



2 Cor. 3:18

Open Face

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Freedom in Europe

David Clayton

GERMANY

I left home on Thursday July 27, 2006, bound for Berlin, Germany, by way of Heathrow airport in London. I Flew out of Montego Bay at 7:30 P.M. but we stopped in Kingston where we experienced a frustrating delay and aggravating treatment at the Kingston airport. We finally left there at some minutes to 11. After a flight of nine and a half hours I arrived in London on Friday July 28 at 1:20 PM. Here there was another wait of almost eight hours but finally I left sometime after 9.00 P.M. and, arrived in Berlin some time after 10.00 o'clock. I was met by brother Erwin Zoor and brother Martin. It had been a year since I last saw Erwin and we were overjoyed to meet again, however, I was tired and slept for most of the four hour journey to home.

The following day was Sabbath, and my duties began immediately. I worshipped at the home church in the home of brother and sister Gurtner where I was asked to give the sermon. I spoke on the Righteousness of Christ with special emphasis on His finished work. About 20 persons were present. In the afternoon we went home to sleep because both Erwin and I were still very tired from being up so late the night before.

The next day we left for the first leg of this European trip. This was to be a campmeeting in a place named Darlingerode about four hours away. I arrived at this campmeeting with the expectation that I would speak eleven (11) times. However when I arrived I discovered that one of the scheduled speakers was absent because of illness and I was asked to take two extra slots!!

On Monday, I spoke twice. The topics

of the messages were, "Human and divine spirit," and "The nature of righteousness." My aim was to present Righteousness by faith in a systematic way, building on each idea step by step so that the people would be able to understand firstly, the connection between this message and the truth of the godhead, and secondly that they could be able to understand the implications of what it means that Christ alone is our Righteousness, to be received only by faith. Many of these people had been introduced to these ideas, mainly through the work of brother Erwin Zoor, but their ideas were still not very clear and they had many questions. They listened to the messages with great interest. On this first day there were about twenty-seven adults present. On Tuesday, I spoke three times and the numbers present grew to more than thirty (30). I spoke on "The nature of sin," "In Christ" and "The Fight of Faith." These messages were again well-received. Erwin also spoke showing a parallel between Israel in the wilderness and righteousness in Christ.

These meetings continued for six (6) days, and each day the interest of the people was more intense. Some had come with doubts, a few were openly opposed to the message of Righteousness by faith as they understood us to be teaching it, others had many questions. But we rejoiced to see that by the end of the six days, as far as we could tell, every trace of opposition had been erased and there was nothing but grateful rejoicing for the wonderful gift of free salvation fully bestowed in Christ, by grace, through faith alone.

One man gave a testimony that he had come to the campmeeting after having received Erwin's newsletter which contained my first article on "You can be truly free." He had just recently come



Children singing at German Camp

to understand righteousness by faith at the time when he received this newsletter. He believed in it but could not prove it from the Bible. However he had accepted it after discussions with a man who had explained to him that the law could not save him, but only Christ. He had felt a load lifted from his shoulders when he accepted this, after ten years of seeking righteousness in the law. When he read the article in Erwin's newsletter he had been thrilled and determined that he had to attend the campmeeting. When he came to the meetings he was overjoyed and drank in everything with fixed attention. He told us that at the end of the meetings he and his wife would be traveling to the north of Germany where they would be sharing this message as best as God would use them.

By the last meeting on Sabbath I had preached 13 times! The topics of the sermons were as follows:

1. Human and Divine Spirit
2. The Nature of Righteousness

Also in this issue:

- Talks on Righteousness 9
- Light in Jamaican Hills 11

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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3. The Nature of Sin
4. In Christ
5. The Fight of Faith
6. Surrender
7. Why Did Jesus Have to Die?
8. The Promise versus the Law
9. God's Rest
10. Relative Perfection
11. The Two Covenants
12. The Objective Gospel
13. The Subjective Gospel

Erwin also preached three sermons on the subject of righteousness by faith and while I could not understand much of what he preached (because of course he spoke in German), it was evident from the response of the people that they were greatly blessed by these presentations. Germans have a reputation for being unemotional and unexpressive people, but there were many expressions of joy as these meetings progressed and more than once I saw tears streaming down the faces of those who had found peace and relief in the truth. One lady commented to me at the end, "I will never forget the things I have learned here. The Bible is a new book and I will have a new understanding now every time I read it." One man who was present only on the last two days ex-

pressed how happy he was that his parents had called and insisted that he come. They had been present from the beginning and called encouraging him to come because they wanted him to share in the blessings. He said that he had been an Adventist for eight years but had always felt something missing in his life. Now he felt that in what he was hearing he had found an important key to a deeper experience with God. Another man who only attended on the last day said, "this is the first time I am hearing this but it is a wonderful truth and in my heart I know that it is the truth." These comments were typical of many others and at the end, though I was tired, I felt that if this campmeeting had been the only reason for coming to Europe it would have been well worth the trouble and the expense.

I left the campmeeting not only with the joy of knowing that the truth had been understood and embraced but also having made new friends who had found a fixed place in my heart and whose faces I look forward to seeing again as soon as God makes it possible. This German campmeeting was a new experience for me. It was the first campmeeting in which the focus had been exclusively "Righteousness by Faith," and I was thrilled to see the re-

another brother from Romania. Allen and Vlad were on the way to Poland but they stopped by Erwin's home for a couple of days after which we planned to travel on to Poland together. The other brother whose name was Paul, was an ex-Adventist pastor from the mainline Adventist Church. This brother had been a very high official in the Romanian SDA church hierarchy and had been the person in charge of the publishing work in Romania before he had been removed from his job. After his brother rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, this pastor had started studying the subject to show his brother where he was wrong. But to his astonishment as he studied with an honest heart he discovered that his brother was right! After some time of agonizing over the matter he made his findings known to his fellow ministers and subsequently lost his job with the denomination. Now he had traveled from Romania with Vlad so he could speak with Allen and me and learn some more concerning the doctrine of the godhead.

As we discussed the subject of the godhead, with brother Paul asking many questions, the questions eventually drifted to the subject of Righteousness by faith. Brother Paul had many questions and at first also some objections



sults. It was also by far the most sermons which I had ever preached at any one series of meetings. However, the experiences which lay ahead were even more thrilling with even more demands for the presentation of the word!

After the campmeeting was over we met with Vlad from Romania. He had come to Germany with Allen Stump and with

to what he perceived to be my position on Righteousness by faith. For a while he had difficulty understanding exactly what was the main point of our focus, but he kept asking questions and I appreciated the fact that he listened carefully to what was said and made an effort to understand. By the second day, after several hours of discussions

brother Paul was beginning to get a clearer understanding of the main ideas. Finally he said, "I see it now. It is clear to me. It is simple, it is very simple. It is easy to understand." After a little more discussion he said, "you know brothers, I came here to learn more about the godhead, but I think God has given me something better. For many months I have been praying and asking God what to do with my life now that I no longer work for the SDA church. I had no clear understanding of what to do, but I think God has shown me what my work is to be."

We could only sit in amazement as we heard these words and we gave thanks to God for helping brother Paul to see so clearly. The astonishing thing was that once he understood the message he immediately saw how important it was and the need to commit himself to teaching it. This was typical of the way the message was received everywhere we went in Europe.

POLAND

Two days later we left Germany bound for the campmeeting in Poland. This year it would be at a place called Lutom, not too far from the German border. Erwin and I left late at night, many hours after the others, because on the day that we were planning to leave I discovered that my visa was not valid to enter Poland until the following day so we could not cross the border until midnight. We crossed the border at Frankfurt and after another three hours driving and having to backtrack and search around a bit, we arrived at the campsite at almost four in the morning, tired and worn out but thankful that we had arrived safely.

The campsite was the best of all the camps I had been to in Poland. It had once belonged to the Wright movement, which was an "offshoot" movement from the SDA church, founded by Fred Wright, the man who had pioneered the teaching that God does not kill. At one time this movement had been very popular in some parts of Europe but has lost some of its influence. Those who have turned from it (there were several at the Poland campmeeting) have said that it is characterized by extreme legalism. The premises where we had this campmeeting had been specifically pre-

pared for occasions such as this. There was a spacious hall which served as both meeting hall and dining area, and there were ample bathrooms and toilets. There were also several rooms with beds as well as a spacious yard with a lot of space for pitching tents. The people who were the caretakers of the property provided two meals per day for everyone. It was not Jamaican food by any means but it was good and having been warned by my wife Jen to "make sure and eat up," I obeyed her orders and enjoyed what was provided.

Every campmeeting I have been to in Poland has been memorable. This one was no exception. Firstly, our focus was of course, Righteousness by Faith. For most of this trip, this is what I would be focusing on with the possible exception of Hungary where there was an audience which was mostly interested in learning the truth about the godhead.

I preached seven times and Erwin preached three times. The news that we were focusing on Righteousness in Christ had reached the people long before we arrived. Some of them had been on the *Open Face* mailing list and they were eager to hear first hand, more of this message. Everyone had questions to be answered and they listened with keen interest to the presentations. I have to say that of all the times that I have been to Europe, I have never seen such responses to the messages. Here, as in Germany, there were several who broke out into open tears. The news of freedom in Christ was almost too good to be believed and the wonder of it all found expression in tears.

Near the end of this campmeeting, there was a baptism where eight persons became a part of the body of Christ. This service was held on Sabbath afternoon while the sun was still hot (to accommodate me). We went down to a lovely little lake about ten minutes walk from the campsite and there we had the ceremony. Afterwards Matti wept. As I hugged him he said between his tears, "it's alright man. All newborn babies cry."

When we had the last sermon on Sunday and said goodbye, it was with sincere regret. On each visit to Poland I have learned to love the brethren more, but this was the time when I was most

unhappy that we had to finally separate from one another. The experience this time had been special.

Several moments from this campmeeting stand out in my mind. As I said, meetings in Poland are never like in other places. Every single year that I have been there there have been many questions on issues which I consider to be trivial and related to legalism. Perhaps it is because this country has been so long under the yoke of Catholicism, but it seems that there is always a great concern over very small matters. This year it was a question of whether or not the Levitical law concerning women being unclean for seven days after their period was still in effect. I tried to answer on the basis of explaining principles rather than on the basis of a command but my answer did not go down too well with the person who asked the question and at one point he walked out of the room. However, he later returned.

I thought this was a stormy meeting but it was nothing compared to one which took place later on and which involved



the same brother who had asked the question. It was a night for testimonies and also for questions if anyone had any. This brother rose to his feet to give a testimony and proceeded to talk for more than an hour. He spoke of having read various passages in the Bible and what he had learned concerning Christian unity. He told of how he had been putting away various practices and accepting certain others. He gave details of how he had adopted one health rule after another. I found it difficult to get his point but I thought he really was not giving anybody else a chance to speak. Just as I was thinking, "these people are incredibly patient," one brother

sprang to his feet and started speaking rapidly. My translator, Matti, could not keep up with him. He said, "this guy is like a machine gun!" However, he gave me the gist of what was said. This brother said, "I must protest! I cannot sit here and listen to this any longer. What you are saying is false. It is not righteousness by faith. All you are talking about is what you have been doing but not what Christ has been doing." Suddenly the meeting livened up. Another sister rose to her feet and said, "I agree with Adam. Peter and I were in the Wright movement for many years and we tried the way of which you are speaking. We tried so hard to do all these things and it did not work and we will not go back to such a religion." Jacek and Peter were in charge of the meeting and they asked the people to be patient while they allowed this brother to finish, so he continued for another few minutes before another voice interrupted him. Another brother broke in, "why are you speaking so long? You have been talking and talking and not giving anybody else a chance, by the time you are through there will be no time for anyone else." This was too much for the brother who was giving this long speech and he finally decided to sit down. What happened next was deeply moving.

