an inferiority complex among ministers and the devil takes advantage of this complex to blind the minister so that he will not see the AUTHORITY that God has given him, and therefore he does not use it to its full potential.

My beloved brother, if you and I are ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have divine authority and power, and we must put it to use. Not for our own benefit or honor, but we must use this authority for the salvation of the lost. Remember: *"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"* (1 Tim. 4:14). Exercise that authority! Put it to use! You know that the same hands which are holding this publication are the hands that He has already used. Lend yourself so that He can use them even more. Don't underestimate the AUTHORITY that you have as a minister of God. Don't harm yourself and those faithful members that you preside in the place that God has placed you by saying that you don't possess this divine authority.

I have used this divine authority for a lifetime and I know that He has moved me to tell you to do the same. I am totally confident that the Lord will confirm in your heart that what I say here is true and that it is not me speaking to you but Him. As all of us believe and put into practice this divine authority, there will be great blessing in the Church of the Lord which will benefit all the saints who are in need and who thirst for God. It will also serve as a sign for the lost so that they will be drawn to His Salvation. God bless you ■



As I was searching the Scriptures, I came across a story which caught my attention, making an impression upon me. It has to do with a man who was a friend, but who later became a terrible foe (**2 Kings 8:11-13**).

When Hazael comes in a friendly manner to consult the Lord through the prophet Elisha about the sickness which tormented Ben Hadad, king of Syria, who died the next day as prophesied by Elisha, Hazael took over the kingdom in fulfillment of what the Lord had previously told Elisha would occur (**1 Kings 19:15**). The Scriptures relate that as Elisha was speaking to Hazael, who to this point had been his friend and who acknowledged the calling of Elisha as a prophet of God, *“he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept. And Hazael asked, Why weepeth my lord?”* (**2 Kings 8:11-12**). Elisha answered him by telling him what God had shown him was going to happen and he prophesied to him that he was going to become a great foe of Israel in the future. At the moment, Hazael did not believe the prophecy and even stated: *“But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?”* (**2 Kings 8:13**). But the vision the prophet had seen came to pass. Hazael was exposed to conditions, environments, pacts, friendships, and compromises that caused him to change from being a good friend to becoming a terrible foe.

I believe it is easy for the reader to understand the great lesson this story holds for us, when we who profess to be followers of Christ apply it directly to our lives. As

A FRIEND WHO BECOMES A FOE

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

for the world, everyone does what seems right in his eyes, and even though hypocrisy, falsehood, and betrayal are commonplace in the environment of the natural man, there are friends who remain friends and nothing affects their relationship since they consider it to be something sacred. But in the case of Christians, we know that we should not live our lives according to what seems right in our own eyes, but according to what our Master commands in His Word. And in this particular case, the commandment is that we love one another (**John 13:34-35**), because if we are children of the same Father, then we are brothers. Consequently, we are also friends in the Lord Jesus. But our Master, knowing of the terrible strain that would be placed on the friendships among His followers, foretold us of this so that those of us who desire to hear and obey Him would take preventive steps against this negative influence. *“And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved”* (**Matt. 24:10-13**).

We understand that among the people of God, Israel, there have always been friends who result in traitors. We also know that the same has occurred in the Church

of the Lord Jesus, beginning with Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Master Himself (**Matt. 26:50**). The apostle Paul warns about those men during his time who were *“false brethren”* (**Gal. 2:4**). This same story has repeated itself even unto the present. We are now in the last days before the return of our Lord Jesus, and many Christians have fallen into and are bound by this subtle Satanic snare. Many are the Christians who have not only become foes of those who have done them harm, but have also become foes of those who have been good to them. Many are the Christians who at one time were sincere friends, but with the passing of time have been affected by the same negative influence that affected Hazael and his relationship with the children of Israel.

The minds of many of these deceived Christians have been so troubled by *“the god of this world”* (**2 Cor. 4:4**), that they view this diabolical deceit as the most natural thing in the world. Therefore, they continue living their lives, professing and even preaching about their communion with God, all the while being blinded to the truth that the faithfulness of the believer in Christ the Lord should not only be vertical, directed to the Lord, but also horizontal, directed toward their fellow believers. He who believes that he can be faithful in his friendship toward Christ the

Lord without being faithful in this friendship toward his brother is being deceived. It is imperative that he align his emotions and sentiments with God’s will while he still has an opportunity to do so.

Hazael never returned, but the truth is that his heart was never circumcised. Judas Iscariot tried to return, but it was too late. His change of heart and his friendship were forever destroyed by his betrayal (**Matt. 27:3-5**). On the other hand, the apostle Peter had the opportunity to repent and he did so, weeping bitterly because of his denial of the Lord Jesus. That horrible experience became engraved in Peter’s soul, but he learned from it. Later, when he was publicly and harshly rebuked and embarrassed by his brother, the apostle Paul, he firmly maintained his friendship with his brother and companion in the Lord, and in his old age was able to sincerely refer to his brother as *“our beloved brother Paul”* (**2 Pet. 3:15**).

Although it is true that it is impossible to control others and force them to remain our friends, on our part we can, with the help and the power of God, sustain friendships with those who have harmed us, and with all the more reason, with those who have shown us their love! Just as we consider the faithfulness of a friend as a special treasure, we can also cause that others feel the same about our friendship. In fact, this is something we should strive for BECAUSE THE CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS COMPRISED OF FRIENDS, NOT OF FOES. May God bless you ■



It was 6 pm on Friday, Dec. 12, 2014. Early that morning my husband and I had returned to our home in Madera, California, after a trip to the state of Oaxaca and to Tijuana in Mexico. We were preparing to travel to Bakersfield, California, where we had planned to spend the night at the home of Pastor Jose Zazueta. We had planned to travel with him and his family Saturday morning to attend a celebration which was going to be held in Lone Pine, California, hosted by Pastor Rudy Madera and the local congregation. We had not even bothered to unpack our suitcases, since we were going to continue traveling. Or so we thought. But things did not work out this way. God had other plans.

Around 7 pm, Efraim was being transported by ambulance to the local hospital, with an unbearable headache, difficulty understanding what was said to him and difficulty in speaking coherently. At first I thought it was a stroke, and the paramedics believed it was due to severe dehydration. Upon arrival at the hospital, he was given a strong sedative to ease the pain ... He did not open his eyes for days.

After two CAT scans, a convulsion, vomiting, a drastic increase in body temperature, mental confusion, blood tests, general anesthesia, and an extraction of cerebrospinal liquid, my husband was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis. They placed



him in quarantine, connected him to a respirator and administered several medications and solutions intravenously. At ten o'clock Saturday morning they transported by helicopter to one of the intensive therapy units in a hospital in San Jose, California.

We were not permitted to see him until many hours later. When we finally were able to visit him we found him on his bed, unconscious, his body totally immobile, with his arms tied to the rails of the bed, lying on a mattress filled with water which was near freezing as the doctors tried to control his body temperature. He had inflatable bags on his legs to assist his blood circulation and was connected by many wires, catheters and needles

HIS MIRACLES AND HIS HEALINGS

PASTOR EFRAIN ARREOLA AND HIS WIFE YOLANDA ARREOLA



to equipment monitoring his heart rate and his blood pressure.

At midnight the doctor on duty called me to the room. He, with a very serious demeanor, tactfully explained to me the gravity of my husband's condition. He assured me that he and the medical staff were doing all that they possibly could to assist my husband, but that he could not make any guarantees on whether my husband would survive this situation. He told me that we should pray.

Later we learned that my husband was not only suffering from bacterial meningitis, but also from encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), septicemia (blood poisoning), pneumonia, facial herpes and bronchitis. He

underwent an operation on his brain to drain out the liquid that was causing extreme pressure on his brain. They also performed a tracheotomy and a gastrostomy. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to explain the details of all the other procedures he underwent during this time.

By the mercy and grace of God my husband was released from the hospital on the 28th of January and was transferred to a rehabilitation center in Fresno, California. The Lord had delivered him from death, from undergoing amputation of one of his limbs, from losing his hearing or eyesight and from damage to any of his internal organs due to the extremely high dosages of antibiotics administered to him. He has almost fully recovered all his "normal" brain functions, although he does suffer at times from lack of balance. But most importantly, through allowing him to undergo this experience and through the tremendous support we have received from the people of God, the Lord has shown him and caused him to feel the immense love that He has for my husband. Blessed be the Lord.

When he arrived in Fresno, he was still using a gastric catheter through which I fed him using a syringe. The muscles of his throat and his mouth were semi-paralyzed, thus not allowing him to even swallow his own saliva. For that reason it was very difficult for him to speak and his



voice was almost inaudible. We had to use an electric suction machine day and night to clear out all the saliva and phlegm that accumulated in his throat. He was in a constant state of fatigue. He was not able to sleep. He was not able to move or to even open his left eye and he was extremely weak. By this time he had lost fifty pounds. That first night in Fresno, both he and I felt saddened and fearful of being in a strange place, without knowing what to expect. But to our surprise, the next morning the Lord brought us joy. By another miracle he recovered full use of his left eye from one moment to the next. Glory be to God!

And the story continues. Perhaps one day we will write a book describing this state of our lives, so that we can share the marvelous works the Most High God chose to operate in us, and to give a detailed account of all the wonderful personal and spiritual experiences we lived through during this time. Also so that we can share all the experiences of brotherly love, companionship and support that we received from our family, friends, brethren in the faith and even from person we had recently met. But I will say this, that from the first moments in this struggle, we experienced an enormous amount of support from all those who learned of the situation we were going through. They never allowed us

to feel lonely or helpless. We will never forget this. We are eternally grateful to each and every one who helped us and encouraged us.

"I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me" (Dan. 4:2).

