



**SUMMARY of the  
SOUTHEASTERN FIELD  
CONFERENCE**

**“REVIVAL  
OF LOVE”**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 28,  
TO SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2024**

Barbara Watts  
Norman Park, Georgia

The Southeastern Field Conference took place on the Norman College campus in Norman Park, Georgia, under the theme “Revival of Love.” This summary will give you a sense of God’s infinite love, as presented in the services for the adults during the conference. A separate Youth Conference was held at the same time.



Elder *Ciro Arevalo* presented the first topic on Friday evening at 5 p.m., **“Talking about Love.”** Love is visible in one’s actions, as the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17: “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.” Love goes far beyond talking. Moment by moment, the Holy Spirit moves the human heart to reflect God’s love in the family, the neighborhood, and the church as one longs for and chooses to have a Christlike character.

Even though Jesus said that the natural human heart can become void of love (“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Matthew 24:12), husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters can respond to the Holy Spirit’s urgings and choose to love one another. “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and

length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Ephesians 3:17-19. This is possible when the Holy Spirit is given full sway in one’s heart and mind. Let us devote ourselves to cultivating His presence and great love.

After dinner, a service was given by Elder *Samuel Alejos* under the title **“Love in Decline.”** Since every living thing in the universe received life from God, He is the Source of life. “God is love.” 1 John 4:8. Each one is sustained constantly by Him in love. The question was asked, Is love a feeling, or is it a principle? It is the first on the list of the fruit of the Spirit; it is unconditional. Galatians 5:22, 23. It is not enough to respond to someone else’s love or to follow tradition—what one was taught. A person is in great danger if he or she ignores the Holy Spirit’s knocking in the name of Jesus. Indeed, love is a principle. It is constant. It is proactive, not

waiting for others to take the lead. True love is of divine origin. It is unwavering in its commitment to reflect God’s love.

The Bible story of Ruth is a wonderful illustration of that love. She transferred the love and loyalty she had for her husband who died to her mother in law, and then far more so to the loving God of Israel, whom she came to know through them. Satan wants to separate the human being from God. But Ruth became so totally bound to Him through Naomi’s love and example that she never wanted to be separated from her mother in law. What characteristics did that include? She sought guidance from Him for her decisions, was patient and kind, practiced humility and respect, and was consistent, deliberate, and proactive. The very first words of Sister Ellen G. White’s book *Patriarchs and Prophets* are “God is love.” And the last words of her book *The Great*





Controversy are "God is love." All of the history in between presents the outworking of that infinite love for His people. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matthew 24:13.

The topic "**Revival of Love**" was explained by *Elder Uldarico Alejos*, president of the Southeastern Field. A revival needs to occur when enthusiasm wanes, for to keep love strong, it needs constantly to be re-energized. In all of our lives, there have been offenses, envy, and hatred. That is when God's love was manifested—not because we were good, but because He loved us! One can only judge how this happens in his own life; his experience is solely his own. But the work needs to be done in oneself, even if he believes that love is waning in the church. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." Titus 3:8. Constant advancement heavenward is our greatest joy!

Let us realize that we "should earnestly contend for the faith which was once



delivered unto the saints." Jude 1:3. At no point can one become apathetic without risking great danger. And we need to strive lawfully; that is, either we are a Christian or we are not. There is no middle ground. The false prophet Balaam tried to be on God's side and Satan's side at the same time. That is impossible. So, the

question is, How do you stand before God? The world is living mechanically, without love, so the people need to see that God's sons and daughters "have love one to another." That is how "men know that ye are My disciples." John 13:35. According to Romans 8:38, 39, we are the ones who decide if we will be separated from God's love, because nothing else is "able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Let us be conquerors who are even now citizens of the eternal kingdom!

*Elder Humberto Avellaneda*, vice president of the General Conference, conducted the Sabbath opening service, speaking on the topic of "**The Tender Touch of Love.**" In Ruth 1:16, 17, Ruth made a pact with her mother in law Naomi that was based on the touch of love. Such love is encompassed by undying love. Sister Ellen G. White wrote in *The Review and Herald* that a loving, true Christian is the best, most powerful argument for the eternal truth of God.

The Scriptures contain examples of the power of touch. Jesus touched the untouchable leper and made him clean. In Daniel 10:7-10, 15, 16, 18, 19, the prophet was touched multiple times and strengthened by the angel. Every child of God needs that touch that transforms him into the image of Jesus. In the parable of the prodigal son, it was his father's love, with which he was well acquainted, that made him want to go home. The illustration is profound, for the Father in heaven wants to give

each redeemed sinner a robe, shoes, and a ring—emblems of belonging to the heavenly family—along with the title of sons and daughters of God. The son henceforth would show the obedience of love. God has saved and will save everyone who comes to Him to be embraced in His arms of love.

## Sabbath

The morning worship service was conducted by *Elder Edison Henriquez*. He spoke about "**The Great Commandment.**" Jesus' answer in Matthew 22:37, 38, to the lawyer's question, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" appeared in concept on various occasions and at different times, according to the Scriptures. Jesus cited the command to love God as being with all of one's heart, soul, and mind—mentioning three faculties. In Deuteronomy 6:4, 5, Moses gave the commandment similarly: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Again, there are three faculties given. Then in Mark 12:29, 30, Jesus' list combined them. "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: 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." The lawyer gave the list of faculties as heart, understanding, soul, and strength.

Love is far above and beyond sacrifices and offerings. To worship God and to do His will, one needs to understand love, for He is love. How does one measure that love? Humanly it is not possible. God's love is too wide, long, high, and deep for man to fathom. Nothing and no one is able to separate anyone from that great love except by his own choice. It is the greatest blessing to embrace God's love so that it can be returned to Him in service, praise, and worship!

The **Sabbath school** was led by Elder Larry Watts, with the Spanish Sabbath School being taught by Brother Mario Cisneros and the English Sabbath School being taught by his wife, Sister Inessa Cisneros. The lesson topic was "Rome," the last lesson for the half year's studies on "The Acts of the Apostles." Sister Erica Murua presented the Health Nugget, a basic overview of health principles. For the Missionary Minute, Elder Samuel Alejos encouraged everyone to be active in arousing

interest in the gospel and sharing the holy word.

The topic for the Sabbath service, presented by *Elder Idel Suarez, Jr.*, American Union president, was **“A Love Stronger Than Death.”** It followed the reading of the Scriptures in Romans 8:38, 39: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Elder Suarez told the children a story about a mother’s hands



that were so scarred that her oldest daughter was ashamed of them. But one day her mother told her the story of how that scarring came about. A fire broke out in their home; and in the process of saving that very daughter’s life, the mother’s hands were badly burned. That explanation totally changed the daughter’s view of her mother’s hands. Isaiah 49:15, 16, similarly tells about other loving hands—those of the Saviour: “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me.”

The story was told of Ernest Shackleton and his crew, who attempted to reach the South Pole and cross Antarctica. The year was 1914, and Europe was at war. The disasters that the men encountered were enough to make the strongest person give up. They lost their ship, the *Endurance*, to the ice of Antarctica; but Shackleton himself and five other men rowed one of the lifeboats 800 miles to a whaling station on South Georgia to get help for those

left behind. After many more terrible hardships over more than four months, in 1916 they returned for the other 22 men who were stranded on Elephant Island. The men’s love was stronger than exhaustion, hunger, and death; and they conquered. You can read their amazing story of trial and perseverance at <https://www.history.com/news/shackleton-endurance-survival>.

Jesus came from heaven to this earth to suffer and die to save mankind, which had cut itself off from its Creator. Jesus died both the first and the second death (separation from His Father). He is the only Being in the universe who has ever or will ever return from the second death, as revealed in the gospel.

There are three groups of people who love. The first group (2 Timothy 3:1, 4; 4:10) includes those who love pleasure and the present world—fashion, sports, money, women, alcohol, and drugs. The love of the world is like leprosy; it looks good from a distance, but its end is death.

The second group (2 Timothy 3:2) is composed of those who are “lovers of their own selves” (narcissists). They see themselves as better and more beautiful and intelligent than others; they have fantasies of power, success, and beauty. As Narcissus in Greek mythology, their end is also death.

But the third group encompasses those who are lovers of God. 2 Timothy 3:4.

To love, one needs to be loved. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Those verses reveal divine love, that which comes solely from God. Let us pray to receive that love from Him and then give it to everyone whom He places within our circle.

After lunch, *Elder Uldarico Alejos* presented a service on the topic of **“The Second Great Command-**

**ment.”** This commandment, of course, is related to the first great commandment. They are found together in Matthew 22:27-39. “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” One cannot give love if he does not have it within himself. That is *agape* love; it is divine love, which comes only from God. Then we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Faith in God’s Son Jesus Christ makes it possible to empty oneself and receive God within by the Holy Spirit.

Such love breaks down barriers, making it easy to do a good work, to sacrifice everything for God and others. Let each of us glorify God by being a messenger of love!

*Brother Wikler Moran* led a half hour of music with individuals and groups presenting vocal and instrumental music. Brother Isaac Sanguay, from Peru, played hymns on several instruments from that country, including a pan pipe (pan flute), wooden flute, and little guitar—and even all of them at various times in one song. God be praised for His wonderful love!

**“Love for Children”** was the subject presented by *Elder Edison Henriquez*. “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward.” Psalm 127:3. Children are not our property; they belong to the Lord. In fact, nothing belongs to us. Parents are in the place of God to their little ones at the beginning, and that is a great responsibility. Every child is unique. “Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for



signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Isaiah 8:18. The love that we give to our children comes from God and is as a gift, a high and holy principle, a plant of heavenly origin. And Jesus is the greatest expression of love.

The languages of love include service, quality time, physical touch, giving and receiving gifts, and words of affirmation. As Jesus, who came to serve, and as Martha, who enjoyed serving Jesus, everyone is called to serve in God's church and in society. Spend time with Jesus, and keep Him ever in your thoughts. "Love is a plant of heavenly origin. It is not unreasonable; it is not blind. It is pure and holy." –*Messages to Young People*, p. 459.

Brother Sebastian Simancas shared important thoughts on the topic of "**Brotherly Love**" in the next service. People in the Bible, such as Joseph and his brothers, as well as Moses and Aaron and Lazarus and his sisters, showed that every family has the potential for wonderful blessings and difficult problems. The church is also a family, bound together by having one Father in heaven. We all have different personalities, and we all come from different countries, where culture influences our way of thinking (our worldview). Rather than being the source of difficulties, this enormous diversity is a great blessing in broadening the believers' views and also in making the church a home for all different kinds of people.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1. Each person needs to see his fellow Christians as brothers and sisters and promote unity and peace throughout the church. The apostle Paul wrote: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." Learning how to reflect God's love to our brothers and sisters prepares us to spend eternity together. It is like watering a plant, which multiplies blessings as it grows. "All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all." Titus 3:15.

Sister Persia Suarez and Sister Inessa Cisneros led the next service, in which various people gave testimonies and told experiences. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. True love comes only from Jesus; and when we keep it in our hearts and reflect it to others, we fulfill His holy law.

There were a couple of Bible games. Sister Margie Seely, General Conference Education Leader and director of Orion Christian Academy, explained the importance of teaching and training children, of protecting and preserving their minds and giving them moral values. Sister Margie visited schools in other countries, such as Mozambique, Guatemala, and Venezuela, to support them and help them in their mission. The Education Department also oversees a volunteer program in which individuals with educational training go to such schools and work with them for a period of time. See [www.imseducation.org](http://www.imseducation.org).

After dinner, Brother Jonathan Figueroa presented the topic of "**Love for Strangers**." He focused on the experience Jesus and the disciples made with the woman of Syrophenicia, whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit. The mother was in great anguish because of this and desired with all her heart to have her daughter be free of this terrible affliction. Jesus' ministry to her was not by chance. He deliberately traveled with His disciples for a day and a half to meet her and at the same time to demonstrate to His disciples how the Gentiles should be ministered to.

Although this woman was a stranger and far from the citizenship of Israel, she believed that Jesus was the only One who could answer her cry for help. Jesus knows how outsiders feel, for He was also an outsider in Israel. To teach the disciples a lesson, He spoke at first in a way that appeared to call the woman a dog, which was what Jewish people would have considered her. But her amazing reply in Matthew 15:27 was, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She was not offended by His comments but was more than willing to accept whatever blessing He would give her, for she trusted His love. Jesus responded by saying, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Verse 28. Likewise, we are to embrace and encourage those whom we meet and those who visit the church, for we "are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28.

The Sabbath closing service was given by Elder Larry Watts. The topic was "**The Triumph of Love**." God's love is the most valuable thing in the universe. The Lord Himself, after pardoning Israel's rebellion following the evil report brought by the ten spies who searched Canaan the first time, said, "I have pardoned according to thy [Moses'] word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Numbers 14:21. Today it is our choice whether or not we will be part of the revelation of God's glory in the world.

In Matthew 15:2, Jesus was challenged by the Jewish scribes and Pharisees, "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread." While Jesus was the embodiment of and taught eternal, spiritual principles, the teachers of the day focused on physical things and taught the people to do the same. This conversation took place just before Jesus and the disciples traveled 45 miles to Tyre to meet the Syrophenician woman whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit. And before that, Jesus fed the 5,000 men, besides women and children, and told the disciples to leave and cross the sea. The problem was that there was a plan afoot to make Jesus Israel's earthly King, and the disciples were part of that. Because the disciples did not obey Jesus and go immediately, they got caught in a deadly storm; that was when Jesus walked on the water and after the disciples welcomed Him into the boat, it was immediately on land. This experience is recorded in John 6:5-21.





There is an enormous spiritual storm coming on the world and on the church. What should we be doing right now? Jesus chooses to lead those who willingly accept Him. After this conference, we will go back to work, back to the world. What work will we do? Sister Ellen G. White wrote, "I know of no greater sin against God than for men to engage in the ministry who labor in self and not in Christ." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 462. We can be busy with all kinds of work, programs, and activities. But the question is, Are we doing the work, or is Christ doing it? "Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." John 6:28, 29. Has God found you? Then He needs you. He has a place for you. If you believe and are at peace with your brothers and sisters, God will act!

## Sunday

For morning worship, *Brother Francisco Vazquez* presented the topic "**Love without Limit.**" True love is a perfect bond between individuals. It is a divine, eternal principle, as well as an intense feeling for someone or something. When we say that something has no limit, it means that it is infinite, with no beginning and no end. The *agape* love—divine love—falls into this category. It is what God gives—essential good will and benevolence, leading to fidelity and a high moral nature. No human being has this by or in himself. One has to ask God for it, for that is what John 3:16 describes. In Matthew 22:37, 38, Jesus spoke of loving God with all of one's heart, soul, and mind—that is truly falling in love with the Lord!

Other types of love, such as *fileo* (brother love) and *eros* (marital love),

need the divine love (*agape*) to be present in them so they will be without limit. That produces total dedication, commitment, and fidelity that can withstand problems and storms. As written in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall

be one flesh." Let God's love be without limit in every relationship, according to His will.

After breakfast, *Brother Elvis Feliciano* spoke on the topic of "**The Most Difficult Thing for Love.**" A type of love that many people have difficulty with, which Jesus presented in the sermon on the mount, is the following: "... Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Matthew 5:44. What Jesus commanded is humanly impossible. Should one just fake it? No, that will not work, because love has to be genuine, or it is not love. How about loving one's enemies as much as possible? No.

Jesus set the example in Luke 23:34. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Such love is the essence of Jesus' very being and thus also of a Christian. There are three ways to love one's enemies. Refer back to what Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, quoted above. (1) Bless them; be kind. Break the cycle of hatred through words; speak well of those who hate you. "... If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Romans 12:20. (2) Follow the golden rule. Do good to those who hate you, whom you have not wronged in any way. (3) Pray for them; intercede for one who criticizes or humbles you. Counter hatred with love; conquer with prayer when you are tempted to respond in kind. That is what Jesus did. It is part of Christian perfection. Matthew 5:48. This is truly possible, but only if Jesus' love is in one's heart. Take your enemies to Jesus, and pray for Him to plant His love in your heart.

In the last service, *Elder Yony Delgado*, General Conference secretary, presented the topic, "**Conjugating the**

**Verb to Love.**" The concepts found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 were referred to a number of times by speakers during this conference as well in these verses. The Hebrew root for what is translated "charity" in the English *King James Version* comes from the lips and may not be from the heart—what a person actually feels. In Matthew 15:8, Jesus said what the prophet had written about in Isaiah 29:13. "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."

