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# Advent Christian WITNESS

January/February 2001



"I hate

# Divorce"

says the LORD God of Israel... Mal. 2:16



# WITNESS

January/February 2001

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## From the Editor

I saw a terrible car wreck last month. I was third in line at a stop sign, changing channels on the radio when I heard the impact. I looked up to see the little white station wagon sliding sideways, shrouded in a spray of glass and plastic. Apparently the first car at the stop sign pulled out directly into the path of a full-size truck going 60 miles per hour.

Even before the car stopped sliding, I knew it was bad. I jumped out and ran to the scene. Actually, I ran three steps, slowed to a reluctant walk for two steps, then jogged the remaining distance, hoping someone would beat me there. As I approached the car I shouted the ridiculous question, "Is everyone all right?" Obviously not. Even fifty feet from the car I could hear the unconscious driver's labored breathing. I think she had a punctured lung. But that probably wasn't the worst of her injuries.

A passenger behind the driver alternated between screaming and moaning. Her legs were pinned between her seat and the driver's and she wanted out. A second passenger sat next to the driver, seemingly unharmed but covered with glass particles.

In spite of my delaying tactics, I was second to the scene. I let a middle-aged woman get there ahead of me. She said she was a nurse (thank God!), but if she was, she wasn't a very bright one. She kept saying, "I think that

one has brain damage. Look at the way she's holding her hands. She's not right. She's got something wrong with her..." I wanted to shout, "Shut up you idiot! I don't need to know that, and neither does anyone else. Tell me what to do to help these people or at least pretend to be helpful."

I've never taken a first aid course but I have an idea of what to do in this situation. First, make sure everyone is breathing. They were. Next, make sure everyone has a pulse. They did. Finally, don't move anyone unless it is absolutely necessary. All this translated to mean I stood there and did nothing. I tried to calm the screaming passenger, assuring her that help was on the way. And I kept listening to the driver's rasping breath, praying to God that it didn't stop.

The only person helping me was that not-so-helpful nurse. Probably ten or twenty people stood around the scene, inconvenienced by this wreck, but they kept their distance. When help arrived, via three ambulances and a police car, I was appalled to find myself still alone, while the paramedics slowly donned their coats and surgical gloves, and rummaged through their vehicles for equipment. The cop didn't come anywhere near me, but immediately began taking statements from witnesses.

Continued on page 26



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# D*ivorce*

## *Another Scarlet Letter*

by Robin Eldridge

HOW DOES IT FEEL to be a divorced Christian woman in today's church? I hate being a statistic and since I hate it so much I haven't bothered to look up the statistically correct number of divorced Christian women there are in churches today. I have no title, I have a label. I'm not a Miss or a Mrs., and Ms. gives me chills. When it's necessary to provide personal information, I have to check the box labeled "divorced." To me, marking that box is the same as saying that I am a failure at a basic function in life.

There is no such thing as an amicable divorce, even if it's based on people's perception of a Scripture-based divorce. No one walks away unscathed. Any Christian who has stood before a pastor and vowed to God and witnesses that they would love one person "til death do us part" can testify with me that standing later before a judge and stating why you are divorcing, dividing assets, and delegating custody of your children is the most humiliating experience imaginable. And nobody comes to watch you break your vow.

When I stood alone on the steps of the courthouse in 1996 after having 20 years of my life dissolved, and watched Michael walk away, I thought my life was over. The still, small voice of God inside me was overpowered by my own voice crying over and over and over again: "What have I done? What have I done?"

I grew up believing that divorce was a sin. I'm not sure whether it was ever actually told to me. But it was something that decent folk did not do, something that Christians did not do, something I would never, ever do. And then I did. Even now I believe that no Christian should ever have to be divorced. But then, I believe that no one on the planet should ever have to be divorced.

The one consolation for the Christian, not available for the non-Christian, should be the family of God. In reality, the outside world offers more comfort, without adding more guilt, without the finger pointing, and

without the sermonizing. I've taken note since I've been divorced. I've watched and listened and I've come to realize that many churches offer welcome to the repentant alcoholic, sympathy for the weary backslider, comfort for the world-wounded, and applause to the couples who stick it out for years in spite of obvious hostility. But for the divorced there are debates, rules, limits on their ability to serve Christ, and the perception that they are forever tinged.

Divorce is a public thing, debated in the hallways, and whispered about in the bathroom stalls. "Who did what to whom?" becomes the question most pertinent in everyone's mind. Was my divorce "Scripture-based?" Did I get divorced before I became a Christian or after? Did I follow all the guidelines when making my choice to divorce? For a Christian is divorce even an option? Should I have divorced? Am I now sinning? If I remarry am I committing

**I grew up believing that divorce was a sin.**



adultery? What are the rules? I am amazed that the placement of a single comma in Scripture makes what I have done either right or wrong in some people's opinions.

I can't tell you how much agony there is in being asked those questions. I always feel on the defensive, almost answering questions before they are asked, stating my case as clearly as a completely confused person can answer them. How do you know if you're following all the rules when your life is falling apart? If I sin and it is so publicly displayed, it is understandable that, in addition to needing forgiveness from God and my children, I also feel a need to seek forgiveness from everyone who feels he has a right to judge. But why should I feel like this?

One day when I was preparing for a ladies', Bible study, I read in the gospel of John the description of Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well. I was overwhelmed with the realization that Jesus broke all the rules. He broke all the rules in order to speak to one woman. He reached out to love someone who was deemed a social outcast, not simply because she was a woman and a Samaritan, but a woman who was divorced five times and living with someone she wasn't married to. He challenged her. She was a woman who knew the Scriptures and was waiting for her Messiah. She told other Samaritans about Jesus, who in turn "believed because of the woman's testimony." Many people believed in Christ because of the testimony of an outcast, a sinner, a person five times divorced. Christ didn't look at her as anything other than a person who needed

to be saved, loved, and forgiven.

That day I started believing that the only one to look to for answers was Christ. The one who would convict would be the Holy Spirit, and the only one I had to answer to was God. I believe that God has, over time, pointed out to me the areas in my life where I needed to seek *his* forgiveness and the

forgiveness of the people who were hurt by my decision. When I am confronted by people, I become defensive and make excuses, but when I am confronted by the Holy Spirit, I must listen and obey.

To this day, I still cannot tell you for sure that I made the right decision, leaving my home and my children. There is more regret





than you can imagine. I took my son to lunch recently. I told him about my regrets, and how painful it was to leave him and his brother and sister. He surprised me by telling me that he was glad I left because it put an end to the fighting. His memory was full of day-after-day fighting. I don't know whether to be filled with more regret or look at my son and accept that *he* believes I did what was best under the circumstances.

Having said all of the above, I want the reader to know that during my divorce I was surrounded by a small band of loving and caring people, including my family. I now attend a church in Easton, Massachusetts, that allowed me to sit quietly and heal. It takes a long time to heal.

Sometimes, some little event reminds me that people just don't understand. They don't get it. I go to supper and attend Bible study every Tuesday at a friend's home. While everyone pitches in to help cook, set the table, and make coffee, I go to the living room and play their piano to my heart's content. One evening I



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overheard a conversation where a friend explained to another friend that it was her responsibility to steer her class of teenagers in the right direction. After a discussion with her class on appropriate music, she could no longer recommend the music of a popular Christian pop/rock singer because that singer had divorced. I sat in the living room and realized I couldn't let that statement pass. As kindly as I could, I stepped into the kitchen and said, "The divorced person who is in your living room, playing your piano, wonders if she could have a cup of coffee."

Divorce is an awful thing, but God's capacity to include me in his family will never end. That's a hard truth to remember when I see my children faltering through life, when I'm lonely, when I want to go back and fix things, when I know I can't fix anything, when I look forward and the future seems empty and cold, when I'm overly sensitive and one word or hard look can cause me to lose my ability to trust. It's all there and I can find safety only with the One who saw it all, who knew my name before I drew my first breath, who knows my heart now, and has promised me—the divorced Christian woman who left her home and children—the very same things he has promised you. †

*Robin Eldridge lives in Easton, Massachusetts, where she attends the Free Evangelical Fellowship.*



## 'SOUL-MATE' — A Romantic Fiction

by Dr. Edward Fudge

*A gracEmail reader writes that she and her husband are divorcing because they have nothing in common anymore. Meanwhile, she has found a fabulous male friend who so resonates with her that she wonders if they might be "soul-mates" — souls created to find each other and be together. Finally, she asks, can she be forgiven if she marries this friend someday after her divorce is final?*

\* \* \*

I am afraid that the "soul-mate" notion is a romantic invention that makes for sweet stories and movies but lacks any scriptural basis. The Bible does not actually talk about God making "souls" and putting them in bodies. That was the teaching of Plato and the pagan Greek philosophers such as Socrates. In the biblical version of creation, God makes Adam of dust of the earth (a clay "man"), breathes into his nostrils the breath of life (the Greek and Hebrew word here for "breath" is also translated "spirit"), and he became a "living soul" (the word "soul" here is also translated "being"). In other words, a body made of earthly elements, animated by breath of life, or spirit, becomes a whole person, a "living soul."

There certainly is truth to the idea that some people seem to "match" and that others do not. However, much of that is the result of factors that may be known in advance of marriage — and which courtship is intended to uncover and discover. Do the people love God? Do they both want to serve him as a first priority? Do they like the same things in daily life? Are they "friends?" Do they enjoy each other and appreciate and respect each other — wholly apart from romance or sexual interest? All that can usually be known before marrying, if people are asking the right questions.

The Bible says that God hates divorce. (And so do almost all those involved in it, when they see all the harm it causes, and the hurt to everyone involved — especially children.) It is always a sign of failure and brokenness and sin. There is no point in my trying to gloss over that fact, or to pretend that it isn't true. But the other side of the coin is that God can forgive our sins and failings, and he does so when we genuinely repent of them and ask his forgiveness. Hopefully, we learn from our mistakes and purpose not to make them again. We can study God's Word more diligently, pray more fervently, walk more closely with him, and seek his guidance more frequently. And God often makes something good out of a bad situation. He is famous for that! †





## Forgive Us... As We Forgive

by Dr. Vincent Taber

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO overestimate the importance forgiveness plays in the healing of broken relationships. Reconnecting in the absence of forgiveness is meaningless, a pseudo-accommodation that makes genuine intimacy impossible. Where forgiveness is present and doing its work, however, the result is a closeness that is both special and compelling.

So what is this healing balm we call forgiveness and how is it applied to those situations in life that call for it? Forgiveness is necessary only when an offense has been committed and a debt incurred. Many people have a habit of seeking forgiveness even though no trust has been broken or violation committed. They live with a false sense of guilt, assuming blame for everything that goes wrong whether they are responsible for it or not. Still others ask for forgiveness without the slightest inkling as to the nature of the injury they have caused or the extent of the debt they owe. They just want to get on with things and asking for forgiveness seems to be

the *magic* that allows this to happen. These prevalent views of forgiveness are shallow and only cheapen our understanding of it.

Forgiveness is a sacred and serious matter both for the one who offers it and for the one who needs it. The prayer that Jesus taught his disciples in response to their request "*Teach us to pray*" is followed by this qualifying statement, "*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*" (Matthew 6:14-15).

Forgiveness is not primarily about forgetting or remembering. It is about releasing. It is a conscious decision on the part of the offended party to release the offender from the debt and penalty of their act. In releasing the debtor by absorbing the penalty owed we release ourselves from the bondage and bitterness that festers in an unforgiving heart.

It is God who best conveys both the beauty and significance

of forgiveness in his relationship with us. Does God know the pain of a broken relationship and the power of forgiveness to heal? God was the first one to experience this pain and he knows this pain more fully than we ever could know. God hates distance and craves intimacy with us. He is an intensely intimate and personal God. But why does God hate distance and why was he willing to pay such a high price to make it possible for those of us — whose transgressions had put us at a distance — to be brought near to him once again?

"*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ*" (Ephesians 2:13).

God is love, and love cannot do its job across a chasm. It must have the object of its affection close at hand in order to do what love is meant to do. It sounds so simple but the implications are vast. God brings us close to him so that he can love us and it is his great forgiving heart that makes this possible.



We owe God a debt that we are unable to pay, "...the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This is our predicament. For as long as this debt remains unpaid, reconciliation and intimacy with God is impossible. God, however, steps into our predicament, "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23), and forgives the debt we owe by taking on Himself the penalty for which we are liable. It is inconceivable that anyone forgiven so large a debt at so great a cost would withhold this same gift from others. Love and forgiveness in the mind of God are inseparable. God forgives because he is a lover and loves because he forgives and he expects our love to behave in the same way.

With all this said, I am left with a question that begs an answer. If God is the most perfect of lovers and the most consummate of forgivers why is it that so many people he longs to love and forgive will go out into eternity without him? If forgiveness is the instrument that rights all wrongs why do relationships remain broken in the face of such provision? Remember Jesus' words as he wept over Jerusalem, "How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing!**" (Matthew 23:37). There is no lack of

passion or desire in the heart of God that could possibly explain such indifference. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).



The problem is in the heart of the debtor. Here is the transactional aspect to forgiveness that is often overlooked. This is clearly illustrated for us as Jesus hung on the cross. "Then one of the

criminals who were hanged blasphemed him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise'" (Luke 23:39-43). Forgiveness achieves reconciliation only when the debtor brings that which is necessary to complete the transaction—namely a sincere repentance and a broken and contrite heart. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm

51:17). If you are in a broken relationship that you cannot repair, don't automatically assume that the problem is an unforgiving heart. Examine your heart and make sure that you are willing to release the debtor from the debt they owe. Forgiveness is the responsibility of the offended party. If you are willing, experience the freedom that comes from knowing you are prepared to keep your end of the transaction. You may, however, continue to live with the pain and sadness of a broken relationship — even a permanent alienation — not because of your unwillingness to forgive but because the offending party is unwilling to bring what is necessary to complete the transaction. Take comfort in the fact that God knows all too well the pain of a permanent breach. He encourages us to bring this pain to him. He understands and cares. †



Dr. Vincent Taber is director and counselor at Southern Connecticut Christian Counseling Center in Fairfield, Connecticut.



# D I V O R C E

## Two Views

### on *Matthew 19:9*

Christians are not immune to divorce. In fact, recent studies indicate Christians divorce more frequently than non-Christians. How should the church deal with this issue? Opinions may vary, but what does Scripture say? Using Matthew chapter 19 as a guide, we asked two Advent Christian leaders to give us their understanding of Christ's teachings on this issue. In spite of knowing the hazards that come from expressing unpopular views, both men graciously agreed to share the results of their studies on this passage.

# DIVORCE:

## *Is It Ever God's Will?*

by Rev. Tom Warner

CONTROVERSY ABOUT DIVORCE is not a new phenomenon among God's people. "Jewish rabbis agreed among themselves that the Mosaic Law allowed divorce with the right to remarry ... But they disagreed on what constituted valid grounds for divorce."<sup>1</sup>

They differed over the meaning of Deuteronomy 24:1-4. "Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he

finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house..." (v. 1, NRSV).

Interpretations of "something objectionable" ranged from a ruined meal to a skin disease, improper behavior, or even a husband finding a more attractive woman.<sup>2</sup> A more conservative view saw it as sexual unfaithfulness.

### God's Original Intent

When the Pharisees asked Jesus about divorce (Matthew 19:3-9), he referred them to Genesis 2:24, "...the two will become one flesh." Christ let his hearers know the divine ideal: that marriage be a lifelong union. "Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."<sup>3</sup> "Moses permitted divorce," Jesus said, only because people's hearts were hard. Marriage should only be broken by death. "Note,

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## JESUS' TEACHING

### *on Divorce and Remarriage*

by Dr. Oral Collins

AT A TIME WHEN we emphasize family values nationally as well as in the Christian community, believers committed to the lordship of Christ must heed the teachings of Jesus on all aspects of marriage and family life. The fact that, on average, professing Christians divorce more frequently than unbelievers suggests that we need to discover how to contract and build, or rebuild, solid, lasting marriages. Our primary responsibility in this process is commitment to the Word

of God. With this in mind, we turn to our assigned text, the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:9.

**Matthew 19:9: "Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity (*me `epi porneia*) and marries another, commits adultery" (translation mine).**

The nature of this text requires careful analysis. I have chosen to do my own literal translation to avoid the various interpretations of the familiar versions. Italics indicate the original Greek text, which I have referenced to deal

accurately with Jesus' meaning. The problem to which we direct our attention is the meaning of the *exception clause*.

Commentators recognize that Jesus made this same exception in the Sermon on the Mount:

**"Every one who divorces his wife, except for a case of unchastity (*parektas logon porneias*), causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery." (Matt. 5:32, translation mine).**



however, that it is not an unbreakable union. Otherwise, Jesus might have said, "...what God has joined together, no one can separate." Marriage is a covenantal union that is sometimes broken by unfaithful human beings.

### **The Lord Hates Divorce**

It grieves God to see someone cast aside his marriage partner. "I hate divorce!" says the Lord, the God of Israel. 'It is as cruel as putting on a victim's bloodstained coat... So guard yourself; always remain loyal to your wife'" (Malachi 2:14-16 NLT).

We should never forget that. But God's hatred of divorce doesn't mean he hates divorced

people. To the contrary, he loves people and knows that a marriage breakup will hurt them and their children. So God's opposition to divorce is not focused primarily against the legal action at the end. He hates the unfaithfulness that destroys the relationship. In fact, it is worthy of death.

### **The Death Penalty**

One way a marriage could be ended, in compliance with the Law of God, was by the death penalty. Under the old covenant, a husband or wife who was guilty of adultery, homosexual relations, or bestiality, and certain other crimes, could be turned over to the authorities for trial and execution (Leviticus 20:10-16). Obviously,

that would end the marriage! This should tell us that God did not desire the continuation of a marriage regardless of what a covenant-breaking partner might do.

When marriage vows were betrayed by sexual unfaithfulness, a relationship could be ended lawfully by having the guilty partner put to death; or, if the innocent partner desired, he or she could seek a divorce instead.<sup>4</sup> This, in fact, was God's approach, when Israel was guilty of spiritual adultery. The Lord did not execute her, he "divorced" her (Jeremiah 3:8).

### **What's a Pastor to Say?**

Suppose a wife discovers that her husband is visiting prostitutes.

This parallel has importance for understanding the meaning of the exception in Matt. 19:9. The words, "a case of" in Matt. 5:32 are omitted in 19:9. The Greek word *logou* is the key to understanding both texts. The expression, *logou porneias*, should be translated "a case of unchastity" (emphasis mine). This legal idiom refers to specific case law. Support for the use of *logos* to refer to case law may be found in the ancient Greek version of Exodus 18:19, "you shall open their cases to God" (translation mine), and Acts 19:38 where the *REB* reads "have a case against anyone" (see further Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed., p. 1057, col. 2,3.1.b). Matt. 19:9 simply abbreviates a familiar idiom and should be understood as "except for a

case of unchastity." Whereas the abbreviated idiom was understood when Jesus was speaking to legal experts in Matt. 19:9, when addressing his disciples in Matt. 5:32, he used the full form of the legal expression. The recognition of this idiom in Matt. 5:32 clarifies this ambiguity in the text. We will explore further its significance below.

### **The Several Interpretations of Matthew 19:9**

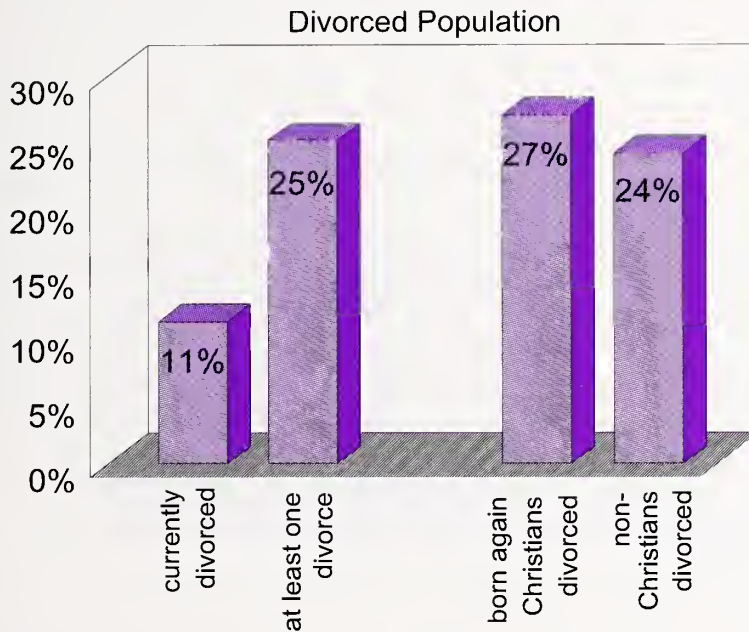
There are at least five interpretations of Matthew 19:9 which cloud the practical issues surrounding the subject of divorce and remarriage. One held by Roman Catholics develops from the concept that a marriage duly constituted is inherently indis-

soluble. The Roman Church therefore does not recognize divorce but will annul marriage that their lawyers choose to consider illegal. A second view, held by many who hold negatively critical views of Scripture, assumes that the "exception clause" is not original with Jesus, but was added by a later editor in the early church. Those who hold to this view teach that Jesus made no exception, as recorded in Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18, but that some later hand added the exception in Matthew. A third view holds that the "exception clause" refers to incestuous marriages, which, because in biblical law they are illegal (Leviticus 18), justify divorce. A fourth view is currently so common among conservatives that it is sometimes called "the evangelical consensus." This

She confronts him, and he is very embarrassed, and seems repentant. She tries her best to forgive

him. But, as time goes by, she discovers that he's at it again.

Husbands are not put to death for such sins in most countries these days. So, what is she to do? What should her pastor say to her? Shall he say, "God wants you to stay with him, no matter whether he repents or not?" And since a married person is not to deny sexual relations to his or her partner (1 Corinthians 7:2-5); should her pastor also counsel her to go ahead and risk contracting a sexually transmitted disease or even AIDS from her unfaithful husband? Does God sentence this woman to a life of "marriage" with a flagrant covenant breaker who deserves death?



interpretation understands the Greek word *porneia* as used in Matt. 19:9 to mean "adultery" and therefore teaches that any believer may divorce a spouse who commits adultery. The fifth view may be called the betrothal interpretation, as it understands Jesus' exception to refer to a specific case law in the Old Testament. Within the limits of this study I will address only the last two views.

### The Adultery Interpretation

In Matt. 19:9 and Matt. 5:32, the Greek word, *porneia* is literally translated, "unchastity" [RSV, NEB, NRSV, REB] or "sexual immorality" (NASV, NIV, NKJV). However, those who hold to the adultery interpretation infer that within the context of

marriage *porneia* means "adultery." Thus, according to the adultery interpretation, Jesus expressly condoned divorce and remarriage where sexual unfaithfulness has occurred in the marriage. There are several serious difficulties with this viewpoint.

1. The argument that *porneia*, "unchastity," is sometimes used in the Bible, either in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint version) or in the Greek of the New Testament, to mean the same as *moicheia*, "adultery," cannot be established. The argument obscures the distinctive meaning of "adultery" as referring, not conceptually to a sexual act, but to the violation of the marriage covenant. This follows from the fact that the biblical institution of marriage adheres to the covenant, as stated

in Malachi, "She is your . . . wife by covenant" (2:14, NASV, NKJV); and "I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine" (Ezek. 16:8). It simply cannot be demonstrated that anywhere in the Bible either the Greek terms for "unchastity" and "adultery" nor their Hebrew equivalents are ever used as exact synonyms. The distinction in meaning is illustrated in texts which catalog common sins, as for example, the following:

**"...murders, adulteries, fornications" (Matt. 15:19)**

**"...neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers" (1 Cor. 6:9)**

Even in poetical texts where the parallel terms are used broadly as



## Divorce for Sexual Immorality

In Matthew 19:9, Jesus prohibited divorce except when one's partner is guilty of "sexual immorality" (NKJ). The Greek word is *porneia*, which can also be translated as "marital unfaithfulness" (NIV), "unchastity" (NRSV), or "some terrible sexual sin" (CEV). I believe Jesus' statement refers to "immorality in general, whether premarital [during the betrothal/engagement period] or postmarital," because "the Greek word...occurs regularly in this general sense throughout Greek literature."<sup>5</sup>

*Porneia* was a kind of umbrella term that covered heterosexual adultery or premarital

intercourse as well as other unlawful sexual relations, including homosexual or lesbian activity, bestiality, and incest. When a marriage partner violates the "one flesh" union by continuing unrepentant in such gross sins as these, it seems to me the marriage bond is broken.<sup>6</sup> Where that has happened, a divorce is a legal recognition of that reality.

### If There Is Repentance

If I were the pastor in the example above, I'd point the woman to Matthew 19 and tell her she has biblical cause to divorce her unfaithful husband. However, I'd counsel her first to leave her

husband for a time, and continue to pray for his repentance.

The Lord, who "divorced" Israel, was willing to receive her back, if she would repent (Hosea 2). His example of forgiving grace tells us that a guilty partner should be forgiven where there is evidence of genuine repentance. Husband and wife should then seek counseling, and work and pray for the restoration of their relationship. Where there is no credible evidence of repentance, God allows the innocent partner to obtain a divorce because of what the guilty partner has done to break the marriage covenant.

synonyms because both refer to immoral conduct, *porneia* ("unchastity") is used of unmarried women and *moicheia* ("adultery") of married women:

**"Your daughters commit sexual immorality [Hebrew *z'enuth*; Greek *porneia*], And your brides commit adultery [Hebrew *ni'uph*, Greek *moicheia*]" (Hos. 4:13; translation mine)**

The activity of prostitutes was common in the popular culture of ancient Israel. Prostitutes, whether married or unmarried, were called *pornai* ("unchaste women"). Their sexual deviation was referred to as *porneia* ("unchastity") because as a class many were unmarried and their sin was often addressed independently of

whether or not they were married. When the prophet Ezekiel wished to demean Judah's spiritual immorality as extravagantly habitual, he used *porneia* and the imagery of prostitution. After painting this picture in the most vivid colors (16:15-31), he leveled the fatal divine judgment: "You *adulterous* wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband!" (emphasis mine) Judah by her idolatry had not only "prostituted" herself by her degrading conduct (*porneia*), but had in so doing also violated her covenant marriage to the Lord (v. 8). This passage makes abundantly clear that in the biblical vocabulary *porneia* ("unchastity") and *moicheia* ("adultery") are even within the context of marriage independent concepts.

2. Another major argument for the adultery interpretation of

Matt. 19:9 is drawn from the apostle Paul's instruction 1 Cor. 7:15: "If the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to peace." The argument assumes that Matt. 19:9 legitimizes divorce for adultery, then finds that this text — specifically the statement that the divorced person "is not bound" — legitimizes remarriage of divorced persons. The interpretation is based on the rabbinic usage where "not bound" was interpreted broadly to imply the right to remarry. Several observations are appropriate:

First, the interpretation of the rabbis, as found in the preserved rabbinic literature, does not represent the entire picture of legal interpretation in Jesus' day. Scholars generally recognize that



## A New Situation

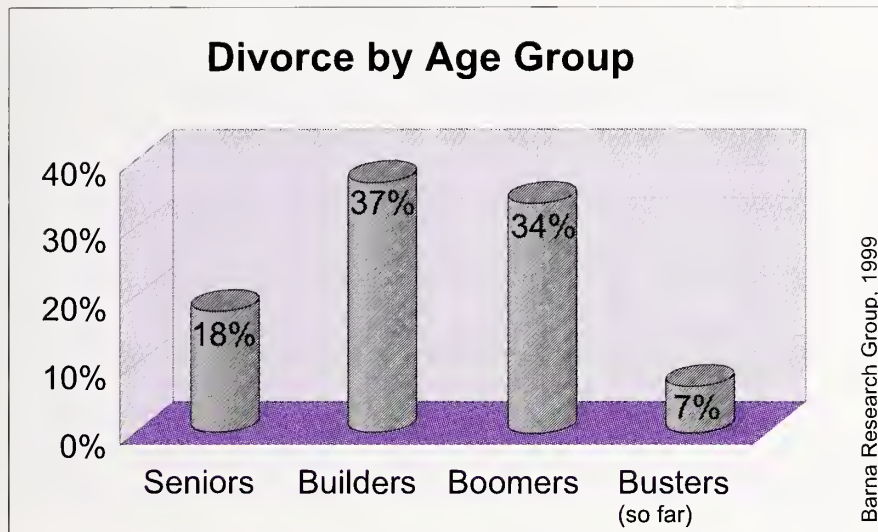
Years after Jesus spoke about divorce, the apostle Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to address a new situation that arose in the

early church. In 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, he wrote to the Christian convert whose marriage partner had not yet come to faith. Paul advised that the marriage should

be preserved if possible. It's not illegitimate in God's eyes and it might even lead to the salvation of the unbelieving partner. But, Paul makes it clear, "if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances..." (v.15, NIV).

This comes down to a very practical issue. When a husband or wife deserts a partner, and refuses to return, is there really a "marital union" anymore? Paul seems to say no. The deserted one is no longer "bound" to the absent mate.

No one should use this as an excuse to mistreat a partner in order to drive that person away!



the first Christians in Judea as well as the friends of Jesus himself had strong ties to the Essene community. The house of Mary and her son John Mark, where Jesus celebrated the last Passover, was located in the center of the Essene district of Jerusalem. Essene authorities, as indicated in the Dead Sea Scrolls, rejected the Pharisaic rabbinic tradition and took issue with their rabbis on this subject.

Second, the text itself indicates what the apostle intended by "not bound" — "God has called us to peace" (v. 15b). The inference is that the believing spouse was not to persist in contesting such a divorce instituted by an unbeliever. This instruction appears to have been necessary because Jesus was understood to have spoken against divorce.

Third, the larger context clearly states a position contrary to the adultery interpretation. After addressing marriage in vv. 1-9, the apostle appeals to the authority of Jesus, "To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife" (vv. 10-11). When accurately quoting the Lord in a city where divorce was rampant, he must have believed that the exception clause in Matt. 19:9 was not applicable in the context of Gentile marriage customs. His quotation is unqualified, never once mentioning an exception for adultery. He concludes at the end of the chapter by restating the principle of permanence in

marriage: "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord" (v. 39). A fundamental rule of language interpretation — surely of the written Word of God — is that ordinarily the meaning of a text is conditioned by its context. Neither can one assume that at this early date (about A.D. 55) the Corinthian church had access to the gospel of Matthew.

Fourth, the adultery interpretation can make no adequate explanation for the absence of any exception clause in the parallel accounts in Mark 10:11-12, Luke 16:18, and Romans 7:1-3.

Fifth, from a practical standpoint, the adultery interpretation may give license to Christians to dissolve a marriage covenant

But, if one's mate chooses to leave and refuses to return, eventually a divorce would be an appropriate legal recognition of the end of the marriage.

### Other Circumstances

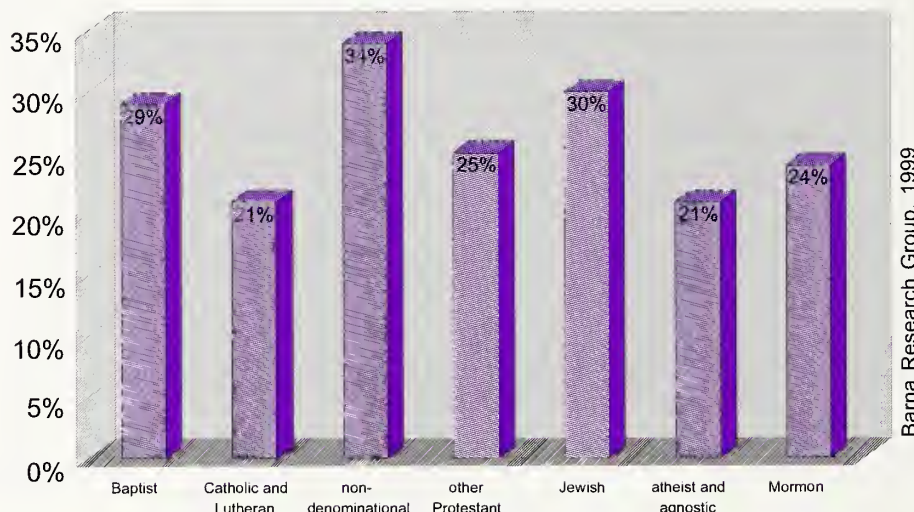
Are there other sins, besides sexual unfaithfulness and desertion, which could break the marital union? For example, if a spouse were guilty of murder, and sent to prison for life, would this be a case of desertion? I believe so.

Other examples are less clear. Would a spouse's prolonged refusal of sexual relations be equivalent to desertion? What about a heroin addict that is incapable of providing for his wife and

children? Hasn't he "deserted" her, even if he sometimes lives in the home? Some would argue that a husband who regularly beats up his wife has broken the spirit of

the marriage covenant as badly as any adulterer or deserter, and that God would want that wife to get out of the marriage if the husband won't repent.

**Divorce and Faith**



rather than to seek repentance and restoration. The marriage as ordained in Creation is not primarily a sexual relationship but a permanent covenant union, as indicated in the Christian wedding vows.

For the above reasons, this writer is convinced that the adultery interpretation falls short of possessing biblical authority as the Word of God.

### The Betrothal Interpretation

The betrothal interpretation understands Jesus' "exception clause" in Matthew's gospel as a reference to the "law of the unchaste bride" found in Deuteronomy 22:13-21. In Matthew 19, we find Jesus engaging in a discussion of the law with

the Pharisaic rabbis. Jesus commonly appealed to the Old Testament Scriptures rather than to rabbinic jurisprudence for the legal context of his teaching. The law of the unchaste bride is the only biblical law involving a charge of *porneia* against a married woman in the Bible. It therefore provides an appropriate reference for understanding our Lord's intention.

In the time of Jesus, the two Pharisaic schools, the School of Hillel and the School of Shammai, debated the divorce text of Deut. 24:1-4. This case law begins, "If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce..." Hillel taught that the "something indecent" (NIV) involved adultery and consequently defended divorce

for adultery only. Shammai took "something indecent" to mean anything the husband found offensive (even a fly in the soup!). No doubt, the questioner hoped Jesus would take his side in the dispute.

Jesus replied to those Jewish lawyers that divorce in Deuteronomy 24 is not commanded, as they represented it (v. 7), but it is only permitted and that without sanction: "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard, but it was not that way from the beginning" (v. 8). He appealed directly to the Creation ordinance of Gen. 2:24, "The two shall become one flesh ... therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:5-6). He allowed no exception except for *porneia*, as in the case of the unchaste bride (Deut. 22:13-21; Matt. 19:9).



These situations certainly call for intervention by concerned friends, church leaders, counselors, medical professionals, or perhaps officers of the law — as do the cases of sexual unfaithfulness and desertion. Some seemingly hopeless relationships can be salvaged, with the help of God and others. But, what if such a situation doesn't change, year after year? I admit that the "letter" of Scripture does not prescribe divorce in these cases. But, we need to ask how the "spirit" of God's Law may apply to them.<sup>7</sup> Any person in such a dilemma should pray, search the Scriptures, and ask for counsel from godly friends and spiritual leaders before he/she decides to seek a divorce.

## Finally

The circumstances that lead to divorce are always tragic. God hates to see a marriage destroyed, and so should we. Each of us is accountable to do everything we can to preserve our own marriage, and to encourage others to do the same. There is no permission in the Word of God to do anything less than love our mates sacrificially and faithfully.

But one person's efforts are not enough. If one's husband or wife continues to be unrepentant for breaking the marriage covenant, that marriage is not really intact. If patient, prayerful efforts to restore the relationship do not succeed, I believe a divorce is permissible in certain circumstances. And where

there is a divorce on biblical grounds, I believe the person is free to remarry. †

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *A Survey of the New Testament*, Robert Gundry, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, W.C. Kaiser Jr., P.H. Davids, F.F. Bruce and M.T. Brauch, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> "The word used [for 'separate'] is 'chorizo' = to separate by divorce." p. 43, *Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage in the Bible*, Jay E. Adams. The word is also used in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

The law of the unchaste bride uses this term because in the Hebrew-Jewish culture the bride lived in her father's house for some time after the marriage covenant was solemnized. Her chastity was a condition of the marriage contract, but could not be verified until the marriage was consummated. Therefore, the law presumes that the offense occurred prior to the marriage. Apparently it is for this reason that the charge is *porneia*, "unchastity," rather than *moicheia*, "adultery." Legal language must be literal and precise. It is therefore hardly conceivable that in a legal exchange Jesus would have used an imprecise term like *porneia* ("any sexual transgression") to mean "adultery." *Moicheia* is the proper legal term for "adultery," as in the seventh

commandment. This law still functioned in Jesus' time, as illustrated by Joseph who considered divorcing Mary privately when she became pregnant "before they came together" (Matt. 1:19).

We have pointed out, first, that the law of the unchaste bride provides a natural, common sense explanation of the biblical language of the exception clause in Matt. 19:9.

Second, this satisfies our expectation that Jesus would, as usual, address the question by appealing to a biblical text.

Third, the terminology Jesus uses is precisely the technical language required to address the case law of Deut. 22:13-21. Several additional facts strongly support this understanding.

Fourth, one can hardly account for the reaction of the

disciples apart from this interpretation. They responded, "If this is the situation between a husband and a wife, it is better not to marry" (v. 10). This implies that Jesus was teaching a radical principle rather than that commonly taught by the School of Hillel. Jesus' reply that some "have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (v. 12) also implies this.

Fifth, this understanding provides the only adequate explanation of the omission of the exception clause in the parallel texts in Mark and Luke, as well as in the apostle Paul's treatment of the subject in Rom. 7:1-3 and in his quotation of Jesus in 1 Cor. 7.

Sixth, it provides the only reasonable explanation of the fact that the early church fathers prohibited divorce and remarriage



<sup>4</sup> Jay E. Adams has a good discussion of why God allowed divorce instead of execution (pp. 70-75, *ibid.*).

<sup>5</sup> Gundry, p. 174. If *porneia* could have a more limited meaning, in particular contexts, this does not mean that the word itself was limited. Unless the context indicates otherwise, we should read *porneia* as having its normal, broad meaning. "Fornication" (often used to represent *porneia* in the KJV) is now used in modern English to mean sexual sin by unmarried persons. This has created some confusion about the inclusiveness of *porneia* and has prompted many translators to render it as "sexual immorality" or something else when they believe the normal, broad meaning is intended.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:16, which says that a man who joins himself to a prostitute "becomes one body with her." If he is one with her, then the "one flesh" union with his wife has been disrupted. This would apply, I believe, to other sexual relations as well.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of whether there may be other biblical reasons for divorce, from a Reformed perspective, see *Second Chance: Biblical Principles of Divorce and Remarriage* (particularly pp. 57-63), by Ray Sutton.



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until the time of the Emperor Constantine, when in the fourth century he, as head of the state church, inaugurated new laws regulating marriage and divorce.

### **Concluding Observations**

The above observations only partially address the questions that commonly arise from our text. I commend to the reader a small tract titled "Divorce and Remarriage" by the late Dr. Linden J. Carter, last published by the author (7th ed.) in 1953. For many years, Dr. Carter was writer of the *Blessed Hope Sunday School Quarterly*. In recent years moreover, there has been a resurgence of discussion of this issue. The writer can suggest further reading, if desired.

The practical application of Jesus' teaching goes far beyond the scope of this article (a partial treatment of one verse of Scripture!). While I wish to commend the above and believe it to be the correct reading and explanation of the text, we who hold a particular understanding should not presume to judge those who have been taught otherwise and who, in good conscience, have chosen to act contrary to our understanding.

Let each person address the Word and search his own heart and conscience. God is judge. Believers should use their means to relate to one another graciously and redemptively. The Gospel extends grace to all believers who come to Christ with a penitent spirit, confessing their sinful condition and sincerely seeking to understand and walk in the way of the Lord. A

strong marriage and family life is found by embracing his commands and the voice of his Spirit. It is he who said, "The one who can accept this should accept it" (Matt. 19:12). †



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# Divorcing the Unbeliever

by Dr. David Alves

ON WHAT GROUNDS may a Christian divorce? We know that the only reason Jesus gave is “marital unfaithfulness” (Matt. 5:31-32). But are there other acceptable occasions? Does Scripture, for instance, allow us to divorce because our unsaved spouse does not provide spiritual care or leadership in the home? Should we divorce our unsaved spouse if she or he does not love Jesus the way we do? Surely there are difficult, sometimes intolerable, situations which seem divorce-worthy.

Throughout our years of ministry my wife, Marcy, and I have had many opportunities to minister to people enduring tough marriages. We have met many well-meaning Christians who have married nonbelievers. Many warnings can be given about marrying outside the faith. But one is enough to cause serious disciples of Christ to refrain: Marrying outside the faith is always problematic. Woman after woman, devastated by her disobedience and the resulting pain and despair, has asked us to warn others to take seriously the Lord’s commands regarding believers marrying other dedicated believers only (Ezra 9:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-15).

Suppose you find yourself in a situation where you were joined in marriage before you turned to follow Jesus? Can you divorce your mate and find a Christian

spouse? Is there a Scripture that would give guidance or hope?

Paul’s response to similar Corinthian issues is instructive for us. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is responding to several concerns which have arisen among the Corinthians. Among other things, they apparently wanted to divest themselves of unbelieving spouses who could not participate in the kingdom with them, especially

since many of the women believed that they were already in the final kingdom (under Jesus’ teaching that in the kingdom they would no longer be given in marriage but would be like the angels). They believed this because they wrongly felt Christ’s meaning must be taken for this life because there was no resurrection (thus Paul’s corrective in 1 Cor. 15).<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, Paul has already addressed several concerns in the Corinthian’s letter to him. He first had addressed believing married couples. They must not divorce one another just because they think it more spiritual to be single (v. 10-11). Paul now deals with the specific concern of the unbelieving spouse.

With his introductory phrase in verse 12, “To the rest I say,” he turns his attention to couples where one is a believer and the other is not. Notice that he addresses men and women equally on this topic. Though it



was rare for women to send their husbands off packing, it did happen and he spoke to the problem.

Depending on how you read verse 1, the Corinthian's slogan may have been, "It is better for a man not to touch a woman"—i.e. "It is better to not have sex." Paul agrees that, for the sake of the kingdom, it is better not to marry. Nonetheless, concession is made because it is better to marry than to burn with passion, which should not be satisfied outside the

marriage. However, Paul does not go as far as some of the Corinthian Christians, who hold that those who were married should abstain from sex within their marriage, nor that the believers should divorce their unbelieving spouses. He rather says the opposite. Believers are to recognize the debt of love in their sexual gifts to one another. And in mixed marriages, the believer commends Christ through loving acceptance of an unsaved spouse who desires to

unbeliever. The text is not saying that the unbeliever is "saved" by remaining in the marriage. This is clear from Paul's rhetorical questions in verse 16. Rather, the text is saying that the unbeliever *may be saved*, provided the believing partner lives in peace with him or her as a testimony of the love of Jesus.

A key focus for us is verse 15, which provokes the question: Can I divorce the unbelieving spouse who abandoned me? The answer may not be what we assume. Paul says that should the unbeliever leave the relationship, the remaining partner is "not enslaved" (Greek *dedoulowntai*) but enslaved to what? The marriage? The unbelieving departing spouse? Or the command which Paul gave to the married couples in verses 10 and 11? The context is not absolutely clear.

We do know that the abandoned believer is free to be at peace throughout the separation and free to be bound to Jesus (v. 15, 22). Should the unbeliever depart permanently — i.e. divorce — and so that the believing spouse will not enter and remain in sexual sin, he or she seems to be free to remarry (v. 22, 27-28 NASB). Though, it must be said, this inference is not Paul's main argument or preference. He would rather see the believer remain in whatever state God has permitted (v. 20). Divorce has always been merely an allowance for our humanness and fallen state (Matt. 19:8-9).

As far as the apostle is concerned, the man who has been "released" from his wife is not to seek one (v.27, NASB). He is

remain with a newly converted spouse.

With regard to divorce between a believer and an unbeliever, God wants them to remain together except in the situation where the unbelieving spouse wishes to depart. Up until that time, the unbelieving partner is set apart — "sanctified" — to God and the believing partner. The use, in this context, of the term sanctified relates more to possible future salvation than current purity or blamelessness of the

### 1 Corinthians 7:12-17 NIV

*<sup>12</sup>To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. <sup>13</sup>*

*And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.*

*<sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.*

*<sup>15</sup>But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. <sup>16</sup> How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?*

*<sup>17</sup>Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.*





better off to give himself to the Lord with his new freedom. But Paul adds, “But if you should marry, you have not sinned (28),” referring to the one in the previous verse who has been “released from a wife.” Someone could opt for, as in fact the NIV translators did, a translation of *lelusai apo gunaikow* — “released from a wife” — to be read as “unmarried.” Unfortunately, this would seem an awkward and unusual way for Paul to say “unmarried” when consistently throughout the chapter he has used a more precise form *agamos* “unmarried” as the term for those not yet married (v. 8, 11, 32, 44). Why would Paul use the same form of *luow*, which Jesus uses for the word “divorce” throughout the Gospels and expect the reader to understand it here to mean “unmarried” when *luow* does not have that sense anywhere else in 1 Corinthians?<sup>2</sup> Arguing, as the NIV translators did, for such an unusual translation exposes them to the criticism that rather than translate

accurately here, they succumbed to a particular theological bias.

However we choose to read these texts, we should be able to agree that divorce is not God’s best, but that in some cases it is beyond our control. It also points out that incompatibility of devotion to Jesus is not ground to divorce a spouse.

We would do well to remember that Paul’s greater concern was that we would not be so carried away with the concerns of marriage or divorce (v.29, 32-35), but that we would remain focused on Jesus and on loving devotion to him. He would have us stay in whatever state best promotes our testimony of Jesus, so whether married or single, we would honor him with our lives (1 Cor. 10:31-33). †

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<sup>2</sup>Aland, Kurt, Black, Matthew, Martini, Carlo M., Metzger, Bruce M., and Wikgren, Allen. *The Greek New Testament*. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart, 1983, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

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# Suddenly

by Janet Crook Pierson

SINGLES WEREN'T FROM another planet, but single-ness certainly was an issue outside my realm of thinking. I was married with three wonderful children and active in my church and community. While I dealt with some struggles, being single certainly wasn't one of them. I thought and cared about singles. I mingled with singles. But I wasn't one.

Then one day my 30-year marriage came to a sudden and unexpected end. Suddenly I was a statistic. Suddenly I confronted singleness.

Conservative statistics claim one in two women have been divorced. Many have chosen the single life, but for those who have not — those who find themselves thrust unwillingly or unwittingly into this alien world — the initial adjustments and struggles are devastating. This issue faces every family, community and church.

My singleness came through divorce. For others



it comes through the death of a spouse. However it comes, a woman finds herself alone for the first time in her life with a mixture of emotions.

Confused. Crushed. Even ashamed. Personal worth and self-esteem can be badly battered, especially in divorce. My own experience left me devastated. I felt betrayed, angry and confused. My self-esteem plummeted to an all-time low. While my family and friends were wonderfully supportive and God walked with me each step, the road back wasn't easy.

I'd accomplished a lot in my lifetime, but since I had no formal education beyond high school and no job skills beyond the home, I was thrust into an alien world, one in which I felt ill-equipped to survive. After plenty of tears and prayers I decided to get my education and at the ripe old age of 49 enrolled as a freshman in college.

Eventually I took up residence in a new town and sought out a church. Greeters welcomed me and pastors called on me after I'd filled out a visitor form. People were friendly,



# Single

but they were also busy with their own families and activities. After the service and the foyer-friendly smiles I was alone once more. Bible studies discussed mission and ministry sometimes more devotedly than doing mission and ministry — at least when it came to singles. In my experience there were a few social groups for singles, but no groups for singles on the edge who had just been through some of the most traumatic events in their lives.

I went back into society and found counseling and support groups, all of which were instrumental in helping me recover my self-esteem and get my life back on track. During this time I also completed my college degree and began a career.

Many single women and men within the church have experienced profound loss through the death of a spouse or divorce. Many are not supported and encouraged by family. Did you



know that in a 36-state survey, loneliness was the greatest problem faced by single women? Did you know that within many Christian congregations single adults who are struggling and trying to heal from their grief/loss are often met

with well-meaning (yet devastating) words such as, “You need to trust God and pray more,” or “Get involved in the church and get your mind off yourself.” Or with nothing at all.

As one who has been there I offer these suggestions for the local church ministry. Find the one that best represents the needs of singles in your church:

- *Divorce Support Group*
- *Widows' Support Group*
- *One-to-one Caretaking Ministry*
- *Ministry to Single Parents (including help with children)*
- *Ministry to Children of Single Parents*
- *Singles' Ministry (Sunday morning class, Bible study, social activities)*

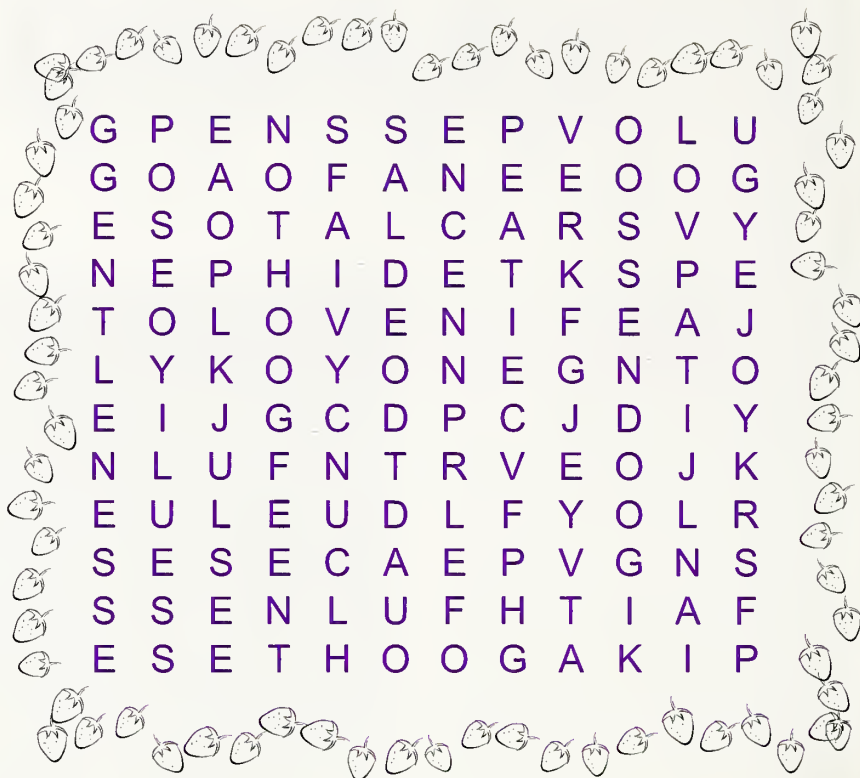
*Janet Crook Pierson is a free-lance writer and author of five books. In her church in Olympia, Washington, she was instrumental in forming a singles' ministry, and she facilitates a divorce-support group. †*

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**

**Wordsearch**

**Find the Fruit of the Spirit:**

- LOVE
- JOY
- PEACE
- PATIENCE
- KINDNESS
- GOODNESS
- FAITHFULNESS
- GENTLENESS
- SELF CONTROL



**Cryptogram**

Find the letters these letters represent. Once a letter is decoded it remains the same throughout the quote. Look for recurring combinations of letters, repeated letters, and double letters. There's a hint at the bottom if you need help getting started.

TKI LISPB VE MKOI HKCS, AVLASI BAPF  
 BAS ASPCSFE; MKOI TPVBATOHFSEE  
 ISPYASE BK BAS EDVSE. JS SNPHBSU,  
 K LKU, PJKCS BAS ASPCSFE PFU HSB  
 MKOI LHKIM JS KCSI PHH BAS SPIBA.

—Psalm 108:4-5  
 (Hint: T=F)





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell



**Unscramble these Bible verses.**

Matthew 5:8a— pure are Blessed in heart the

Luke 18:27— men What possible with God is impossible with is

Matthew 7:7a— you be and given Ask it will to

Matthew 19:14a— come children little me to the Let

Mark 11:22a— faith Have God in

John 8:12b— am the of I the world light



**Find the missing vowels to complete the Bible verse.**

D\_N'T L\_T \_NY\_N\_ L\_\_K

D\_WN \_N Y\_\_ B\_C\_\_S\_ Y\_\_

\_R\_ Y\_\_NG, B\_T S\_T \_N

\_X\_MPL\_ ... (1 Timothy 4:12a).



Continued from page 2

And I'm left terrified that this woman will stop breathing.

When I left the scene, rescue workers were dismantling the car with the "jaws of life." The driver had a sheet over her, supposedly to protect her from flying debris. Or maybe she had stopped breathing. I could never find out. Confidentiality laws prohibited rescue workers from telling me. But later on one paramedic told me he thought he remembered a fatality.

I think divorce is like a horrible car wreck. It's ugly and no one wants to be first on the scene. For people close to the couple, the feeling of helplessness is overwhelming. Most people just keep their distance.

But there are survivors in divorces and car wrecks. Someone needs to help them, or at least stay with them until help arrives. While I was standing next to the demolished car I could hear one witness' statement to the cop: "I saw the whole thing, officer. She pulled right in front of him. There was nothing he could do; it was all her fault." The statement was true, but it was also irrelevant at the time. The guilty driver was also the one critically injured. Who's to blame shouldn't determine who gets treated. Otherwise, none of us sinners could ever be saved.

Surely there are guilty parties in divorce. But does that mean Christians aren't obliged to minister to the survivors? We may be debating fault while a soul is gasping for air. How sad that often the church finds herself among the distant

spectators, a passive bystander when divorce occurs! Christians should be first on the scene, offering compassion and mercy to the wounded survivors. Better yet, Christians should be among the professional rescuers, trained and prepared to minister to injured souls when the inevitable occurs.

Divorces and car wrecks are ugly. Our natural inclination is to run away from the carnage. Yet, somebody has to provide first aid. Somebody has to comfort the wounded. Somebody has to be there. That somebody should be the body of Christ. †





# Seeking A Place of Refuge

by *Roxanna Tate Sieber*

AS THE SECOND GRADERS filed off the risers at our elementary school's spring concert and the third graders prepared to march up next, my eyes scanned the bleachers. They settled on a woman who recently joined the ranks of single moms sitting with her soon-to-be ex-husband — together, I guessed, to provide some normalcy for the children. Then I noticed a proud dad with a camcorder. He sat alone. Last year he and his wife were there like the other couple, but a year changed the relationship. The kids are "adjusting." He seemingly gave up on working toward reconciliation.

My attention turned back to the stage. A young boy sang a marvelous solo. I wondered if his dad was there to hear it. Probably not. He seldom was. The child's mom had quit making excuses for his dad's lack of attention.

My eyes wandered again. I saw a grandmother sitting proudly. She had given up the role of "grandma" to be a substitute mom when her son with his toddler daughter moved back home. Dad remarried, but grandma remained the constant in the child's life. The young gal in front of me stretched to see her daughter recite her piece in the program. She sat alone. There was no one's hand to squeeze as pride welled up in her. Maybe it had been so long she didn't miss it anymore. Maybe, but I don't think I'll ever get used to it.

Soon after my husband told me he had filed for divorce, I wrote two letters, one to my sister's sharing group in the St. Petersburg, Florida, Advent Christian Church and one to my great aunt Beulah, then about 100 years old. I shared my heart's longings and my perception of my marriage situation. I knew the ladies in St. Pete to be

enthusiastic prayer warriors and would keep a confidence. I wrote Aunt Beulah because of her deep faith and the time she committed to prayer. I knew she would not fail to hold me up daily to our heavenly Father. I have made many wrong decisions since Frederick filed for divorce, but those letters were one thing I did right. The assurance that I'm supported in prayer has carried me through some tough times. I cannot emphasize the importance of the church to forge prayer partnerships with single parents.

**Churches have special opportunities to serve our Master in the lives of single parent families.**

## The Church as a Refuge

Churches have special opportunities to serve our Master in the lives of single parent families. We often focus on what can't be done. When Christians unite in prayer with a desire to serve God and reach lives for Christ, He will open up ministry opportunities.

Bring the reality of the single parent home into focus. Understand that a variety of events lead to the phenomenon of "single parent." Many are lumped into this category, but for the most



part people become single parents as a result of the death of a spouse, divorce, the birth of a child out of wedlock, foster parenting, or assuming the care of orphaned children.

The single parent resulting from the premature death of a spouse deals with different issues than the one coming out of a divorce. In death the mother loses a spouse, friend, and the love of her life. She is encouraged to grieve, to take her time making decisions, and to allow herself anger at his death. The mother who goes through divorce is encouraged to leave the past behind, to "get on with her life." I remember wishing people could know how much I grieved the loss of my husband, my love. While the widow is encouraged to remember the good times, the divorcee is told to do just the opposite.

There are different moral issues involved, too. As we serve the single parent we need to remember that God loves the sinner but not the sin and that we, his servants, must do the same. We tend to do one of two things. Sometimes in trying to help both the parent and child feel good about themselves we overlook the sin and thus we don't encourage and urge the parent to seek forgiveness and rebuild in God's will. We shy away from even defining the situation as sin. In other circumstances we in condemning the sin, condemn the person and offer no help. We walk away from the whole situation and lose the opportunity to walk the path of redemption with the individual.



## A Refuge for Children of Divorce

The emotional baggage a mother and children bring to the single parent home is as varied as the events that cause the situation. I have a friend who went

through divorce soon after I did. We laughed sometimes because some of the things that concerned me were the very things she longed for. I feared Daniel's father would file for custody. She longed for her children's father to pay them any attention at all.



She wished he would care enough to want to spend time with them.

Daniel's father lived far enough away that he saw Daniel only at Christmas and in the summer. Other children see the absentee parent every other weekend. It leaves children in continual upheaval. Textbooks convey the importance of consistency and tradition in a child's life, yet the child of divorce has so little of either. The first years after our divorce Frederick picked Daniel up on Christmas Day after he opened gifts with me. That gave each of us some time with Daniel on Christmas. It seemed the fair way for Frederick and for me.

But I came to see that it was not fair for Daniel. I have such wonderful memories of Christmas. My mom and dad made it a glorious occasion for us. All Daniel experienced was a quick

opening of gifts and then the rest of the day on the road. I told Frederick we needed to rethink Christmas. So Daniel and I had Christmas the second Sunday of December and he traveled to his dad's for the 25th.

Other matters of consistency are not so easily resolved for children of divorced parents. They must learn to adapt to the values and rules of each parent's home which may differ dramatically. Much is required of them to "fit in" to a home which may have stepbrothers and sisters who also must fit in. Children are adaptable, but we need to consider what we're asking of them.

It's difficult to understand how the baggage children bring to the single parent home influences a parent's decisions. Daniel used to come in from playing with his friends every half hour or so to check that I was home. When his dad left, he told Daniel

that he would be back. His father didn't come back, so my promise that I would be here for Daniel wasn't enough. He had to confirm that by frequently seeing it for himself.

The church needs to accept with the single parent that this is probably not a short-term situation and everything is not resolved in the first year. I read in a book that the most difficult year for the child is the seventh year after the divorce. Those words proved true when I struggled years later to figure out why Daniel's world collapsed and he displayed anger at everything.

## Practical Ways to Be a Refuge

Divorce or the death of a spouse leaves one trying to catch her breath. Some suggest that a widow should not make

major decisions for a year. Whether or not circumstances allow that, time passes swiftly. Children cannot wait for security and decisions must be made. Here are some practical ways to help.

- Have available a resource packet and a bibliography of resource books and cassettes available in the church library. Your recommendations will encourage single parents to use





the resources. Give the packet in a gentle, loving way. Use a friend or someone who has "been there." Perhaps include a gift certificate to a restaurant or grocery store.

- Starting over isn't easy and the pressures are incredible.

But there is the opportunity for a new beginning. The church can be there to help through assistance with budgeting, parenting skills, lifestyle, or employment.

- Money may be a problem even if it doesn't appear so. Keep your eyes open for little ways you can help. No one can know how much joy a new pair of shoes can bring.

- Are there activities at church or in the community that the children would be helped by attending? Offer to treat the children to the activity or have a fund from which Christian education and youth leaders can draw to meet expenses.

- Sometimes children need an adult to help with a project or to attend an event. My son brought home a note from Scouts about a cake-decorating competition for dads and sons. The note read, "Have dad, an uncle, grandpa, or a male friend help you decorate your cake. No help from mom or grandma." Daniel was in tears before I had a chance to think it through. I told the Scout leader I supported the concept of building relationships

with male role models and asked that they let me know in advance so I could have a "fill-in" ready. When derby time came I was prepared. No tears!

- Invite a child or children into your home occasionally so they do not

have to go home to an empty house. Use that time to help with homework or as an opportunity for creative expression.

- Before school registration day go to the school and prepay registration fees and other back-to-school costs. Secure a list of supplies from the school that students will need. Fill the list and give it to the children in a single parent home. Make

its presentation bright and colorful and include a book with devotionals for the school year.

- A working car is essential in a single parent home, but the cost of maintenance can be forbidding. Have the men organize an auto clinic to provide general maintenance for single parent autos. Or perhaps you have a group of men who are good at home repair. Get them organized for meeting those household emergencies that single parents experience frequently.

**Forgiveness does not mean we approve of our society's attitude toward marriage and divorce.**

## Closing Thoughts

The most important thing the church can do is to help stop this "cancer" on society called divorce. But does the desire to minister to a

divorced person mean that we have to accept divorce in order to accept the person? Get out of that mode. God forgives and church people must be willing to as well. Forgiveness does not mean we approve of our society's attitude toward marriage and divorce. Teach young people Christian skills for dating and eventually choosing their mates. Teach without flinching that in marriage two people become one in Christ. Fight the clichés that make divorce justified — clichés like, "It doesn't help the children to keep marriage together just for them" or "God doesn't want us to go through life unhappy."

Advent Christian churches can be leaders in ministering to single parent homes and in fighting the war against divorce. It is a challenge, but one we cannot afford to fail.

*Roxanna Tate Sieber is active in the Villisca, Iowa, Advent Christian Church. She operates a mail-order business specializing in Christian counted cross-stitch and does freelance accounting work. †*





*This fall, a pastor and a church was staggered by the sudden death of the pastor's wife. After being admitted to the hospital for minor treatment, her condition suddenly deteriorated and doctors were unable to revive her. She left behind a husband and two children, ages 17 and 11. Her husband, Rev. Steve Spearing, expresses his appreciation to Advent Christians for their support throughout this ordeal.*



# *Rays of Light from a Broken Heart*

*by Rev. Steve Spearing*

NOVEMBER 6, 2000, is a day that changed the course of life for Josh, Kati, and me. Gwen's death leaves us stunned. I did not know that the human heart could hurt so bad. I say that after twenty years of pastoral ministry. I thought I had seen and experienced the depth of every human emotion possible. I have been in homes and hospital rooms when people have drawn their last breath. I have conducted three of my grandparents' funerals and had part in another grandmother's and a great-grandfather's. I have seen my mother-in-law go through the death of a husband, mother, son-in-law, son-in-law's father and now daughter in ten years. Words can't express the depth of anguish that we feel. Our hearts are broken.

In the midst of sorrow there have been many rays of light. There is no way I can respond to everyone who has reached out to

us. I hope that through these words our gratitude can be passed on to you, our family. How do we say thank you? Our church family has been beyond comprehension. They are grieving with us. They have loved us, supported us, protected us, and provided for us since we came to Dover, New Hampshire, in 1995. I mentioned to our Eastern Regional Superintendent Clint Taber that every church could take a lesson from this church on how to support a pastor's family. Their support did not just start with Gwen's death. To Hope Community Church. Thank you!

We say thank you to the Advent Christian people. The calls, the cards, the flowers, and the financial gifts have been greatly appreciated.

Joshua (17) and Kati (11) attend Portsmouth Christian Academy, which has been wonderful during this time. All but two from Joshua's senior class attended his mom's funeral plus a number from the other classes.

A number of administrators and teachers were in attendance as well.

I have a great faith in the sovereignty of God and I know that God is good. I do not want to give a false sense of spirituality. I don't "feel" very spiritual. Right now I don't "feel" much of anything. For now, tears are an everyday part of life. But, for me to turn anywhere else would be to make the life I had with Gwen a lie. And God has been too good to us through the years for me to do that.

Words and phrases that are biblical and part of our Christian experience take on new meaning. Resurrection. Jesus is coming again. The Blessed Hope. Maranatha.

Please remember Josh, Kati, and me in your prayers as we make some difficult transitions in our lives.


*The grace & peace of our Lord,  
Steve Spearing*



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# WITNESS

Advent Christian

March/April 2001

*Dear  
Old  
Saints*



# WITNESS

March/April 2001

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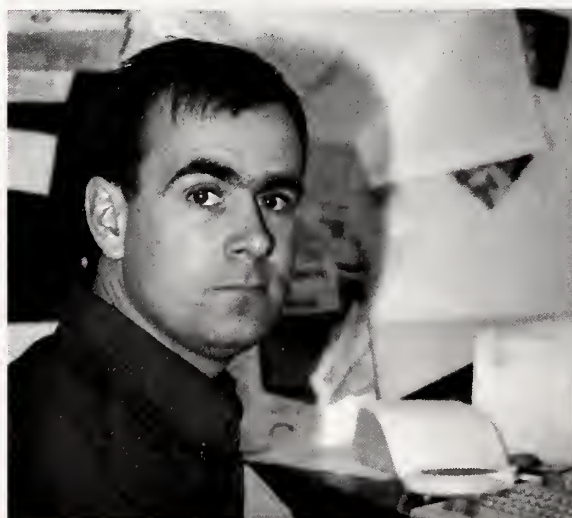
Two things cross my mind when I think of "Dear Old Saints." First, most Christians I know list some "dear old saint" playing a leading role in their spiritual development. Elderly Sunday school teachers are often mentioned, but so are old pastors, old song leaders, old youth workers, old scoutmasters, old deacons, and a variety of other "old" church fixtures. My own faith was fostered by the efforts of an old Sunday school teacher (Arnie Davis must have been close to 60 when I was in his class!), an old worship leader (I think Elmer Tompkins was older than Arnie!), and an assortment of other ancient saints.

In addition to recognizing the critical role "dear old saints" play, I also realize that very few people appreciate the title. In fact, the lady on the

cover expresses exactly the reaction I expect most would have to being called a "dear old saint." Pity the fool who calls her old! Isn't it ironic that most of us consider some elderly person a vital part of our faith, but none of us wants to assume that role?

In the next twenty years the swollen ranks of "baby-boomers" will find themselves in this position. Already some of them qualify for the designation "old" (at least in my book). I wonder if they will "grow old gracefully," or overdose on Grecian Formula and plastic surgery. More important, will they play the critical role of "dear old saints" to a new generation?

This issue of the *Advent Christian Witness* focuses on the tremendous impact older Advent Christians are having on our denomination. From volunteering in nursing homes to personal mentoring, these "dear old saints" are making an eternal difference. In fact, our missionaries to India are grandparents in their sixties.



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*Continued on page 30*



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# Life Only in Christ

by Dr. Gordon Isaac

I wouldn't recommend it, but it is possible to describe Advent Christian theology in primarily negative terms. One could say it like this,

- ❖ "I don't believe in the traditional doctrine of hell."
- ❖ "I don't believe in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul."
- ❖ "I don't believe that a person goes directly to heaven when they die."
- ❖ "I don't believe in the secret rapture of the church."

To lead with a negative is not advisable (although I have started that way in this article in order to get your attention!). It may cause the hearer to think that the position being outlined is reactive instead of proactive. It will most likely have a defensive feel and posture about it, something which people cannot easily embrace. Besides that, from these negative statements, it is pretty hard to determine what the speaker really does believe!

In stark contrast to this, the Advent Christian message is positive! As I have had the chance to read in some of the earlier

Adventist sources, I am impressed that they consistently attempt to state their convictions in positive terms. How did they do this? Some of the early writers were especially fond of describing their understanding of the Gospel as "Life Only in Christ." This phrase is an attempt to summarize the fact that immortality has been forfeited through sin, but has been regained through Christ for all who will receive it at his hand. J. H. Pettingell puts it in the following manner,

*He offers this life, or a new life by a resurrection from the dead, to all who shall come to God through him. This then is the Gospel, the proclamation of 'Life Eternal through Jesus Christ our Lord.'*

The Bible affirms this truth, which Adventists loved to quote, "This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (I John 5:11-12). Eternal life is to be sought and found in him and in him alone.

This promise of eternal life is the remedy for the world that God gave in the garden to Adam and Eve at the time of their disobedience. To them and to all that sin God said, "You shall surely die." The result of sin against God is

death. Adam and Eve were created to enjoy immortality. But through disobedience in the garden their right to life was forfeited. This is the great tragedy of the Fall, that Adam trusted himself rather than God. Adam relinquished the life-giving relationship with the Father and on that day he began to die. Separated from the source of life, Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden. The pursuit of making a living now takes place with the knowledge that the condemnation of death, once pronounced, stands firm.

The reversal of this condemnation can come only in Christ. Eternal life is again offered to us through a Divine Savior, who has himself died to redeem us from death. It is precisely as "The first-born from the dead" that Jesus leads his own people from death to life. We are urged to seek immortality and life everlasting through him. As we are told, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The story of Scripture, then, is the story of how God promises to overcome the death sentence and the destructive forces of sin by his own life, laid down and taken up by Jesus the Christ of God. The narrative extending from Genesis to Revelation is the story of how the God of life overcomes the



death that has overtaken his creation and laid claim on his people. The Bible, very simply put, is a book about death and life and the ultimate triumph of God.

What strikes me is that this formulation of the Gospel is marvelously biblical and wonderfully positive! It is a message of life, not death; it is one of salvation, not punishment. In short, it is good news to a dying race. It's a word that brings life and immortality to light, while condemning sin in the sinner. It exalts the living Lord even as it puts to an end the waywardness that separates the children from their Father. Through faith in the risen Christ, the family of God is built up in the praise of the One who alone is worthy of adoration.

The positive presentation of life only in Christ focuses the biblical account on the veracity of God and Satan. Which of them should we believe? Which should Adam and Eve have believed? God told our first parents that if they disobeyed they should surely die — they should forfeit the immortality that they could only have as they walked in holiness. Against this word, Satan told them that they should not surely die, should not forfeit their immortality — but that they should be as gods knowing good and evil, happiness and misery.

The great deceiver still declares that we are immortal without a Savior; that it is not a question of death and of life as God says, but simply one of good and evil, happiness and misery. To give some

plausibility to his lie, he tells us that “death” does not mean *death*, nor “life” *life* in the Scriptures, but only *misery* and *happiness*, and, as sinners and saints are alike immortal, the unsaved must, as a necessary consequence, be forever miserable.

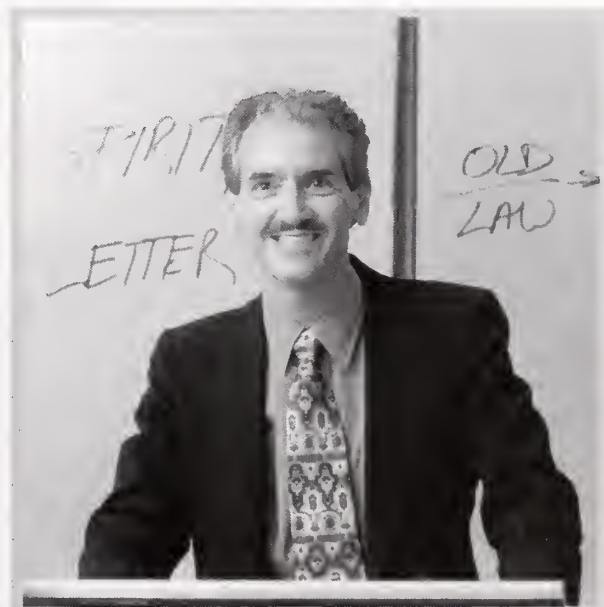
Thinking according to the deception of Satan brings a reproach upon God and twists biblical terminology. But we teach and believe that God said what he meant, and meant what he said. We are to believe God and not Satan who is a liar.

If the great Gospel of life only in Christ is distinctly presented, it allows biblical terminology to mean what it says. The questions surrounding death and life come to the forefront. Questions concerning happiness and misery recede to the background. Metaphysical questions that speculate over whether a soul can have existence apart from the body are set aside. Greek dualism is exchanged for the Jewish and Christian affirmation of the redemption of the body.

The Bible's insistence of dealing with the whole life of the individual is central even when it comes to the issue of final punishment. When understood in Christ, future punishment — how many or how few

stripes will be inflicted upon the unsaved sinner, and how long the sufferings of the lost will be protracted — need not perplex anyone. These questions will take care of themselves. Sin always brings misery and misery accompanies and follows it even to the end. But sin and misery cannot be endlessly perpetuated. Scripture tells us, “that sin when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:15). And death itself will have an end.

It is from this sin, misery, and final death, that God proposes to save us through Jesus Christ. The preaching of life only in Christ magnifies grace while it humbles the pride within the human heart. Our hope for life to come does not reside in ourselves but in the “first-born from the dead.” There is eternal life in Christ, and only in him. †



Dr. Gordon Isaac is director of the Center for Advent Christian Studies and teaches at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts.



# *Far Away*

*by Earl and Martha Wright*

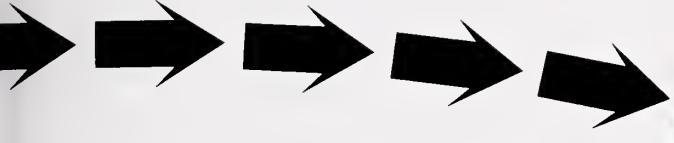
It started on June 24, 1989, with the words, "It's a girl!" We entered the joyful world of grandparenthood. We heard that the reward for having children is grandchildren, and this has proved true.

For several years, we were fortunate to be near our children while their families were growing. It was such a joy to be called upon to babysit. One of our great delights was to watch the development of our grandchildren. They call us "Memum" and "Grandpa," and to hear those names always fills us with gladness. It was a delight to spoil them and then send them home. Our children would say, "Mom (or Dad), you never let us do that," and we would reply, "We don't have to raise our grandkids, we just have to love them."

Grandchildren love their grandparents unconditionally. They think we are perfect (what little they know!). We are always amazed that they do whatever we ask on the first request instead of needing to be prompted several times. And they love to hang around us no matter what we are doing.







# *Grandparents*

When we moved 250 miles away to Panama City, Florida, in April of 1994, we had six grandkids. This was very difficult. Not being able to drop in on a whim or attend all the ballgames, Sunday school programs, and

school functions was tough. But frequent phone calls, visits, and knowing you could be there if any major crisis occurred eased the pains of living away from them. One of our grandsons, Nathan, only reached Florida when he en-

tered our home even though we lived 63 miles south of the state line. For him, "Florida" was his grandparents, not the beach nor the amusements, but Memum and Grandpa.

In spite of the distance, major holidays were often spent together, and even when our son and his family lived in North Carolina, we still saw them on occasion. Memum was present for our youngest grandchild Kyle's birth in March of 1997. This brought our total to eight grandkids.

Then came the call to the mission field. Eleven thousand — more than forty times our previous separation! You can't drop everything and get home in several hours. And you can't afford to go home on a whim. Saying goodbye takes on a new and bittersweet context.



Many grandparents know the pain of separation. The difference on the mission field is the finality for a specified length of time. Calls are also less frequent due to time change and expense. After phone calls, homesickness is worse, but does not decrease the joy of conversing with loved ones.

Two years is a long time in the life of a child. We celebrated Kyle's first and third birthdays, missing all the events of the two years in between.

The separation is hard on the grandchildren also. During one conversation with Matthew, who was five at the time, he asked, "Have you killed all the Indians yet?"

"What do you mean, Matthew, have we killed all the Indians?"

"Grandpa," he replied, "when you kill all the Indians, you can come home." We had to explain that we were not in the old wild West.

We fear that they will forget us, but they also suffer from this fear. Our oldest grandson, ten-year-old Alex, asked, "Memum, will you know me when you come home?"

"I'll know you, Alex."

"But Memum, I have grown a lot since you left."

"It doesn't matter how much you have grown, Alex, I love you and you will always be so important to me. I will know you."

During the same phone call he asked his grandpa, "How long till you come home (on furlough)?"

"Four months, Alex."

There was a long pause then Alex said, "Make it three."

We often think of missionaries in the past who had to send their children away to school and later dealt with grandchildren they saw only a few times in a lifetime. Where did they get the strength to endure this separation? We have phones, and though it is not always possible to get through, we can call. We also have e-mail on a semi-permanent basis. How blessed we are! But where do we get the strength to endure our separations? "I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither

slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:1-2).

As we were thinking about this verse we received a phone call from our daughter Candee. She told us that Earl's mother had just passed away. She was not only a parent and a grandmother, but a great-grandmother of twenty. Two husbands and two sons preceded her in death, but she remained firm in her faith. Her example has helped us to be able to say goodbye to our loved ones for extended periods of time. Her name was Jennie E. Mills and she was a great lady. As we say here in India for hello and goodbye, "Stoterum," which means, "Praise the Lord!" †



*Earl and Martha Wright are serving as missionaries to India.*





# *Bearing Fruit in Old Age*

*by Larry Knowles*

*“The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree...planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green” (Psalm 92:12-14).*

Suppose you were given the opportunity to take a couple of hours off one day, but were only given two choices as to where to spend them, either to rest under a palm tree or to visit a nursing home. Would the choice seem obvious?



Spending time with the elderly isn't a popular way to kill a few hours. Often it's regarded as more of a chore or a "ministry" than an opportunity. But if Psalm 92 is a reliable guide, you'll be surprised to find that the two choices mentioned above aren't as different as you think.

In this ancient hymn the psalmist likens certain elderly people to palm trees. Is the comparison an accurate one? At first you might not think so. The tendency of our culture is to associate old age with purposelessness, loss, decay, and loneliness. What have gnarled hands and senility to do with a majestic and elegant palm? After all, we know that humankind labors under a curse, and old age is one exhibition of how "creation was subject to futility." So is the psalmist simply waxing poetic? Or do we need to look closer?

There's a fellow I know who could be called one of the finest human specimens that anyone's ever seen. However, he's no candidate for the cover of *Gentlemen Quarterly*. He's over 99 years old. What makes him so appealing? His eyes reflect the depths of his soul and see just as deeply into yours. His hands, though slow, are rich with expression as they move or hold or offer. His voice, though cracked, carries tone and inflections that doubles the weight of the words he speaks. A palm tree is beautiful, but so is this friend.

Palms are also places of refuge. They characterize an oasis, where the proverbial desert traveler finds shade or figs or coconuts. One might ask what that has

to do with an elderly person. Aren't they the ones who need nurturing and sheltering?

The answer to this objection is simple. Try visiting a trusted senior the next time you are stressed, confused, or simply in need of company. You might not find all the answers you seek. What you'll almost surely find, however, is a ref-

uge. It can be downright refreshing to feed on the wisdom an elder can afford, or to share woes with someone who actually has the time to listen — especially when they've probably survived troubles worse than yours. And like a good dose of tonic, elders offer the honesty of a refined perspective on life — a simple, but





welcome alternative to our cultural wisdom of political correctness. An hour with these folk can be as good as shade and a drink in the desert.

One of the most outstanding but unknown facts about palm trees is their usefulness. In Asian agricultural regions, it's estimated that there are 800 different uses for the fruit, leaves, bark, wood, and oil of palms. Would we really, however, employ the term "useful" in describing our elderly?

Certainly no one would suggest that folks over 70 are in their peak productivity years. Yet even those few seniors who skydive, surf, and run a marathon may be mistaking vigor for relevance. While old age tends to decrease the number of active things an elder can do, it doesn't necessarily reduce the impact of what they can do. At the retirement center where I serve, 30 different roles performed by residents easily come to mind. Our daily operations, not to mention our sense of community, would be hampered seriously if it were not for the many retirees who "bear fruit in old age."

Note, however, that it's not just any elderly person who's being compared to the palm. The characteristics of beauty, refuge, and usefulness in old age are described as the consummation of a *righteous* life. While many seniors are gracious, productive people, it's the uniquely spiritual fruit — the bloom of godliness — that's being extolled in the psalm. And when you see it, there's nothing like it.

Again, in my dealings with residents of our retirement community, it's a particular pleasure to be around "seasoned saints." When the traits mentioned above proceed from the life of someone who's been rooted in Christ and has drawn from deep veins of living water, it's not just pleasant, but powerful. The fruits of wisdom and mercy and admonition and diligent prayer in these saints are a quiet sensation. To witness a lady,

cognitively devastated by the later stages of Alzheimer's disease, raising clenched hands at the sounds of "How Great Thou Art" is a virtual religious experience.

Even for Christians, old age isn't always pretty, either to experience or to witness. But among the elderly in Christ there's unexpected refreshment for any traveler on the desert road to heaven.

†



*Larry Knowles, Jr. has been the executive director of Vernon Advent Christian Home since 1983. He and his wife Joanne have four kids: Kristen, Larry III, Katie, and Eli.*

# The Resurrection: Our Comfort and Hope

*by Dr. Jim Caron*

Eleanor, recovering from a bad fall, lay in bed staring at the ceiling. She felt lonely and discouraged because of the doctor's report. "Pastor, my diabetic problem is getting worse. I hurt all over. I can't move, and I'm in severe pain. Now the doctor says that I have cancer. What will I do?" Tears were now flowing from her eyes and drenching her pillow. A sigh of frustration followed as she squeezed my hand and I held hers. When she



gathered some composure and strength, I said, "Eleanor, Resurrection Day is coming! Jesus will give you a new body with no more pain and suffering."

"Boy, I can't wait," she replied. "The Lord knows I need a new body."

Yes, Resurrection Day is coming! Just as sure as Jesus came and promised to come back again, so the Day of Resurrection will one day be a reality for believers. This resurrection for all believers in Christ gives us comfort and hope. The resurrection of all believers is rooted in the promise, "Because he lives, I will live also."

## Old Testament

There are three stories in the Old Testament that show the power of God to restore a dead person back to life. The widow's son at Zarephath, whom Elijah raised (1 Kings 17:17ff), the son of the Shunammite, whom Elisha raised (2 Kings 4:32ff), and the man whose dead body was thrown on Elisha's grave (2 Kings 13:21). These attested to the mighty power of God and gave credibility to their faith that God would raise his people again in comfort and hope.

In the Old Testament, God was known, not as the God of the dead, but as the God of the living. Abraham's faith grew strong as he believed that God could raise the dead (Hebrews 11:8-16). Moses sang of God, "See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life" (Deut. 32:39). Hannah said, "The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up" (1 Sam. 2:6).

Job said, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then from my flesh I shall see God, who I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19:25-27). The psalmist stated, "Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices; my

body also dwells secure. For thou dost not give me up to Sheol, or let thy godly one see the pit" (Psalm 16:9-11). Isaiah maintained faith in the resurrection as "He will swallow up death forever and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" (25:8).

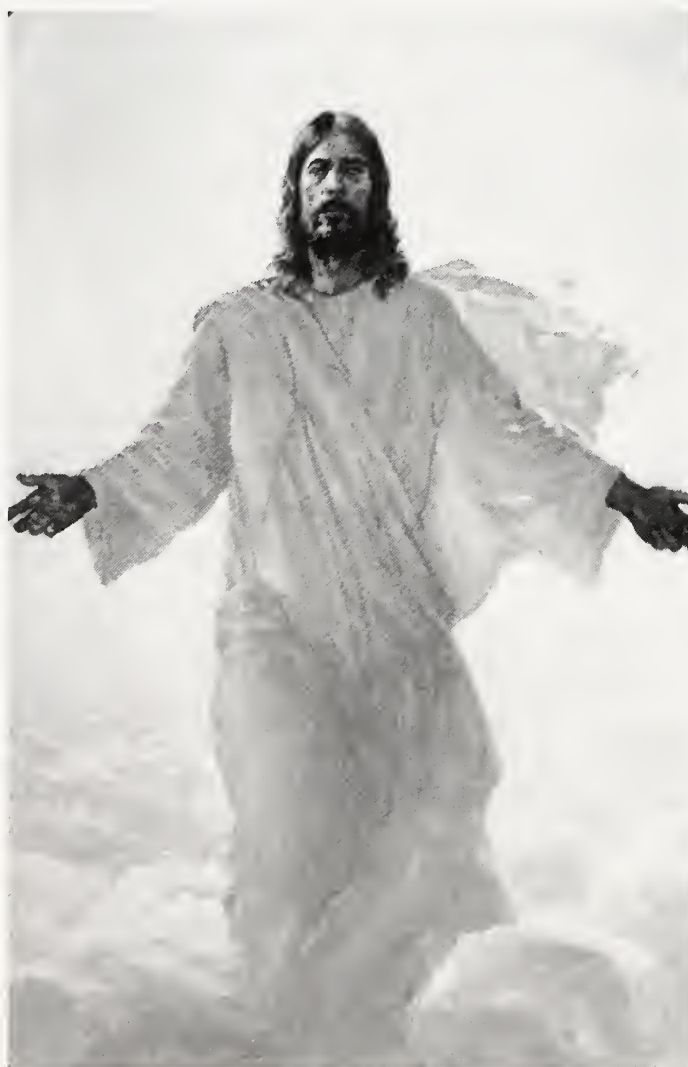
Daniel predicted a resurrection at the last day when he said, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:2-3). This prophet was to bring comfort and hope to many who would later suffer loss and become martyrs for their faith.

## New Testament

In the New Testament, the word for resurrection is *anastasis*. This emphasizes God's initiative of demonstrating his quickening power in raising the dead. Jesus raised the widow's son (Luke 7:11ff), Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:35ff), and Lazarus (John 11). Many saints were raised when Jesus died on the cross (Mt. 27:52-53). After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter raised Dorcas to life (Acts 9:36ff), and Paul raised Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9). In all these displays of God bringing the dead back to life, people were

amazed at his awesome power, and there was comfort and hope. Yet all those raised to life died again, awaiting the final resurrection.

Resurrection for the believer is possible only because of he who conquered sin, death, and Satan's powers. As God incarnate, Jesus willingly gave his life and submitted himself to the agony and power of death in order to conquer death once for all. On the third day God the Father called forth his Son, Jesus Christ, from the realm and abode of death, by the quickening power of the Spirit of Holiness. Jesus became alive by the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit and he was given a glorious, imperishable, spiritual





body. Forty days later, he ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the majesty of God. Heaven resounded with shouts and accolades of praise as the King of kings and the Lord of lords took his seat in victorious triumph. Now he represents us and promises to return so that we may be gathered to live forever with him in the same kind of body that he was given on Resurrection Day.

The Apostle Paul describes this glorious resurrection of believers as follows:

*“The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:42-44).*

Notice that the natural body that is sown is perishable, and in dishonor and weakness. This describes the present condition of our bodies. However, this natural body will someday be raised and transformed as an imperishable, glorious, and spiritual body. This body, which now experiences physical, emotional, and mental weakness, is subject to decay and is under the curse of sin, even though we are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Our bodies are still prone to sickness, disease, and death. We get tired and worn out. We have days of disappointments and discouragement. We fail

and are flawed. We get sick and become afflicted. And so it remains until Resurrection Day when Jesus returns.

Resurrection Day is around the corner awaiting you and me. When the trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ rise, we who are living shall be gathered to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:13ff). Our bodies will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51-54), and will be transformed to become like Jesus’ own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21). Our bodies made new — never to hurt, never to suffer, never to get old, never to get sick, never to die — will live forever in resurrection power and glory.

Here is comfort and hope for the believer in Christ. Are you tired and worn out physically, mentally, and emotionally? Are you afflicted? Ill? Suffering with cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s, arthritis, or some painful disease? Take comfort, believer in Christ, because Resurrection Day is coming! It is awaiting those who love Jesus and live for him with an undying love. Take comfort and hope in this fact, even though you are suffering. After all, didn’t Jesus our Lord have to suffer, and then enter his glory? Likewise, after we have suffered a while in the body of weakness, we will rise again and be clothed with glorious resurrection power just like Jesus.

After several weeks and many visits with Eleanor, she

died. Yet she died with comfort and hope knowing that in Jesus Christ she would some day be given a brand new, glorious body that would live forevermore with him on the earth made new.

For believers in Christ, this resurrection gives us comfort and hope as we look for the return of Jesus. He will transform our weak, lowly bodies into glorious, imperishable, immortal bodies. You can count on this! It will happen! Take comfort and hope! †



*Dr. Jim Caron received his M.A.R. and M.Div. from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA., and his doctoral degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. He and his wife Cheryl have six children. They have served Faith Bible Church in Plainville, Connecticut, for 17 years.*

# Advent Christian Leadership Development in the 21st Century

## *Jeremiah 3:15*

Leadership Development is a major component of disciple-making. In reality, we are called to make disciples who make disciples. In that process, there are those who God chooses, identifies, and appoints to be spiritual leaders. Disciple-makers need to be anticipating this and discerning of God's hand. It will then take a team effort — a network of discipling leaders to be intentional and purposeful in the joyful tasks of equipping those whom God chooses, as He directs that process. As that network develops and becomes fruitful, the result will be the multiplication of leaders, not merely their addition.

Like all of disciple-making, leadership development is a “two-way street experience” between two or more individuals. It involves a relationship between



Dwight Carpenter, Leadership Development Coordinator

people in which the life, perspective, and experience level of each person impacts the life of the other. As one may learn from the experience of the other, one may also gain a fresh outlook on life

and servant ministry of the other. It is a process of telling and showing, equipping and enabling, going and sending. There are core values, theological truths, character issues, and other foundational components essential to healthy development. But the process by which these are developed is individualized, following God, walking side-by-side, and moving at the pace of, and in concert with the God-given vision and passion of the disciple/developing leader. But these are always consistent with and subservient to the mission of making disciples and multiplying leaders.

Developing leaders is a partnership, a mutual commitment, where the disciple/trainee learns from the advanced training and experience of their discipler/mentor/coach. Concurrently, the discipler has the opportunity to sharpen their equipping and leadership skills, as well as evaluate and enhance their own leadership skills, renew their vision, and restore their passion, which comes from sharing the fresh perspective and eagerness of the disciple/trainee.

What this entails is a process by which emerging leaders are developed in their daily walk with servant leaders, through coming alongside and imparting not only the Gospel and skills, but their very lives as well (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Iron sharpening iron, lives intersecting and impacting one another, being and doing life together in Christ.

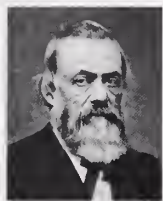
All of this is dependent upon God's direction and grace and our response. †



# Leadership Development Awards

## *“Honoring Key Individuals”*

*Just as the people below left a legacy of leadership, the Leadership Development Fund and the Leadership Endowment Fund will help to raise up people who will continue that legacy. The Leadership Development Fund will be leadership development awards that are named in honor of someone who provided key leadership and that are supported by those who were affected by them.*



Joshua V.  
Himes

**The Purpose** is to develop new leadership and to maintain current leadership.

**Annual funding, up to \$5,000 each**, will be given honoring individuals, living or deceased, who have had a significant impact on people's lives.

Clarence  
Kirby



**Nominations** will be of individuals who have demonstrated commitment to discipleship in their own life as well as leadership in carrying out a ministry that touched and enriched the lives of a broad base of individuals.



Edwin K.  
Gedney

**Funding** will come from individuals who were recipients of the life-impacting ministry, including their family and friends, along with friends and family of the one being honored.

Joe Tom  
Tate



**Identification of potential donors** will be at a joint meeting with those wishing to nominate and the Resource Development Coordinator. A list of potential individual and group supporters will be drawn up.

**To solicit funding members**, materials, a timeline step sheet, and support services will be provided by the Resource Development office. Actual solicitation will be a joint effort.



J. Howard  
Shaw

**The use of the money** will be determined considering the interests and passions of the one being honored.

Glennon  
Balsler



**A report** concerning recipients, use of money, and impact of award will be given on an annual basis.

## *You Can Nominate Someone to be Honored*

To be  
nominated

A person who wishes to nominate an individual to be honored contacts Chet Hart, [ACGCDevelopment@aol.com](mailto:ACGCDevelopment@aol.com). A resolution establishing an award in honor of that person will become part of the Permanent Plaque for the Leadership Development Fund of Advent Christian Churches.

# God's Will About Your Will— Estate Planning for Christians

by *Melody K. Anderson*

## **Imitating Our Loving and Orderly God**

The heart of estate planning for Christians is linked to the character of God revealed in his Word and creation. Our God is loving and orderly.

God Almighty has an estate plan. He has promised an inheritance, which includes eternal life, to all his children. If you love God and are trusting in Christ's death in your place, then you are a child and heir of God. Paul says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17).

The theme of inheritance weaves throughout the Bible, clearly indicating God's interest in a thoughtful and orderly transfer

of property. For example, when King Hezekiah of Israel was sick and near death, Isaiah the prophet took him a message, "The Lord says, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live'" (Isaiah 38:1). The book of Proverbs describes a "good man" as one who "leaves an inheritance to his children's children" (Proverbs 13:22). The New Testament speaks of our "eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).

Of course, good stewardship is also a motivation, but estate planning, at its heart, is an excellent opportunity for us to be like our heavenly Father. "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1).

## **What is an Estate, and What is an Estate Plan?**

Your estate is simply your property: real estate, cars, valu-

able interests, retirement accounts, furniture, jewelry, bank accounts, a business, stocks, collections, and personal items. An estate plan is a set of directions for managing your property if you can no longer make decisions for yourself, and for distributing your property when you die.

Some estate plans consist of a simple will, while others include other documents like a trust, power of attorney, and advanced directive for health care. Ideally, estate planning is done at several stages throughout your life and includes planning for retirement, incapacity, and death.

## **Who Needs an Estate Plan?**

Every Christian would do well to consider the benefits of an estate plan. Ways that an estate plan could specifically benefit you and your loved ones should be discussed with qualified legal and financial advisors.

Those who absolutely should prepare an estate plan are parents of minor children, those charged with the care of another, and those to whom God has entrusted more than the basic necessities of life.

## **What Happens if I Die Without an Estate Plan?**

It's impossible to die without an estate plan. Even if you never make out a will or trust, the laws





of your state and the probate court will direct who will inherit your property. But there are problems with letting state law handle your estate. Your estate still has to go through probate. Your property will go to your relatives, but it might not go to the ones you prefer, or in the percentages you desire. If you die without any living relatives, all your property will go to the state. And if you don't prepare an estate plan, *none* of your property will go to the Lord's work or other charitable organizations of your choice.

### **Will, Trust, What's the Difference?**

Wills and trusts are similar in that both can be used to nominate guardians for your minor children and distribute your property when you die.

A will differs from a trust in that it takes effect *only* when you die. Unlike a trust, your will becomes part of the public record (you can read the wills of Benjamin Franklin, Babe Ruth, Walt Disney, Princess Diana, and others on the Internet at [www.ca\\_probate.com/wills.htm](http://www.ca_probate.com/wills.htm)). The most significant difference is that a will generally must go through probate.

A trust, on the other hand, takes effect while you are still alive. Because a trust becomes effective the day you sign it, it allows you to nominate someone to manage your affairs if you become incapacitated. Certain kinds of trusts allow you to remain in complete control of your property while you are alive. A properly drafted and funded trust that remains unchallenged will not go through probate, which may rep-

resent a significant cost and time savings. Your trust remains a private document, which means you control who has access to your personal matters. For many, one of the greatest benefits of a trust is that it can help minimize final taxes. These and many other benefits of a trust are best discussed with a knowledgeable attorney.

### **What about Probate?**

Probate comes from the Latin word meaning to test, to approve. Simply stated, probate is the legal process by which authority is granted to transfer the property of someone who has died. Probating an estate can be costly and time-consuming.

For some estates, the orderly, public, court-directed probate process might be acceptable. For most, however, there are several attractive alternatives. If you decide to try to avoid probate, some of the options to discuss with your attorney include a living trust (that is, one signed while you are alive), joint tenancy with right of survivorship, beneficiary designations, gifts during life, and paid-on-death accounts, among others.

### **Related Planning**

There are some simple additional steps you can take to make things easier for your executor, successor trustee, and heirs. You might consider making a list of your property that describes it and tells where it can be found. You might also put into writing your desires regarding burial, cremation, and a funeral/memorial service.

### **Where Can I Get More Information?**

Because individual situations and needs will vary dramatically, this article is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of competent legal counsel.

If you would like to prepare an estate plan, or have questions about your existing plan, you should talk with an estate planning attorney. Many offer free or low-cost initial consultations. The Christian Legal Society ([www.ChristianLegalSociety.org](http://www.ChristianLegalSociety.org), 703-642-1070) can refer you to a Christian estate planning attorney in your area.

With sound counsel, prayer, and the Holy Spirit's direction, every Christian can imitate the loving and orderly character of our God by preparing an estate plan. †



*Melody K. Anderson is an estate planning and adoption attorney in San Diego, California. She serves as a judge pro tem in the small claims court and is a member of North Park Community Church. Her email is [extrajus@lawinfo.com](mailto:extrajus@lawinfo.com).*

*And we know that in all things* **God Works** *for the good of those*  
**Out of the Past** *who love him... " (Rom. 8:28).*

by Rev. Johnny Carpenter

A few years ago, when I thought I was through pastoring, I took a job with a tour company as a coach driver. Now that I am again pastoring First Advent Christian Church, Lenoir, North Carolina, I still drive for Christian Tours when I have time.

Recently, I took a group of seniors to Monticello. Every group quickly learns that I'm a minister, and I often find at least one minister is traveling with us. A retired Presbyterian pastor was on this tour. I told him I was an Advent Christian and asked if he knew of our denomination. He said, "Oh yes. In fact, I have a story to tell you about a wreck that killed two of your pastors, back in 1951." I knew of the wreck that had killed a former pastor of our church, Rev. Rolly Chambers, and Rev. Brinferd (Buck) Balser near Phillipsburg, New Jersey. Also in the car were Rev. Hayford Cavender, Rev. Nelson Melvin, Rev. J. Murray Hannah, and Rev. Bernard Blackstone.

Rev. David Aaronson was a young pastor in Phillipsburg and was serving as hospital chaplain. When the injured pastors were brought in, David was called to come minister to them and their

families. One of the injured was Rev. Bernard Blackstone from Maine. Bernard's family came to be with him and needed a place to stay. David and his wife Sue took them in and ministered to them and their son for about two weeks. During this time, Bernard, in and out of consciousness, kept asking about "the ring." Those who removed the luggage from the wreck site began to go through it and found the ring that Bernard planned to give his fiancée.

Since that time, the Aaronsons retired and moved to North Carolina. They belong to a seniors group who were traveling with Christian Tours. When David told me the story, I told him that I was pastoring the same church that Rev. Rolly Chambers pastored from 1935 to 1939. I was delighted that our paths had crossed, but more was coming.

In February 1993, David was attending a meeting of several ministers in Charlotte. As each told what church they belonged to, one man said that he had been an Advent Christian pastor. David began to relate the story of the wreck and as he did so, the minister exclaimed, "I was in that accident!" That person was Rev. Nelson Melvin. Nelson told David how he had changed positions in the car shortly before the wreck or he would have been killed.

Sometime later, Rev. Aaronson was attending another meeting and again told the story of the wreck and Bernard Blackstone's calling for the ring. A man spoke up and said, "My daughter was the one who married Bernard Blackstone."

After all these years, it was a privilege to meet David and Sue Aaronson and to learn of their compassion and care during that untimely tragedy. Perhaps there are friends or relatives of these pastors who would like to write a note to them. Here is their address: Rev. David Aaronson, 9621 Marshbrooke Rd., Matthews, N.C. 28105. †



*Bernard & Cathy Blackstone,  
June 1952.*



# God Works *for the good of those*

## Truth Is Stranger than Fiction

by Dr. Nelson Melvin

My wife and I enjoy the Primetimers senior's group meetings so much that we invited Rev. David Aaronson and his wife, Susan, to the Primetimers dinner in September. A lot of people invite friends to enjoy the monthly dinners. The food is delicious and the programs are always great. But, as Paul Harvey would say, "Wait until you hear 'the rest of the story'" of how that friendship was formed.

I was one of six ministers driving through the night from a foreign mission meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, to Charles-

ton, West Virginia. Apparently, we all fell asleep, including the driver, as the 1949 Nash (remember the one that looked like an upside down bathtub?) raced down Jugtown Mountain near West Portal, New Jersey. The guardrail sheered the side of the car like a can opener and killed the two ministers on the passenger side. The four injured pastors were taken to Warren Hospital. Rev. David Aaronson was one of two local pastors who came to the hospital to minister to these men who were far from home. David and Susan opened their home to a dental student from Tufts University, who arrived to care for his injured brother.

Forty-five years later, the Melvins, with members of the Friendly Class from Hickory Grove Baptist Church, were at Calvary Church for a dinner theater. A man and his wife had reserved seats at the same table. In their conversation, Hannah mentioned that Nelson's dad had been an Advent Christian minister. At that point, Susan said that they had once opened their home to an Advent Christian young man from Maine. The pieces fell together and a friendship was fostered. Following retirement, the Aaronsons moved to Charlotte and now live within two miles of the Melvins. That's the rest of the story.

Friendships are priceless. Friends cannot be bought; they are a gift. Jesus called His disciples friends. Our Christian friends are a gift from God. Have you ever stood in a circle, looked into the faces of friends and realized that you would not have known any of them if you had not known the Savior? What a friend we have in Jesus! †



"And we know that in all things

who love him..." (Rom. 8:28).

# The Cost of Caring

by *Miriam Snow Priebe*

She sat across from me at our kitchen table — an attractive woman, age 36, perhaps — visibly upset. I poured us both a cup of coffee. She had rung my doorbell at eight o'clock that morning. I had assumed that she was looking for Charles and explained that my husband had already left to make hospital visits. She said she had come to talk to me. She needed a little advice.

"I am not a member of your church," she explained, but a friend of hers had suggested that she should talk to an older woman. I smiled, knowing that at forty-six, I certainly qualified. She then gave

me a little of her background, told me where her husband worked, told me the ages of her five children and named the schools they attended. "I am thinking of leaving my husband, but I am not sure if it's the right thing to do."

She poured out her story. She had married young and the children came along quickly during those early years. Her husband was a good provider, but dull and stuffy. She had met an exciting man — her hairdresser. The kids were old enough to take care of themselves. She felt that they just used her as a maid anyway when she ironed their clothes and got their meals. Her husband depended on her to sweep and dust

and was critical of her efforts to be a homemaker.

It was a familiar story so far. Almost any woman has had days when she had had similar thoughts. I asked her if her husband beat her or was in any way abusive. She shook her head. I asked her to tell me about the man who had asked her to run off with him.

"He is handsome, exciting, and fun to be with. He compliments me on the smallest things. He loves to dance and go to parties." She went on to compare his virtues with the shortcomings of her husband. I listened. When I finally began to talk I tried to give some "common sense" advice. She stayed most of the morning, but







when she left she had decided to stay with her family.

I felt good about the advice I had given. I felt I had helped. A year later, she ran off with a truck driver she scarcely knew. She didn't ask my advice that time. As the results of her foolish mistake began to come about I wondered if perhaps the hairdresser would have been better for everybody! So much for trying to help!

Most of us have been asked for advice from time to time. Sometimes the people who ask us for help have no intention of following our advice, they merely hope that what we say will agree with what they intend to do anyway. But a careless answer on our part is extremely dangerous too. We have to assume that those who ask for our opinion may do the things we suggest.

I enjoy reading the columns written by Abby Van Buren and Ann Landers. In my opinion, their advice is usually good. It is amazing though how often people write in to complain that the advice

given was harmful or useless!

Whoever said that advice was cheap or coined the phrase "free advice" was on the wrong track. Counsel is costly, as many people who seek it from professional counselors know well. Counsel is time-consuming and it is only fair that the dollar-cost is by the hour. This may be one reason, though, that folks turn to family and friends first, and you and I are asked to give counsel fairly often.

Whenever we give advice, it costs us something! All aside from the time and energy we have expended there is the worry that our advice may not have been good. As a teacher, I once suggested to a very troublesome, overage, ninth-grade student that he quit school and get a job. He quit the next day, and I was ashamed to tell my fellow teachers that I had encouraged him to do so.

He got a well-paying job in a factory. I sometimes met him on the street. He was coming home from the factory and I from school. He always smiled and

spoke. He seemed happy. But even today I wonder if I did the right thing. Did I hurry him into the adult "rat-race"? Should I, as a teacher, have urged him to stay on in school?

I think sometimes of the students who went on to colleges I recommended to them. What happened at college? Did they meet the wrong people or get into the wrong jobs? If you care, giving advice costs!

Our son used to quote that passage from Proverbs that compares meddling in another's problem to "grabbing a passing dog by the ears." He usually quoted it to his sister who was inclined to jump in and "go to bat" for people whom she felt were unjustly treated. She learned, as we all do sooner or later, that giving advice or seeking to help sort out another's dilemma is usually a risky business.

But a lot of things are risky. Loving someone is the riskiest thing we do, but we all keep loving. Certainly we should not meddle. We should never lightly give our opinion without trying to understand another's pain. But if we are asked for advice and if we have ideas or suggestions that might help, I believe we should give it, knowing that the advice will not be free and that caring is always costly! †

*Miriam Snow Priebe is a frequent contributor to the Witness. She and her husband Charles live in Gulfport, Florida.*

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**

**Cross out words** according to the instructions below. More than one instruction may apply to a word, and words that have been crossed out can still be used to help cross out others. When you're finished, read the remaining words from left to right for a special message.

1. Cross out words with double vowels.
2. Cross out words that are spelled with letters from the first half of the alphabet.
3. Cross out words that are anagrams (two words spelled with the same letters).
4. Cross out the longest word in each column.

abiding	west	climb	it	teacher
look	is	week	war	better
least	cheater	to	acclaim	understand
get	leaf	stew	wisdom	feed
idea	than	too	deer	steal
high	raw	leg	gold	hedge

**(Proverbs 16:16)**

**Crack the code:**

<u>14</u> <u>8</u> <u>15</u> <u>4</u>	<u>8</u> <u>11</u>	<u>16</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u>	
<u>13</u> <u>14</u> <u>4</u> <u>15</u> <u>4</u>	<u>11</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u>	<u>12</u> <u>5</u>	<u>16</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u>
<u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> ,	<u>15</u> <u>7</u> <u>12</u> <u>19</u>	<u>14</u> <u>4</u> <u>15</u> <u>13</u> <u>4</u> <u>2</u> <u>16</u>	
<u>5</u> <u>12</u> <u>14</u>	<u>16</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u>	<u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>14</u> <u>9</u> <u>20</u>	
<u>1</u> <u>11</u> <u>3</u>	<u>14</u> <u>4</u> <u>18</u> <u>4</u> <u>14</u> <u>4</u>	<u>20</u> <u>12</u> <u>17</u> <u>14</u>	
<u>6</u> <u>12</u> <u>3</u> .	<u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>10</u> <u>16</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u>	<u>9</u> <u>12</u> <u>14</u> <u>3</u>	
	<u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>18</u> <u>8</u> <u>16</u> <u>8</u> <u>2</u> <u>17</u> <u>15</u>	<b>19:32</b>	



1=a	11=n
2=c	12=o
3=d	13=p
4=e	14=r
5=f	15=s
6=g	16=t
7=h	17=u
8=i	18=v
9=l	19=w
10=m	20=y





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell



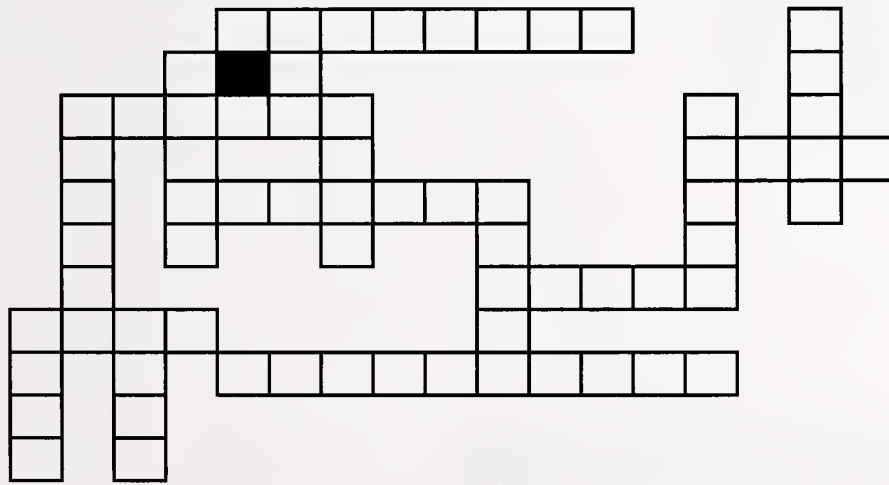
Change the vowels:

a=o e=u i=a o=e u=i

Us nat wusdam faend imang tho igod? Daos nat lang

lufo brung endorstindung? Jab 12:12

Fill in the names of these men who each lived more than 100 years according to the number of letters:



3  
Reu

6  
Joseph  
Joshua

4  
Adam  
Eber  
Noah

7  
Abraham

Seth  
Shem

8  
Arphaxad

5  
Enoch  
Isaac  
Kenan  
Moses  
Sarah

10  
Methuselah

Who Am I?

- I gave birth to a son in my old age. \_\_\_\_\_
- I was sold into slavery by my brothers and became second in command to Pharaoh. \_\_\_\_\_
- I am the oldest man in the Bible. \_\_\_\_\_
- I led the Israelites after Moses died. \_\_\_\_\_
- God told me to build an ark. \_\_\_\_\_

Joseph      Sarah      Methuselah  
Noah        Joshua



# *Elders in the Mainstream*

by *Renee Kent*

One of my favorite childhood memories involves sitting up in bed next to my grandmother late at night eating her homemade, real butter pound cake, as the Atlantic Ocean washed the sandy beaches outside the window. Back then I thought the pound cake was the treat. But now I know the real reason this scene is so close to my heart is because of my grandmother.

My grandmother, born and bred in southern Georgia, brought with her the smell of lilacs and magnolias and simmering pots of peas and cornbread. After hours of summertime play under the towering pines and in the branches of her mimosa trees, my bruises were nursed in her soft, ample lap. She would tuck me into bed with overstuffed pillows to the crackly

tune of crickets and frogs, and I always dreamed sweet dreams at her house. I helped her paint ceramics in her small studio. She let me place the pieces in the kiln. On the Easter morning I was baptized, she sat proudly in one of the very front pews.

As I grew into an adult and gave my widowed grandmother her first great-grandchild, she became increasingly concerned about the problems associated with growing older — loneliness, ill health, isolation, inactivity. She moved to live near my father, but my family and I were too far away to be of help to her in her declining years.

Her health continued to deteriorate after she broke both hips in separate falls. Our family traveled many miles to visit her often as she recovered. She delightedly gathered other patients together,

so three great-grandchildren could sing to them too.

The last time I saw her, she was curled into a fetal position, her soft blue eyes searching for something she might recognize. As I spoke to her, our eyes engaged for a long moment. She could not speak, but a single tear rolling down her hollow cheek told me all I needed to know. To her, I was still the little girl spilling cake crumbs in her bed at the beach. And she was still my adored grandmother.

## **Changes in Aging**

By the year 2010, there will be 13 million persons aged 65 and older living in the United States. Three out of four will be women. Men aged 75 or older, living alone, will be a rapidly growing segment of the population as well.

As baby boomers age, their own attitudes are changing toward aging. They now prefer to think of aging as not so much an affliction as an opportunity to improve the quality of life among older citizens. In the future, senior baby boomers will be surfing the internet, working from their homes as business consultants or tutors, still contributing to society in viable ways.

Strides to advance the cause of the aging have long been underway. Organizations such as the Gray Panthers, Shepherd's Center Training Service, and the American Association of Retired Persons work to sponsor commu-





nity service programs and activities. They promote independent living and aging with dignity, while combating age discrimination and negative societal attitudes.

As a result, there is a growing awareness that the "autumn of life" is a longer season than it used to be. Retirement doesn't mean a short trip to a nursing home anymore. Christians can promote this awareness and ensure that the elderly are lovingly cared for and invited to remain in the mainstream of living.

### Need Concrete Ideas?

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging offers a listing of agencies serving the elderly in your area. The opportunity is at hand to enrich the lives of the elderly.

- ✧ Familiarize yourself with local hospice programs, nursing homes, and senior citizen centers. Find out what you can do as a volunteer.
- ✧ Adopt a nursing home resident to visit several times each month. Ask the nursing home director to tell you about residents who have no family visits. Bring small gifts of warm socks, hand lotion, a large-print Bible or magazine, and healthy snacks.
- ✧ Seek out a widow or widower in your area who might be in need of companionship. Include him or her in family celebrations, such as summer picnics, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.
- ✧ Send encouraging notes to families of hospice patients, and give them a night out while

you visit with their loved one.

- ✧ One of the greatest things we can do for the elderly is encourage them to remain involved in the process of living. Talk with your pastor about starting classes for adults on nutrition, exercise, computers, crafts, and other topics. Offer refresher courses in driving or simple home repairs.
- ✧ Does your church have a van or mini-bus perfect for taking seniors on day trips? Encourage the elderly to enjoy traveling to new horizons. A trip could be as simple as taking the day to visit a state park, hike to a picnic spot, and enjoy light food, fresh air, and sunshine. Include a Bible study or book study using *Traveling with Tangerines* by Barbara Crider, or *Prisms: Being God's Light for Missionaries through Prayer and Ministry* by Stuart Calvert. Elderly Christians make great prayer warriors! Connecting with people and projects, along



with a change of scenery, will eliminate that eerie sense of helplessness that leads to mental deterioration.

Think of someone you love in their older years. Do they live close enough that you can be a part of their life? If so, get started. If not, find another senior who needs a loving touch. In honor of your loved one, reach out. †

*Renee Kent volunteers for the Southern Baptist group Women on Mission. Reprinted from the July 1997 issue of Missions Mosaic, Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Alabama. Used by permission.*

# Thank God for My Mentor

by Edwina Norton

I was a happy-go-lucky person on the outside, but only God knew how badly I was hurting on the inside. The built-up anger threatened my facade as I desperately fought to control it. A friend advised, "Fake it until you make it." Thus I tried to work my way into happiness by ignoring negative feelings and thinking only "happy thoughts." Other counsel included, "Christians don't get angry." "Make a decision to forgive, and *just do it!*" "If you didn't think so highly of yourself this wouldn't upset you. Humble yourself and be thankful for everything that happens, good or bad. Look at all the bad things that happened to Jesus — and he didn't complain." Their advice was like trying to smother a fire with a hay bale, and served only to fuel my anger more because I couldn't live up to it. But the tears, clenched teeth, and an overwhelming

urge to lash out betrayed how I really felt. I felt trapped. In my desperation, I knew I needed help. Where was I to turn? A counselor? A pastor? But God already had a plan. My healing was to come through a mentor.

What is the difference be-

tween a counselor and a mentor? Counseling is the ability to help someone by learned principles of psychology and behavioral sciences; whereas, mentoring is a commitment to walk with a hurting person. God knew I needed that kind of help.

It amazes me how God puts people in our path for us to work with, and I'm even more amazed at how he worked out the connection between my mentor and me. I'd been attending a parenting skills class, and "Jeanne" was there as an interested grandparent. We'd never really talked before. In fact, she intimidated me so I avoided her. But that night my heart was crying out. I was tired of how negative I always felt. As Jeanne passed by she asked three simple little words, "How are you?" (She uses those words much more carefully now, unsure of the response she might get.) The dam of misery burst and I





sobbed, "I need help and I don't know what to do."

John 15:13 talks about the sacrificial love of a friend. Many of us interpret that as jumping out in front of a runaway bus to push a friend to safety. Most of us won't be called upon to prove our love in this way, but what about the sacrifice of our time? Our resources? Jeanne knew she'd need time to get to know me and find out where I was coming from. She also knew that for her to understand the situation, she would have to build trust with me so that I'd feel free to share all the pieces of the puzzle. Any snap conclusions could be wrong. Jeanne set up a time for us to meet.

We can now joke about Jeanne's anxiety when she first realized how much help I needed, and how long it could take. The movie, "What About Bob?" came to the theaters at that time. It was a comedy about a man named Bob who had so many fears he never left home until he went to see a psychiatrist. Bob's excitement over the progress he was making with this counselor soon turned to obsession. His need to continually be around this man drove Bob to follow him on his family vacation. The counselor tried various ways to be rid of his pesky client, but nothing worked. Alas, he'd turn around and there would be Bob, peering through his cabin window or standing in the doorway. My need was so great, Jeanne was afraid I'd become her "Bob."

She allowed me to just talk

about my life, and asked questions that made me look below the surface. Through questions, Scripture, and prayer, I quit concentrating on how I felt and began to look at why I felt that way. As we delved deeper I became uncom-

fortable. I had put up a pretty good front with my other friends. Although I knew they cared about me, I didn't trust them enough to share the "real me." I feared rejection when they found out I wasn't the fun-loving optimist I

## *What to Look for in a Mentor*

1. One who has experienced enough of life to be familiar with pain, but is an overcomer. Being acquainted with suffering accompanies compassion.
2. One who filters helpful suggestions through Scripture and thereby shares godly principles rather than personal opinions.
3. One who has a reputation for confidentiality.
4. One who can listen... and listen... and listen.
5. One who is healthy enough in personal self-esteem to gently guide a hurting person to wholeness and has the ability to help this person make her own good decisions.
6. One who feels enough self-respect to sensitively discern unreasonable demands on her time. There must be a sense of reciprocity in the relationship. If this is not there at first, it is important to guide the time together in that direction.
7. One who will not respond in shock to whatever the hurting person shares. This means accepting the person where they are.
8. One who works toward healing according to God's timetable, not her own. This is called patience.
9. Persons who have people-serving gifts such as mercy, exhortation, hospitality, and wisdom are potentially good mentors. When a hurting person has spent time with a mentor prepared by God, the result will be a sense of hope, healing, and encouragement.
10. Is this person you are considering willing to welcome you into her life? Now think of three weaknesses this person might have. (This is to remind you, you have chosen a mentor, not an idol. She has flaws.) Note: A good mentor should sooner or later work herself out of a job because her character and wisdom have been taken on by yourself. †

portrayed. At this point I knew I needed to expose some of my ugly past. I just wanted to drop those horrid sins at the cross and pretend they were never committed. We had come to a crossroads in our relationship. If I shared those dark transgressions I risked losing her respect and friendship. If she listened, she risked my embarrassment which could cause me to drop the friendship. We questioned whether we were willing to take the risk.

I painfully relived those moments as I revealed my hidden life. I cringed as I thought what her reaction must be, although her outward expression never changed. After I finished my story, she merely reminded me in a calm, quiet voice, that God had been with me through all that had happened, and was still beside me. I realized then the awesomeness of amazing grace. If the One who knew me best could still love me most, then I knew I had to stop treating myself like junk. I'd need to change my thought patterns and end any negative friendships I had.

Letting go of the past was bittersweet. It felt good to be rid of all my junk, but now that I was getting better I feared it would mean an end to my relationship with Jeanne. Our mentoring relationship had tested the waters and proven to be safe. After sharing our tears and laughter, trust had grown and God continued to lead in our experiences. Little by little the mentoring became less. In its place a friendship grew. †



*Edwina Norton is a frequent contributor to the Witness and lives in Lewiston, Idaho.*

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**Editorial — Continued from page 2**

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It's unfortunate our culture equates aging with being cursed. Christians should know better. Scripture declares, "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life" (Proverbs 16:31). Some Advent Christians see gray hair as a passport to service. No longer responsible to provide for children, tuition, or retirement, they are free to go and do whatever ministry is needful.

Imagine the impact the next generation of seniors could have on our denomination. We face unprecedented needs for pastors, missionaries, youth workers, mentors, house parents,

administrators, and church planters, to name only a few. All of these needs would be filled if the largest generation in our nation's history saw their graying hair as a passport to service.

Most of us are thankful for "dear old saints" of the past. We know the difference they made in our lives. The question remains: when our time comes, will we also become "dear old saints," making a difference? I hope so, because I suspect the only alternative is on the cover! †





# Luree's Bookshelf

*Bad Girls of the Bible and What We Can Learn From Them*, by Liz Curtis Higgs, Waterbrook Press, 1999

Have you ever felt like a “bad girl”? Have you ever looked at others as “bad girls”? Have you considered some biblical women as “bad girls”? Liz Curtis Higgs looks at some women of the Bible and of today from a new perspective. She discovers that badness varies. Sometimes it lasts and sometimes it is only temporary — but it always serves a purpose. She takes each lesson from the Bible and gives it a 21st century application. Most of all, she wants the reader to see afresh how God works today as he did many years ago. Look with her at different women and reflect on the thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter. The study guide adds more biblical references to enhance your study. I recommend this book if you are facing some difficult life issues.

*Can a Busy Christian Develop Her Spiritual Life?* by Kay Arthur, Jill Brisco and Carole Mayhall, Bethany House, 1994

Too busy to spend time developing your spiritual life? Be honest! In this book, three authors, all busy women, try to help the reader

find real answers on growing spiritually. First, they discuss how each person is unique, so there is no one answer. They suggest ideas on finding an approach that might fit. The second section deals with doubts. The final section includes chapters on finding one's place of service. A “Make it Happen” section in each chapter helps the reader apply the material. I recommend this book for either individual use or for small group study.

*Leota's Garden*, by Francine Rivers, Tyndale House, 1999

Do you stop and wonder about the rapid changes occurring in our world? If so, you will be fascinated by the way Francine Rivers takes numerous issues and weaves them into this endearing story. She intertwines the issues of aging, family relationships, moral decisions and more in this book. Follow Leota, Annie, Corbin, and others as they seek to find answers to life. This book is hard to put down once you get into it. Don't let the first few chapters discourage you! They're important in setting the scene for what is coming. Though it's a fictional story, this book contains much food for thought.

*Amy Carmichael*, by Kathleen White, Bethany House

Amy Carmichael is a well-known missionary who lived and ministered in India for many years. Numerous books have been written about her. One can learn much by reading this small book that highlights her life. Much of her work centered on saving Indian children from slavery in Hindu temples. Although an invalid for many years, she continued to direct the work and write from her bed. Her whole life was one of obedience to Christ to bring glory to him. Reading about her will inspire and encourage you. I also recommend reading this book to get a picture of life in India in order to pray more intelligently for those who serve Christ in that country.



*Luree Wotton serves as Women's Ministries Coordinator of the Advent Christian General Conference.*

# Their Leadership Left a Legacy



Edwin K. Gedney



Clarence Kirby



Joe Tom Tate



J. Howard Shaw

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*Leadership Endowment Fund*

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## From the Editor

The scariest thing I've ever faced is parenting. The first hint of fear came when Kathy was eight months pregnant with our first child. I think it was during Lamaze class that I began to get the sensation that I was strapped to the tail of a 747 taxiing down the runway. Inexorably, I was rolling toward a thrill-ride that might kill me, and I had absolutely no control.

When the baby arrived the joy was overwhelming. But as I lay listening to her breathing that first night, another emotion washed over me: terror. Suddenly, I felt as if someone had removed a six-inch square of skin from my back. I was vulnerable, hypersensitive to everything that touched my child. It became my duty to protect her from all harm and my failures stung like a slap on skinless flesh.

As my children's world grew, so did my vulnerability. In addition to the accidental pain that threatens all kids (like bicycle wrecks and bee stings), now I am faced with

the prospect of intentional pain inflicted by neighborhood brats, greedy advertisers, and "strangers." How can I hope to protect my family from such pervasive malice? Last year, a man walked into a church in Charlotte, lured a little girl to his van, and kidnapped and molested her. Now I can't even worship without being on alert!

To make matters worse, much of our society actively undermines my efforts to protect my kids. I want them to be innocent; the local school board wants them to practice "safe sex." I want them to be good stewards; Madison Avenue wants them to buy the latest fashions. I want them to live each day by faith; politicians want them to be religious at appointed times and places. Last year the American Psychological Association published a study suggesting fathers aren't important ("Deconstructing the Essential Father," *The American Psychologist*, June 1999). And in September, the United Nations is convening in special session to eliminate parents' rights. Each new day another assault threatens my efforts to raise godly children.

In spite of the many threats to my children and my limited ability to protect them, I do not de-



*Continued on page 8*



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*Years of infertility left...*

## *A Baby-Shaped Hole in My Heart*

by Elizabeth Ellis

For years infertility was a cloud that shadowed almost every aspect of my life. Now my seventeen-month-old daughter, Mary Mei, is sitting across from me cramming markers and crayons into a box. Eight months ago, God

blessed my husband Brad and I with the opportunity to travel to China to adopt this beautiful little girl. The pain of childlessness is gone, but its memory remains, as do the permanent marks it made on my life.

For nine years my husband and I prayed for a child. Our plan was

to start our family after our first year of marriage. Our anniversary came and we had great hopes of soon becoming pregnant. After another year with no success I went to my doctor in tears. This began what would be years of testing, surgeries and very invasive treatments.

Since a biological bond with our child was never of great importance to my husband and I, we looked into adoption early in our infertility. But what we saw were huge costs and many risks, not to mention long waits. In order to adopt a child you must open up your life to an adoption agency, and sometimes birthmothers, to decide whether or not you are fit to be parents. Every aspect of your life is inspected and documented. The whole adoption route seemed much too high a hurdle for us in every way. With the cost of infertility treatments being covered by health insurance (we live in one of the few states that mandates this), the medical route seemed at the time to be our only option.

Pursuing pregnancy with medical intervention is time-consuming, emotionally and physically draining, painful, and, for most people, a great financial commitment. The emotional ups and downs can be overwhelming. I won't go into the details of all that we went through medically. Suffice it to say that we tried many of the treatments avail-



*Mary Mei and Elizabeth*



able, numerous times, and none were successful.

I don't know what it is like for a nonbeliever to go through infertility, but I think there are unique difficulties for a believer. Whether or not a Christian couple decides to pursue medical intervention, they know that they will only get pregnant if God allows it. As a Christian, every month that you aren't pregnant is a direct answer of "No" from God. You have to ask "Why?" Why are people all around me getting pregnant and I'm not? Why do they get pregnant without even trying and our pleas go unanswered? Why does God give more children to people who abuse and neglect them? Why do teenagers get pregnant when I, a married woman of 30 cannot? Why do people who have had abortions get pregnant when all they will do is abort again? Why are drug abusers allowed the miracle of conception and we are not? Are these people more deserving of children than we are?

As Christians we believe that "children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3). These words can be very painful for the couple struggling with infertility. There was a time when I would like to have erased those words from my Bible. I tried to think like the world; conception is just a physiological occurrence, not necessarily a conscious decision by God to bless. Even though it would have made the whole thing easier to bear, I could never completely convince myself of it. Then I tried to think of conception as one of

God's natural laws that just carries on without much intervention from the Creator, like the reproduction of the rest of the living universe. But it never quite fit with the whole of my theology. I always came back to the fact that for some reason God was choosing not to answer our prayers.

So I stopped praying for a child. It was too painful to get my requests rejected month after month, year after year. So I just left it up to God to do as he wanted, since my prayers seemed useless. I struggled with bitterness and feeling as though God wasn't really concerned with my life. I could not rejoice over anyone else's pregnancy. Every time I heard of someone getting pregnant or having a baby I felt a physical pain as though I were being punched in the stomach. It was a reminder of what God was willing to do for others but not for us.

I stopped going to baby showers. It was much too painful. When you are a woman in your late twenties and early thirties it seems that someone in your life is always having a baby. I would often find myself in any room full of people, looking at each individual woman and checking off in my mind those who were mothers. It seemed I was almost always the only woman in the room who was not a mother. I tried to avoid church services with baby dedications. I stayed away from women's groups and school reunions— anywhere that I might be faced with the question, "Do you have any children?"

I stopped going to church on Mother's



Day — it was unbearable. One Mother's Day when I did go to church I sat through the entire sermon with tears streaming down my cheeks. I couldn't stop them. Every hope that had ever been dashed — and there had been countless hopes — was to me a child I had been denied. I thank God that we never have suffered the pain of losing a child and I can only imagine how that would feel. But my arms were still empty and not by choice.

My activities and relationships were affected as I continued longing for a child. I felt like an incom-

So often when the barrenness of women in the Bible comes up in a sermon it is dealt with as a cultural issue. We are told that these women were so desperate for a child because in their culture people needed children to help with the work of life, that it was a patriarchal society that valued sons, that children were needed to care for the parents in their old age. I am sure this is all true, but I think there is much more to it than that. Rachel said, "Give me children, or else I die" (Gen. 30:1). Hannah agonized over her childlessness. Proverbs 30:15-16 says

nate you are to not have children yet, "Your time is your own!" If they know you are trying to conceive, some will say, "Well, you can always adopt" as though that is an easy solution. Or they will tell you that you should adopt because people who adopt always end up getting pregnant. People will even ask why you don't have someone else carry your baby as a surrogate.

The comments always seem to come when you least expect them and when you are not in a good emotional state to be able to respond. Having someone imply that

.....

*My activities and relationships were affected as I continued longing for a child. I felt like an incomplete person and a failure as a woman.*

.....

plete person and a failure as a woman. I avoided people who were being blessed with children. Even church can be a difficult place to be when you see families all around you, always someone in a maternity dress. Bible studies, Sunday school classes, and programs that other couples your age are attending are often geared toward raising young children. An infertile couple feels like they are standing on the sidelines watching God blessing everyone else. While others are doing playgroups and home-schooling and living on a budget and getting home early to put the little ones to bed, you are working and eating out and going to the movies and doing anything you can to not think about what you are missing.

"There are three things that will not be satisfied, Four that will not say 'Enough:' Sheol, and the barren womb, Earth that is never satisfied with water, And fire that never says 'Enough.'" Barrenness is an ache that burns from somewhere deep within the being of a woman.

Trying unsuccessfully to have a child is such a private problem that there aren't many people with whom you can talk honestly about it. Most people don't even know you are trying. It would simply be too difficult to constantly have everyone you know asking you if you are pregnant yet. So you don't tell people. Well-meaning people ask you with a wink when you are going to have a baby. Or they will ask "Don't you want to have kids?" People tell you how fortu-

you are not trying hard enough or that you are childless by choice can tear at the heart of the person whose whole life seems consumed with the desire for a child. Even hearing of other people's miracles can be discouraging to the person feeling forgotten by God. Again, these things are almost always said with the best intentions. Most people simply forget that not everyone who wants children is able to have them. When people are aware of your struggle they are generally sensitive and caring. The most helpful words are as simple as "How are you doing?" and "I am praying for you." My husband and I experienced compassion and kindness from many people during our infertility and were over-

*Continued on page 21*



# *Raising Newborns*

*by Rev. Ronnie Wong*

The first day of my daughter's life was quite stressful as I pondered, "What am I supposed to do?" It was a critical moment in my life: would I be able to do what was required or would I crumble? Those first few days taught me more about ministry through caring for my daughter than I learned in school.

Our days began with a 2 a.m. feeding and a wept diaper. Of course at 2 a.m. my daughter is ready to play and eat, while I'm ready to nod off. At 4 a.m., I'm back in bed. 4:30 a wet diaper happens. I get up to change her and put her down, to her frustration. Mommy now gets up to comfort as only she can. I go back to get some sleep. My eyes close, but 7 a.m. comes quickly. For Madeline Grace Wong, it's time to be held and fed and now changed out of a "dirty" diaper. I'm still trying to wake up.

Now, she sleeps relatively well. Kimberly and I get up only once a night. She still wants to play but sleep is important too. We've met the first part of our many challenges as parents. For me, caring for

a newborn has taught me much about ministry for new Christians because they, too, are newborn into a relationship with Jesus.

We miss the boat many times with new converts because we forget that they are spiritual newborns. The new believer should be "cared for" as a newborn. I emphasize "cared for" and not "treated as" a newborn because it is easy to confuse the two. The newborn, such as my daughter, has only one method of communication and waits upon mom and dad to figure out what she needs. The new Christian needs the spiritually mature to understand and provide for his needs. It requires us to move from pointing out needs to be met, which is something we're good at, to empathizing and meeting these needs.

Distinguishing Maddie's cries became important, too, because we didn't know why she was crying. Often, I thought she just wanted attention or had a wet diaper. I forgot that a newborn baby usually eats every two hours. That most urgent cry was because she was hungry. This also applies to the pastor and church. Many times new

converts' "vocalizations" are dismissed because we misinterpret the cries of hunger. We cannot believe that this new person sitting in our congregation needs more spiritual food and spiritual fellowship than we do. Listen to the cries for spiritual hunger. This takes spending time to get to know the new believer and to understand his patterns.

Here's another interesting similarity between newborns and new believers. My daughter doesn't yet have complete controls over her bowels. We can be holding her, feeding her, or playing with her; she can be napping, calm, quiet or even cooing. Suddenly, whammo, the dirty diaper appears. Our only warning is that distinctive odor that something is not well in Denmark. All it takes to clean up is a trip up to the diaper changing table, 40 or so wet wipes, and a new diaper! Immediately, I can look into my daughter's eyes and see that she's the sweet-smelling baby that I remember her to be. For the pastor and church to miss this "odorous" sign is neglect to the new believer, and implies that the stink

doesn't matter and a dirty diaper is something that has to be put up with rather than changed. Many converts are not babies or innocents. They have stinks and smells that come with them. The problem is that we think they should change themselves. That will not happen. We must be willing to bring them to the changing table and show them that dirty diapers belong in the pail, not on them.

I need to be aware of this as I expect God to bless our congregation with new people and unbelievers. Like a dutiful father, I need to be aware of the needs of new converts as much as I need to feed spiritual meat to maturing saints. Our churches have been

good at feasting upon God's Word and "sucking the marrow" out of it. But we must not choke on the bone in doing so. To raise daughters and to make disciples we need to push back from the table and attend to the newborns that God gives us with our hands ready to feed, clean, and burp.

✝



*Rev. Ronnie Wong serves as pastor of First Advent Christian Church, Hickory, North Carolina.*

Continued from page 2

spair. I know mine is a temporal post. Ultimately, they belong to God and He is their protector. I must do all I can, but He will do more. When I fail, He will succeed. I love; He loves more. I'm strapped to the tail of the 747; He's in the pilot's seat.

Parenthood paranoia has an interesting benefit: today I am a much better Advent Christian. Earlier in my life I wasn't so anxious for the Lord to return. I hoped to experience some of this world's joys before the "last trump." The prospects of marriage, fatherhood, and pastoring tempered any longing I had for Jesus' soon return. Now I would gladly trade these joys for the knowledge that my loved ones are safe. And, as my first daughter approaches her teen years, one cry grows in my head: Maranatha—Our Lord, come! ✝



# ***Kids and Death:***

## ***Helping Our Children Grieve with Hope***

by Rev. Mark D. Woolfington

Like most Christian denominations, the Advent Christian Church has several doctrinal distinctives. One of the most important of these is our belief in conditional immortality. The Scriptural basis for this doctrine is found in 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4, and various other passages throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

### **Conditional Immortality:**

#### **The Declaration of Principles: Article III.**

We believe that man was created for immortality, but that through sin he forfeited his divine birthright; that because of sin, death entered the world, and passed upon all men; and that only through faith in Jesus Christ, the divinely ordained Life-giver, can men become "partakers of the divine nature," and live forever. (2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 51-54)

But conditional immortality is not strictly an Advent Christian belief. A growing number of evangelical scholars and authors support this view, such as E.E. Ellis, Edward Fudge, and John Stott. Still, the majority of Christians around the world hold a belief that the soul lives forever, either in heaven or hell. Related to this, most believe that immediately upon death the soul of the believer is whisked away to heaven, to receive eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Support for the traditional belief is scant in Scripture, but this has become the dominant view.

In a recent edition of a well-known Christian magazine, a reader wrote to a columnist with a question dealing with this issue. The author of the letter wanted to know how to teach her children about death. This is an important question that every parent faces sooner or later. In her response, the columnist warned against using euphemisms such as "sleep." "When talking with our kids about death," she wrote, "we should not tell them that 'Grandpa went to sleep,' either because the child will then be afraid to fall asleep themselves, or that they will not understand the permanence of death." Incredibly, the author then quoted 1 Corinthians

15:51, in which the apostle Paul wrote, "Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This passage refers to both the believer's death, and our transformation at Christ's return. In a letter to the editor, which was published in a later issue of the same magazine, I pointed out the problem of warning readers not to speak of death as sleep, quoting from a passage in which Paul

### **The Intermediate State:**

#### **Article IV.**

We believe that death is a condition of unconsciousness to all persons, righteous and wicked; a condition which will remain unchanged until the resurrection at Christ's Second Coming, at which time the righteous will receive everlasting life while the wicked will be "punished with everlasting destruction;" suffering complete extinction of being. (Ecclesiastes 9:5; Job 14:14; John 5:28-29; Matthew 10:28)



does the very thing that the author warns against. Admittedly, most Christians do not understand death in the same light as Advent Christians do. But no less than Jesus and Paul used this term when speaking of death.

In fact, Jesus even used this term in connection with the death of a child. When a grief stricken father came to Jesus when his daughter had died, Jesus responded by sending the mourners away and saying, "Depart; for the girl has not died, but is asleep" (Matt. 9:24, NASB). The text makes it clear that the little girl had in fact died, as evidenced by the presence of mourners. Jesus raises her from the dead, and gives her back to her parents. But he was ridiculed for believing in "soul sleep" then, just as proponents of the intermediate state are often criticized and denounced today.

How then, do we as parents, pastors, youth pastors, Sunday

school teachers, and parents address children's concerns and questions about death, when considering the theological distinctives that Advent Christians hold?

### **FIRST, KNOW YOUR CHILD.**

Just as children grow and mature physically at different rates, the spiritual maturity of children can vary greatly, even among siblings. Some children grasp things of a spiritual nature more readily and at a younger age than others. No one will know a child's ability to understand the reality and circumstances of death better than his or her parents. Using complicated language, or terms that are beyond the child's ability to understand will only add confusion to what they are already feeling.

### **ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN BOTH TO GRIEVE AND TO SEE YOU GRIEVE FOR THE DECEASED.**

In Paul's instructions to the Thessalonians, he does not tell them not to grieve at all, but he warns against grieving as do those who have no hope. There is a world of difference between the two types of grief. Allowing your children to see Mom or Dad cry shows them that it's okay for them to be sad as well.

### **USE THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REASSURE YOUR**





## **CHILDREN OF THE LOVE OF GOD.**

This can be done by showing them God's promises, such as Psalm 139:16. Help them to see that even Jesus experienced the death of a loved one, his friend Lazarus. (John 11). If the person who has died was a Christian, you can explain God's plan of salvation to your children. They can know for certain that they will see Grandma or Grandpa again, when Christ returns, because of grace. They can have the same relationship with Jesus that their loved one had.

### **BE HONEST.**

We are called as Christians to speak the truth in love, and this applies to the parent-child relationship perhaps more than any

other. If you are uncertain of the deceased's salvation, be very careful about your explanation. Only those who are in Christ will inherit the Kingdom of God. If your child is old enough, and can grasp the concepts of right and wrong, and sin and its consequences, this is another teachable moment for you to explain the benefits of faith in Christ. These benefits include both abundant life in this age, and eternal life in the Kingdom of God when Christ returns.

### **FINALLY, KNOW**

#### **WHEN TO SEEK HELP.**

If a child becomes obsessed with death, either their own, other family members or pets, professional help may be necessary. Depression, recurring nightmares, change in appetite or problems at school

may be signs of a problem. Your pastor should be able to refer you to a Christian counselor or therapist in your area who can help.

The death of a loved one, whether it is a parent, grandparent, or even a family pet, is never easy, no matter what our age. However, by the grace of God, and the promises of his Word, we can go on. Through Christ, death is a conquered enemy. Therefore, "Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Cor. 15:58). †

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# Our Years of Infertility Grief

by Shelley Warner

Grief recovery is a process that I used to think applied only to people suffering from a death loss. I learned differently while my husband was pastoring in Ashland, Maine, and came across some excellent materials for grief workshops. Any painful loss — job termination, geographical relocation, health trauma, or loss of hopes and dreams — can bring deep feelings of grief. When I learned this, I recalled our years of childlessness. Wanting a baby, but being unable to conceive, had indeed been an experience of painful loss for me.

Remembering those years of

childlessness brought to mind a church-planting ministry that we were involved in during the early years of our marriage. Several other couples met with us in a house church; they were all young parents. The women, experiencing the beginning challenges of mothering, were closer to each other than to me. When tensions sometimes arose, I felt an emotional distance from them. I was the only one unable to have children. I could feel my self-image plummeting on occasion. It was a difficult time.

The years went by. Doctors could find no cause for our infertility. Then a little girl came into our lives who helped me to come

to a very important decision. Holly was 18 months old. Her mother hired me to do childcare while she worked a variety of shifts at the local zoo. My favorite time to care for Holly was Sunday. I'd dress her in cute little dresses and take her with us to church. After church, there'd be picnics in the park, feeding part of our lunch to the ducks, or lunch out in a restaurant. What precious times!

When her mother quit her job, I missed Holly so much! I realized how much I'd come to love her and with that realization came a very important insight. Giving birth to a child was not important to me. I prayed about adoption. Then I opened to the Psalms, and one verse almost leapt off the page:

"He makes the barren woman abide in the house as the joyful mother of children. Praise the Lord!" (Psalm 113:9 NASB)

During the next few years, we were attending Bible College and working part time. Unfortunately, adoption agencies weren't interested in impoverished students as prospective parents. The passing of time brought a deeper sense of loss and frustration. Mother's Day became a day of sadness and embarrassment, especially during one church service when the pastor invited all moms to form a receiving line at the close of the morning service. My prevailing thought as I walked past them shaking their



*Shelley and Andy*



hands was: "How can I get out of here as soon as possible?" I wondered if I had just imagined that Psalm 113:9 was God's personal promise to me.

Toward the end of Bible College, we encountered a hopeful situation. We were introduced to a 16-year-old girl who was pregnant. A student at our school and his wife spent hours with her, trying to persuade her to consider a Christian adoption. In the end, she accepted her parents' counsel instead, and had an abortion. On the day that she decided to end the baby's life, I came home from work sick at heart. Overcome with sorrow, I gave way to tears. Then the phone rang.

I don't remember the reason for my friend's call. Even though she was a member at the church we attended, she had no idea of the struggle we were having. Her questions about my tearful voice brought out the whole story. "You know," she answered, "I have a friend who has adopted from India. Would you be interested?"

One year later, we waited at the airport for our tiny son from Calcutta. The plane finally arrived. My stomach flip-flopped as we watched a long line of passengers disembark from the plane. At last! We spotted two women carrying Indian baskets. Small brown faces peered out from among

blankets and bottles. A crowd gathered round as the women set down their cargo and held up the first infant. "Warner," she called. "Shelley!" exclaimed my friend, Teena. "That's your baby!" As my little son was placed into my arms, I saw my brother, Chris, standing above me on a chair snapping pictures. I looked down at my featherweight bundle. I knew that my years of childlessness had ended. Now I looked forward to that formerly much-resented question: "Do you have children?" How good it felt a few days later while making conversation with a stranger at a bus stop to say, "YES! I DO! I have a brand new baby boy from India!"

For me, the problem of infertility was now solved. I had

learned from Holly that it's bonding, not birth, that makes a child my own. When Andy was still a little guy (now he towers over me), a friend once remarked, "Maybe someday you'll be lucky and have a child of your own." I looked at her in disbelief. "I am lucky," I answered. "I do have a child of my own!" Six years after Andy's arrival, we waited at a Boston airport for the arrival of a beautiful baby girl from the same orphanage. This time one escort disembarked with an infant in her arms. She placed Corina in my arms, who then reached her baby hand to my face and smiled at me. She completed our family in a wonderful way.

Now Andy is 19 and Corina is 13. Remembering our eleven years of childlessness, I am so grateful that the solution for our infertility was adoption. I know that, for some, the desire to give birth to a baby is a deeply felt need. For them, there may be a medical answer—or God may just do a miracle, as he recently did for a couple in our church. But Tom and I needed to wait for God's promised gift of a child through adoption. And he wonderfully answered our need! †



*Shelley and Tom Warner live in San Diego, California, where Tom pastors North Park Community Church.*

# The Rebellious Son

by Rev. David W. Davis

He had it all — youth, looks, charisma, and even position. Life was easy, and no need or want of his went unmet. After all, he was a favored son of the king of Israel. He even had ambitious goals — he wanted to be king! Yet, despite all the positive attributes Absalom possessed, he lacked integrity and did not walk in close union with Yahweh, the God of his nation.

A sheltered life did not keep Absalom from hard realities. His father, David, was often away leading military campaigns. Therefore, his father had little time for him — to share in his dreams and ambitions; to praise his accomplishments; to encourage him in his disappointments; and to reprimand him when he had done wrong. Worse, yet, his father set a terrible example for him by committing adultery with another man's wife. He even watched his father unsuccessfully cover-up his sin, resulting in an innocent man's death.

All children are influenced by the behavior of their parents and Absalom was no different. Scrip-

ture does not record for us Absalom's feelings regarding his father, but in the narratives we have, one can assume that Absalom lost respect for his father. This lack of respect must have grown into apathy and finally, through the years, into hatred. Certainly he would be a better monarch than David ever could be, at least in his mind, if only he had the opportunity.

When the heir-apparent, Amnon, raped Absalom's sister, it may have sparked the beginning of

his quest to seize the throne of the nation. Absalom may have been counting on his father to discipline Amnon — he must have thought his father would punish Amnon most severely. After all, Amnon proved himself a fool in defiling a highly valued and pro-

tected virgin daughter. Yet, as angry as David was, he did nothing. Absalom took matters into his own hands, ordering his men to kill Amnon, which they did.

Everything went according to plan: Amnon was dead, the men who did the dirty work escaped, and Absalom fled to the refuge of his grandfather's home. It would

be there in the safe confines of the East, he would plan an insurrection. Undoubtedly, in the three years he was in Geshur, Absalom formed alliances and mustered the military support he would need during the uprising.

There are some gaps in the biblical account of Absalom in 2 Samuel. For instance, what happened to Kileab, David's second son? Evidently he died, for Joab seemed to indicate that as long as Absalom remained estranged and alienated from David in Geshur, Israel was being denied a successor to the throne. Another uncertainty is how David was consoled concerning Amnon's death. Was it the guilt from his own adultery and murder that caused him to be lenient toward Absalom or was Absalom David's favorite son? David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, and, even though David waited another two years before seeing his son, Absalom's life was pretty much normal. The author of 2 Samuel writes that Absalom married and had three sons and a daughter. Interestingly, Absalom named his daughter after his sister, Tamar.

With Amnon and Kileab dead, Absalom was now the next in line to succeed his father. By all appearances the throne of Israel would soon be his. Yet his pride and lack of restraint would not allow him to wait until his father's death. Instead, his obsession to be

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in charge consumed him.

While in Jerusalem, Absalom put the final pieces of his conspiracy in place. His network of supporters were secured and he stole the hearts of the people — “If only I were judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets jus-

tice.” Nothing was going to stop him now — so he thought.

After four years of being in Jerusalem, Absalom’s ego could stand it no longer. He had to be king, and he would be proclaimed king in Hebron, the place of his birth, under the guise of fulfilling a vow. David unknowingly gave his blessing to Absalom’s plot by let-

ting him go to Hebron, and as Absalom and his entourage were in route to Hebron, his messengers were fanning out through the nation to proclaim him king. Absalom must have been very convincing as he gained support for his conspiracy, for even the trusted advisor to King David, Ahithophel, became a traitor and lent his support to Absalom and the insurrection.

David learned too late that the son he loved wanted not only his throne, but also wanted to take his life. So in order to save Jerusalem from destruction and his own life, he fled the city. David knew he had to act quickly and decisively if he were to remain in leadership, for Absalom’s rebellion was already widespread. If anyone could help him combat Absalom and the traitor Ahithophel, it would be Hushai. Armed with the same charisma possessed by Absalom, Hushai deceived Absalom, convincing him that he, too, was joining the rebel in his pursuit to the throne.

Absalom was at the crossroads. The plan was set in motion, but he didn’t know how to proceed. Therefore he consulted those who knew his father best — Ahithophel and Hushai. Absalom turned to Ahithophel first, who advised him flawlessly: “Sleep with your father’s concubines, then all Israel will know that you are serious about being the king, and that all hope of reconciliation between you and your father will be severed.” This pleased Absalom and he promptly acted on Ahithophel’s suggestion.

Ahithophel, knowing all of



David's military strategy and contacts, counseled Absalom to assemble as quickly as possible an army of twelve thousand men to locate and exterminate David and his supporters. If Absalom was prompt, David would be caught off guard and would be unable to recover his kingdom.

Absalom, not willing to listen to only one advisor, also sought the advice of Hushai. Hushai gave contrary counsel, knowing full well that advice of Ahithophel would surely succeed. Under divine guidance, Hushai appealed to the pride and arrogance of Absalom, and craftily convinced him that he should summon a vast army with which to pursue his father. Not only that, Absalom should be the one to lead this army into battle. Absalom and his conspirators bought the plan hook, line and sinker.

Hushai bought David the time he needed to secure the reinforcements to stop the rebellion and reclaim Jerusalem and the throne. However, as he sent his commanders into battle it was with the orders not to harm Absalom.

As the battle commenced, David's men fought brilliantly, and the army of Israel, under the command of Absalom, was defeated. The sword claimed 20,000 men, with the forest taking the lives of many more. During the battle, the invincible Absalom became

trapped between the branches of an oak tree — suspended by the hair of his head. One of David's men came upon Absalom's predicament and reported it to the commander Joab. Knowing that as long as Absalom lived the threat of rebellion against David would continue, Joab plunged three javelins into Absalom's heart, leaving his armor-bearers to put Absalom out of his misery. Instead of sitting on the throne of Israel, Absalom

lies in the forest, buried in a pit covered with rocks — a victim of his own scheme.

Once David learns the news concerning Absalom he is devastated. In anguish he cries out, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you — O Absalom, my son, my son!"

What can we learn from the life of Absalom? First, parenting is an enormous responsibility, and proper discipline must be exercised by parents to correct sinful bends in their children — even if the parents made the same mistakes the children are now making. Also, parents must remember that they set an

example for their children — all the time. Children emulate their parents, even the negative characteristics and sinful behaviors. Therefore, it's important that Christian parents live a godly life before their children.

Finally, the most important lesson that can be learned from the life of Absalom is that God's will cannot be thwarted, even by the free will of human beings. Through the mouth of the prophet Nathan, God told David that murder and turmoil would mark his family's life. Little did he realize that when he sinned with Bathsheba that he would pay with the death of four of his sons, the third of which was Absalom, the most rebellious of them all. †

Parents must remember that they set an example for their children — all the time.



*Rev. David Davis pastors Goodwins Mills Advent Christian Church, Dayton, Maine. He and his wife Vicki have four children: Kelsey, Nathan, Kristyn, and Noah.*



# Daddy,

# May I Take Communion?

by Dr. Gordon Isaac

The question came up again this last Sunday as the communion plate passed by. Ian looked up into his mom's face and asked if he could have a piece of the bread and drink from one of those little cups. Quietly, with all the confidence of a well-rehearsed response his mother replied, "Not today son, you need to wait until you are a little older." The question may have its answer for the time being, but it raises the issue of when it will be appropriate for Ian to partake of the Lord's Supper and on what grounds.

If it had only to do with credentials I suppose I would say yes. He knows the Lord's Prayer, he recites the Apostle's Creed with me from time to time, and he is becoming more adept at extemporaneous prayers. Ian is usually the first to raise his hand to answer Bible questions in Sunday school and he's eight years old. Why shouldn't he be allowed to partake

of the Lord's Supper?

As a father, I want to do all I can to help my son understand the faith and live it out. I have no de-



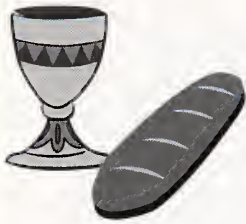
sire to withhold good things from him, or to make him wait to participate in the life of the church, including the Lord's Supper, with only a "just because" as a final answer. So how do I deal with this

issue with fatherly concern and theological integrity, and what should drive my answer? Clearly, not everyone in the Christian church has answered this question in the same way.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church today, infants, not just children, are regularly communed. The practice allows for an infant cradled in a parent's arms to receive Holy Communion. The thought behind this practice is predicated on the belief that anyone who is baptized should not be excluded from communion. Orthodox children are baptized in infancy (by immersion no less!), thus they are also communed as infants. "Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). The Orthodox believe that infants belong at the table when the

church celebrates this important moment of worship.

Admittedly, the Orthodox position on this subject looks extreme to one coming from an Advent Christian perspective, if not



bizarre. Leaving aside the question of infant baptism, which is a subject of its own, what does one say to the idea of communing infants? First, it should be pointed out that while it is true that there is evidence that infant communion was practiced for a short period of time early in church history, that is not reason enough for us to follow suit. It has not been the overall consensus of the church and it is not binding on us today.

Further, this view seems to assume that grace is not God's unmerited favor, and instead thinks of it as a "substance" that is "infused" into people. One can participate and receive "grace" quite apart from the faith of the recipient!

Martin Luther, in critiquing the Roman Catholic Church, insisted that the Lord's Supper is the offer of God's promise to his people to be received in faith and to strengthen faith, not a ceremony that infused something into the life of a person apart from faith.

In Scripture, the Lord's Supper assumes active rather than passive participation. In Matthew 26 Jesus says, "Take and eat; this

is my body... Drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins... Do this in remembrance of me." The imperatives that Jesus utters are to be followed by the actions of believers. Jesus speaks, his people hear and respond. Since the supper is a summary of the Gospel ("for the forgiveness of

sins") we are called to receive it in faith. Thus, both adults and children who hear the voice of their Lord are invited to participate in the Word proclaimed in the Supper.

In 1 Corinthians 10-11, Paul identifies the Supper with the proclamation of the Lord's death and connects faith with

self-examination. This passage does not speak of self-examination in such a way that God's grace is dependent upon human effort, but neither does it allow faith or self-examination to be treated as peripheral matters. Rather, Paul argues that people are confronted with the death of Christ in the supper, the response of the believer entails self-examination as well as reception, since the cross both discloses the real-

ity of sin and promises release from sin. Since infants are not capable of recognizing sin or desiring forgiveness, they should not participate in the Lord's Supper. For these reasons I disagree with the Orthodox even though they have good intentions.

My wife Beth, who grew up as a Congregationalist, did not take her first communion until she was about thirteen years old. Dedicated as an infant and raised in the church, she went through confirmation class as a teenager before she first participated in the Lord's Supper. The confirmation class gave instruction on a number of basic theological issues regarded as essential knowledge for every Christian. The pastor taught the class, and Beth sat side-by-side with some of her church friends who had been baptized as infants. (Congregationalists allow for both baby dedication and infant baptism at the discretion of the parents.) Beth was baptized before she received her first communion.

In believer-baptism traditions, such as our own, when a child first begins to receive the Lord's Supper is left to the parents. Someone from the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church told me that in his congregation there are some parents who allow their five- and six-year-olds

I disagree with the Orthodox even though they have good intentions.





to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Southern Baptists require baptism before the first communion, but also baptize children as young as four or five. The trend lately is to go younger and younger. Other groups are more comfortable to have their children wait until closer to teen years. As we have already seen, among Congregationalists, and the more strongly Catholic and Reformed traditions, first communion follows baptism and may or may not follow confirmation class.

It is interesting how close the actual practice of a wide number of liturgical and non-liturgical traditions are on this issue. Roman Catholics, Lutherans, some Reformed, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Nazarene, Baptists of various kinds, as well as Advent Christians, allow for children to receive the Lord's Supper at a relatively early age. All these diverse traditions have roughly similar practice with this one difference: in the liturgical traditions, partaking of communion follows baptism as the rite of entrance into the church; whereas in the baptistic traditions, generally

**Both adults and children who hear and believe receive its benefit.**

speaking, partaking of the Lord's Supper can often precede baptism.

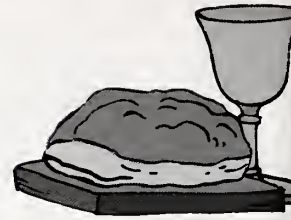
Already certain principles are emerging which help to clarify when a young person should begin to receive the Lord's Supper. Clearly, Scripture must be at the heart of our attempts to answer this important question. As Protestants, we affirm that Scripture is the sole rule for faith and practice. As an expression of our discipleship, we seek to conform our worship to the gracious flow of God's history with his people. There are at least three issues that help give direction to our answer.

Already certain principles are emerging which help to clarify when a young person should begin to receive the Lord's Supper. Clearly, Scripture must be at the heart of our attempts to answer this important question. As Protestants, we affirm that Scripture is the sole rule for faith and practice. As an expression of our discipleship, we seek to conform our worship to the gracious flow of God's history with his people. There are at least three issues that help give direction to our answer.

**FIRST**, the nature of the Lord's Supper, as proclamation of the Word, is central in how we proceed. The supper is a summary of the Gospel that is to be received in faith. Central in our celebrating together are the words, "given and shed for you for the remission of sins." The Lord's Supper conveys exactly what the word of preaching does, so that the old Adam is put to death and the new life of faith springs up. Both adults and children who hear and believe receive its benefit.

In the Old Testament, the Passover celebration consisted in the eating of certain kinds of food and rehearsing the Exodus story of Israel. On this occasion, the entire family was gathered around the table to celebrate the salvation that God had provided the people. As is taught in Exodus 12, the son asks, "what does this ceremony mean?" The father responds by saying, "It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians." In later celebrations, the questions asked by the son were expanded and formalized. The point here is that adults and children participate side-by-side in celebrating God's salvation. This should be no less true of the people of the New Testament gathered around the table at which the last will and testament of our Lord and Savior was established as an act of worship, celebrating his death and resurrection and directing our gaze to his soon return.

**SECOND**, we need to be careful that we do not set up a new law that will bind consciences. The exact age of first communion is not a matter of religious law but of parental and pastoral recommendation based on the nature of



the Lord's Supper itself and a discernment of readiness. The Gospel embodied in the supper is to produce and nourish faith. Faith believes something. Faith is trust in someone. There needs to be sufficient capacity to know that someone and to desire the fullness of the Gospel. Some children may not be ready at age ten, while others may be ready at a much earlier age. Some parents and pastors may prefer waiting for a more formal period of instruction. These are decisions that should be open for discussion.

**THIRD**, the question of when a child may first participate in the Lord's Supper gives Advent Christian pastors and churches the opportunity to respond to the need for concentrated teaching on this issue. Most of our churches do not have an established practice of formal instruction, or confirmation class. But it may be that in light of this issue we may be moved to think again about how we intend to increase the discipleship of our people through systematic teaching.

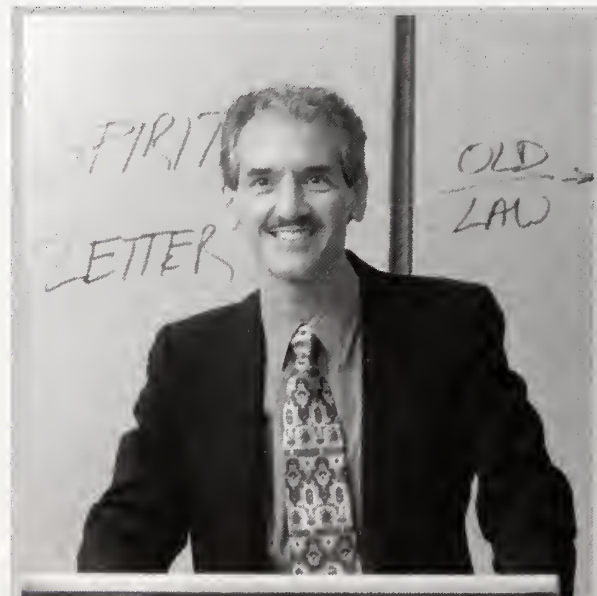
In the sixteenth century, Luther visited in some of the churches in Germany and discovered great ignorance among the pastors and the laity. He found that there were Christians who did not know the Lord's Prayer,

the Creed or the Ten Commandments. In this dire circumstance, Luther urged the pastors to begin teaching the people these fundamentals of the faith so that they would know them by heart. Luther was convinced that without knowledge of these essentials a person could not function properly as a Christian.

The challenge comes to us today. The most recent Barna report indicates that there is a growing biblical illiteracy in society at large, and in the church as well. Our people need biblical preaching and grounding in the es-

entials of the faith. As we exercise ourselves learning the words of life, we will be better prepared to answer the difficult questions that arise in the journey of faith including the issue of when a young person should take their first communion.

While Ian is learning and growing in the faith, he will wait a little longer to receive his first communion. But as his father I am eager for the time when I will turn to him in the worship service, offer to him the bread and the cup and together we will celebrate the victory of God in the supper. ☩



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whelmed by the outpouring of support when we adopted our daughter.

As our particular "thorn in the flesh, infertility did bring about certain fruit in the lives of my husband and I. It strengthened our marriage because it was a pain we both felt and had to work through together. In

our questioning God we were able to grow closer to him and were forced to place our trust in him fully. We clung to the promises in God's Word.

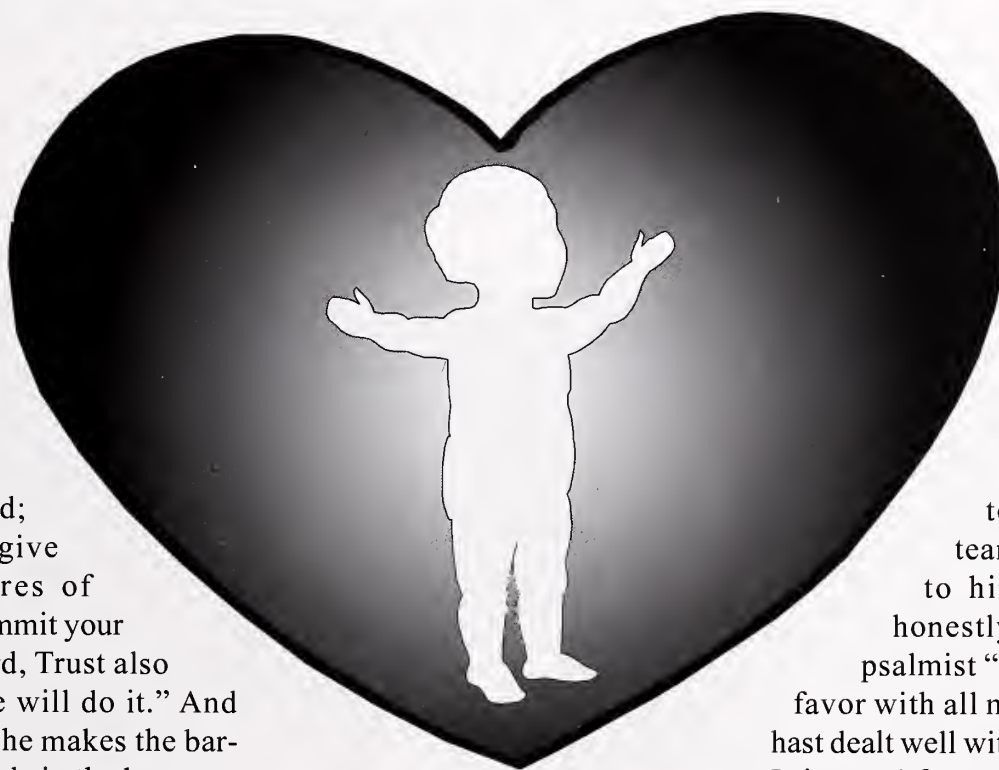
Promises such as Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord; And he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in him, and he will do it." And Psalm 113:9, "he makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children." Though I did not understand why God was withholding from us our hearts' desire I was comforted by the fact that "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

Obviously my husband and I did finally decided adoption was possible for us. After the grieving

there was healing and suddenly there was joy and hope. As in Psalm 77:10, "Then I said, "It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed." God had done a work in our hearts; we knew that he had a child for us and that we would go to China to get her.

In my studies in Bible college I learned about the "God-shaped

*One evening as I sat with my husband in our adoption class it occurred to me that what I had in my heart was a baby-shaped hole.*



hole" that we all have, which needs to be filled. One evening as I sat with my husband in our adoption class it occurred to me that what I had in my heart was a baby-shaped hole. It was an open wound that could only be filled with one thing, a baby. And specifically, our baby. Not necessarily our biological offspring, but the child that God had cho-

sen from the foundation of the earth to be raised by us. I now know that child. She was the fruit of someone else's womb but she is our "reward" (Psalm 127:3) and has filled my emptiness forever. If God had answered my fervent prayers at the exact time and in the exact way that I had prayed them, we would not have this particular perfect-for-us

child. And she would not have us.

I hope that every couple reading this who is going through their own battle with infertility will be encouraged that they aren't alone and that God has not forgotten them. Your tears are precious to him. I can now honestly say with the psalmist "I entreated Thy favor with all my heart...Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant... It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes...I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me" (Psalm 119:58, 65, 71, 75). Great is his faithfulness! †

*Elizabeth, Brad, and Mary Mei Ellis live in Gill, Massachusetts, and attend Vernon Advent Christian Church.*

# What's a Pa

by David Roper

He is my Jacob Lord, and I must pray, "Wrestle with him please, 'till break of day.

My wrestling days are past nor did they any good, but if you'd take him on I know it would."

—Ruth Bell Graham

I wonder about Isaac and Rebekah, left at home, heartbroken at the disintegration of their family. Surely, like most believing parents, they sought a godly off-

spring, yet Jacob seems to have lost his way. How many sleepless nights did they spend wondering where they went wrong?

When our children make unwise decisions: when they abuse alcohol, do drugs, get pregnant, drop out of school, turn their backs on family and God, do we not ask ourselves the same question?

In the dark hours of the night, we relentlessly rehearse our failure as parents: "What did we do that we should not have done?"

"What should we have done that we did not do?" We collapse into self-doubt and condemnation. We feel like failures, our children the tragic victims of our gross mismanagement.

There is, however, no absolute correlation between the way people parent and the way their children respond. Good parenting does make a difference, but it doesn't guarantee that the results will necessarily be good.

We're all acquainted with families where cruelty, abuse, ne-





# rent to Do?

glect, violence and alcoholism are the norm, yet the children turn out remarkably well. They have good friends, do well in school, get jobs and hold them. They end up in stable marriages and handle their parental responsibilities with wisdom and love.

On the other hand, we're aware of families where the parents are warm, nurturing, kind, firm, wise and giving and yet there is at least one prodigal and sometimes more than one.

It's certainly better to be one kind of parent than the other, but the fact remains that despite our best efforts sometimes our children choose to go wrong.

But, you say, what about that proverb: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6)? That sounds very much like a guarantee, but it's not.

The biblical proverbs are not promises. They are premises — general rules or axioms. Proverbs 22:6 is a statement of general truth much like our contemporary saying: "As the twig is bent so the tree is inclined." That's a maxim that sets forth a truth applicable in most cases, but not necessarily so. There are always exceptions to the rule.

The reason there are exceptions is that children are not mindless matter that can be shaped and formed at will, but thinking, choosing individuals who may,

even with the best of parenting, choose to go their own way. Even God, who is the perfect parent, has always had trouble with his children — Adam and Eve to name only two. You and me, to name two more.

We cannot produce godly children. And if we believe we can — that by applying certain techniques and rules we can generate good behavior — we may be in for bitter disillusionment and heartache. No one can determine or predict what their offspring will do. It was Joaquin Andujar, poet and pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals, who said you could sum up baseball in one word: "You never know." His word count was off, but he captured the essence of parenting as well as baseball: you never know.

Given that uncertainty, the question we should be asking ourselves is not, "How can I produce good children?", but rather, "How can I be a good parent?" The two questions appear to be the same, but they're not. The first has to do with results; the second with process. The first puts all the responsibility on us; the second leaves the

results to God. The first is concerned with matters beyond our control; the second with things that are well within our control.

If our focus is on process rather than results the questions then become, "How can I deal with my impatience, my temper and anger, my selfishness, my re-

sentment, my stubbornness, my defensiveness, my pride, my laziness, my unwillingness to listen?" "How can I deal with my addictions?" "How can I strengthen my marriage?" "How can I develop my parenting skills?" "How can I build bridges of grace — forgiveness and acceptance — that may make it possible for my prodigal to return?" "How can I grow in love for my Father God and become more like him?"

These are the things that ought to occupy us — things that we can do — and then we must leave the consequences to God.

Ruth Bell Graham has written again, "Lord, I will straighten all I can and You take over what I cannot do." †

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Good parenting does make a difference, but it doesn't guarantee that the results will necessarily be good.

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).

Solve the clues and fill in the letters in the corresponding blocks below. The small letters in the blocks indicate which clue that letter comes from. The first one is done for you.

A. To squeeze or twist. WRING  
25 6 66 17 33

B. To witness or tell.             
23 20 39 57 47 29

C. Let borrow.             
4 28 46 37

D. To pay attention to.             
11 31 42 68

E. Right.             
1 24 15 53 51 64 59

F. The final enemy.             
35 56 21 44 65

G. The beat, time, or measure of rhythmical motion.             
10 18 5 70 43 22 48

H. Well-being, free from sickness.             
30 16 32 67 49 60

I. Knight's title.             
9 62 19

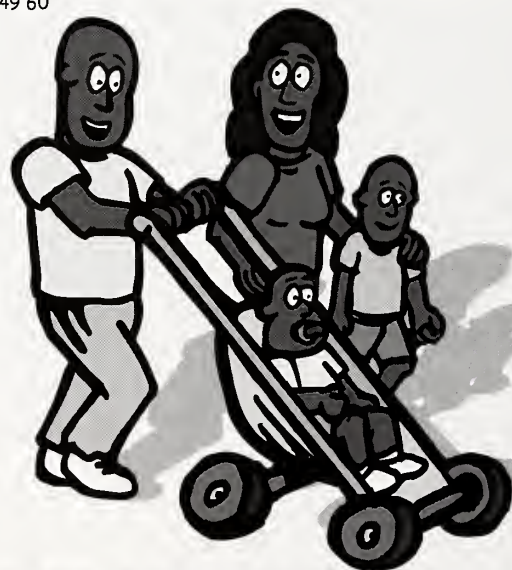
J. Land surrounded by water.             
3 45 13 36 8 38

K. To tear.             
41 12 52

L. Acquaintance.             
58 69 54 61 71 55

M. String used to sew with.             
27 2 63 34 40 14

N. Female chicken.             
50 7 26



1 E	2 M	3 J	4 C	5 G	6 A R	7 N	8 J	9 I		10 G	11 D	12 K	13 J	14 M	15 E	16 H	17 A N
	18 G	19 I	20 B		21 F		22 G	23 B	24 E	25 A W	26 N		27 M	28 C		29 B	30 H
31 D		32 H	33 A G	34 M	35 F		36 J	37 C	38 J		39 B	40 M	41 K	42 D	43 G	44 F	45 J
	46 C	47 B	48 G		49 H	50 N	51 E		52 K	53 E	54 L	55 L	56 F		57 B	58 L	
59 E	60 H	61 L	62 I	63 M		64 E	65 F	66 A J	67 H	68 D	69 L	70 G	71 L				

—Proverbs 17:6





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

Cross out every other letter.

XSIOLNKSEABRWEMA

DHPEARLINTCANGHEKF

ORYOCMETUHSSELLIOJ

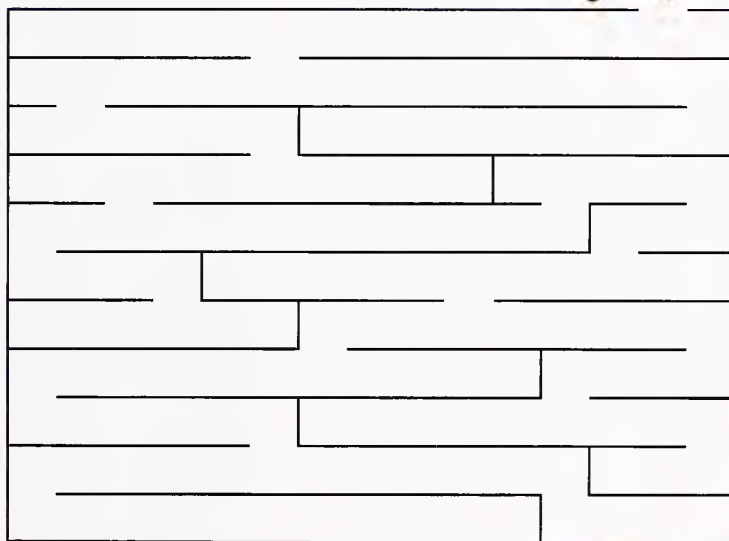
REDUCTHAIPLODRRSE

PNIATRYEMWEAKRID

SFHRNOBMTHCIWM.

—Psalm 127:3

Help the child get to his parents.



Match these parents to their child.

- Adam & Eve
- Abraham & Sarah
- Jacob & Rachel
- Isaac & Rebekah
- David & Bathsheba
- Boaz & Ruth
- Zechariah & Elizabeth

- Esau
- Benjamin
- Obed
- Isaac
- Abel
- Solomon
- John

Change each letter to the letter that comes before it in the alphabet.



IPX HSFBU JT UIF MPWF

UIF GBUIFS IBT MBWJTIFE

PO VT, UIBU XF TIPVME CF

DBMMFE DIJMESFO PG HPE!

—1 John 3:1



# Homeschooling:

by Noelle Carle

When our oldest son was just starting school, after the second or third day, he came home in tears, not wanting to go back. My mind sifted through the litany of possible reasons why he might be having problems, from bullies to difficulties with the alphabet. I was completely unprepared when he sobbed, "I have to be away from you and Daddy so long." Outwardly calm I explained how many hours are in a day, and really, he was only going to be at school one quarter of each day. Inwardly I was torn. What choice did we have? Eventually we all adjusted.

Four years later, when his sister started first grade, she was much more vocal and persistent in her protests. Every morning she cried. Every morning we forced her onto the bus. Her first four years were marred and marked by an impatient teacher who yelled at the students and, remarkably, kept being advanced with the class. By then, homeschooling was just beginning to emerge, but it was radical, and practically unheard of. Again we felt we were without any choice.

We prayed for and with our children as we sent them out, into the hands of trained educators. We endeavored to maintain our connection with them, what they were learning, what they were

hearing at recess, who were their friends, who were the bullies. But gradually we became part of another world called home, while they were profoundly influenced and affected by the world at school. The validity of our opinions crumbled away under the solid authority of their teachers and their peers. Their curiosity and wonder and enchantment was stifled and soon replaced with knowledge of things they shouldn't know, a worldliness that made them prematurely cynical and doubtful of the truths we were trying to teach them at home and at church, and a skewered understanding of relationships.

It is in looking back that I see these things. At the time we were living the average American life. With few exceptions our children were living out the average American childhood. It's the exceptions that make me grieve over our too leisurely involvement. Why did we wait so long to speak to the boy's parents in our neighborhood who was physically hurting our son on the bus every day? "Let kids work out their own differences," is what we were told, even by Andy Griffith! But it wasn't a solution. How could we erase the words and pictures in our six-year-old daughter's mind after her peer described what he'd seen on a pornographic video? Why didn't we complain about the number of

movies being shown at school before they played Stephen King's "It," resulting in nightmares for two weeks? How could we ease the distress of leaving friends when we moved? How could we make the daunting task of making new friends easier?

God has brought us through each episode that came along. We grew and matured as parents, and they grew and matured as children. I wish we'd been quicker to recognize the problems and more eager to pursue alternatives.

Our oldest son graduated with an adequate education from the public school system. He is a social creature who makes friends easily, and he enjoys and draws energy from groups of people. But I look back on his life and see so many opportunities lost, so many moments I did not savor and now barely remember. There are big gaps in his life that are a blank to me. I started out with his baby book, but that only goes so far! What did he think about when he was ten? What did he love to do and long to be? It's gone so swiftly. I can and do build on our relationship now, yet I sense that part of him is lost to me because I never realized how precious his childhood was and how rapidly it passes.

Now I homeschool our daughter and youngest son. Homeschooling is flourishing and



# *The Benefits to Parents*

is definitely a viable option for those who wish to pursue it. People homeschool for various reasons. Some parents object to the schools being used as a venue to promote immoral or amoral lifestyles. This is happening, as evidenced in a recent decision by the PTA to endorse the video "It's a Family," upholding the "naturalness" of a gay family. Some parents homeschool from a purely educational standpoint. They want to provide a moral base and life skills beyond what children would learn in school. They want to teach outside what the schools are allowed. Some parents simply want to have more influence over their children than their peers have. They want to indulge and encourage their child's innate curiosity rather than have it constrained by a rigid schedule and teachers who can't possibly focus on twenty-five to thirty children at once. Our reasons include parts of all of these, and others.

And the verdict is in — homeschooling is good for children. According to a study by Dr. Brian Ray, the president of the National Home Education Research Institute, homeschoolers excel in nationally standardized achievement exams. On average, homeschoolers surpass their public school peers by thirty to thirty-seven percentile points across all

subjects. A parent's educational background has no substantive effect on their children's home education performance and their scores remain between the 80th and 90th percentile, whether their teaching parent has a college degree or did not complete high school. Homeschoolers spend more time at the library, are actively engaged in social and community activities and spend significantly less time watching TV than do public school children. And the majority of homeschoolers who graduate go on to pursue postsecondary education.

But beyond all this, for me, homeschooling has been a benefit

for one very important reason. I have the opportunity and the privilege to know my daughter and my youngest son in a way that is not afforded when they are in public school. I see them learn and grow and change. I learn along with them. I enjoy their company every day and am drinking in the fact of their presence. I'm fully aware that I may not, for some reason, be able to homeschool forever. I sense already that I may be too uneducated to teach algebra, calculus, and chemistry. But for now, I am savoring these moments, against a time, in the not too distant future, when my children will be adults. †



Russell and Noelle Carle served as missionaries to New Zealand for four years. They live in Portsmouth, N.H., and have three children, Ryan, Emily, and Peter.

# THINKING THINGS OVER

by Miriam Snow Priebe

Today I saw two small boys enjoying a ride on the seesaw we have here on the grounds. One of the boys suddenly jumped off, sending his friend plummeting to the earth. I ran over to see if the child was hurt, but he shook off my attentions and started across the grass toward the place where his mother stood talking with a friend. He did not utter a sound until he was within reach of his mother, then he started to howl.

I was reminded of my own children who used to do the same thing. Then I remembered how I, too, used to contain my grief until one of my parents was nearby to comfort me. I bet all of us can remember holding back the tears until someone who cared for us could hear our wails!

Charles and I were fortunate to have parents who lived well into their eighties. There were so many times across the years that, after driving several hundred miles to see our folks, we would sit around a table and talk about our problems with them. Sometimes the worries of the day were minor, but other times they were bad enough to bring the tears. We knew that our parents heard and understood.

I have attended many funerals in my life, and have noticed that the bereaved ones often showed no grief until a certain friend or relative came to comfort them. With the arms of that special, caring person around them they suddenly would start to cry.

We all hope to have friends like that around us when we need to cry. I believe, too, that all of us want to be comforters to those we love. Hearing the grief of others is harder for some of us than for others who seem to be born with the gift of comforting. But we can all try.



*Miriam Snow Priebe is a frequent contributor to the Witness. She and her husband Charles divide their time between Gulfport, Florida and Mechanic Falls, Maine.*

How fortunate we are to have a God that cares when we hurt. In ancient times, people used to keep the tears of loved ones in a small bottle. What a lovely symbol of caring! The Bible speaks of how God saves our tears in a bottle! He cherishes us and he is the great Comforter. That is a good thing to remember today! †



# Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall Mirror, Mirror, on the Wall

by Bea Moore

Women today are smarter, more beautiful and more talented than ever before. Do you agree? No? They should be. Look at all the resources at their fingertips. Three women's magazines sit on the table before me, and what intriguing ideas they suggest to the reader!

"Flip on your happiness switch! Researchers reveal how to do it."

"Stressed? Secrets to Serenity."

"Can't Fail Diet — Lose 20 lbs. by Spring." (And above this heading on the cover is a beautiful rose-covered cake — 449 calories per serving!)

Beauty. What is it? Face lifts, tucks here and there, implants, reductions? I read about a man whose skin was pulled so tight from cosmetic surgery that every time he sat down his mouth opened! (I haven't had cosmetic surgery, but occasionally have foot and mouth disease.)

What *really* is beauty? The dictionary defines it as "something that delights the eyes, excites an admiring pleasure. Or, "intellectual or moral sense, grace, charm or pleasing excellence."

We've all heard that "beauty is only skin deep," or, "beauty is as beauty does." I decided to look at women in the Bible to see how

they measured up in the beauty area.

**Eve** — "Created in the image of God.") Beautiful. Innocent. Holy. "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). She listened to Satan, disobeyed God, and sin and death resulted. Beauty is as beauty does?

**Sarah** — Abraham's wife. Her beauty was legendary. "When Abraham came to Egypt, the Egyptians saw that she was a very beautiful woman" (Gen. 12:14). Hebrews 11 cites her faith with her husband's, but she was a con- niver — deceitful and manipulative. She couldn't wait for God to fulfill his promise to give her a son and concocted a plan of her own. Beauty in form, but not in character.

**Rachel** — Jacob's wife (Gen. 29). Rachel was one of those rare women worth waiting for. Jacob worked 7 years for her and was tricked into marrying her sister, Leah. Therefore he worked 7 additional years for her. Was she worth 14 years? Aside from hiding her father's idols early on in her marriage, she matured into a beautiful woman, wife and mother.

**Rahab** — A prostitute in Jericho (Josh.2,6). Rahab saved the lives of Israelite spies by hiding them on

her roof under bundles of flax and then, when safe, let them down from the roof with a scarlet cord. Because of her kindness she and her family were spared when Jericho was destroyed. She is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus as one of his ancestors (Matt. 1:5). "By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient" (Heb. 11:31). Faith made the difference in her life and constituted her beauty.

**Delilah** (Judges 16) The Arabic root of her name means "amorous, coquettish, seductive"— and she was. As Samson's mistress, she betrayed him. Beauty is only skin deep? I'd say so.

**Bathsheba** — Wife of Uriah, the Hittite (2 Sam. 11-12, 1 Kings 2). She was an adulterer who became pregnant by David and had a baby, who died as punishment for David's sin. Later she had more sons, the most prominent being Solomon. Bathsheba was a beautiful woman, but immoral, not a good influence on her sons. Still, she was in the lineage of Jesus. God works in mysterious ways.

**Jezebel** — Wife of Ahab, king of Israel. A ruthless, morally corrupt, sinful woman. Tradition has made her name a byword for a wicked woman. As a Canaanite she wor-

shipped Baal and Asherah. She was responsible for the persecution of God's true prophets and the formal institution of Canaanite religious practices in Israel. She wielded tremendous political power with her legal knowledge, manipulative skill and determination. Her seductiveness was definitely skin-deep beauty, but her evil character went to the core!

**Mary** — the mother of Jesus (Luke 1). She was a devout young virgin, engaged to Joseph. An angel appeared and told her that she had found favor with God and would bear his Son, Jesus. Mary replied, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." No questions. No hesitation. Just tremendous faith in God. She pondered the things that were said about Jesus. From the time he was born she loved and nurtured him, teaching him about God, even though she knew that he was on loan to her for a short time. Mary was a quiet, gentle spirit that helped mold her son into the kind, caring person he grew into. So much she didn't understand, but her trust was in God. Not only graced with outward beauty, Mary demonstrated an inner beauty—such that God trusted her with the care of his only Son.

**Widow** (Mark 12:42-43) "But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her

poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on.'" Was she a beautiful woman? In God's eyes a resounding *yes!*

**Woman with no name** (Mark 14) Beauty is as beauty does. She brought an alabaster jar of expensive perfume, broke it, and poured it over Jesus' head. As the beautiful fragrance filled the room, angry voices criticized the gesture. But Jesus spoke up, "Let her alone. She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want, but you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her" (v. 6-9). A beautiful woman! A beautiful faith and love! A beautiful deed!

I have touched on the lives of ten women in the Bible, some with only outward beauty and some with the inner beauty of Christ. Our churches and WHFMS groups have ladies who are beautiful in the sight of the Lord. Susie Davis, Sarah K. Taylor, Ruth Banks, Vesta Clothey, Hannah Stalks, Musa Powers, Marion Damon, Beulah Rediker, Mary Brown. Recognize these missionaries? Elsie Kirby, Jean Balser, Doris Gedney, Ann Ball. Recognize these laywomen?

Where do you and I fit in? "And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command, but one we have had from the begin-

ning; I ask that we love one another. And this is love that we walk in obedience to his command" (2 John 5:6). "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful" (1 Pet. 3:3).

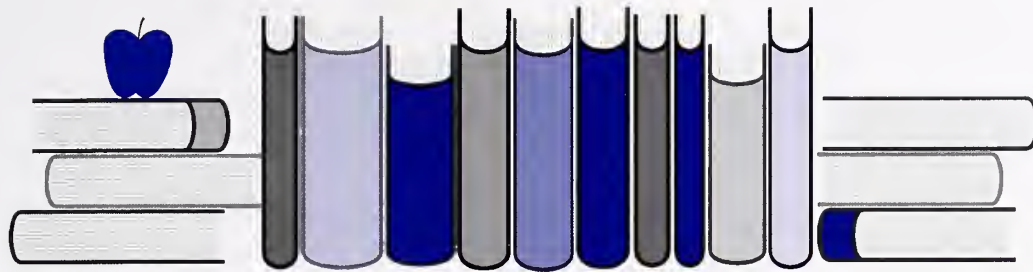
True beauty comes from the Lord. By living in us he enables us to reach out and touch others. I paint on slates and am always looking for new mottos to paint. One of my favorites is, "Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart." Have you left footprints on another's life, footprints that lead to Calvary?

Pray with me that the beauty of Jesus be seen in us. Many need our touch. God's touch in our lives enables us to touch the hearts of others with the beauty of Jesus. ✝

*Bea Moore is National WHFMS Spiritual Life Superintendent. She and her husband Wendell live in Loudon Ridge, N.H. and serve the Advent Christian church there.*







# Luree's Bookshelf

*The Great Everyday Commission*, by Dann Spader and Gary Mayes (currently out of print).

This book is must reading for those committed to living the Christian life, reminding us that carrying out the Great Commission includes all believers. Each has a responsibility to make disciples where God places him. The book will help you evaluate personal and church responsibilities to make the Gospel meaningful to everyone.

*Love Your Neighbor As Yourself—Blessing Your Neighborhood Through Love and Prayer*, by Mary Lance Sisk.

This booklet has been translated and used around the world. In it Sisk outlines ways that we can bring blessing to our neighborhoods. The chapters are built around "Neighbor." Sisk suggests ways to reach our neighborhoods in non-threatening ways. If used as a study book, be sure to cover at least one chapter a week, and put into practice the suggestions she makes!

*These Are Times That Try Women's Souls*, by Emily Andrews Kile.

Kile takes familiar women of the Bible and makes applications from lessons learned from them. To whet your appetite, a couple of lessons are: "Sarah — Has life passed me by?" and "Hagar — Can God use the fruit of a broken home?" Each chapter contains a study of the Bible passage and application questions. The book would be excellent for individual or group study.

*God, I Know You're Here Somewhere — Finding God in the Clutter of Life*, by Elizabeth Cody Newenhuyse.

Do you feel too busy, like life is a clutter? How is your spiritual life progressing? This book will help you get back on track. The author shares ways to be refreshed in the midst of the routines of life. Here's a sampling of chapters to intrigue you. "Goodbye, Martha Stewart: Finding Yourself and Pleasing God," and "Was That the Lord, or My Own Wishful Thinking?" The book could be used as a study book, though no guide accompanies it. Resources are mentioned in each chapter and at the end of the book. I highly recommend the book for those who feel stressed, or for group study.

*I Wish I Could Be More...* by Poppy Smith.

Do you sometimes feel inadequate? Do you look on others as "saints" or even "super-saints?" Poppy Smith reminds us that we all grow spiritually at different rates, but our aim is the same—to become like Christ. She searches with the reader to discover how to overcome stumbling blocks along the way. To get the most out of the book, take time to work through the assignments with each chapter. Also, each chapter contains "Reflections for Thought and Discussion." The book is best done with a small group, but could be used in a mentoring relationship.



Luree Wotton serves as Women's Ministries Coordinator of the Advent Christian General Conference.

# Their Leadership Left a Legacy



Edwin K. Gedney



Clarence Kirby



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## From the Editor

I wish everyone had my sense of calling. Really. I've never doubted my choice of work. If it's reasonable for anyone to be certain of anything, I am certain I was called into the ministry.

Sometimes I wanted to leave the ministry, to get a better job... a funner job... a paying job. The certainty of my calling kept me chained like a dog to a tree. Once, I was unemployed for six months without a single job offer. The very day I was hired at the plywood factory I was asked to candidate at a church. Since I was certain of my call, I left the "corporate ladder" of manufacturing before touching the first rung.

A single event marks my calling: Plainville Campmeeting, 1981. The week concluded with a service based on Isaiah 6:1-8, in which the Lord says, "Whom shall I send?" and Isaiah responds, "Here am I! Send me." (Frankly, I had grown a little tired of hearing that passage. For eight weeks I had worked as a youth leader at camps and every camp concluded with that same text. I think it was a denominational conspiracy.) As Dr. Dean spoke, a feeling of dread grew within me. I had an uneasy sense that that night's message was for me.

When the service concluded there was no altar call, no emotional plea for a response. Dr. Dean prayed and, while heads were bowed, asked for those willing to commit to full-time Christian service to stand. My response was involuntary and immediate. I suppose I could have remained seated, about as easily as I could stay under water for twenty minutes. Ironically, people congratulated me for my "decision"—like I had anything to do with it! I can't describe what happened.

There was no audible voice of God, no euphoria, and no broken resignation. I just knew.

If there were any doubts, the next twenty-four hours wiped them out. Answering a call to ministry meant going to Bible



*Continued on page 19*



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*by Rev. Dwight Carpenter*

TRAVELING ACROSS THE COUNTRY over the past fourteen years in Student Ministries, I ask one question in every church I visit: "Where are your eighteen- to twenty-five year olds?" In the majority of places I get the same response, "We haven't seen most of them since they graduated from high school." I add, "You mean since they graduated from youth group?" And the heads nod in agreement.

During the same time frame, I have worked with hundreds of college students in this age

bracket. I have asked them why they are not present and actively involved in the church they attended as youth. A few are, but the majority are not. One of the striking things I have learned is that most of them were not brought to faith there. Most accepted the Lord at a camp, a retreat, a crusade or conference. For others the moment of decision and the seeds sown leading to that were attributable to a peer or a mentor, but not the local church. Even if it took place in the "youth group," that has seldom brought

them into the life of the church itself. And only a few who have been born again and actively involved in the church are purposely being disciplined to go and make disciples of Christ with their friends.

Asking the usual questions of "what, where, why, when, and how" is misleading and doesn't help us come to terms with what can be done. The question that matters is a personal one—a relational one. It speaks of investing our lives in others through community and in discipling/mentoring.



**WHERE ARE THE**



It is the question of “Who.”

If we want to address the issue and be the body of Christ we have been called, commissioned, and commanded to be, then we must become intimately acquainted with *Who* God is, *Who* we are in Christ, and *Who* he is putting in our path to disciple to saving faith. It is a process of *being*—being who we are in Christ and being who God has commissioned and commanded us to be in love and by grace: his disciples, who are purposefully in the process of being discipled and mak-

ing disciples as we walk daily with God and side by side with one another.

This requires a lifelong process of intentionality, interrelating, and impacting life upon life. To be intentional about disciple-making, we must know the “3 Who’s” previously mentioned. And who are these potential disciples, these eighteen- to twenty-five year olds? Today, this age group represents the cutting edge of Gen Y. They are the “millennials,” and they are the missing generation in most churches.

## Who is Generation Y?

Consider the following responses of students from recent surveys done in colleges, both state and Christian campuses, across the U.S. They help us gain a perspective on how this generation thinks and feels about leadership, discipleship, spiritual issues, and life in general.

1. “We’re optimistic about our personal future but pessimistic about our nation’s future... and cynical about existing institutions, including the church as we have



# YOUNG PEOPLE?

come to know it.”

One student said: “I am cynically optimistic.”

66% said they were optimistic about their “local and personal future” because they saw themselves in local community making a difference.

73% said they thought they could make a difference—but most had a small and pragmatic vision, despite being more and more globally aware and connected.

They don’t trust government and other institutions, and don’t expect them to bring about change.

2. “We’re not pursuing leadership positions—that’s not where we will make a difference.”

They don’t believe formal leadership positions, as they have seen them, are where it’s at. They resist ‘top-down’ authoritative positions because they do not want to be perceived as “being in charge or control of others.” Parachurch organizations, most churches, and even the U.S. Military, are experiencing a greatly diminished pool of male leaders. It is more important to be thought well of by peers and to keep friends than to risk being seen as one “over them.”

Interestingly, females are rising to the occasion and assuming more of the leadership roles traditionally held by males. The church is being called upon to consider the implications of this, and to involve women in ministry according to their spiritual gifting and calling.

What students are looking for is a new paradigm of leadership. Fortunately, this is the paradigm Jesus modeled, and is inherent in true discipling and Biblical community. It is side-by-side leadership based upon authenticity of a person, rather than inherent authority of a position.

Student leaders were surveyed and asked: “When you think about taking a highly responsible leadership position, which terms most describe how you feel?”

The top two responses were: 1) not interested, or 2) unprepared.

In describing their opinion of current leaders, they used terms such as: controlling, manipulative, non-relational, intolerant, authoritative, and jerks.

They were asked, “How well have your college classes prepared you for leadership?” On a

scale of 1-10, 70% ranked their classes below 5.

When asked, “What has provided the most helpful preparation for you?” 82% said, “a position I held.” Only 1% said, “courses or professors.”

The standard by which millennials learn and gain confidence in on the basis of equipping that is both relational and experiential, i.e. mentoring/discipling.

3. “We want to make a difference and are looking for authentic causes to invest in.”

“I can’t do anything about the theft of nuclear grade weapons materials from Azerbaijan, but I can

When asked in a survey at the University of Colorado what adjective they would use to describe themselves, the most common choice was “tired.”

A majority of undergraduates in a *Student Affairs Survey (1997)* reported that, “I have no social life,” “there is no free time,” “my whole life is juggling,” “studying is all I ever do in my leisure time,” and “I am always behind, I never catch up.”

One in six teenagers have actually seen or known someone who has been shot (*Adler, 1994*).

Nearly half of all undergraduates (46%) worry about becoming victims of violent crime. Most could speak of specific fears they live with today (*Undergrad Survey, 1993*).

“It’s unfair. We cannot ignore the problems around us like the ‘yuppies’ did. Our generation has to fix everything. We didn’t make the problems—we inherited them” (*Student, UCLA*).



clean up the local pond, help tutor a troubled kid, or work in a homeless shelter” (Student, University of Colorado).

During the 1990s, 75% of all colleges and universities reported an increase in student participation in volunteer activities (Student Affairs Survey, 1997).

Dr. Tim Elmore of Equip Ministries ([www.equiporg.org](http://www.equiporg.org)) in his seminar, “The Matrix: Ideas to Develop Leaders Out of the Generation Y,” speaks on “Developing students into disciples and leaders.” He suggests the following as ideas we should consider as we pursue this generation and attempt to develop them into healthy disciples and leaders in our churches:



## **1. Play into the Qualities of Post-Modern Thought**

Obviously, everything about post-modernism is not bad. However, you must know them and show them before you can grow them to be disciples. Here are trademarks of this generation:

- They understand layers of reality
- They can live with contradiction
- Relationships matter the most
- They will do anything to be loved
- Individualism is valued
- They are racially diverse
- They are self-sufficient; don't trust
- They are skeptical of institutions
- They are wary of (long) commitments
- They work so that they can have a life
- They are pessimistic about global future
- Pain and anger are rising
- They embrace change
- They are adrenaline junky risk takers
- Pragmatism rules over truth & reason
- They are spiritual seekers
- There are no boundaries or limits
- They want rules from right sources
- They're stressed out, overorganized
- They embrace technology and media
- They have a unique communication
- They love stories
- Music is huge and eclectic
- They are incredibly ambitious

## **2. Raise Emerging Leaders Through Disciple-Making (Mentoring) Relationships**

One at a time. Side by side. Personal and experiential. Investing in the individual by: Influence, Intimacy, Impact. Community Building: to know and be known, loved, accepted, and forgiven

## **3. Find Systematic Ways for Casting Vision to Develop Leaders**

- Paint pictures
- Provide handles
- Supply roadmaps

- Furnish laboratories
- Give roots
- Offer wings

#### **4. Call Students to Short-Term but Purposeful Commitments**

We will only develop leaders as we make disciples in a long-term process (not program). Do this by having ready multiple commitment steps of short-term intervals with multi-optional experiences that are meaningful and global in perspective.

Commitment to the vision and leadership is a process by which one moves from level to level, by personally experiencing progressive, systematic, purposeful, and relational equipping in an intimate community of grace and truth.

#### **5. Be Creative Using Music and Media as You Train**

#### **6. Create Safe Places for Them to Experiment Being Leaders**

We have school laboratories for all kinds of scientific exploration and experimentation, done in a safe and secure environment. We need the same type of ‘experiential learning centers’ for developing leaders and maturing believers. Again, the methods need to be multi-optional and be personalized, but must include practical internships of making disciples and developing leadership skills in a community of faith, hope, and love.

#### **7. Facilitate the Decisions We Want Students to Make**

What life-changing and wise character-forming decisions do we want students to make through our ministry?







- INVOLVEMENT LEVEL  
(small group/big event)
- MINISTRY/SERVING LEVEL  
(exercising gifts/skills)
- LEADERSHIP LEVEL  
(leaders in groups)
- MULTIPLICATION LEVEL  
(leaders of leaders)

### 9. Provide Resources Monthly to Leaders in Process and Potential Leaders

Offer retreats, seminars, personal interaction, books, tapes, articles, videos. Provide general training, huddle time, skills development, relational accountability and growth level events.

### 10. Utilize Assessment Tools to Evaluate Leaders through Relationships That Encourage, Exhort, Edify, Equip, and Empower

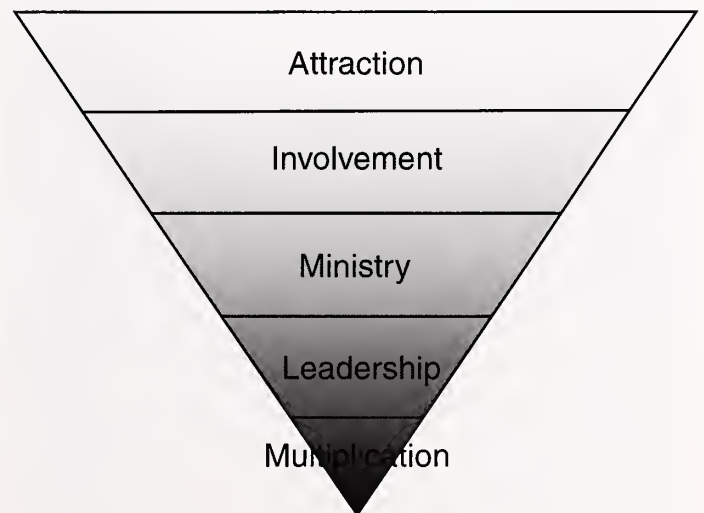
- What is the process?
- How do we effectively communicate and champion these values?
- How will we facilitate them?
- How do we recognize and reward their achievements?
- How do we deal with failings that will occur?

### 8. Construct a Plan That Enables Students to Grow in Stages at Their Pace

Create “Fishing Pools” to identify students at each stage in their personal development, who are ready for the next level and challenge.

Develop a ministry of pre-conversion and growth discipling, providing bridges to cross into next level that includes a narrowing funnel from:

- ATTRACTION LEVEL  
(entry level open to all)



# *New Wineskins for the Church in Connecting with the Millennial Generation*



Key Characteristic of Churches God will use in the Process of Making Disciples in a Post-Modern Culture:

## **Welcoming Environment**

The disciple-making church connects people through knowing them personally and facilitating relationships between people with similarities, yet unique.

## **Intimate Community**

The disciple-making church is where people are experiencing "Life Only in Christ" with one another. These people are in the process of becoming who God already knows they are: being real and authentic where they know as they are known, love as they are loved, accept as they are accepted, forgive as they are forgiven by the grace and in the truth of God through Jesus Christ.

## **Narrative Disciple-Making**

The disciple-making church holds to the Word of God as the only absolute truth for all people, preaching, teaching, evangelizing, and equipping through biblical stories. People want and need to experience God personally and corporately, by being connected to God.



This occurs by hearing and believing God's story, realizing and accepting our part in his story, and sharing it with others as God proves to be as wild and good in our lives as he is in the Bible, where God always is the hero.

## **Embodied Apologetics**

The disciple-making church offers the appropriate defense of the Gospel, which is not dependent upon modern and humanistic reasoning, but upon incarnational truth as God lives, and moves, and has his being in us and through us, his children.

Here, the love of God is seen and experienced, rather than merely talked about. Here, grace and truth are empirical evidence of the living God. Here, truth is believed, not because we believe it, but we believe it because he is the Truth, the Way, and the Life. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth."

## **Spiritual Formation**

The disciple-making church fosters growing in faith as we, in our brokenness, are in the process of being healed. We are wounded, but God uses us as wounded healers.

## **Worshiping and Celebrating Community**

The disciple-making church is transcendent above all else. Here God is worshiped in spirit and in truth; exalted and adored in all his holiness. Yet he relates to us just as we are, drawing us into his presence, where we can experience him with all of our heart, mind, soul, and spirit.

## **Interactive Learning**

The disciple-making church is participatory, offering discipling that is inclusive of all of life, from pre-conversion to saving faith to growing in grace. Here we have safe, spiritual laboratories for developing leaders and maturing believers. Here one can fail and fall in the process of learning, but not blow up the lab. The methods need to be multi-optional and personalized, including practical internships of making disciples and developing leadership skills in a community of faith, hope, and love.

## **Nurturing Style of Leadership**

The disciple-making church has leaders who are authentic rather than authoritarian; leaders who are and facilitate honesty, vulnerability, transparency, grace, and truth among those God puts in their care. Its shared, relational approach to leadership is visionary, mission-driven, passion-fueled, and Spirit-led. These leaders want what is best for the people, no matter what.

## **Saving Hope – A Passion for Life**

The disciple-making church has people who are willing to sacrifice much for a great cause. This motivates Christ-followers to be fully devoted and committed to him and his mission. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Until we have a cause great enough to die for, we have nothing to live for." †



# Have Diploma... Now What?

by Dawn C. Rutan

MANY YOUNG PEOPLE go through life believing there is just one right path—one career, one spouse, one place to live—and if you miss the right path you will have trouble until you get back on the path. But that's not what Scripture indicates. The verses that speak of choices we must make refer to whether we will choose to follow God or

God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:1-2).

So if there isn't one perfect plan for each of us, no blueprint for us to follow, how do we decide what we should do with our lives? Here are a few guidelines we can follow:

better take into account the fact that you've been disobeying God by having sex outside of marriage. When you know you're outside of God's will to begin with, it's foolish to expect him to reveal more. It's the same with any sin that keeps us from hearing God and submitting fully to him.

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Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat. —*Teddy Roosevelt*

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choose disobedience. "Choose you this day whom you will serve" (Josh. 24:15). "Choose life that you might live" (Deut. 30:19). Nowhere does God say, "I have one perfect plan for you and if you miss it, too bad." God calls us to love one another by making disciples as we are going along the way (the Great Commandment and Great Commission), and to have a submissive heart—"Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of

1) Is this choice in line with scriptural principles? If this choice will cause you to disobey God in some way, it's not a good choice. That's not to say God can't use any decision you make, since "We know that God causes all things to work together for the good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28), but the ends don't justify the means if the means are contrary to Scripture.

2) Are you currently obeying God's will? If you're wondering if you should marry the person you've been sleeping with, you

3) Will this choice bring glory to God? This isn't always a clear-cut question. If you're trying to choose between teaching at a Christian school or a public school, both could glorify God. A Christian school may allow you to be more open about your faith, but a public school may give you more opportunities to interact with troubled kids who need your help and prayers.

4) Will you find pleasure and satisfaction in this choice? Sometimes we assume that God doesn't want us to have any fun, so the "right" choice must be the one we



wouldn't enjoy. This is a faulty view of God. "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Ps. 37:4). God wants us to enjoy life and enjoy serving him in the ways he has gifted us. If you're not enjoying what you're doing, it may be an indicator that you are not using your gifts, or perhaps you need to look for a different environment.

5) What godly advice have you received from disciplers, friends, family, pastors, or counselors? No one else can make your decision, but someone who knows you well and desires God's best for your life can help you to see what choice would be best for you.

different careers in their lifetime. Some studies also show that ten years after graduating from college, less than 10% of people are in a career that's directly related to their major field of study. Interests and abilities change over time, so it's not unreasonable to think that your career path might change too.

8) Don't limit your choices too much. Instead of thinking you must choose A *or* B, maybe there's a way you can do A *and* B, or maybe C would be a better option. The more choices you have, the more likely you are to find a good niche for your current needs and desires.

Bible study, worship, and fellowship. You may not get immediate answers, but it will help you to wait patiently to see what God is going to do next.

When I was a senior at Bethel College, Campus Pastor Keith Anderson advised us in his final sermon of the year, "When someone asks what you're planning to do next, just tell them, 'More—more eating, more sleeping, more learning, more living...'" It's okay not to have all the answers immediately. Life is a journey, and journeys are taken one step at a time, not all at once. Most of us will never hear a voice telling us to "Go to Ninevah," or "Come to

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The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.

—George Bernard Shaw

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Those are the more "theological" principles in following God's will. Now here are some other practical tips.

6) Don't do something just to please your parents or teachers. If you really want to become a youth minister, but your parents think you should be a doctor, you'll probably find more satisfaction in following your heart than in chasing your parents' dreams.

7) Don't expect to find one perfect job for the rest of your life. On average, people in the workforce today will have seven

9) Don't stop learning. Just because you earned a degree doesn't mean you should stop taking classes. Find an interesting class at a community college, or pursue a self-study course at home. If it's related to your current job, it may help you land a promotion later on. Or if it's unrelated, it may help you decide what your next career may be.

10) "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth" (Eccl. 12:1). When you don't know where to turn and everything around you seems like chasing after the wind, don't forsake prayer,

Macedonia," but as we learn to wait upon the Lord and not worry about tomorrow, we can enjoy the journey of discovering how we can best serve God with the gifts, abilities, and time God has given us. †



# *Pentecost is for Pioneers*

—Acts 1:1-8, 2:8

The Pioneers would see the church as a covered wagon—a house on wheels, on the move, ready to go to new places.

by Keith Anderson

A WRITER NAMED Wes Seeliger said there are basically two views of life and, therefore, two kinds of people. To get his point across he used the language of the western frontier, the old West. One group of people see life as a possession, something to be guarded, made safe and protected. Security is their primary goal. They encounter life as they settle in and build safety, security, and comfort. These he calls settlers. On the other hand are those who see life as something to be experienced, explored and investigated. For

them life is an adventure, a journey, a movement into something new, something to be found on the way to new horizons, new vistas, new places. This second group he calls pioneers—those who are never quite content to stay in the same place but see life as a continuous adventurous journey.

If we follow his thinking then and apply it to the life of faith what would it look like? For the settlers the church would be seen as a courthouse. Standing in the center of town is this large, stable stone structure where records are kept, taxes collected, and trials held for the bad guys. It is the symbol of law, order, stability and security. It is the residence of God who in their minds is the mayor and lawmaker. The Pioneers, on the other hand, would see the church as a covered wagon—a house on wheels, on the move, ready to go to new places. That mobile, traveling caravan where they eat, sleep, fight, love and die. It moves in on the future and doesn't bother to glorify its own ruts. It isn't necessarily comfortable, but pioneers don't care—they have a multifaceted world to





explore, not a single place to inhabit.

I've been thinking about those two philosophical choices in the context of a festival in the Christian year. Pentecost is a Jewish festival celebrated 50 days after Passover, a harvest festival when the first fruits of the wheat harvest were presented to God. Jews from all over the world would gather in Jerusalem to celebrate this, the "Feast of Weeks." For the early Christian community it was destined to be the birthday of the church of Jesus—the day of commissioning for these believers and a day to make some choices about how they would conceive of their role in history. And it is this that I want to focus on, for I believe that how the church perceives its role in history determines the style and direction of our life together. How we understand our purpose will determine how we go about our task.

On the Day of Pentecost, two choices lay before that community in the upper room. Would they become settlers and move into the stability and security of the life of traditional Judaism? Would they lose their distinctiveness and simply become another sect in historical Judaism? Or would they take the role of pioneers and forge into new ground by following the new winds being blown across them by God's Spirit?

Immediately after the crucifixion of Jesus, the disciples were in total disarray. Everything they had believed in and lived for was dead—in the grave. Until Jesus himself ap-

peared to them and we read in Acts 1:3 what he did. "After his suffering he showed himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the Kingdom of God—that is significant. He spoke with them about the Kingdom of God. The only message he preached was a message about kingdom life. It wasn't new to them: the central teaching during his 3 years with them had been the kingdom of God. The primary message he preached again and again was simple: God is King. It was the historical message of the prophets of Israel: "The day of the Lord is coming," they foretold, "God will establish his kingdom and rule forever." And for three years Jesus had labored over this message and carefully taught them what it meant. But somehow they were settlers at heart and never heard the word of a revolutionary movement—they looked for this kingdom to come

The disciples...  
were settlers at  
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this kingdom to  
come and to  
build a secure,  
military-political  
kingdom in  
Palestine.





and to build a secure, military-political kingdom in Palestine. In Acts 1:6 we read the single question they all asked him: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom in Israel? Build the institution of power? Settle in? Get off the road for a change?”

I’ll leave the deepest theological questions of this text for another day and simply use it to ask you a key question as you come to the end of a semester and the beginning of summer and the rest of your life. What is your plan? What is your dream? Settle in, settle down, settle for...? You can do that, it’s easy. Become comfortable, secure, settled, safe. Your theology is set—no need for more study. Your faith is set—no need

for new disciplines. Your career is settled or your summer plans—just settle in, settle down, settle for... How boring can life be? If you do that you’ll miss the adventure, the journey, the *kingdom* as it unfolds with Jesus through the

**This is  
Christian  
faith in its  
most raw  
form—  
always a  
call to  
recognize  
Jesus as  
sovereign  
Lord of my  
very real life  
and its  
choices.**

Holy Spirit. You will settle for less. The message of Jesus for his disciples was a different message than that: He wanted them to know, just as he wants us to know that his kingdom is not a place, it is a dynamic, living relationship. God is the ruler of all of life.

All that is and all that is meant to be through the church comes as we learn to obey the king. “Jesus is Lord” became the sole, central creed for the early church. If you ever want to check on the orthodoxy of someone—their legitimacy for ministry in the church—start there. Do they affirm Jesus as Lord? I like the way one church put it when they bring on new members: “I affirm that Jesus is Lord and unreservedly abandon my life to him.” That is a painfully clear definition of discipleship. “I give my future, my safety, my security to him. I place my very life in his hands. I place all of my life in his control. Jesus is my Lord.”

“And Jesus taught them of the kingdom of God.” He tried to show them that life in town only appears to be secure. He showed that life on the trail—in the adventure of faith—is where life takes on meaning and power. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” On the way, on the road, out there. These are not words to settle in with and get comfortable about, but to settle down before and get serious with. This is Christian faith in its most raw form—always a call to recognize Jesus as sovereign Lord of my very real life and its choices. I don’t care if you go from here to the world of business and accounting or politics or medicine or education or the arts or the church, it’s about this dynamic, unfolding, adventure of relationship with Jesus. Always new, always fresh, always just ahead...

But before he sent them out, Jesus had something else that he wanted them to do. Jesus said, “I am going to send you what my Father has promised, the Holy Spirit, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Now follow the sequence of this experience. The disciples are finally aware that Jesus is alive and are ready to join him—ready to







turn their world upside down. What they thought they had believed had been shown to be true and now they wanted to get started, ready to go and Jesus says, “Wait.” You’ve got to be kidding me! What kind of leadership says, “Wait.”? Jesus’ kind. Wait! Why? So they could spend time with the resurrected Lord. So they could experience Jesus before they would go to give witness to him. So they could receive power that is more than their talents and abilities. So they could learn about the kingdom of God—in mind, in heart, in spirit.

And that too is a word for us to hear. WAIT. Don’t simply go rushing head long into your life without spending time with the resurrected Lord. Don’t go rushing off trying to reach out to your world until you are in touch with the source of your world. When Jesus is Lord, we must spend time with him. When we intend to do his work, we must know his orders—if we are to function as his body, we must be aware of what he, the head of the body, intends for us. And frankly that means we must spend time waiting—in listening prayer. When Jesus is Lord, we must spend time with him. There are not alternatives to that for us, just as there were none for the disciples. “Wait, don’t go rushing off, first spend time in re-

lationship with me. Wait until the Holy Spirit gives you directions and power.” For some of us this means a fresh commitment to our own upper room experiences — to a time and a place for the daily disciplines of silence, prayer, and study of the Word. Brennan Manning has said: the key to an effective prayer life is to show up! Wait! Slow down! What did the psalmist write? “Be still and know that I am God!” Do you have even 10 minutes a day without voices or a CD blaring in your ear? How can the Holy Spirit get hold of your mind if it’s always preoccupied?

Some years ago I spent three days in Washington DC at a retreat center. One of the most profound statements for me came during our first session together. Our leader said this: “I firmly believe that God has brought each of us here. Listen then for God to speak to you. I am convinced that one person here has *the* word from God for you and you for someone else.” Wait for the Spirit to come to you. That statement put me on tiptoes during those hours we

were there. I really *expected* God to speak to me and I was not disappointed. *I waited*—in expectation. What happened at Pentecost when the disciples gave heed to that word was beyond their wildest imagination. The Holy Spirit of God came upon them and literally overtook them. But the most amazing thing was not simply the signs and wonders, speaking in

other languages, it was instead a life set loose to follow the Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God filled them, touched them, inspired them, and empowered them to set out on a journey that continues to this very day. They were sent out into the world as disciples cleverly disguised as teachers, carpenters, parents, health-care providers, and merchants.

How will you go? Will you settle down at home like a prairie settler, will you settle back into old ways, will you settle in to a summer of fun and sun or job—or will you join a movement for the kingdom? I can’t prove it but I believe it: There is more spiritual *formation* in the summer than any other time in your college

I really  
*expected*  
God to  
speak to  
me and I  
was not  
disappointed.  
*I waited*—in  
expectation.





years. For some it is a great time of growth and stretching. I talked to a friend who works in a coffee shop. She said, "I love my job, I simply love it because it puts me in touch with non-Christians. I'm the only Christian there. I am learning so much." For others summer is a time of *de-formation*—steps backwards—a return to the high school habits and for some just bad habitats. You go backward because you didn't prepare beforehand. People do this every year—in the spring you're red-hot, fired up for the Lord; in the fall you're cool, lukewarm at best. What changed? Two steps back. Detours. Dead-ends. You took a different route. You followed the road of your friends instead of the road, the way who is Jesus.

As a college sophomore I took a good-paying summer job in South St. Paul at Swift & Company—working in the stockyards. It took me ten years before I could ever eat a hot dog or balo-

You college guys,... you don't know nothing. If you can't live in the world where it all ain't so pretty, what good is your education? It ain't worth XXXX.

ney sandwich again. I lived with four other guys, but they were on different shifts so I was basically alone that entire summer. The world of meat packing wasn't exactly like my suburban Chicago world and I spent a miserable summer convinced that God didn't work in the stockyards. My faith took a beating—my lifestyle slipped and I struggled to keep my spiritual vitality alive. Was the answer to return to school in the fall and get back into the swing of Bethel Christianity? Well, it helped but it wasn't the answer—late in the summer one of the men with whom I worked and one who stressed me the most said to me in front of a group of other hard-hat workers: you college guys, you're all alike, you think you know all about it—classes, ideas and books—let me tell you—you don't know nothing. If you can't live in the world where it all ain't so pretty, what good is your education? It ain't worth

XXXX."

Maybe he wasn't too far wrong—for this message we seek to live and speak—does work in the world where it ain't all so pretty because Jesus lived there and understood that world and sends us out to join the adventure with God in that world. Peter moves in on this future and stands up to preach with bold fire, holy passion for the kingdom in the city of Jerusalem. What changed Peter? Resurrection, yes. And he discovered that the Spirit had been set loose in the world. Not to create an institution that is staid and safe but to start a movement that is alive, moving and changing the world all around us. I really connect with Peter these days—he fell down—made mistakes—denied Jesus and was forgiven and dared to stand up in the community to speak for Jesus again.

Wendy and I watched the movie version of Victor Hugo's classic story, *Les Miserables*. I remember reading the story one summer when I was in junior high but the movie had a wonderful line in it that was captivating. Jean Valjean is a convict who has just spent 19 years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread. He finds his way to the home of an old priest who gives him hospitality which surprises the convict who then steals his silver, knocking the old







priest unconscious and makes his way to the road late that night. He is captured and brought back to the priest by the police the next morning. The priest is a Jesus-figure in the story. He does an unexpected thing—something that is evidence of the Spirit set loose in the world. He tells the police he is glad they returned Valjean because he is angry at him for not taking the silver candle holders too. He then says to the thief, “Jean Valjean, don’t forget. Don’t ever forget. You’ve promised to become a new man.” The thief is incredulous, “Why? Why are you doing this?” The priest’s words are Jesus’ words: “Jean Valjean, Jean, my brother. You no longer belong to evil. With this silver I bought your soul. I’ve ransomed you from fear and hatred and now I give you back to God.” †



*Keith Anderson is the campus pastor at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Copyright 2001. Reprinted by permission.*

### **Editorial Continued from page 2**

college, but it was mid-August and I hadn’t even applied. Plus, I hadn’t saved a dime for school. Imagine my shock when, that very night, a man offered to pay my first semester’s tuition! And, by noon the next day, I was verbally accepted to attend college, starting in less than two weeks.

A lifetime of events prepared me for my call: I had godly parents who modeled a Biblical lifestyle; I was raised in a loving church family who nurtured my spiritual growth; I was encouraged to participate in Christian ministry, even when I lacked ability; and I had older Christian mentors who invested their time in my life. In today’s terms, you could say I was “discipled.” Churches engaged in this kind of activity seem to produce lots of people with my sense of calling. I’m sure this isn’t the only way for a person to be called into the ministry. But I think it’s the Lord’s preferred method. After all, he is the one who commanded us to make disciples.

Less than one third of my ministry-major classmates are serving as leaders in Advent Christian ministries today. There are many reasons why most left, but those who remain share my sense of calling. Their experiences parallel mine: their churches actively discipled them for years prior to their “Plainville experience.”

There is much talk these days of a shortage of people answering God’s call. Perhaps the real shortage is of churches and individuals discipling the next generation. †



Ignatius of Loyola



Martin Luther

# Wanted: Young Ministers

by James P. Wind

EYE TO EYE ACROSS a restaurant table laden with plates of oysters and wine goblets brimming with fine German Riesling, a young candidate for ministry and the more experienced clergyman who had nominated him for a first pastorate met to discuss a just-preached trial sermon. The young pastor waited with foreboding as his patron searched for a way to break the bad news. Then Martin Niemöller, eventual founder of the German Confessing Church, said to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, eventual martyr in Hitler's death camps, "The written evaluation of the search committee states that your preaching style was too demanding, and your message depressing."

Niemöller went on to tell Bonhoeffer that his message was too challenging for most congregations in Germany, leaving the young pastor with dwindling hopes for a first call. Then Niemöller turned the topic to church politics, proposing a strategy of accommodation with Hitler and his new-to-power Nazis. Bonhoeffer replied, "You can't be serious." Niemöller, after attempting to persuade his inexperienced but immovable conversational partner, concluded, "Let me warn you, no church in Germany will have you with your present opinions. There is a vacancy in London which has been open for more than a year, because it's a dreary low-paying position and few clergymen want to leave the country

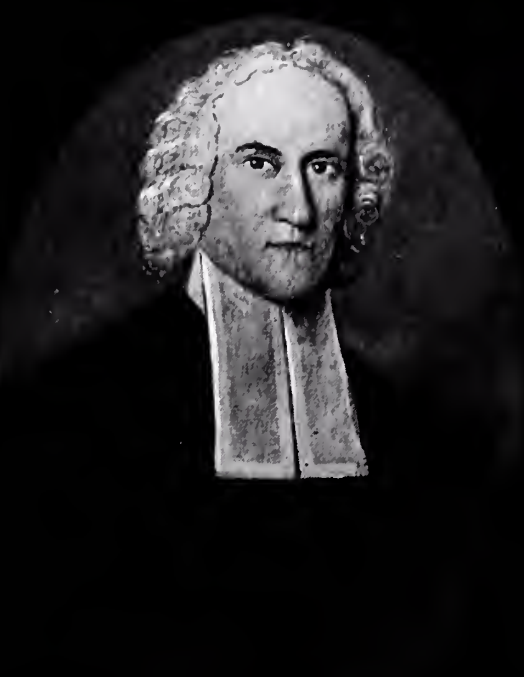
now, not with the excitement here. But if you persist in isolating yourself, it's the only type of position you'll be able to find, now or in the future."<sup>1</sup>

The riveting historical novel this conversation is taken from reconstructs Bonhoeffer's life for our imaginations. As part of a work of fiction, the conversation may or may not have happened the way Giardina tells it. But regardless of its historical accuracy, it tells the truth. It tells the truth about Bonhoeffer's lonely resistance to the Nazis, about what that resistance cost him over more than a decade of protest, and about how an encounter with this young minister shaped the future of the eventually imprisoned Niemöller. In addition, it tells an important





John Calvin



Jonathan Edwards

truth about our need for young ministers. Twenty-seven years of age when he was exiled to London, Bonhoeffer spoke truth to power, first as he opposed the church body he depended upon for employment, then later in his life when he was involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

### Transformative Leaders

As I considered the shrinking pool of young ministers in America, I found myself returning to this portrait of Bonhoeffer, the troubled, lonely prophet who, while still in his thirties, dared to participate in the immoral act of an assassination attempt because of the danger of the greater evil of the Holocaust. The young, flawed, but unflinchingly moral cleric challenged the Christian community of his time to grapple with its complicity in the processes of death and destruction. That youthful

challenge became the raw material of an argument that spanned the world for several generations, an argument that called many to think about the meaning—and the cost!—of discipleship in the modern world.

Remembering Bonhoeffer led me to recall other young Turks, inexperienced but often transformative leaders who led their religious communities into controversies that changed reality. Staying for a moment on German soil, I remembered Martin Luther, who posted his 95 Theses at age 34 and rocked the Roman Catholic world. As I mused about this, my colleagues at the Alban Institute joined me in a parlor game. Who were the leaders who changed their religious communities and the world around them, and how old were they? We developed quite a list.

John Calvin published the first

edition of his *Institutes* when he was 27. Ignatius of Loyola started to write his *Spiritual Exercises* at 31. Julian of Norwich wrote the first account of her mystical experiences at age 30. Jonathan Edwards, the first great American theologian, was 31 when he led his first revival. George Whitefield led the Great Awakening while in his twenties. Angelina Grimke began to radicalize women of the South against slavery at age 31. Elizabeth Bailey Seton founded the Sisters of Charity in Baltimore at age 35. Jane Addams opened Hull House at age 29. Billy Graham preached his first great revival at age 30. Martin Luther King, Jr., was 28 when he helped found the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and gave his “I Have a Dream” speech at 34. And of course there are Moses, Jesus, Muhammed, and Buddha, all traditionally understood to have been



**Jane Addams**

**Billy Graham**

in the thirties when they moved to their foundational leadership roles.

I do not recount that list because I want to practice a reverse ageism, which assumes that all great leaders are young when they make their marks. Nor do I assume that all leadership should be measured against those who have made large historical contributions. A closer look at the list will quickly disabuse us of many generalizations about leadership. Some of those mentioned defied nations and empires. Others wrote great books. Still others built institutions. Some mesmerized crowds as preachers. Others frequently stood alone or led with the power of quiet suffering or contemplation. Moreover, the list spans centuries and wide differences in social circumstances, so we should be careful about sweeping assertions. But the tan-

talizing fact remains: young leaders play an indispensable role in the unfolding and reforming of our faith traditions.

### **Losing Our Edge?**

I ponder the list because during this time when many of our faith communities seem to be unable to attract the younger generation or call young people into leadership roles, something very important is at stake. If the statisticians are correct that the average age of entering seminary students is over 34—past the age when most of the folks on my list had made their first major waves—and if they are correct when they point to the small (and shrinking) percentages of clergy under the age of 40 in our denominations, then we are running the risk of losing our edge. To stay vital, religious communities and traditions need the pres-

sure of the next generation. They need the moral challenge of conviction that comes with the idealism of youth and the lack of countless qualifications that come with middle and old age. They need the outrage at hypocrisy, the naïve questions, and the freshness of not having done it that way before. The wisdom of the elders needs the stirring, shaking questions of the younger to stretch beyond smugness, weariness, or limited imagination.

There are many reasons for concern when we are confronted by declining numbers of young clergy. We can worry about filling all the pulpits that will empty as the boomers retire. We can wonder who will staff the youth groups or what will happen to our pension plans as the pool clergy dwindles. But for me the greater concern has to do with the dyna-





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mism of our traditions themselves. There is something about the young person asking the old person why, about the challenge of emerging leaders, that quickens our faith communities. Even more, there is the new power of a rising generation that dares to believe in fresh ways—the marvel of new faith—that lifts our vision and inspires new commitments. Our failure to recruit people who, to find their treasure, will challenge us and test our traditions is a warning sign. To let this failure continue is to risk losing our vitality and our future. †

*Rev. Dr. James P. Wind is the president of the Alban Institute. Reprinted by permission from Congregations, March/April 2001, published by the Alban Institute, Inc., 7315 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 1250W, Bethesda, Maryland 20814-3211. © Copyright 2001. All rights reserved.*

<sup>1</sup> Denise Giardina, *Saints and Villains* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), pp. 152-53.



**George Whitefield**

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**

When the letters are dropped into the columns below in the right order you will be able to read Psalm 119:9.

H	A	C	O	K	R	B	I	A	L	I	D	U	W	G	Y
M	A	N	R	C	R	D	P	W	H	Y	O	T	N	G	
	O	U	C		E	N	Y	N	G	I	V	I	N	A	
	P	W		E	A	E		O	O	R	S		O		



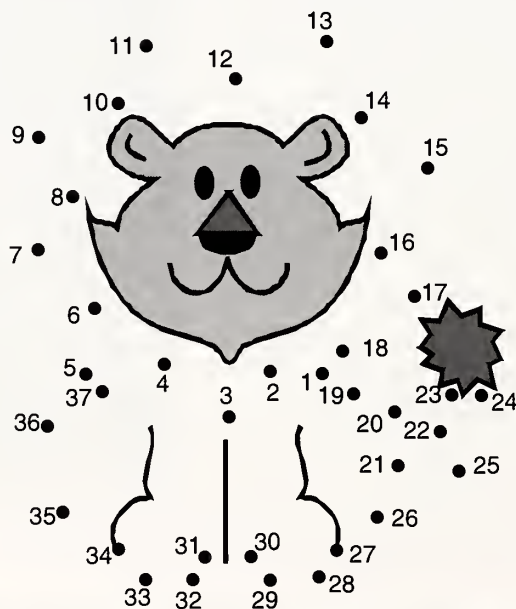
Cross out the words that are not related to summer, then find the summer words.



- beach
- boots
- bugs
- coat
- homework
- ice cream
- ice skates
- mittens
- picnic
- sandals
- shorts
- snow
- swim
- vacation

H	S	O	W	S	S	A	E	B	G
C	A	E	C	H	A	N	I	U	B
A	N	O	O	V	N	O	C	G	O
E	O	R	P	I	D	V	P	S	B
B	T	V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N
S	U	H	O	R	L	S	O	H	C
N	W	I	M	D	S	K	A	V	A
P	I	C	N	I	C	W	C	T	E
M	A	E	R	C	E	C	I	I	B
I	L	O	O	T	S	P	P	M	U

Connect the dots to see what Daniel faced.







# As Children

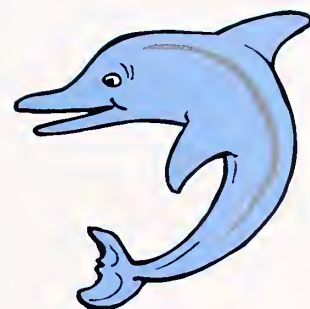
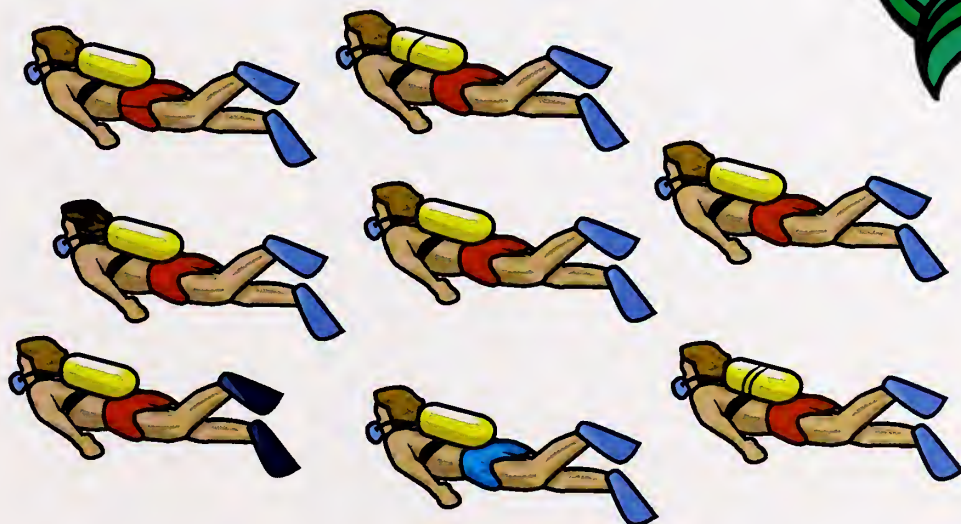
"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

Match these young Bible characters to an act of bravery they did.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| David    | He and two friends would not bow down to anyone or anything but God.                 |
| Joshua   | She risked her life to save her people.  |
| Esther   | An Israelite spy who trusted God to give them the Promised Land when others doubted. |
| Shadrach | He continued to pray and worship God even when his life was threatened.              |
| Ruth     | She left her home and people to stay with her mother-in-law among strangers.         |
| Daniel   | He continued to serve and protect King Saul who wanted to kill him.                  |

Find the two that are the same.



# Graduation at the College of Evangelism

by Rev. Earl Wright

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL, sunny day at Kodaikanal May 18th, a perfect day for the graduation of the 5th class of the College of Evangelism. Four young men were candidates for their Bachelor of Theology degree. They had labored for four years to arrive at this point.

Several local pastors from the Kodaikanal area were there, and a number of former graduates of the College now serving as pastors in the Fellowship of Blessed Hope Churches. Some had even made the long trip from Chennai.

All of the special guests, the director of the college (Rev. Gellknight), the graduating seniors, and the other nine students of the college lined up for a procession. Family and friends followed as the procession began. Your two missionaries-in-residence were asked to lead the group.

The graduation ceremonies were held in the college building that contains an assembly hall where the church (Andivilla) holds its services. The building also houses classroom space and the school library. The assembly hall was

brightly decorated in honor of the occasion.

The Mission superintendent gave a welcome, and the other special guests took part in the program as well. These folks brought greetings and encouragement. Music included some special songs and singing by the audience.

The commencement speaker was Professor P. J. Jeremiah. He teaches at the Bangalore Baptist Bible College and is the newest member of the College of Evangelism Board of Directors. After an address that was well received, it was nearly time for the presentation of diplomas. The handing out of gifts to the students and graduates of books preceded this. Books were welcomed treasures

for the hopeful pastors who would soon be leaving to take up new positions in churches. Pastors do not easily build libraries in India, for books are expensive and pastors are not paid high salaries.

The four young men who graduated that day had sent a request to the Fellowship of Blessed Hope Churches to provide a place for each of them to labor for the Lord. At the recommendation of the Business Committee of the Fellowship, the India Field Council has asked the new graduates to serve in pairs. Two of the young men are to serve in a newly established work and the other two to begin a new work. If they all accept their new postings both pairs of workers will be under the direct supervision of Fellowship

area pastors.

Here it is prudent for a new pastor to serve under another pastor or with another pastor until he is married. The families of these men will be searching for a bride for each of them. Please pray for these graduates and their families that the Lord will guide them in the choices to be made concerning their future. †







## *A Second Flagpole on Our Campground!*

by Charles M. Priebe, Jr.

THE ADVENT CHRISTIAN Campground at Mechanic Falls, Maine, has been precious to my wife and me for almost fifty years. Recently workmen brought me an unusual blessing. It involved two flagpoles, something that happened in a small church, and many years of service in Christian ministry.

Since childhood, I wanted to serve in the Armed Forces of our country. That was why I worked so hard in grade school to be the "Standard Bearer," the boy who had the honor of taking the U.S. flag from its standard in front of the classroom and holding it before the class while they pledged allegiance to that flag and to the nation for which it stands. I held that honor for several years.

When I graduated from high school, I made every effort to get sent to Officer's Training School at West Point or Annapolis. The Air Force did not have such a school at that time. I was never chosen even though I did very well on the exams.

When World War II began, I went to the recruiting stations for the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. I was refused induction because my left eardrum was perforated. If there were a gas attack in battle, the gas would enter through the ears, even if a gas

mask were worn. Later I learned that German dive-bombers had to have their eardrums pierced so that they would not pass out when they pulled out at the bottom of their dives. I was furious when I learned that I could have served in the enemy air force with my perforated eardrum, but not in my own.

In 1947, after the war was over, it became clear to me that God had called me to become a clergyman in His church. Even after divinity school, ordination, and serving many years in ministry (in the U.S., England, South America, and West Indies), I still felt angry that I had never been allowed to serve in any branch of our armed forces. My dream had been unfulfilled and it hurt.

Then one day after I had retired from over fifty years of ministry, I sat in the back seat of a little church in Maine and studied the U.S. flag in the front. Suddenly, I looked at the other side of the church and really studied the Christian flag that stood there. A strange and wonderful thing happened to me. I didn't hear the voice of God like some people say they do, but a thought came to me, "Charlie, you big dummy! You have been an officer all along and you never realized it. You wanted

to be an officer in the U.S. Army; but God has had you as an officer in His army all these years." The words of the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers" rang in my ears.

Last year many people, like myself, became upset because the Christian flag on our campground was being flown *underneath* the U.S. flag. After carefully checking the rules about the correct way to fly such flags, those in charge purchased another pole on which to fly the Christian flag alongside the American flag. Volunteer workmen prepared the base for the new pole.

As I said before, I have never had the privilege of serving in any of our armed forces as three of my brothers did. However, I have served in part of God's church. I've never marched in uniform behind our U.S. flag; but I have marched in clergy vestments behind the Cross of Christ. Our country, our U.S. flag, and our service people are very precious to me; but our church, our Christian flag, and our fellow Christians are also very precious. I am delighted that our camp's Christian flag will be flown in its proper place and at its proper level in the center of our campground from now on. Thanks be to God! †

*At a forestry camp friendships forged between unlikely generations.*

# **Under the Ponderosa Pines**

*by Della Biddiscombe*





IT WAS MAY 18, 1980, the day Mount St. Helen's erupted. I began a new venture as a cook for a camp facility I'd never seen, replacing its cook of many years who had died suddenly. The job seemed like a good match for me since my children were grown and I lived alone after my husband's death. Early that spring day two buses of University of Idaho forestry students met me in Lewiston, my hometown, to load food supplies and direct me to the campground in McCall, Idaho.

A tall, handsome Spanish man from Honduras stepped off the bus first. He reminded me of the Spanish Conquistadors I'd seen in history books. After introducing himself as Froylan Castanada, he announced, "I'm to be your bodyguard." At that point I went limp, wondering what I'd gotten myself into! Gratefully his attempt at humor dispersed the awkwardness

of the moment. Next a teacher assistant stepped up and offered to drive my car, which I appreciated immensely since we faced a four-hour drive.

The campsite was breathtakingly beautiful, that is, until I saw the inside of the dining hall and our log cabins! Closed nine months a year, the facilities weren't in good shape. But everyone pitched in and cleaned the hall and my cabin before addressing their own rooms, possibly so I could get their meal started. The group's combined effort of kindness gave me such a lift! And that was only a taste of what was to come. That spring proved to be cold and wet with violent storms of every kind, including lightning striking a huge Ponderosa Pine in the middle of the compound. My new friends and I witnessed it together at a *safe distance*, praise God! Their youthful exuberance and positive

outlook boosted me when storms could have sent me packing.

I cherish the twelve summers I worked at the camp in McCall. Even though I was much older than they, I forged lasting friendships with these special forestry students and many are much-loved members of my extended family.

Some would argue that today's generation is self-centered, lacking in manners, and devoid of morals. But God opened a new chapter of blessings in my life the day 60 college students landed on my doorstep. †

*Della Biddiscombe attends the Church of New Hope (Advent Christian) in Lewiston, Idaho. Retired, she enjoys visiting and reminiscing with old friends. With a talent for painting, Della is a "Grandma Moses" waiting to be discovered.*

Original painting by Della Biddiscombe



# What is an "A.C. Kids Club"?

An "A.C. Kids Club" is any children's group that incorporates and uses the "GO & TELL" Missionary Manual for Advent Christian kids at least once a month. With this material children learn how to "go and tell" the good news of Jesus Christ.

Your A.C. Kids Club could meet once a month during your Sunday school, Children's Church, Junior Action, King's Jewels, Pioneer Club, or whatever children's group is established in your church. We would *love* to see an A.C. Kids Club in every Advent Christian Church.

We introduced the program material this year by sending a copy of the manual to every Advent Christian church to be used in conjunction with each church's children's ministry. You may already have an active A.C. Kids Club if you are taking advantage of this great resource.

Manuals may be purchased for \$6.00 through the Office of Women's Ministries, Advent Christian General Conference, P.O. Box 23152, Charlotte, NC 28227. †

*Randee Davis,  
Children's Auxiliary  
Superintendent*

## "Go & Tell"



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# Luree's Bookshelf

*Walking in Total God-Confidence*, by Donna Partow. This book is a ten-week study of five lessons plus weekly reviews. To get the most value from it, the reader must be committed to follow through with the lessons, including the memory work. If a group uses it, do the daily lessons on an individual basis, then meet to review, discuss, and encourage one another. Even if you are not part of a group but want to take this journey, I encourage you to get the book. Topics include: being called, being nourished, becoming more like Christ, and taking the leap of faith. For the serious seeker.

*Experiencing God*, by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King. Blackaby is well known for his writing. Subtitled, "How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God," this book is a proven best seller. Thought questions interspersed with the concepts in each chapter help the reader focus on and apply the material. Topics include ways we can know God

by experience, by His Word, and by circumstances. This book will make you think and grow if you allow it.

*Created to Be God's Friend - How God Shapes Those He Loves*, by Henry T. Blackaby. Blackaby delves into a study of the life of Abraham and how God shaped Abraham to be His friend. Sections of the book include: "Before the Call," "Encountered by God," "Abram: Learning to Walk By Faith," "Abraham: A Friend of God." Each chapter has study questions for individual or group use. To get the most from the book, read it slowly and then think about the questions. Better yet, discuss them with someone on the journey with you.

*Dancing in the Storm — Hope in the Midst of Chaos*, by Linda R. McGinn. Is your life defined by chaos? If so, join McGinn and learn to live victoriously in the midst of it. She does not give easy or superficial answers, but suggests that it is necessary to face chaos, not resist or deny it.

You will identify ineffective ways you try to manage chaos in your life. Help and healing may require sorrow, facing disillusionment and loss, and finally repentance. After leading you to a place of honesty in facing chaos, she introduces ways of living and finding peace in the process of life. She notes that change may be required as chaos is part of life, and reminds you of the way to peace and rest. This book can be read individually or used as a study guide with questions for reflection to help in the process. †



Luree Wotton serves as Women's Ministries Coordinator of the Advent Christian General Conference.

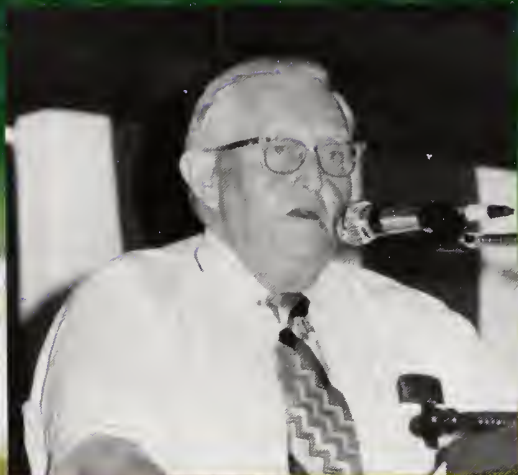
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## From the Editor

Dhanu beamed as her nervous hands clutched the traditional bouquet. This was the proudest day of her life. She peered anxiously through the crowd, looking for the man whose future she would share. The crowd stirred and he appeared, dressed in the finest clothes on earth. His walk down the aisle seemed an eternity. Finally he was before her, and she bowed to her knees. He paused to offer a reassuring hand and helped her rise. With hardly a movement she pressed the switch concealed in her palm, and the bomb beneath her dress obliterated her and the man who was Prime Minister of India.

Dhanu, a teenager, was a member of the suicide unit of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This army of guerrillas is fighting for the minority Hindu population of Sri Lanka. Struggling against perceived injustices of the Muslim majority in Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers have fought

against overwhelming odds for more than fifteen years. A unique trait of this army is the universal necklace worn by every member, from private to general: a cyanide capsule. Every Tamil Tiger is expected to sacrifice his or her life rather than be captured. Sometimes, a Tamil Tiger's entire mission is to commit suicide for the cause.

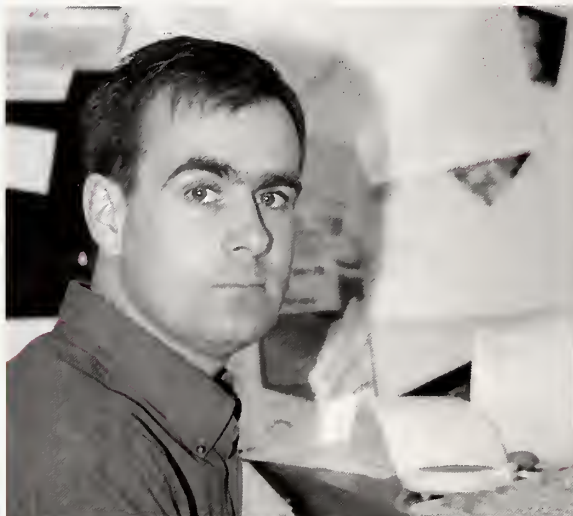
Earlier this year I had the rare opportunity to speak at a youth retreat. To get the youths' attention I shared this true story of a teenager literally giving her all for a cause she believed in. Sadly, this is a foreign concept to many of us. My question for the youth was not, "Are you willing to be the next 'suicide bomber' for Jesus?" