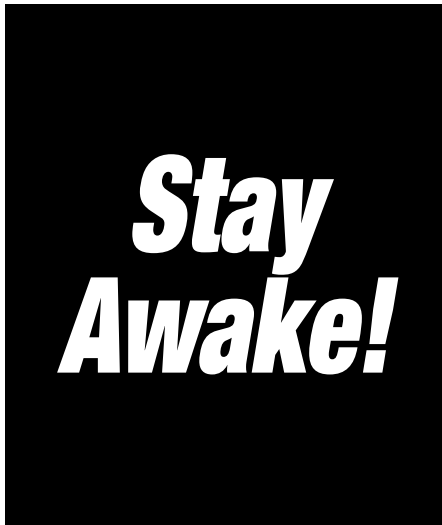




# AMERICAN UNION NEWSLETTER

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# Stay Awake!

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Valencia, California*

In Revelation 16:15, we read the following: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."


"The evil servant says in his heart, 'My lord delayeth his coming.' He does not say that Christ will not come. He does not scoff at the idea of His second coming. But in his heart and by his actions and words he declares that the Lord's coming is delayed. He banishes from the mind of others the conviction that the Lord is coming quickly. His influence leads men to presumptuous, careless delay.... He mingles with the world.... It is a fearful assimilation. With the world he is taken in the snare...."

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' Revelation 3:3. The advent of Christ will surprise the false teachers. They are saying, 'Peace and safety.' Like the priests and teachers before the fall of Jerusalem, they look for the church to enjoy earthly prosperity and glory. The signs of the times they interpret as foreshadowing this. But what saith the word of Inspiration? 'Sudden destruction cometh upon them.' 1 Thessalonians 5:3.... Upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth, upon all who make this world their home, the day of God will come as a snare...."

"The world, full of rioting, full of godless pleasure, is asleep, asleep in carnal security. Men are putting afar off the coming of the Lord. They laugh at warnings. The proud boast is made, 'All things continue as they were from the beginning.' 'Tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more

**NORTH EASTERN FIELD CONFERENCE**

# Stay Awake!

ONLINE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED 

**"LOOK, I COME LIKE A THIEF! BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO STAYS AWAKE AND REMAINS CLOTHED, SO AS NOT TO GO NAKED AND BE SHAMEFULLY EXPOSED." REVELATION 16:15**

Next to a beautiful lake in Camp Lebanon Retreat Center, God calls His people to "STAY AWAKE" in this perilous time. We pray that God's message will nurture the spiritual life of our families! We thank God for the baptisms that are planned for this conference!

**JOAMI BARNEDO (720) - 998- 2446 ENGLISH**  
**OBED HERNANDEZ (502) - 822- 9321 SPANISH**

CAMP LEBANON RETREAT CENTER  
 4464 EMMONS RD.  
 OREGONIA, OH 45036

**SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023**  
 FRIDAY 4 PM - MONDAY NOON

abundant.” 2 Peter 3:4; Isaiah 56:12. We will go deeper into pleasure loving. But Christ says, ‘Behold, I come as a thief.’ Revelation 16:15. At the very time when the world is asking in scorn, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’ the signs are fulfilling. While they cry, ‘Peace and safety,’ sudden destruction is coming. When the scorner, the rejecter of truth, has become presumptuous; when the routine of work in the various money-making lines is car-

ried on without regard to principle; when the student is eagerly seeking knowledge of everything but his Bible, Christ comes as a thief.” –*Maranatha*, p. 34.

How can we stay awake? From Friday, September 1, to Monday, September 4, 2023, the Northeastern Field will hold a conference at the Camp Lebanon Retreat Center in Oregonia, Ohio. Everyone who attends will be richly blessed with workshops and topics on the conference

theme, “Stay Awake!” The camp is located by a calm, beautiful lake where the attendees can come together and encourage one another in Christ. The accommodations are group cabins and private tents; see the flyer for prices. Register at: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pfsPN9I-n7PC4t-PKqsy9c7TLdPpBK4wl7lcmMoaJJS4/viewform?edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1pfsPN9I-n7PC4t-PKqsy9c7TLdPpBK4wl7lcmMoaJJS4/viewform?edit_requested=true).