By contrast, what makes a person a child of the Father in heaven is unconditional love for everyone. This is possible only if Jesus lives in one's heart through the Holy Spirit. God is love, and He is perfect, so we can say that reflecting divine love is perfection. Love is the supreme motivator in the kingdom of God. It is a blessing to replace the word "charity" in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 with "Jesus." Then, replace "charity" with your own name. Again it is seen that we are actually like that only when Jesus is in us. According to the Spirit of prophecy, He is the great Center. We come closer to each other to the degree that we come close to Him. Divine love brings us in tune with each other, for God's love is poured into our hearts.

To close this blessed conference, *Elder Uldarico Alejos* called all of the speakers to the platform and expressed his gratitude for their presentations during the conference. Each one read a Bible verse and gave words of encouragement. Questions submitted by the believers were then read and answered primarily by Elders Idel Suarez, Jr.; Larry Watts; and Yony Delgado. The last song that was sung was "Tis Love That Makes Us Happy."

Gratitude was expressed to all who had a part in the conference and the youth conference—presenters, musicians, youth conference organizers and participants, kitchen staff, grounds staff and volunteers, housekeepers, and attendees.

To close this summary, let us each examine ourselves as we observe what is happening in the world around us. The next four months (and beyond, as shown in Bible prophecy) will very likely be chaotic politically, economically, and socially. The theme of this conference and the messages that were presented will help us to pass through these times and honor the God of heaven until Jesus comes. May God's infinite love and blessing be yours!

# EVENTS

## NORTHEASTERN FIELD CONFERENCE

Friday, August 30,  
to Monday, September 2, 2024  
*Halifax, Pennsylvania*

## AMERICAN UNION WORKERS' SEMINAR

Tuesday, October 22,  
to Sunday, October 27, 2024  
*Norman Park, Georgia*

## AMERICAN UNION CONFERENCE

Friday, December 20,  
to Monday, December 23, 2024  
*Norman Park, Georgia*

## AMERICAN UNION DELEGATES' MEETINGS

Tuesday, December 24,  
to Wednesday, December 25, 2024  
*Norman Park, Georgia*



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## Asleep in Jesus

The believers in the Elizabeth, New Jersey, church lost a precious spiritual brother when

### **BROTHER REYNALD LAURENT**



passed away on Sabbath, March 9, 2024, at the age of 68. He was diligent in his employment as a screen printer in his native Haiti, as well as in Canada and the United States. He and his wife, Sister Magdaly Laurent, had four children. Besides them, his grandson and ten brothers and sisters are left behind. Friends testified to his faithfulness as a friend, counselor, and brother in the faith.

Services for him were held on Friday, March 29, 2024. May God's promises in Revelation 21:4 comfort and strengthen his family, the believers, and his friends. "... God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

The Norman Park, Georgia, church asks you to pray for the family of

### **SISTER MYRA THORNTON**

who passed away on Friday, April 19, 2024, at the age of 57.

Sister Myra worked faithfully as the head chef for conferences and other events at Norman College for the past two years. She was very active in the Norman

Park church, presenting the Health Nugget for the Sabbath school and encouraging fellow believers, family members, friends, and phone contacts to be strong in the Lord.



Funeral and graveside services were held on Monday, April 29, 2024. Pastors Larry Watts and Idel Suarez, Jr., presented the promises that sustain the Christian in this world that "lies in the power of the evil one." 1 John 5:19.

Sister Myra left behind her husband Brother JD Thornton, her two brothers and one sister, six children, and three grandchildren. We pray that they will be comforted to know that her hope was in the Lord. What a joy it will be to greet her at the resurrection of the righteous!



saturated fat for those that are high in the more healthful monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which can help to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. As a general recommendation, if one eats 2,000 calories per day, the daily goal for women is 5-6 teaspoons, while the daily goal for men is 6-7 teaspoons, according to the University of Maine.

### 1. Olive oil

Olive oil is a basic ingredient of the famous heart-healthy; Mediterranean diet. It is perfect for drizzling on salads, pasta, and bread. Extra-virgin olive oil is extracted from olives without using high heat or chemicals, thus maintaining the oil's naturally occurring nutrients, called phenols, according to Harvard Health Publishing. It contains more than 30 different phenolic compounds, a group of phytochemicals that include many with anti-inflammatory and blood-vessel-expanding actions. Extra-virgin olive oil contains higher amounts of healthful monounsaturated fats than do other oils. However, since it does break down at high temperatures, it is not the best oil for stir frying and should be reserved for sautéed dishes and drizzling.

On a spiritual note, olive oil, along with whole wheat and grapes, are the three main foods that have nourished the peoples of the Mediterranean world for thousands of years. They are the three main ingredients of which we partake in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

### 2. Canola oil

Canola oil has only 1 gram (g) of saturated fat in 1 tablespoon and is, like olive oil, high in monounsaturated fat (with about 9 g per tablespoon). It also contains high levels of polyunsaturated fat (4 g per tablespoon), according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Canola oil has a higher smoke point than olive oil and a neutral flavor, so it is better than olive oil for cooking at a higher temperature, such as roasting and frying. However, since it does not have as much flavor as some other vegetable and seed oils, one may be advised against using it for salad dressings and dishes in which the oil adds flavor.

### 3. Flaxseed oil

Flaxseed oil is an excellent source of alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid. In addition to their benefits for the heart, omega-3s, a type of polyunsaturated fat that the body cannot produce

*Emil Bainhardt  
Western Field Health Leader  
Novato, California*

On Sabbath, May 11, 2024, those from the Sacramento congregation joined the San Jose believers for a mini-conference. During my afternoon talk on the subject of health, a sister asked about the effectiveness of grape seed oil. While I have seen grape seed oil in small and expensive bottles on grocery store shelves (along with other oils used in smaller quantities, like those made from walnuts, sesame seeds, linseed, and lemon seeds), I have not come across it in literature about oils. So, in this article I would like to present helpful facts and recommendations on the use of oils in cooking and other food preparations.

Oils, or fats, are nutrients in food that the body uses to build cell membranes, nerve tissues (including the brain), and hormones. The body also uses fat as fuel. If fats that one eats are not burned as energy or used as building blocks, they are stored in fat cells.

## Four kinds of fat

- 1. Saturated fat** is a type of dietary fat that is known to be unhealthy, along with trans fat. These fats are most often solid at room temperature. Foods like butter, palm and coconut oils, cheese, and red meat have high amounts of saturated fat. These can lead to heart disease and other health problems.
- 2. Trans fat**, of all of the fats, is the worst. It increases the risk of heart

disease and other health problems. Trans fats are made by turning liquid oils into solid fats, like shortening or margarine. They are used in fried, packaged, and processed foods, particularly commercially baked cakes, pies, and cookies, as well as refrigerated dough. Food labels often list trans fats as partially-hydrogenated oils (PHOs).

- 3. Monounsaturated fats** are the healthful fats, along with polyunsaturated fats. They are liquid at room temperature but become solid when they chill. They are found in plants, such as nuts, avocados, and vegetable oils. Consuming moderate amounts of monounsaturated fats in place of saturated and trans fats can benefit one's health by helping to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol.
- 4. Polyunsaturated fats** are also considered healthful fats. They are found in plants, such as vegetable oils and some nuts and seeds. They can help to reduce LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, decrease the risk of developing an irregular heart rate, slightly lower blood pressure, control blood sugar, and reduce the risk of diabetes.

## The best eight oils for good health

Now that we have covered the four broad categories of fats, let us look at each of the oils separately, beginning with the ones that are most beneficial.

Just be sure to choose the right oil, which means to swap oils containing

on its own, may reduce inflammation, thus lowering the risk for certain types of cancer, according to MD Anderson Cancer Center. Flaxseed oil in particular may help reduce symptoms of arthritis, according to the Arthritis Foundation. It contains omega-6 fatty acids, which are also important for health, per Mount Sinai. One study found that higher levels of linolenic acid (the most common omega-6 fatty acid) were linked to lower odds of heart disease, stroke, and early death. Do not heat this oil, as doing so can disrupt the fatty acid content, according to research. Instead, use it in cold preparations like smoothies and salads.