I remember I was talking to my wife about the trip to Lone Pine when suddenly I began slurring my words. What followed after that, my wife has already explained. What I was experiencing inwardly during this time was something totally different than the trauma I was outwardly experiencing. Suddenly, I felt as if I was in a completely strange place. Then I realized that I was next to a huge slope and in the distance I could see the sky. Then, I saw a small metal car similar to the ones used by miners. Then I felt as if I was inside this car, but I could not see my body. It was as if I just had my mind but no body.

This metal car began moving me rapidly up the slope until I reached the top. There at the top the only thing I could see was a huge light. As I was contemplating this splendor, I began hearing the murmuring of many voices, but I could not see anyone.

As I was there asking myself what all of this meant, I heard the unmistakable voice of

"Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth"
(2 Cor. 12:2)

our beloved brother, Efraim Valverde, Sr. (I can still hear his voice in my mind). The Lord knows that what I say hear is true. We entered into the following conversation:

"So you arrived, son?," he asked me. "Is that you, brother?," I astonishingly asked him. "Ha, ha, ha. The dead don't come here son, only the living," he responded. "But, brother... hasn't it been a while that you died?" "Oh, son, haven't you heard that our God is not a God of the dead, but of the living?" "Continue pressing forward, continue pressing forward..."

As I heard and spoke to others, I could not believe that they were there in that place. But I also knew that humanly speaking they were no longer alive, but I heard their voices plainly as if they were alive. I could continue sharing all that occurred during this tremendous experience, but in doing so I would fill an entire book.

When I returned to my body, I did not understand what was happening. I experienced something similar to what the apostle Paul experienced when he stated: *"Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth"* (2 Cor. 12:2). I could not speak. It would be days before I could begin communicating in writing. I saw my wife approach me and I heard her say that we were in San Jose. Her voice sounded as if she was far away. I thought we were still in Tijuana. I could not remember anything else at that time. "You have been here three weeks," she told me. This astonished me even more. I asked myself how this could be possible, since I had the sensation that only a day had passed.

It is impossible to explain in just a few lines all the miracles the Lord worked in me throughout this experience. After a year, I am still here by the grace of God and I know that it is for a purpose that only He knows. I continue to recover little by little, but I continue to struggle with bronchitis, with a tremendous weakness in my body, and with a sense of numbness in my mouth. I ask everyone to continue praying for me. We love you in the Lord.



Dear brethren, readers of this Christian newspaper, I greet you in the mighty Name of Jesus Christ our Lord and our God.

I inform you that this annual event was once again a tremendous blessing, both for the local brothers and for our brothers who could attend from different places. The attendance was even larger than last year. We thank God for this.

On Thursday pastors, ministers and youth began arriving who came to offer their services for projects that our pastor has planned for this new year. We could sense a great level of enthusiasm among all those who came to learn more about the plans and the work of this ministry which continues forward.

On Friday the general activity began and from that first day the sanctuary began to fill up with our brothers who arrived early. That night we were ministered to by the

Report on Bible Seminary held in Salinas

Word through our pastor, Efraim Valverde III, who spoke to us on the extreme importance of learning to call upon God, especially at this crucial time.

On Saturday morning our pastor was moved by God to share Biblically based, valuable and detailed instruction on Christian marriage. It was something special, because apart from the constant need for counsel in every marriage, some married couples had come with great need to hear and receive this substantial dissertation. They, together with the rest of us, were fed with this Godly counsel.

That same Saturday evening, after the energetic and fervent adoration and praise of those of us who were

gathered together, we hear the admonition on the details written by our pastor of blessed memory, Efraim Valverde, Sr., in his book "A Convocation, A Challenge to Violent Christians." Our pastor used the challenges that his grandfather issued to the people of God in this book to shake our awareness of the urgent need to enter into the spiritual battle that the present time demands, so that we might avoid falling into the spiritual slumber that has engulfed the majority of present day Christianity. We were moved to remake, to reset and to reconfirm our commitments to our Lord.

On Sunday morning, our pastor talked about the reasons why the

world and the devil hate the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and why is there so much interest in the Temple Mount. We read many scriptures which definitely removed any doubt or confusion that someone might have had concerning the reasons behind the strong attitude of hatred demonstrated toward Israel by their enemies.

The activity ended with us having a feeling of great satisfaction for what we received throughout the duration of the activity. It was something that could be defined as taking complete advantage of the time, which went by all too quickly.

May God bless each one of those who still have a spiritual appetite to continue feasting on the delicacies from the Word of God.

Your servant and brother in the Lord,
Phillip Nava ■

Desiring that the blessing and peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you, I greet you from the Valley of Vizcaino in South Baja California, Mexico. I thank God for the opportunity and privilege of celebrating together with our brethren in the fellowship service which we hosted from Nov. 6-8, 2015.

We rejoiced upon hearing the Words of the Almighty using the lips of our brothers, Pastor Efraim Valverde III from Salinas, California and Pastor Efraim Arreola from Madera, California. Being moved by God's Holy Spirit and the power of His Word they each encouraged us to prepare ourselves for our reunion with the Lord, especially now that our

Service in Viscaino, Baja California Sur.

redemption is nearer than when we first believed.

Pastor Efraim Valverde III spoke to us about the importance of understanding the true meaning of the Gospel (a term we should understand in detail since we call ourselves evangelicals), and through his teaching he answered the following questions: What is the Gospel? What does the term Gospel truly mean? What is the message of the Gospel? What are the Good News of salvation?

In closing his words on Friday, Pastor Efraim Valverde III encouraged to not be ashamed of the Gospel and reminded us that it is our responsibility to announce the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ so that others might be saved through Him.

Throughout the day on Saturday he counselled us on how to we should live as children of God, and about how there should be a marked difference between us and those

who are not children of God. He directed this message to all present including pastors, ministers, fathers, mothers and children.

For his part, Pastor Efraim Arreola shared with us his testimony, praising God for the signs and wonders the Most High God had done in his life, especially through his recent near death experience. We were also accompanied by pastors from the Valley of San Quintin, Ciudad Insurgentes and Ciudad Constitucion.

It is my desire that continue to bless all of our brothers who have been used by the Lord Jesus Christ as instruments to encourage to seek more of Him. May God bless you. Your brother in Christ, Pastor Tereso Bautista Flores. ■



First of all I would like to thank my God for His mercy and for permitting us to host this fellowship service which took place Nov. 13-15, 2015. It was a blessing to once again hear the voice of our Eternal God in the mouths of various pastors. It is a great privilege to see how God uses His vessels. Our brother, Daniel Ybarra, minister in Salinas, California, provoked us to call upon the Lord and to fill our hearts with His presence. I thank Pastor Efraim Valverde III for sending this minister who has been with us year after year. God bless Pastor Alfred Tienda from Vista, California, who gave us a teaching on the Scripture: *"Let us make man in our image"* (Gen. 1:26).

We also were privileged to hear the counsel of God through our brother, Nestor Quintanar,

Service in Poblado Miguel Aleman Sonora México.



who encouraged us to walk daily with the Lord, to beware of neglecting our walk and to not fall into a routine. He mentioned how it is dangerous when we no longer have the desire to draw closer to God and how this carelessness can come from taking the Word of God lightly. He told us to

reflect on what happened in the time of Jeremiah the prophet (Lam. 2:13-14, Jer. 23:16, 2 Cron. 32:12). Then our brother, Lorenzo Mendoza II provoked us to walk sincerely before God, especially in these times we are living in. May God bless our sister in Christ, Gloria Martinez, wife of bro. Lorenzo Mendoza,

Sr., of blessed memory, who has always accompanied us in this fellowship service.

We thank God for the pastors from the area of Valley of San Quintin and Tijuana who have always rendered their support for this activity. We also thank our brothers in Mexicali, Pastor Agripino Diaz and the congregation, Pastor Timoteo Cervantez and bro. Juan Leon from the area of Juchitán, Oaxaca, who have been a blessing. And we also thank the brothers here locally in Hermosillo. We thank God for each one who joined us on this occasion. It filled our hearts to experience together with you the presence of our God. May all honor and glory go to our Lord Jesus Christ!

Pastor Delfino Chavez,
Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico ■

We thank our Lord Jesus for the opportunity to once again host our annual youth service from Oct. 31st to Nov. 1st of 2015, where we were ministered to by Bro. Daniel Ybarra, a minister in Salinas, California.

He spoke to us about the importance of the relationship between parents and their children, and he invited us to the altar to call upon the Lord on behalf of our children. He exhorted the pastors and ministers, and fathers to be mentors for our children as the apostle Paul was for the young minister, Timothy. He pointed out that Paul wrote two letters to Timothy because he found in

him a son, just as Timothy found in Paul a spiritual father. There is a great in teaching our youth and preparing them to make good decisions. He mentioned how the devil utilizes a lack of maturity to influence our decisions negatively, especially when we are not seeking the Lord with all of our heart.

"He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers"

Youth Service in Juchitán, Oaxaca.

(Mal. 4:6). Brethren, let us reconcile ourselves with the Lord Jesus. Let us be sincere with our God. We must awaken so that we can form young men and young ladies so that they can become part of God's army, and who will stand in the gap. *"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land"* (Eze. 22:30). We must be counted among those who seek the Lord

Jesus, whether we are a man or a woman.

The activity ended on Sunday with baptisms in which fourteen courageous young people decided to give their lives to the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38). Hallelujah!

I thank all my brethren for their financial support and for their prayers. Please continue to pray for us. We hope to see you soon in our upcoming fellowship service which will be held on Feb. 5-7 of 2016. Receive greetings from your brethren here and may our God keep you at all times.

Pastor Timoteo A. Cervantes Pérez ■



On behalf of the congregation in Ventura, I give infinite thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, for allowing us to once again host our annual fellowship service, where we were able to gather together with our brothers from many different places here in California and also from Las Vegas, Nevada, and Tijuana, Mexico. We were able to taste the goodness of the Lord experiencing **Psalm 133:1** which states: *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."*

God manifested Himself giving a great blessing in the first service at noon in which Pastor Efraim Valverde III warned us about what many congregations are suffering from in these days:

Service in Ventura CA.

lukewarmness and passiveness (**Rev. 3:15-16**). God bless our brother whom He has used to shake us up spiritually. We rejoiced in what he shared with us. Then we took a short break to share a meal together with all those present.

Upon returning to the sanctuary God manifested Himself gloriously, when our beloved bro. Phillip Nava, minister in Salinas, California, together with a choir composed of mostly young people, presented various wonderful songs before the Lord. We rejoiced seeing our youth praising our God (**Eccl.**

12:1). Afterward each of the pastors who honored us with their presence greeted us. May God bless them. As it is written in **Ecclesiastes 12:11**, *"The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd."*

In the evening service, Pastor Efraim Valverde III, blessed through the Word of God, sharing with us the importance of knowing and understanding who God is. This so that we will not experience the same thing that happened to the apostles

on the Sea of Galilee who marveled, saying: *"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"* (**Matt. 8:27**). After this message which shook us up, our brother invited us to the altar to call upon the Lord together. God blessed us mightily through this prayer and in this way our annual service came to a close.

May God bless all of our brethren around the world, and in every place that this publication might reach. May God bless our brothers in Salinas, California. This is my report of the blessing that God granted us.

Once again, your brother in the Lord who loves you.

Pastor Pedro Aguilar ■

Greetings. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. I thank the Lord for allowing us to gather together from Oct. 30-Nov. 1st of 2015. It was a great blessing to once again see our brothers who accompanied us on those days, and to once again experience the fulfillment of God's Word which declares: *"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"* (**Ps. 133:1**).

We had the privilege of receiving our brothers from Tijuana, Las Vegas, Vicente Guerrero, Hermosillo, Vista and from other places as well.

On Friday, brother Delfino Chavez, pastor in Hermosillo, Sonora, shared a message on who

Service in Mexicali, BCN.

is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (**Mat. 18:1-4**), and how the Lord desires for us to walk in humility, esteeming ourselves as being less than one another (**Phil. 2:2-8**). He also spoke about the inclination to do evil which affects us all (**James 4:6**).

On Saturday, bro. Alfred Tienda, pastor in Vista, California, spoke to us about the blessing Obed Edom received when the Ark of the Covenant was in his home (**1 Chron. 13:14**). Later that day bro. Daniel Perez, a minister from Salinas, California, shared about

the story of Lot and about the importance to do what God has commanded us to do. He also spoke about the very important topic of tithing (**Mal. 3:10-11**), and about our need to seek the presence of God so that He, in His infinite mercy, might give us of His Holy Spirit daily. He also told us that we should not confuse material blessing with the blessing of God and that we should *"seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and that all this (our material needs) will be added unto you"* (**Mat. 6:33**).

We would have also liked to have had Pastor Efraim Valverde III join us, but we know that he is very occupied in the work of the Lord and thus was not able to accompany us on this occasion. We are asking the Lord that if it is His will to do so, that He grant our brother the opportunity to join us on another occasion.

We ask you in the love of God, beloved brethren, to keep us in your prayers, so that our God will help us to continue in His path, that together we can reach our goal, which is to be with our Lord Jesus Christ for all eternity.

Pastor Pablo Ojeda. ■



YOUTH SECTION

Sis. Noemi Trujillo Rogel



"Let us be a generation whose lives are pleasing to the Lord."

I greet you in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to my God for the opportunity that He gives me to walk in His way and for the privilege of sharing these brief words.

In 2 Chronicles 16:9 we are told: *"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."* This is a verse which has filled my heart, because every morning when I awaken I ask the Lord to confirm my heart, because my desire is to be faithful to Him all the days of my life. I want to love Him and to do everything possible to please Him. I believe that this same desire is found in all of the young people who love our Lord. In these times that we are living, there are only a few people who want to serve the Lord with all their heart and who truly want to make a positive difference in this world, by walking in true sincerity before the Lord and

by seeking to please God every moment of our lives.

Nothing in this world can satisfy more than the presence of the Lord. He is the one who guides us and enables to resist the temptations which our enemy presents to us. It is He who shows us how we should live in order to manifest that we are truly children of God.

Let us be a generation whose lives are pleasing to the Lord. A generation which, despite all the distractions we encounter in this world, does not allow anything to separate us from His love (Rom. 8:35-39).

It is truly something beautiful to be one of those chosen by God and to know that one day we shall be before His Holy presence! Be encouraged, for the Almighty God is on our side! I bid you farewell, and I ask the Lord to bless us and to keep us wherever we might be. *"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass"* (Ps. 37:5).
Sis. Noemi Trujillo Rogel

Cuernavaca, Morelos ■

WOMEN OF GOD

Sis. María Zúñiga.

Praise the Lord! I greet you in the glorious Name of our Lord Jesus. My name is Maria Zúñiga. I am the wife of Heladio Zúñiga, pastor in the city of Jackson, Michigan.

I thank God for the great privilege given to me to share these words in the publication "Maranatha" which has been a great blessing to us and a source of edification to help us grow in our faith.

In the month of Abril in 2015 the Lord permitted to host a fellowship service here in Jackson, which was a great blessing to the congregation and for our spiritual lives in order to affirm us in our walk with the Lord and to help our faith increase daily. His Word tells us: *"But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"* (Heb. 11:6). We are in the last days and each day we are made aware of the things that are happening around the world: wars, earthquakes, the increase in violence, atheism, crimes, immorality among other things. Upon hearing and seeing these things I am reminded of the question posed by the Lord Jesus: *"Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"* (Lk. 18:8). In these last days the devil is attempting to deceive everyone, even the elect of the Lord. We should be attentive, clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, and armed with the shield of faith (Eph. 6:11-18). We should not be slumbering spiritually, but should be prepared for the

glorious day of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus our God. Our lives should be marked by prayer, fasting, humility as we walk in the Spirit before our God, because His Word says: *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"* (Heb. 12:14).

He promised to be our Helper: *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me"* (Heb. 13:6). Through trials and tribulations, in sadness, in sickness, in diverse problems which come against our lives, the Lord is always there to help us to continue going forward. And this is not due to our own merit, but because of His grace and infinite mercy. What a privilege and what an awesome guarantee we have as children of God, knowing that we are not alone, but that it is the Lord who manifests Himself in every moment of our lives. There is nothing I can do that is sufficient to express my gratitude to my Lord Jesus Christ, first of all for my salvation and also for all the times He has helped us continue forward in our walk with Him. Sisters, the Lord Jesus declared: *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment"* (Mk. 12:30). Let us be prepared for the great and glorious day of His Second Coming. I ask prayers for your sisters who are part of the congregation of the Church of the Lord Jesus here in Jackson, Michigan. May God bless you. Your sister in the Lord, Maria Zúñiga ■



BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

The doctrine of baptism is a subject of supreme importance, and has been considered to be so throughout the centuries which have passed since the Church was founded by our Lord Jesus Christ. He himself demonstrated the prominence of this sacrament when he issued the following command: *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark. 16:16). He also commanded His apostles to: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* (Matt. 28:19). He also emphasized the importance of being baptized, when He traveled to the Jordan River where John was baptizing, and asked John to be baptize Him, saying: *"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"* (Matt. 3:15).

Many present-day religious leaders teach that baptism is not truly important; thereby contradicting the same Lord they claim to obey and serve. They are following the example of the Pharisees and lawyers who "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" by refusing to be baptized by John (Luke. 7:30). Nevertheless, this tract is not directed to those who oppose the Word of God, but to the sincere Christians, who, having a pure and sincere heart, want

to obey the Word of God. These Christians are willing to obey God's commandments, whether they come directly from the Lord or through His apostles, since the Lord bestowed upon them His authority when He declared: *"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me"* (Matt. 10:40). I must clarify here, that I am not discussing the subject of water baptism with the purpose of obtaining members for a certain religious denomination or organization. Rather, my goal is that the obedient Christian, whoever and wherever he is, will receive from God the fullness of His salvation. Now that we are aware of these basic truths, let us now continue in our discussion by considering the following questions.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF WATER BAPTISM?

The Lord stated that the *"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mark .16:16). On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, through Peter's lips, declared: *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you... for the remission of your sins..."* (Acts. 2:38). Paul, referring to the Lord's sacrifice, declares that the Lord gave Himself for His Church *"that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water (baptism) by the Word"* (Eph. 5:26). Peter, referencing the fact that Noah was

saved by water in the ark, states: *"The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us..."* (1 Peter. 3:21).

HOW SHOULD WATER BAPTISM BE ADMINISTERED?

Paul explains to us that baptism is a symbol of the burial of one who has died. For this reason he poses the following question: *"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death"* (Rom. 6:3). On another occasion he explains to us that we are *"BURIED with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"* (Col. 2:12). According to these Scriptures, baptism is a symbolic burial through which the believer, now dead to the world (repented) is buried in the waters of baptism and emerges from them, ready to live a new life in Christ. For this reason, baptism should be administered through immersion, submerging the body of the penitent completely in water, according to the example given by the Lord Himself when He entered into the Jordan River to be baptized: *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water"* (Matt. 3:16). Likewise, when Phillip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, the Scriptures tell us that *"they went down both*

into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water..." (Acts 8:38-39).

WHAT NAME SHOULD BE INVOKED DURING BAPTISM?

The Lord commanded His disciples to baptize the Gentiles *"in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matt. 28:19), and when the apostles carried out the Master's commandment, they baptized thousands upon thousands of believers in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not disobey the Lord, as some have had the audacity to say. On the contrary, they faithfully executed His commandment, because they had understood that the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is JESUS the Lord, and that He is ONE. They understood when the Lord told them: *"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"* (John. 14:9). They understood that *"God was manifest in the flesh"* (1 Tim. 3:16). They understood that the Lord Jesus was Israel's Messiah, and that He could be none other than God Himself, because there is only one God (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:6). They understood that only the God, YHWH, can save, and they were given revelation to understand that the Lord Jesus is that same God, because the Name of God given to men that they might be saved is JESUS the Lord (Acts 4:12). This is the Name *"which is above every other name"* that Joel mentioned when he prophesied: *"That whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered"* (saved)" (Phil. 2:9, Joel. 2:32).

The following Scripture verses bear witness that the original believers in the Church were all baptized

Continue on page..... 15



Baptism in the name... calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ, and never with the titles Father, Son and Holy Spirit: **Acts. 2:38, Acts. 8:16, Acts. 10:48, Acts. 19:5, Acts. 22:16, Rom. 6:3, Gal. 3:27, 1 Pet. 3:21.** The baptism invoking the titles of Father, Son and Holy Spirit was not utilized in the apostolic era or in the first centuries of the Church. It was an interpretation which came later as part of the package of many other false doctrines, fruit of the apostasy, which were accepted and confirmed by the Council of Nicea in the year 325 A.D.

TO WHOM DOES THE BAPTISM BY IMMERSION, INVOKING THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, APPLY?

You, the reader, can find the answer in the Word of God. It is for the Jews (**Acts. 2:36-38**). It is for the Samaritans (**Acts. 8:14-16**). It is for the Gentiles (**Acts. 10:45-48**). It is for believers who have already been baptized with other baptisms (**Acts. 19:1-5**). *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call"* (**Acts. 2:39**).

In conclusion: My beloved brethren and friends, if you love the Lord and are one of those who are interested in being sure of the salvation of your soul, we sincerely invite you in the love of Christ to meditate on this important doctrinal subject. The message contained within this tract is not merely a denominational point of view, but is a very specific commandment given by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who declared: "He who believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

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WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

PASTOR EFRAIM VALVERDE, SR.

"Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (**Acts. 16:29-31**).

I must inform you that this message is not for everyone. It is only for those who are convinced of the fact that none of the many things that this world has to offer can give the peace that their soul desires.

Neither is it written with the intent of obtaining followers by attempting to convince someone to leave their religion to accept a different one. On the contrary, it is for those who have already experienced the fact that no religion can change their lives. This message is intended to help those who, because of the miserable circumstances in which they presently live, whether it is a sickness, marital or family problems, addictions, traumas, prisons or similar situations, have arrived at the conclusion that only God can deliver them.

It is for those who have come to the point in their lives in which they are compelled to ask the same question that the jailer at Philippi asked Paul and Silas: *"What must I do to be saved?"* If you find yourself in this category,

through the love of Christ the Lord, I will explain to you God's plan of salvation precisely as it is described in the Holy Bible.

First Step: You must acknowledge and confess your misery and need before God, and you must sincerely repent from your sins. Without this fundamental step, everything else you do will be in vain (**Acts 3:19**).

Second Step: You must now accept the Lord Jesus as the Savior of your soul. You must believe that by His Grace and His Blood that He shed on the cross, He is able to cleanse all your sins, no matter how filthy they might be (**Isa. 1:18**).

Third Step: You must believe that by doing the previous step, this is proof that you have become a partaker of the miracle of having been *"born again"* (**John. 3:3**), which is the same miracle as having been *"born of God"* or *"begotten of God"* (**1 John. 5:18**).

Fourth Step: It is now imperative for you to be immersed in the waters of baptism just as the Lord was, making certain that when you do so, the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ is invoked upon you (**Acts. 2:28 and 4:12**).

Fifth Step: Being now a *"child of God"* (**1 John. 1:12**), a *"new creature in Christ"* (**2 Cor. 5:17**),

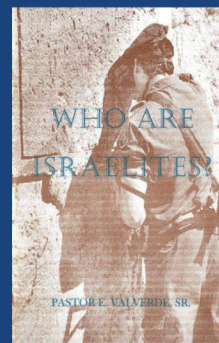
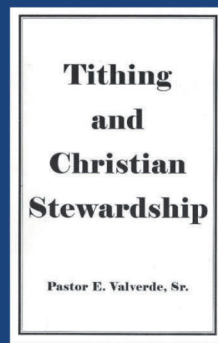
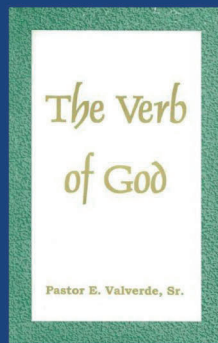
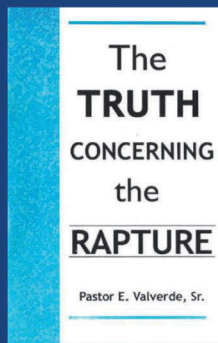
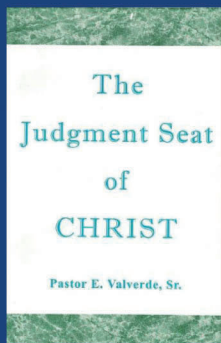
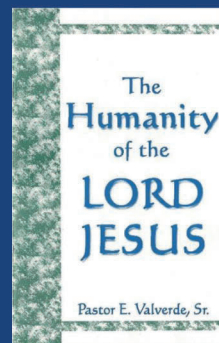
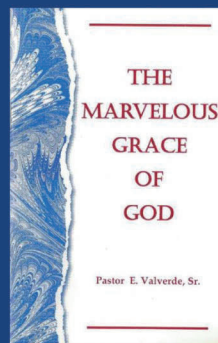
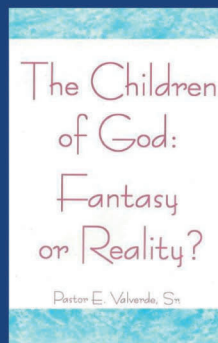
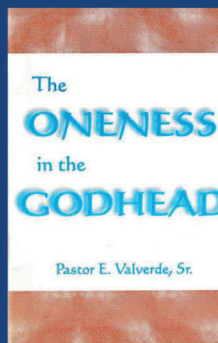
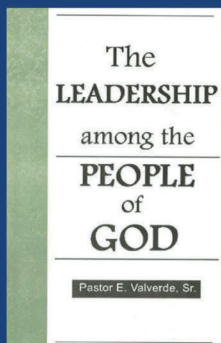
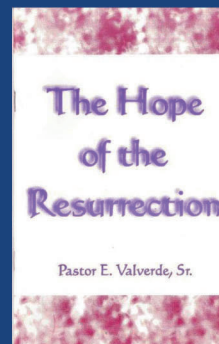
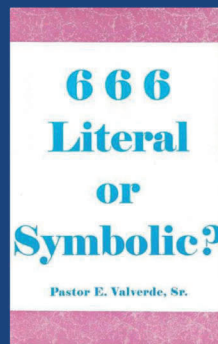
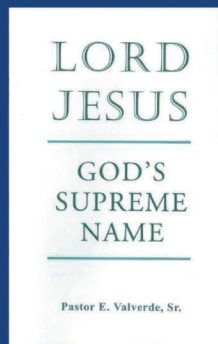
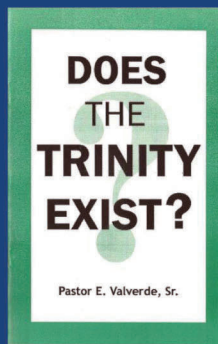
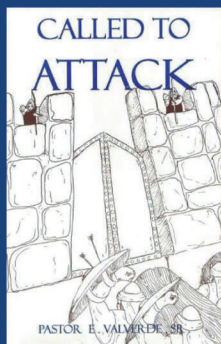
allow the Lord—who now lives within you—to direct you in how you must live, what you must do and what things are not beneficial to you.

Sixth Step: The Lord has promised to give each of His children the power of His Holy Spirit to help us to overcome and to give forth the *"fruit of the Spirit"* (**Gal. 5:22**). Ask the Lord to give you this gift together with the evidence of *"speaking with other tongues"* (**Acts. 2:4**).

Seventh Step: Exercise yourself in reading the Word of God so that you might grow spiritually and become grounded in your faith. Occupy yourself as much as possible in serving others, thereby doing God's work.

Final Step: now try to live the rest of your life in peace and in holiness, loving everyone, and being in communion with those who love the Lord as you love Him now. Seek out as much as you can the fellowship of those who live *"looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (**Tit. 2:13**).

CONCLUSION: Even though we may not know you, the Lord knows who you are, and our prayer is that He will bless you. We also ask our Lord Jesus that He will work in your life, praying that the plan described in this tract will bring the change in your life that you greatly desire. If the Lord places in your heart the desire to receive help from us in any way that we can, please contact us. We are here to serve you.



FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The LORD our God is one LORD (Dt.6:4)

God is not a Trinity (John 1:1, Col. 1:15)

The Supreme Name of our God Is the LORD Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:9)

Baptism is by immersion (Rom. 6:4)

In the name of the LORD Jesus Christ (Act. 2:38)

The Holy Spirit of God manifests itself by means of the fruits (Gal. 5:22-26)
The gift of the Holy Ghost by the evidence of speaking in tongues.

To seek to live a sanctified life is an imperative requirement (Heb. 12:14)

The Church is ONE and it belongs to the LORD (Matthew 16:18, Acts 20:28)

The Church of the LORD is not a religious organization, It is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27, 2 Tim. 2:19)

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