Make plans to attend! We look forward to seeing you!





# COURAGE

Henry Dering  
Cameron Park, California

Have you ever read a book or heard a true-life adventure story of men and women risking their lives to prove to the world that the “impossible” is possible? Daring acts of heroism and courage may be prompted by selfish motives to gain popularity, fame, money, and praise or just to be the first in history to accomplish a certain heroic feat. Whatever the motive may be (self-centeredness or benevolence) it takes will power, nerve power, and a strong determination to reach a specific goal.

Take, for instance, the scaling of lofty Mt. Everest in the Himalayas, reaching over 29,000 feet in elevation. Many have been challenged to reach the snow-capped pinnacle. Exploring a dense jungle for the purpose of setting up a mission station amid poisonous snakes, wild beasts, and the fear of contracting deadly diseases—that takes courage! Attempting to cross a vast ocean in a small boat has meant the loss of many lives. Or consider the dangers involved in traveling into space for scientific research. Imagine the adventurous thrill seekers rafting down the fast-flowing rapids of the Colorado River with its hidden rocks and twisting currents. Many of these unbelievable and astonishing acts of courage may have seemed foolish and unreasonable to undertake, but they have proven very valuable and been a great blessing to man.

Now that we have touched on a few aspects of valor, we see that the Christian needs a lot of courage to face the realities of everyday living and to prepare for the future immortal life. Without courage one is prone to fail and may even forfeit eternal

life. Courage, faith, and implicit trust in God do not come in a moment; rather, they are acquired by the experience of years. Day by day, the Lord places the Christian in various circumstances to test his character and to reveal what is in his heart. Each experience that the Lord permits to happen shapes the character, for better or for worse.

Let us stop for a moment and look at a few lives that have influenced the world in a positive way because of their courage.

## Nehemiah

This noteworthy man of courage, a Hebrew exile, was given permission by the Persian king to rebuild the broken walls of Jerusalem and restore Israel’s national strength. His enterprise in restoring the defenses of Jerusalem did not go forward unhindered. Satan worked to stir up opposition from open enemies and pretended friends and to bring discouragement. Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, the principal enemies of Nehemiah, ridiculed the efforts of the builders, declaring the task to be an impossibility and predicting failure. They endeavored to destroy the courage of the Jews with belittling words. “What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves?... Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?... Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.” Nehemiah 4: 2, 3.

“But taunts and ridicule, opposition and threats, seemed only to inspire Nehemiah with firmer determination and to arouse him to greater watchfulness....

“Nehemiah’s whole soul was in the enterprise he had undertaken. His hope, his

energy, his enthusiasm, his determination, were contagious, inspiring others with the same high courage and lofty purpose.” – *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 643, 638.

## Martin Luther

Because of Martin Luther’s teachings from the Bible, he was separated from the Roman Catholic Church and made to appear before the Diet at Worms in Germany. Assembled there were dignitaries of the church and the state who insisted that Luther retract the doctrines that he advanced. He stood as God’s witness, testifying against the power of error and standing upon the sure foundation of God’s word. “The courage and firmness which he now displayed, as well as the power and clearness of his reasoning, filled all parties with surprise. The emperor, moved to admiration, exclaimed: ‘This monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage.’” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 160, 161.

The mighty courage that Luther demonstrated before the council was a severe blow to the papacy and gave a forward thrust to the Reformation that affected the history of the church for ages.

## William Miller

In the early 1840s, the startling news that the world was soon to come to a fiery end was taught by William Miller and others in the United States. His earthshaking announcement that Christ would come on October 22, 1844, was a distinctive teaching that few others dared to promote with such force and conviction. After the Lord called Miller to expose falsehood and preach the first angel’s message to the world, the Millerite movement gained adherents, and the work rapidly extended.

While the message of God was progressing, Satan, as usual, endeavored to prevent the movement from blossoming. Miller had to contend with ridicule, scoffing, skepticism, and even physical violence wrought by wicked hands. It took much courage to preach an unwelcome message of doom during such times of unbelief.