#### **4. Avocado oil**

Avocados and avocado oil are rich in healthful monounsaturated fats. Avocado oil has excellent nutritional value at both low and high temperatures. Avocado oil has a higher smoke point than olive oil, so it is better when one is cooking at higher temperatures. It can be used for stir-frying and sautéing. Meanwhile, avocado oil's neutral flavor makes it a good option for use in baking.

#### **5. Walnut oil**

Walnut oil is also a healthful choice and a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, primarily alpha-linolenic acid. Research shows that a diet that includes walnut oil (and walnuts themselves) may have heart-protective effects and help the body deal with stress. Moreover, people who had high levels of omega-3s in their red blood cells experienced better cognitive function in midlife. Walnut oil is unrefined and has a very low smoke point, so it should not be used for cooking. It has a rich, nutty flavor and is best used for salad dressings and as a flavor booster to finish a dish. Just be sure to keep it refrigerated. Walnut oil is ideal for desserts and other recipes that benefit from a nutty flavor.

#### **6. Sesame oil**

Sesame oil is known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, potentially helping to lower the odds of cardiovascular disease and atherosclerosis, which is the buildup of fat and other substances in the artery walls that cause these vessels to narrow and raise blood pressure. Sesame oil has a high smoke point, which makes it good for high-heat cooking like stir-frying; however, it has a strong flavor.

#### **7. Grape seed oil**

Grape seed oil is low in saturated fat and has a high smoke point, which

makes it a healthful choice for many different types of cooking. Its nutty but mild flavor works well in salad dressings or drizzled over roasted vegetables. Like flaxseed oil, grape seed oil contains omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids. Grape seed oil also contains vitamin E, which acts as an antioxidant to help fight free radicals and is a key vitamin for immune system support, according to the National Institutes of Health.

### **8. Sunflower oil**

Sunflower oil is high in unsaturated fats and low in saturated fat. Research shows that opting for sunflower oil rather than an oil high in saturated fat could lower LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Like grape seed oil, 1 tablespoon of sunflower oil is a good source of vitamin E.

## **Three oils to avoid**

### **1. Coconut oil**

This oil is controversial. Some believe that not all saturated fats are equal and that coconut oil is not the same as saturated fat, such as is found in red meat. Some studies show that coconut oil increases HDL (good cholesterol), while other studies indicate that it increases LDL (bad cholesterol). If you want to use coconut oil for cooking or baking, the Cleveland Clinic recommends doing so in moderation, within the recommended limits for saturated fat intake, and as part of a wider healthful diet.

### **2. Partially hydrogenated oils**

The primary source of unhealthy trans fats in a person's diet is partially hydrogenated oil, which is found in processed foods, according to the AHA. These artificial trans fats are created through an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid. The FDA ruled that these fats were so bad for health that manufacturers had to remove all trans fats from their products by January 2020. Everyone should remove partially hydrogenated oils from his or her diet. The way these fats are processed makes them have a long shelf life, but they are very detrimental to human health.

### **3. Palm oil**

According to Harvard Health Publishing, because palm oil is semisolid at room temperature, it is often used in processed foods in place of partially hydrogenated oils; that is not necessarily a bad thing, since palm oil contains

less saturated fat than butter and contains no trans fats. However, it should never be used for cooking, especially since one can use oils with lower levels of saturated fat. Those who have diabetes should pay close attention to their saturated fat consumption (since they are at a higher risk for heart disease) and avoid sources of fat like palm oil, according to the American Diabetes Association. In addition, there are ethical concerns over the use of palm oil, according to the World Wildlife Fund, because palm oil production is linked to deforestation and unfair employment practices.

The foregoing contains basic information about most common oils, including how they can be used or even avoided. Dr. Michael Klaper, M.D., who recently retired and is still an enthusiastic promoter of a plant-based diet, recommends avoiding all oils that are factory processed and sold in bottles or other types of containers. He advises people to use oils as they appear naturally in foods such as avocados, nuts, and seeds—organic, unrefined, and cold pressed. He feels the same way about sugar and salt—that they should be avoided. So, his no, no, no list of foods contains three items: sugar, oil, and salt (SOS). While such goals may be challenging to follow for some people, they are worth considering and discussing with one's personal health care provider.

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