Another brother, Peter, said, "I would like to say something, but maybe my brother who was speaking before may be offended." When he was assured by the brother that he was free to speak his mind, he continued in a very calm voice. I cannot recall everything which he said, but the gist of it was as follows:

"What our brother has been talking about tonight is not the truth. I may seem like the truth, but in reality it is as far from truth as night is from day. There are two paths and sometimes there seems to be no difference between them, but when we understand them, there is a very great difference. For many years I was in the Wright movement and I put all my heart into my religion. Day by day I built on my obedience. I did everything which I read in the spirit of prophecy, I did every single thing which I felt was my duty. I gave up meat, cheese, Everything. I became a complete vegan. Even when I became sick and came close to death

it did not affect my way of life. I became a "perfect" man. I looked through my life and could not think of anything left which I could give up for the Lord. I saw that my family was unhappy, my children were uncomfortable around me, but it did not matter to me. I let nothing stand in the way of my quest for perfection. Finally I came to the day when I had done it all. There was nothing left to give up and I wondered, what shall I do now? Shall I give up my family? It was while I was in this state that I realized that I was a great hypocrite. This drive to be without fault obsessed me. I did not care how unhappy my family was, I did not see their pain, I paid no attention to how much they were hurting and it almost tore us apart. Finally one day I came to myself and realized that I was a man without peace. I realized that I was a great hypocrite. All my works and my painful efforts were nothing and I was broken. All my labour and sacrifice had not brought me happiness. It had almost destroyed my family and I was left with an empty soul. Brethren, I have been on that road and it does not work. That is why I know that my brother is so very wrong. It is only the truth of Righteousness in Christ, the gift of God which can set us free."

I must admit that at the end of his testimony I was ready to shed some tears myself.

I noticed that these brethren were very direct with each other and were not afraid to openly speak what was on their mind. At first I was taken aback by it but I realized that afterwards they still spoke to each other in a kind way and I concluded that it was far better to be this open and direct than to speak behind a person's back.

Sister Kristina was not a Seventh-day Adventist but was present because she had been invited. She was present at every meeting and one day asked if she could speak with me. She

explained that she agreed with everything which I had said. She belonged to a church which also taught some of these things, but she had become disillusioned because she had found out that while they spoke of salvation by faith, their lives did not display the love and the works of Christ and she was just about ready to leave it. Now she wanted to know, since we believed that salvation was only by faith in Christ, why did we have such an emphasis on avoiding certain kinds of food and why did we still feel that it was necessary to observe the Sabbath? She also explained that she works with the railroad company and that her job involves working on Sabbaths. I explained the reason for healthful living, even though we are not saved by such works and made it plain that these guidelines for health were not a means of obtaining salvation but simply to promote good health. She readily understood the principle that a healthy mind operates best in a healthy body. Then I showed her the origin of the Sabbath, that it was blessed and set apart before there was sin and was a part of God's perfect plan for sinful man. I showed how it was intended to be a time of unhindered fellowship between God and those who loved Him. She had many questions and was very honest with them. Finally she was satisfied and thanked me. She did not tell me what she would do, but she seemed very honest and I know that she is in the Lord's hands. I expect to see more of her in the future if I return to Poland.

Matti, Justyna and Chris are all young people from Poland but they work in a printing house in Denmark. I had been in contact with Matti by email and he

With Matti, Erwin & Vlad



had learned the message of Righteousness by faith from our articles and tapes. He and the others had come all the way from Denmark just to attend this campmeeting. Though they understood that basic idea of what Righteousness by faith means, they had some gray areas and many questions. There were even one or two misconceptions which had become a source of difficulty. One of these was the idea that if a person who has found Christ commits a sin it means that he did not really have Christ. I had a careful discussion with these young people and others and I believe they were able to see more clearly that if we do lose our focus, even if it is through carelessness, Christ does not let go of our hand, though we may disappoint Him. Nothing we can do can ever change the facts of what He has done. His salvation is always available and the only thing which can cut us off from receiving it is if we come to the place where we no longer want it.

Again there were tears. I never saw so many tears as I saw in Europe this year. Everywhere we went there were tears, but praise God, they were tears of happiness. After years of legalism and fruitless toiling towards an unattainable mark, suddenly people discovered that it was a free gift, that what they had toiled so hard for without success was freely given in Christ, not just in words, but in reality. The flood of joy and relief were too much and they found expression in tears of rejoicing.

One day Matti, Justyna and Chris came to me with the request that I explain to them why Jesus really had to die. They asked many questions but finally they got it. When they understood how Jesus had borne our sins and how far this sin had separated Him from His Father I heard Justyna speak a strange word. I looked at Matti (my translator) and he said, "it means 'wow.'" When she realized what it meant that Jesus bore her sins, Justyna broke out in tears. She had not come to the campmeeting with the intention to be baptized, but not surprisingly, she was among the eight persons who were eventually baptized. At first, there were two, then possibly three, but at the end there were eight.

Among those present at the meetings

were three men from a town named Gorlitz. This town is on the border between Germany and Poland and the name is different in Polish. There it is called Zgorzelec. Anyway, these men came with the request that they be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and we were happy to grant this request. They were still members of the Seventh-day Adventist church but the truth about God had created a great stir in their church and there were twenty-five people there who had accepted this truth. Things had come to a critical point and there was imminent danger that some would be disfellowshipped soon.

After listening to the messages at this campmeeting these men requested that Erwin come to their area where they would arrange meetings. However they specified that they wanted him to speak only on Righteousness by faith as they were amazed at what they had been hearing.

HUNGARY

From Poland we went back to Germany to rest for a day before going on to Hungary. It would have been much shorter to go directly to Hungary by traveling through Slovakia but I did not have a visa for Slovakia so we had to take the long road by going back through Germany and Austria.

The meetings in Hungary were in a town called Miskolc. These meetings were hosted by Janos Santa, and were held in the house of his grandfather where there was a section of the house with a spacious living room, unoccupied and available. Janos is very young. He is twenty-two years old and still a student at the university in Budapest where he is studying to be an English and Mathematics teacher. He still has three years to go before he completes his studies. He has contemplated giving up his studies to devote himself to the work of God, but he is very mature for his age and he recognizes that it would be foolish to do such a thing unless God clearly directs him. In the meantime God has been using him in a marked way already.

Two and a half years ago Janos began attending a Seventh-day Adventist Church which is a part of a large break away group in Hungary which is called

KERAK (*Keresztény Advent Közösség*, – which means, – *Christian Advent Fellowship*). Many years ago I had heard of this group. When the Adventist Church in Hungary had become involved in the Ecumenical movement, many churches had protested and the contention had become so strong that eventually more than four-hundred members consisting of several churches had broken away from the main church and had formed an alternative SDA church. Eventually they had given themselves another name and were now generally called, KERAK.

Janos had started attending this church after an extensive search on the internet had led him, first of all to Christianity, then to Seventh-day Adventism and finally to this reformed Seventh-day Adventist Church. He had been studying with them for two and a half years preparing for baptism but had not yet been baptized. Before baptism he was required to study all the 26 fundamental doctrines of the church and this process he was involved in on and off for the past two and a half years.

Shortly after he had started this study he had stalled on the second belief which dealt with the subject of the godhead. His continued search on the internet had led him to sites such as Smyrna and Restoration Ministries websites and he had become persuaded that the Trinity doctrine was false. Now he explained to his instructor that he could not conscientiously accept the doctrine of the Trinity as he believed it was false. He had already begun translating the book, "Did They Believe in the Trinity," compiled by Lynnford Beachy and explained that he had strong evidence to support his position. His instructor was an honest man named Attila and he suggested that they should skip the second point of belief for the moment and continue with the rest but he expressed a desire to read the materials which Janos was translating and Janos agreed to let him have them. After reading these materials Attila was convicted that the issue was very important and he began to suspect that the Trinity doctrine was false but he told Janos that he was not able to properly assess them but would pass them on to the leaders of the church who would be better able to examine and analyze them.

One day Janos was sitting in church looking sad. One sister said to him, "why are you troubled my brother?" So Janos explained that he had discovered that one of the doctrines taught by the church was false and that he was in the middle of translating writings by the pioneers which clearly showed that they did not believe in this false doctrine. The sister asked, "can you give me copies of what you are translating?" Janos agreed to do this. Some time afterwards this sister came to Janos and said, "Oh my brother, I hope you are not upset. I have been sharing your translated materials with another sister, a friend of mine. We both believe that what we are reading is the truth!" Before Janos knew it, several people in the church were investigating the issue and believing the truth about the godhead, even before he had tried to tell anyone about it!

Here in Miskolc, I also again met brother Zsolt who had come for the meetings with his son Daniel. I first met brother Zsolt on my first visit to Hungary a few years ago and since then he has emerged as one of the leading labourers in the cause of truth there in Hungary. He had travelled here to Miskolc from far away so he could meet with us and participate in the meetings. We all stayed together in the home of Janos' grandfather where we would be having the meetings.

By the time I arrived for these meetings in Hungary, there were twenty-two persons who were willing to hear what we had to say on this matter. Allen had been there a few days before I arrived having left us in Poland, and had already spoken to the people on the subject of the godhead. But I would speak some more on this topic and also present the message of Christ our Righteousness. Among those present at these meetings was Attila, Janos' instructor, along with his wife Andi. On the second night I gave a study on the God of the Bible and Who is the Holy Spirit. After the meeting Attila came to me and said, "I am happy for this meeting. Now I have some solid evidences against the Trinity, especially the facts you presented from the book of Revelation." This had been his main area of concern and after these meetings there was a different attitude about him. However from then on I concentrated on Righteousness by faith.

As in Germany and Poland, the message of Christ our Righteousness made a deep impact. Among the responses was one comment made by a sister, "I have waited for this for so many years. I cannot believe that I am finally sitting here and listening to this." Brother Attila was especially interested in everything and twice he asked if he and his wife could come in the morning so that they could ask questions.

At the meeting where I spoke on The God of the Bible and the holy spirit. The elder of the KERAK Church and an Adventist minister (from the regular SDA church), were present, there was also a lady there who was one of the preachers from KERAK. After the presentation the lady preacher made a few comments and asked a few questions. Her main point seemed to be that she did not see how this message was related

some opposition and we were happy that almost all of those present could see the truth clearly, even if some would not.

The rest of the meetings focused only on Righteousness by faith. The interest was intense and again there were tears. I cannot forget one sister who took me aside with tears in her eyes and explained how the message had given her hope after years of despair. Now she understood the way but did not know how to believe. This I found to be a problem everywhere and I realized that the answer was to help people to see two things: First how great, real and personal is the love of God towards us, and secondly, how complete and unchangeable is the salvation which He has already provided in Christ. It had to be understood that it does not matter whether we believe or not, the truth re-



to righteousness by faith and she did not see any difference between it and what they believed. The elder of the church said, however, "What you have said is very well presented and very logical, but God gave a prophet to the remnant and she says something different." I pointed out that she did not and showed him the many places where Sister White agreed with the truth as I had presented it. I also reminded him of Sister White's counsel to get our doctrines from the Bible alone. However, we had expected that there would be

mains, salvation is already ours in Christ. Christ obtained it for every single person in the world, it matters not how wicked that person has been, how deep rooted and chronic his sin, the only thing which can prevent us from partaking of that salvation is the fact that we will not believe.

On Friday a few people from the Church fasted and prayed and at the end, the lady preacher called Janos and told him that they had decided to ask him not to come to church and to tell him that we would not be welcome there that Sab-

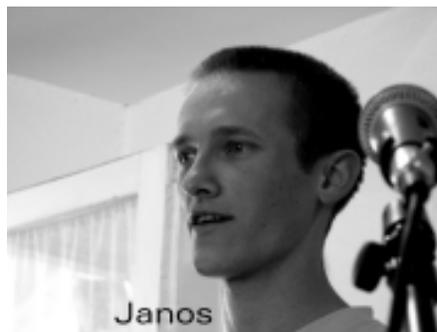
bath. I was willing to comply with this request and so was Erwin, but Janos and brother Zsolt would have none of it. They determined that we should go and so we ended up at the church that Sabbath. As soon as we arrived one of the leading brethren took Janos aside and told him, "you have been warned not to come here. If you remain there will be consequences. It is best if you leave now." Again I thought, maybe we should not stay where we were not wanted, but Janos and Zsolt had no intention of leaving and so we stayed. Actually, most of the people were very friendly. We sat in brother Attila's Sabbath school class and had a good time. Afterwards we listened to a sermon which seemed to be focused on Righteousness by faith, but a diluted version. Of course, I believe the speaker did his best and he seemed a sincere person.

After the sermon a sister came to me and asked me what I thought of the sermon. I told her that I thought it was good but that there were some things I would have emphasized more. She asked me what things and I mentioned one or two. Before I knew it this sister had embroiled me in an argument which was getting nowhere. When I explained to her that we not only need to study the word of God but to understand what we study, she told me that she was not interested in understanding, only in God teaching her! I realized that this lady had closed her mind to anything which I would say.

At that moment the elder interrupted who had attended one of our meetings (by this time a small crowd had gathered). He asked me whether I believed that Christ had a nature just like ours. I explained that His flesh was just like ours but not His mind. He replied that we cannot separate Christ into two parts, body and spirit (mind) and stated that if I said Christ was not exactly like us then I was teaching that we cannot overcome sin because I was teaching that Christ had an advantage over us. I explained that the plan of salvation was not a plan for us to imitate Christ, but for Christ Himself to live in us. That He was able to live in our sinful flesh without sin, when He was here on earth, and again in us, today, but that we cannot copy Christ. He alone is able to live His life, and His life is a life without sin. So he asked me, "are you saying that

Jesus could not commit sin?" I asked him in reply, "can you be a homosexual?" His reply was no. I asked him, why not? You have all the necessary equipment, you are a man. He replied that he despised homosexuality. So I asked him, "do you believe that Jesus despised sin?" at this he was at a loss for words but was not willing to give up his point. At that moment someone came and insisted that we come for lunch immediately for we were invited to have lunch with them! A strange turn of events but it illustrated the fact that many persons in the church were not in agreement with the position of the leadership but were in fact happy to have us there.

After a good lunch where we were well taken care of, I was sitting with Erwin when a man came and asked if he could speak with me privately. His English was poor and I offered to have Erwin translate for us. However, he said no, he wished to speak alone and so we went to a quiet place where we had a very difficult time in trying to understand each other. He was very friendly though and asked me some questions on strange topics such as what did I believe about overcoming sin and how did I believe it happened. He asked me



about Jamaica, the weather, all kinds of things and eventually I told him that I would have to leave for there was a meeting scheduled back at our place at three o'clock. Later, I understood that as soon as I finished speaking with this man some of the leaders took him aside and gave him a tongue-lashing for speaking with me. Among other things they said, "What do you mean by speaking with him so long after we agreed that we would not speak with them?"

Meanwhile Erwin had been standing by himself minding his business when a

lady came up to him and started to question him about our beliefs and what the issues really were which had so disturbed the people. As he was responding to the questions of this lady, a man who had apparently been listening behind Erwin interrupted him. "All, right, you were warned not to discuss these things with anybody. Now you have to leave the premises!" Erwin had never spoken to this man before so he said, "excuse me, did we meet? Did you ever speak to me?" The man said, "no, but your people were told not to discuss your ideas here." So Erwin introduced himself. He held out his hand and said, "my name is Erwin Zoor." Reluctantly the man took his hand but said, "now you have to leave." The lady to whom Erwin had been speaking protested and explained that it was she who had been asking Erwin questions. The man said it did not matter and that he would have to leave in spite of this. Erwin then suggested to this unkind brother, that they would continue their discussion on the street, because it was public property and he could not forbid us to talk there.

So they moved to the street where they continued to talk for another half hour. The lady then decided to come with us to our meetings, so she went back to get her things which were still in the meeting hall. There another sister who opposed our work saw her and asked her, if she would be attending our meetings. When she replied that she would be, the other sister said, "You attend their meetings once, and then again and again until finally you will accept everything they say and then you will disfellowship us." This hurt the other sister deeply because all she wanted to do was to hear the truth, not to separate from her brethren.

That night, after we had a very good meeting at Janos' grandfather's house, the pastor of the church called Attila. He had been absent from the church for the week as he was away attending some seminar. But he had heard all about what was happening and he was not happy. When he spoke to Attila on the phone he was very upset and we could hear his voice from some distance away.

We left these brethren with the expectation that steps would be taken against them by the church, but they were not afraid and were all determined that no matter what the consequences were they would be faithful to God and His truth. Later, we learned that Janos had been disfellowshipped (what exactly this means I am not sure because he had not been a baptized member although he attended church regularly and was accepted by all the brethren as a part of their congregation). The other brethren are not certain of their status but are ready for whatever comes.

ROMANIA

Romania was the last stop on our European trip. The meetings were held at a place in the country called Criva not too far from a town named Slatina. I had heard many things about Criva from Vlad. He had told me that they had been studying Righteousness by faith for several years and that there had been a continuous revival taking place for several years. In fact, they had a campmeeting every month (!) when the people came from many kilometers away to spend a few days together in studying the word and in fellowship. I found it hard to believe that these people were meeting so often without growing a little tired, but Vlad assured me that they were just as full of zeal for attending the meetings as when they had first started. Concerning our coming he assured me, "they are waiting for you."

My experience in Criva was one of the best of my life as far as sharing the gospel and Christian fellowship is concerned. The people were waiting indeed! I never saw such an outpouring of Christian love and fellowship. I was amazed at the spirit which I found there. The meetings are hosted by brother Sorin and are held in a small meeting hall on his property. This used to be the meeting place of the local Seventh-day Adventist reform church. However, six years ago brother Sorin, who used to be one of the officials in this church wrote them a letter to be read at one of their conference meetings expressing his concerns at many things which were not right in the church, among them the extreme legalism, the ceremonialism, the abuses of power etc. The leaders were incensed and disfellowshipped him. The problem however was that the

church in his area was on his property and had been built by him. Though he was disfellowshipped, they continued to meet on his property. Finally he gave them one month's notice to leave and when they moved out eventually, he began to organize meetings there himself. This was the beginning of the meetings at Criva. From all over Romania people heard about these meetings and started attending. Those with hungry hearts came from far and near. Brother Sorin's message was Righteousness by faith. He hardly spoke of anything else and the results have been remarkable. For years these meetings have been continuing without any break and without any sign of the people losing interest.

Brother Sorin has turned his entire yard into a fruitful garden. Fruit and vegetable plants laden with food are growing in every single inch of space. Even the dining area is a grape arbour covered over with plastic. While eating it is possible to reach out the hands and pick grapes. There are many apple and plum trees full of fruit, two large green houses full of huge tomatoes and sweet peppers, there are strawberries and many other kinds of fruits and vegetables. A great deal of the food which is eaten at the campmeetings comes from brother Sorin's garden. Just being there and seeing all of this was a blessed experience.

The legalism of the Reform church in Romania, is best illustrated by the following story which Vlad related to me. There was a man who was baptized by the church, but immediately after his baptism, stopped attending the church before he was even received into church fellowship. He proceeded to return to a life of sin and it became necessary for the church to consider disfellowshipping him. However a problem presented itself because since the man had never been received into church fellowship they could not withdraw the right hand of fellowship from him. They had several meetings where they discussed this problem and then finally they decided to ask the man to come to church to be received into fellowship so that they could disfellowship him!! However, the man refused to cooperate for a long time and they begged and pleaded with him so they could resolve the issue. Finally, he decided to do as they asked. He

was duly received into fellowship and then disfellowshipped, so putting an end to their problem!! I could hardly believe this, and similar stories which I was told. However, as a result of having belonged to a church with attitudes such as this, the message of righteousness in Christ has burst like a bombshell among those who have understood it here.

This was the campmeeting where I worked the hardest, but it was the happiest for me. During the ten days that it lasted I preached twenty-one (21) sermons and in between preaching I was constantly answering questions and having discussions with people. The appetite of the people could not be satisfied. When Vlad had told me what the program was to be like I had protested vigorously. I told him it was too much and that the people would grow weary of hearing too much of one person, but he assured me, "they will not grow tired, they will ask for more!" So it turned out to be. I know that it is not always possible to tell by the tears but it blessed my heart to see how people responded to the truths that their sins were already taken care of and that the life which they were seeking was already theirs in Christ. I saw understanding come to faces, the looks of amazement and then the tears of joy.

One precious memory is of a sister who could not speak English but who had come there with questions and uncertainties in her mind. At the end of one sermon she came with tears in her eyes and a little piece of paper. Written on it were the words, "I am free!" Another sister asked me to go for a walk with her and an interpreter. She told of how there were some terrible sins in her past which she had never been able to forgive herself for. Every time she spoke of the forgiveness of Christ, her father had told her, "do you believe sins such as yours can be forgiven? Do you forget what you have done?" For many



years she had carried this burden with her. But now, with tears running down her face she said, "now I understand, Jesus has already taken all these sins. I must not bear them any more. Thank God, I am free." There were many such experiences. These people have been studying Righteousness by Faith for years and have a good understanding of it, however, as so often happens, God uses different methods and different minds to reach people and some persons found that the message presented in a different way, by a different speaker brought understanding which they had not had before.

One of the joys which I had during the time I spent at Criva was baptizing three people into the body of Christ. They were sister Jenny, sister Paula and Brother Janos from Hungary! Yes, he traveled with us all the way to Romania to share the joy of the campmeeting there, but also to at last demonstrate his entry into the body of Christ by water baptism.

Erwin and I did not actually stay at Criva during the night. We stayed, along with several other brethren, at the lovely home of a couple, Florin and Mihaila, who are also a part of the Criva group. They live in a town called Slatina which is a few kilometers distance from Criva. Here again we had an example of the love and hospitality of the Romanian brethren. These brethren went out of the way to satisfy our every need and I had to be constantly refusing their offers to do something more for us. One night the house was packed to capacity as more visitors had come in. That night there was a heavy thunderstorm and I was glad to be in a dry bed in a warm house. However, in the morning one of the visitors went outside early and what was his astonishment when he found our host and hostess sleeping in their car!! The house had been so crowded that they gave up every single place where a person could sleep including all the cushions from the chairs and the settee. So, without a word of complaint they themselves slept in their car while their guests enjoyed their house! This illustrates the spirit which I found in this group and it gave me a little taste of what it will be like when the spirit of Christ takes over His people as it did at Pentecost.

When we finally left Romania after 10 days, it was with heavy hearts. The people stood at the gate and waved until we had turned the corner. I promised to do everything possible to come again next year. What else could I do? The appeals were so many and so fervent I could not say no. God may have other plans but if He makes it possible it will certainly be one of the joys which I look forward to experiencing next year.

GERMANY AGAIN

The European journey was almost over but not quite. After a wearisome jour-

ney of almost 24 hours Erwin and I made the trip back from Romania to Germany. We stopped briefly for a couple of hours in Austria to get a little sleep. Erwin was the driver and he needed it, but it was very cold and we only slept for two hours before we started off again. Back in Germany we rested for two days before we approached the very last leg of our journey. These last meetings were held in a place called Zetteritz which was almost two hours away from Erwin's home. In this community there was a little church which was operated

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Talks on Righteousness by Faith

At the end of the Smyrna camp-meeting in June of this year, there was a meeting of the elders present from the various areas. Those present at this meeting were Elders Willis Smith, Edmund Cyrus, Bob Habenicht, David Sims, Ken Corklin, Allen Stump, Lynnford Beachy, Glen Ford, Malcolm McCrillis and David Clayton. This meeting was convened to discuss the subject of Righteousness by Faith and lasted for a little over five hours.

These discussions were not conclusive but were encouraging from the perspective that there was open and frank discussion and everyone present was able to gain a more perfect understanding of the issues involved. Though the time for discussion was necessarily limited as the meeting was called on the spur of the moment, there are plans to continue the dialogue with the hope that all will come to a perfect and unified understanding of this critical subject. Another meeting will be held over the week-end of September 23 in West Virginia. These meetings will last over several days and hopefully, we should be able to resolve some of the questions which still need to be clarified in connection with the subject of Righteousness in Christ.

One of the suggestions arising from the meeting which seemed to meet with universal approval was the suggestion that it could be helpful if all those who were involved in publishing would ask other persons to preview articles before publishing them, not with the aim of censoring or modifying the content of the articles but in order that suggestions could be made as to ways in which sentences, words, phrases or ideas could be stated in a way to avoid misunderstanding. This suggestion was regarded with some caution but when it was clarified that this would be a totally voluntary thing and that there was no idea of anyone being obligated to accept any suggested modifications, then the suggestion was universally accepted.

The subject of Righteousness by Faith is to "swallow up all others." (The Paulson Collection p.342). All who believe this will recognize the fact that it is imperative that those who are involved in the proclamation of truth in these last days must make the subject of Righteousness in Christ the center of all their teaching. Before we can do this however, we must have a clear understanding of what this message really is. To proclaim error in connection with such a truth would be the greatest of all tragedies. We are asking all who love the Lord and His truth to pray that He will direct the minds of those who will meet on the week-end of September 23 and that He will subdue all the human elements which might stand in the way of the understanding and reception of truth. You may not be present there but your prayers will make a great difference. May our Lord grant us one heart and one spirit as we face the task of proclaiming His truth to the world.

by a group of independent Adventists. One person from this church, brother Istvan Keszler, had accepted the message of Righteousness by Faith as we were presenting it and had embraced it with his whole heart. The rest of the group were opposed to it however, though they had never heard our presentation, but as so often happens, they had received bad reports concerning our doctrine and wanted to have nothing to do with us. Some of them had attended another campmeeting where our teachings had been opposed and strongly criticized.

Brother Istvan requested that we be allowed to have meetings in the building where this group met, on this final Sabbath that I would be in Europe. Strangely, these brethren agreed that we could have the meetings there, but decided that they would not attend. Instead they had their regular Sabbath services at another place while allowing us to use their chapel! So strong is the power of prejudice and false information! Of course brother Istvan was there. There were also a couple of other people from his group but most of them stayed away. However, several persons from the community were there, including a few from the mainline Adventist Church. There was also a family from many kilometers away. I spoke three times and then in the afternoon, there was a question and answer session.

It is often hard to tell how people are responding to your message, in Germany. The people are, on the whole, not very expressive and they sit without showing much expression of what they are really feeling. At first I thought that the message was not making an impression on the people, but after the second message I discovered that I was wrong. I spoke to a few of them and discovered that they were very interested in what they were hearing. One man said, "This is very, very interesting. I have never heard anything like this in my life." Later in the evening when

we had the question and answer session we were able to clarify a few questions concerning the nature of Christ, sanctification and a few other issues. On the whole the messages were very well received and those who had questions or objections appeared to be satisfied with the answers.

This meeting in Zetteritz had been our



final assignment and now I prepared for the trip home. It had been a wonderful experience in Europe but I always told everyone who asked me if I was homesick, "the best thing about leaving home is when you get back." Now that the work was over I began to feel more acutely the desire for home and family.

On the final day before I left for home I had the joy of meeting with brother Paul Osei Agyeman from Ghana who was in Germany and who travelled a long distance of about six hours just to meet with us. Brother Paul had heard that we were teaching false ideas of Righteousness by Faith and true to his character, brother Paul travelled all this way to hear for himself what we were teaching. As he listened, he could find no fault in what we were saying and in fact, as we listened to him it was clear that he already believed the same things which we were saying! He was concerned however that other people seemed to be getting a wrong impression of what we believed.

This meeting was much too short. I had to leave at 4.00 the next morning to catch my flight and brother Paul had to take the long journey back to Berlin where he had an appointment the following day. However, he took what ma-

terials we had available which included all the sermons preached at the German campmeeting, and he promised to listen carefully and to let us know his conclusions.

A SAD POSTSCRIPT

Two nights before I left Europe for home, tragedy struck the home of Brother Erwin and his family. His mother, Elizabeth lived with him in the same house with her husband Ewald and her grandson, Richard. That night I woke up at about 11.00 P.M. and heard the sound of wailing and a woman speaking hysterically between the cries. I listened for a few moments and then there was a knock at my door. When I opened, it was Erwin. His face was grim and he could hardly speak as he said, "I need your help my brother. Ewald is dead." I found this information almost impossible to grasp. Ewald was 67 years old, but he was full of life, hard-working and always cheerful. He was as strong as an ox and illness seemed the furthest thing from him. He could not speak a word in English but he was always communicating with me by signs and gestures and always trying to bring a smile to my face. I got up in a daze and followed Erwin to the bathroom of his mother's apartment where Ewald was half-sitting, half-lying, propped up against one wall. He was still warm but he was dead.

Two days earlier Ewald had helped to move some people to another house. The move had been a long one and he had been gone all day and most of the night, only arriving home at 4.00 in the morning. The following day he complained of a pain in his chest and we suspected that he had probably injured a muscle by lifting something too heavy.



The next day sister Elizabeth said to me, "something is wrong. I do not understand this pain with Ewald. It is not a muscle because sometimes it is gone for a few hours and then comes back very bad." That was the night that he died.

As I saw the sorrow in that home and heard the heartbreaking cries of sister Elizabeth I felt more closely than I ever had before the reality of death. In my heart there were many questions such as, why had God allowed this to happen now? I wondered what Jesus would have done if He were present and I felt my inadequacy. However, as I thought about it I recognized that no one lives forever in this life. Even Methuselah died, and someday, if Jesus does not come soon, I will die too. The verse in Romans 5:12 came back to my mind and hit me more forcefully than it had ever done before. "death passed upon all men for that all had sinned." But equally forceful was the verse, "for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." The certainty of the resurrection was precious and I know that it helped to bring peace to that bereaved family. Even Richard who is ten years old said to me as we sat waiting for the men from the morgue to take Ewald's body away, "now I know that Jesus will come again soon and I will see my grandfather again."

This final sorrow clouded the joy of the experience in Europe, but nothing can erase the memories of the happiness which I saw on people's faces and the relief which I heard in people's voices when they understood the reality of how real, how complete, how available and how free salvation is. Europe 2006 is over for me, but the effects of these campmeetings will last forever to the glory and honour of our Father and His Son.

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After concluding this report I received the following letters from János in Hungary and Matti in Denmark.
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From János

.... I have not been disfellowshipped indeed, for that cannot be, but rather I was asked not anymore to attend their

services of any kind, neither on the Sabbaths nor other events organized by the church (i.e. Bible readings, youth programs, etc.). When Elder and Sister spoke with me on this matter on Wednesday what I could tell them was that I understand their position but that I will not promise to subject myself to the decision of their church. They were rather furious about it, but I said I couldn't pledge myself for such a thing as to hinder my freedom in Christ, even

though I see it more wise not to offend them more with my presence. It seems to me their minds are so deeply into this ecclesiasticism that they cannot anymore understand and appreciate religious freedom when it is not according to their interests.

Anyway, the brethren (who have accepted the truth) are for the present time divested of their positions and ser-

Continued on next page ➡

Light in Jamaican Hills

During the month of July I had the privilege of speaking in a Seventh-day Adventist Church in the hills of Jamaica. To avoid repercussions I will not give the name of this church. I was invited to hold one week of revival meetings which lasted from Sabbath to Sabbath with meetings each night of the week excepting on Friday.

This was of course a most remarkable thing and was only possible because of the extreme open-mindedness of the brother who is the leader of this church. Before I started these meetings I insisted that he should know what my relationship with the denomination was because I did not want to go there under false pretences. But when this brother heard that I had been disfellowshipped his only comment was that they had disfellowshipped Jesus also!

From the beginning the people received me with open arms. The sister who had been instrumental in getting me invited was an old friend who has been a lover of the truth for many many years. Originally another person had been invited to conduct these meetings. When it turned out that he had to change his plans for some reason, the leader of the church had asked this sister to help him to find another person to do the meetings. She had suggested me. She prepared the church by explaining who I was and the nature of my work and by the time I arrived, some-

what tentatively for the first meeting on Sabbath, they were waiting with open arms.

Of course the focus of my messages was Christ our Righteousness. The people drank it up like those who were dying of thirst. They were lovers of truth and like their elder, very open-minded. On the last Sabbath somebody started asking questions about the godhead (my friend in the church had been agitating the subject for years apparently). By this time brother Howard Williams and a few others from home had come to join me and we did our best to give these dear brethren an understanding of the truth about God and to explain why it is so important that we understand the truth of this doctrine. We also pointed out the connection between a proper understanding of the godhead and a proper appreciation of righteousness by faith. Again to our amazement the people received the truth with open arms. We recognized that here we had encountered people with the true spirit of the Bereans who were willing to study for themselves and were not willing to simply accept something because it was the popular teaching.

Our time with these people was a great blessing and it is our hope that the communication between us will remain open. This was the desire of the brethren there and of course it is our desire. We will be doing all in our power by God's grace towards that end.

vices for another 2 weeks (4 weeks were determined upon them to think, of which 2 have passed already), and we decided that we would gather together every Friday to study together and discuss what next. I believe they are now strong in the truth, especially in their experience in finding Righteousness by Faith.

I just finished translating "This is The Church" from Jones, I just wonder what more it will accomplish... I received some deep convictions this week I had to translate it as soon as I could that I may give of it to the people. I'll begin to print it today and print some more next week. I know God is blessing His people here in Hungary, I have already received many good responses second-hand from people I never ever talked to but it seems to me God has just started doing something very great in these days. Praise Him!

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Jamaica: (876) 603-0821

Blessings to you, dear Brother, from our precious Lord Jesus,

János

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From Matti

Dear Brother,

.... this is so real. Man... You were right to say that you have never seen so many tears but the salvation was never so close and possible for everyone who believes.

After being a slave of sin so many years when you get free at last and you know the love of God toward you, your body and mind do not know any way of expression and automatically you cry. But in your heart there is planted a seed of love. Of love that you cannot fully express. What a salvation, my brother. Every day is so great and more beautiful. Christ, Christ and million more

Christ.

I do not know why but I cannot stop speaking about it. The love as He shows himself more and more. This is real. I know the saviour personally and nothing can take it from me. I praise the Lord for the gift of salvation and His love in His Son and my Brother Jesus. Satan has lost. God's character is a character of love and Satan's arguments are without any support. People around will see this in our lives because this is Christ in us.

So Hallelujah for the God of love. Words cannot tell it but we know it somehow that it is true.

Love to you and your family and our brothers and sisters in Christ,

Matti, Justyna and Chris