“The instigator of all evil sought not only to counteract the effect of the advent message, but to destroy the messenger himself.... The opposition manifested by church members toward his message emboldened the baser classes to go to greater lengths; and enemies plotted to take his life as he should leave the place of meeting.” –*The Great Controversy*, pp. 336.



Thank the Lord for the courage of William Miller, who brought a timely and relevant message that awakened thousands to their true spiritual condition!

## Our time

In these last days of earth's history, the followers of Christ also need moral courage to stand the test of the mark of the beast. As the solemn words of mercy contained in the three angels' messages ring out loudly in preparation for Christ's second coming, each person will have to stand alone in the crisis of an international Sunday law.

"It requires moral courage to take a position to keep the commandments of the Lord. An opposer of the truth once said that it was only weak-minded people, foolish, ignorant persons, who would turn away from the churches to keep the seventh day as the Sabbath. But a minister who had embraced the truth, replied, 'If you think it takes weak-minded persons, just try it.' It takes moral courage, firmness, decision, perseverance, and very much prayer to step out on the unpopular side." *—Evangelism*, p. 240.

As the majority reveal their enmity against Sabbath keepers through the imposition of

finances, imprisonment, and finally the death decree, the faithful follower of Christ will need all the courage given him by God to stand. He may be ostracized by his family, deprived of his job, and forced to sever his connection with friends and associates in order to obey God. It takes moral courage to be different from the world and to be out of step with practices that defy God's law. The preparation time for the last issue to confront humanity is today. "For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:17. This question is addressed to you, dear reader. Who is your source of courage?

One source is association with fellow Christian believers who have the same hope and expectations. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:25.

## Stretching Our Imaginations

"In order for man to obtain eternal life, divine power must unite with human effort, and this power Christ came to place within our reach. He says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' John 15:5. And He says again, 'If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.' John 14:14. We have a right to lay hold of the arm of infinite power. When Christ came to the world, all heaven was poured out in this one great gift. God Himself came to us in Christ. 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?' Christ said. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?' John 14:9.

"My object in speaking these words to you today is to lead you to take your minds off the things of this world and place them on the things of eternity. If your affections are set on things above, if in the daily life you are seeking to follow the perfect pattern, you need never be discouraged. The enemy may seek to cast his dark shadow between you and Christ, but your faith is to pierce the gloom. What are we in this world for? To represent Christ and to be a blessing to our fellow men. Christ is to be formed in us, the hope of glory. We are to live His life, that our lives may show forth to the world the love of God and power of the gospel.

"When God's people take their eyes off the things of this world and place them on heaven and heavenly things, they will be a

peculiar people because they will see the mercy and goodness and compassion that God has shown to the children of men. His love will call forth a response from them, and their lives will show to those around them that the Spirit of God is controlling them, that they are setting their affections on things above, not on the things of the earth. "In thinking of heaven, we may put our imagination to the utmost stretch and think the loftiest thoughts that we are capable of thinking, and our minds will grow weary in the effort to comprehend the breadth and depth and height of the subject. It is impossible for our minds to take in the great themes of eternity. It is impossible for us even to make an effort to understand these things without the effort affecting our whole character for good and having an uplifting influence on our minds. As we think of how Christ came to our world to die for fallen man, we understand something of the price that was paid for our redemption, and we realize that there is no true goodness or greatness apart from God." *—Manuscript 17, 1888.*

Every weekly Sabbath, the body of Christ unites to serve the Lord and gain new insights into God's mercy and love. It is here that opinions and ideas are shared which fortify the mind to be faithful. Words spoken by earnest souls, especially those who have been Christians for many years, have an influence that radiates out to those newly come to the faith and who may lack courage. Courage is contagious. It inspires others to be courageous. The positive thoughts from the Scriptures that are heard in the congregational meeting are a blessing and encouragement to the downcast.

We could list prayer, personal Bible study, meditation, and a good example to others as good sources of courage; but only Christ living in the inner sanctuary of the soul can make a person courageous. It is surrendering all to God through Jesus Christ and beholding the cross of Calvary, the crowning revelation of God's love for man, that truly makes His people courageous.

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