



# PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

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## AN IMPORTANT LESSON FROM SURVIVAL CAMPING

by Jim Buller

Several years ago, we did an overnight wilderness survival camp-out for a summer youth-camp group. We hiked in to the campsite location, and designated a central campfire spot where the group would meet and for meals. Then everyone went out to make their own debris hut shelters here and there in cozy looking places around the area. The staff made their shelters near the central campfire so everyone would know where to find them.

After supper and the evening exercises, everyone went back to their shelters to bed down for the night. However, the spots which had looked cozy and inviting during the day, had become lonely and maybe even a little spooky in the dark. Thus, throughout the night, one by one the campers would come over to the central area, built up the fire, and go to sleep next to it. By morning, almost all of the campers were just sleeping on the ground as close as they could get to the fire.

Over the years, we have noticed essentially this same thing happening with other groups —of all ages. In the afternoon light, people would spread out into the general area making their individual camps. But after dark, especially if it was a colder night, there would be a steady migration to the central fire area.

On a recent wilderness trip, with a group primarily made up of adults, it happened again. So while debriefing at the end of the trip we talked about this phenomenon: how it had been observed many times before; how everyone *would* have been warmer if we had all built our open-faced tarp shelters in a tight circle around the fire, and designated “fire watches,” taking turns to keep the fire going throughout the night; how we would have been warmer still if we had built one large group tarp-tipi with a small fire inside the shelter; but how that previous afternoon, almost everyone had just wanted their own individual spaces, and no one thought it was important to “press together;” and again, morning had found them sleeping on the ground next to the fire. Everyone agreed that we had done something different.

However, as we were discussing these things, it occurred to us that there was an even more important spiritual lesson in all of this. Jesus wants His people to *be* together and *work* together. In His prayer just before His arrest, trial, and death, He prayed, “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one

in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.” (John 17: 21.) In contrast to the separateness caused by the selfishness of sin, our ‘oneness’ is to be a distinguishing mark of His people. Notice also the following from *Selected Messages Book 2*, page 373.

We are coming to a time when, more than ever before, we shall need to press together, to labor unitedly. In union there is strength. In discord and disunion there is only weakness. ... In our separation from one another we are separated from Christ. We want to press together.

Instead of each of us pursuing our own interests and agenda, or for that matter even our own ministry projects, “more than ever before, we shall need to *press together*,” and “labor unitedly.” “For where there is unity there is strength, a oneness which all the powers of hell cannot break.” (*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 6*, page 151.) Notice also what the following from *Early Writings*, page 88-89, says about these things and their relationship to how we are sealed.

I saw a little company traveling a narrow pathway. All seemed to be firmly united, bound together by the truth, in bundles, or companies. Said the angel, “The third angel is binding, or sealing, them in bundles for the heavenly garner.”

This is very interesting. Apparently, even though we are “saved” as individuals, for “‘even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,’” (Ezekiel 14:20), we are sealed—an important part of our salvation process in these end-times—“in companies,” “bundles,” or groups!

One big reason for this is shown by following another train of thought. *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 415 says, “The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.” But, how is this important “last message of mercy” of “His character of love,” to be revealed?—but *through His people!*

God wants to reveal *His love* through us! Please let the implications of the following quotation from *The Ministry of Healing*, page 470 sink in deeply. “The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.” As significant and important as it may be, the “strongest argument in favor of the gospel” is *not* a world-wide system of outstanding health care or education, it is not even a cohesive set of scripturally correct doctrines. (For, “Even the demons believe—and tremble.” James 2:19.) Instead, it is simply “*a loving and lovable Christian!*”

It has been said that one of the strongest arguments for the Trinity is the fact that “God is love”—because love is something you can not do by yourself, therefore, there must be more than One divine being. In the same way, *our* love can not be “perfected” if we just keep to ourselves. (See 1 John 4:7-20.) And so it makes sense that we will be sealed in “bundles,” and that we must “press together.”

Over the years I have heard different ones decry the lack of unity. However, all too often this has been accompanied with the expressed wish that, “If everyone would just

rally around *my* leadership we could be united.” But, this is *not* what brings *true* unity. In the same way that on the camp-outs we would have had to build our shelters around the *central fire* —the *source* of heat— the only way we can have true unity would be if we each build our lives around *Jesus*. “When we are one with Christ, we shall be united among ourselves.” (*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 6, page 139.*) Unity does not center around *anything* human. We can only be truly closer to each other as we *all* draw closer to *Jesus*.

But unfortunately, again just like on these camp-outs, it seems we all have to go through some cold and lonely ‘nights’ before we even recognize, much less appreciate, our need to ‘build’ close to *the Source*; and *then* be willing to give up having our ‘personal space’ so that we can “press together.”

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1 John 4:7-20

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love Him because He first loved us.

If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

## KNIFE SELECTION

(Please note that the following is not intended as an endorsement of any particular product. Particular tools have been mentioned here simply for the purpose of providing specific examples.)

Every once in a while someone asks me which knife they should get. But before I answer that question, I would like to point out that in an actual survival situation, or even when practicing primitive skills, there are actually two types of ‘tasks’ that a sharp edged tool is needed for. Therefore, we really need *two* ‘knives,’ or cutting tools. The first of these ‘tasks’ is for fine work, such as carving a spoon or a twig toothbrush, and preparing food. The second ‘task’ is heavier work such as cutting down a small dead tree and trimming off its branches for a shelter pole, or making the point on a digging stick, or splitting out some dry kindling from the center of a standing dead tree when everything else is wet. Therefore, I personally currently carry a sturdy lock blade folding knife, with a pocket clip and thumb stud, (Buck model #486), and a machete that I have cut down to 10 inches long and differentially sharpened, [the back half of the blade nearest the handle is squared off to be used as a scraper, the back of the blade nearest the point is rounded so it is easy on the mallet when “billeting,” and also easy on the hand when using the machete as a drawknife; the edge of the blade nearest the handle is finely sharpened for carving, while the rest of the edge is left ‘just reasonably sharp’ for chopping]. And, because it is light weight and compact, I also carry a Gerber Sports Saw. (But I think this “Sports Saw” model has since been superseded by their “Sliding Camp Saw” model. They run about \$10, depending on where you get them.)

The reason I carry, and recommend, a machete that has been cut-down to 10 inches/25 centimeters is that although the typically longer blades may be great for brush slashing in the tropics, this extra length simply gets in the way and throws off one’s accuracy when doing the more precise chopping tasks needed for bushcraft. I have experimented with shorter and longer lengths, but 10 in./25 cm. seems to be optimal. Unfortunately, although there *are* machetes this size available, they are both difficult to find and rather expensive.

The closest thing on the market might be the “Bushman” by Cold Steel. (They run about \$20 to \$30 depending where you get it.) It is about 9 inches long and very strong. Currently, it also comes with a really nice sheath that includes a generous pouch for a sharpener or other gear. But the Bushman’s smooth metal handle could get slippery, and therefore dangerous if wet, or your hand gets sweaty from continuous use. Wrapping the handle with some soft leather, lacing it tight after gluing it in place with rubber cement, *greatly* improves the grip.

But what I would recommend, is purchasing an inexpensive yet quality machete such as one by Tramontina, (from Brazil), or Imacasa, (from El Salvador), and cutting it down to 10 inches. (These can typically be purchased for \$8 or less.) Hopefully you have access to an angle grinder, rotary tool, or something similar to cut it with. Simply cutting it straight across at a right angle to the length of the blade is the easiest, and works just fine. Cut the blade slowly so the metal doesn’t lose its heat treatment. (A hack saw with extra hard teeth could probably also be used to make this cut, but I have not tried this.) Then differentially sharpen the machete, and cut off and re-sew the cloth sheath, (that typically comes with these), and you will be ready to go with a quality tool.

In addition to their belt or pocket knife, many woodsmen, especially in the ‘North country,’ carry a hatchet or small axe instead of a machete. This system has essentially

the same elements described above. The axe fills basically the same niche as the machete, and in some cases it does an even better job. The early American frontiersmen and Native Americans frequently carried a tomahawk or 'belt axe' in addition to their knife for the same reasons.

For a tomahawk, Cold Steel makes a nice "Frontier Hawk," (\$22 to \$30 depending where you get it), and there are other good tomahawks and belt axes on the market, primarily through outlets catering to historical re-enactors. Closely check the handles on tomahawks however. Some of them taper much more than what is necessary to fit through the eye, leaving the handle too thin at the end for a good grip. This is not only uncomfortable, but it could also be potentially dangerous.

Gerber, Wetterlings, and Gransfors Bruks all make some nice small axes, although they tend to be pricy. The optimal size for packing and bushcraft tasks seem to be about a 1-1¼ pound head, with a handle length of about 14 to 20 inches/37 to 50 centimeters. To be honest, I haven't had a lot of experience with small axes as I haven't been willing to carry the extra weight, or pay for their price. From my limited experience, the 19 to 20 in./45-50 cm. handle length seems to be more optimal, while the 14 in./37 cm. length tends to be a bit marginal.

There are several folding camp saws on the market. Most of them are relatively inexpensive. Some are very well made, and others are junk. Personally, I prefer those made by Gerber as they are light weight, well crafted, have a good tooth pattern and they don't cost too much. There is another folding saw by Sven which is a bit larger. It would be nice to have one in camp for larger jobs, but since I am already carrying a machete, I've opted for the smaller, and lighter Gerber Sport Saw.

In addition to their knife, I strongly recommend that everyone carry either a cut-down machete, a saw, or a tomahawk/axe, (young children being the exception of course). Ideally, if there is a group who hikes and camps together regularly, one person could carry a machete, another a folding camp saw, and someone else a tomahawk or small axe. Although each of these tools basically fills the same 'heavier cutting tasks' niche, there are some things that the machete simply does better than the saw or tomahawk, things the saw does better than the machete or axe, and things the tomahawk does better than the machete or saw. So, it is really nice to have each of these tools available in a primitive camp—but I doubt anyone would want to carry all three. If the weight and bulk are split up among a group that is willing to share with each other, everyone can benefit from the strengths of each tool. And for what it's worth, carry these tools more or less out of sight in your pack. It may be convenient, and look cool hanging on your belt, but other people won't understand. They'll wonder what you are up to, and have concerns about you going out to 'chop down the woods'—or worse.

For fine carving and food preparation a 3 to 3.5 inch/8-9 centimeter blade would be plenty long. But most people haven't worked their way through what is really needed for survival living, and therefore they try to get by with only one tool. As a result, we find the typical stuff on the market that attempts to cover both the need for fine carving and heavier chopping. Unfortunately, there simply isn't a good inexpensive 'shorter' fixed bladed, or sheath knife on the market—or at least I haven't found it yet.

There are plenty of folding knives in this category, which is probably why I'm carrying what I do. However, with a folding knife the blade to handle attachment is especially critical—make sure the hinge feels 'tight,' and that it is not at all 'loose.' So

even though it may be a bit longer and larger than necessary, a fixed bladed, or 'sheath' knife would probably be what you want for your survival kit.

In spite of the hype associated with them, most of the hollow handled 'survival knives' on the market are next to worthless. This is because the blade to handle attachment is just a little threaded stud that is bolted down inside the bottom of the handle compartment. This stud simply isn't strong enough, and it can easily be bent or broken when doing any serious chopping —so don't waste your money. The "tang," which is what the extension of the blade metal into the handle is called, should go *at least* halfway into the handle, and be completely solid. A "full tang" going all the way through the handle is better yet.

Therefore, to answer the question from the beginning of this article, the knife I would recommend would be the Mora "Clipper," or Cold Steel's "Pendleton Lite Hunter." Both of these are knives I have used for my wilderness skills training programs. The reason I use these knives is because they are simple, good, no-nonsense, and relatively inexpensive, (about \$14-17 depending on where you get them). Some people prefer one, some the other, mostly based on the way they feel in your particular hand. Using these knives gives participants a chance to get used to how a good knife works and feels. If later they want to spend more on something else, fine, but at least they will know what they are looking for —rather than spending a lot of money on something only to find out it really wasn't what they need or want. I have also heard that many of the other outdoor education and survival programs use one of the similar models from Mora, presumably for the same reasons I do. The "Pendleton Lite Hunter" has a slightly shorter and thinner blade design than the Moras, but both are from reputable companies. They also both have a comfortable handle with a "little flat place" at the top of the handle just before the blade which is really nice when using thumb pressure while carving —knives with rounded handles may be fine for light work such a some meal preparation, but they just aren't comfortable when doing serious carving. Although they are simple and inexpensive, and there are better knives which cost more on the market, if one of these was the knife I had in an actual survival situation, I would consider my self blessed.

Some people worry about a finger guard, but a guard can actually get in the way when doing precise, fine carving, so I don't recommend a full guard. For carving and food preparation the 'little bump' in the molded plastic handles are usually adequate. So assuming you are *not* going to be really careless, or stabbing someone or something with the potential of hitting a bone, you really don't need a full guard.

The key to working efficiently with any cutting blade is keeping it sharp. So invest in some way to keep your knives, machetes, axes, and saws sharp. Smith's makes a dandy little sharpener (Smith's Pocket Pal, for about \$10), that you just pull the blade through. There are also various aluminum oxide, diamond grit and ceramic sharpeners on the market that are compact and work well. My personal preference is a ceramic sharpener by Spyderco called their "Pocket Stone" model, it comes in two grits. Common metal files work good for the chopping edges of machetes and axes. Remember to file *into* the edge, don't 'back drag.' To sharpen a saw, you may need what is called a "knife file." Unfortunately, these are hard to find any more, and getting more expensive. If you have an old style hardware store in your area, try there, if not, you can order one as I had to from MSC Industrial Supply Co. [get a 4 or 6 inch long, "second cut"]. [http://www1.mscdirect.com/cgi/nnsrhm?cm\\_re=tpnv\\_-\\_home\\_-\\_home](http://www1.mscdirect.com/cgi/nnsrhm?cm_re=tpnv_-_home_-_home)

Also, for what it is worth having said all this, if I could only have one cutting tool in an actual survival situation what would it be? I would have to choose my machete. Although it would be harder to do fine carving or food preparation with, it *could* do these jobs; I think it's just that from a survival stand point, the heavier 'chopping' tasks would be more essential. So one might ask, if chopping tasks are the most essential in a survival situation why not just carry a tomahawk or small axe? The reason is simply because it is *really* hard to do any fine carving with an axe.

So, if I wasn't able to cut-down the blade of a longer machete, and had to use something I could just buy 'off the shelf,' what would I choose? In that case I would probably go with a Cold Steel "Bushman" —but I would *definitely* wrap the handle with soft leather or something similar, and do something to make sure the wrapping wouldn't slip around while it was being used. Unfortunately, unless you are able to spend quite a bit of money, there really isn't anything, 'as is' from the major companies on the market that I would be want to have to use in an actual survival situation.

Please note: the following paragraph is *not* intended as a commercial, and I have come very close to not writing it to include here. But because some of you will no doubt find it helpful, and because it might make a difference in a survival situation sometime soon, I've chosen to go ahead with it.

My friend Christopher Fischer and I have been talking together about end-time spiritual issues and practical country living and wilderness survival concerns for several years now. In part, it was these discussions that led to first starting "Preparing to Stand." Since Christopher makes custom knives, we have recently been talking about the need to make a shorter machete available to people who do not have the ability to cut down a standard length machete for themselves. And, I know he has been working on providing something along this line, in addition to the custom knives he has available through his online outlet —although to be honest, I currently don't know exactly where this project stands. So if you are looking for something like this, you might want to contact him. <http://www.ctfischerknives.com/>

#### Sources:

- For a couple years now, my friend Eric McCormick has worked with me to supply the equipment for my wilderness skills programs through his online survival equipment outlet, Sportsman Survival: <http://www.sportsmansurvival.com/store/>
- Another friend Christopher Fischer, (mentioned above), makes custom knives, and carries other knives and related products: <http://www.ctfischerknives.com/>
- Another friend Joe Beardsley makes custom knives: <http://jpbeardsley.tripod.com/knives.html>
- Knives Plus, a large commercial outlet with good prices: <http://www.knivesplus.com/>
- Smoky Mountain Knife Works, another large commercial outlet with fairly good prices: [http://www.smkw.com/webapp/eCommerce/main\\_front.wjsp](http://www.smkw.com/webapp/eCommerce/main_front.wjsp)
- Ragweed Forge, carries a good selection of Mora knives: <http://www.ragweedforge.com/SwedishKnifeCatalog.html>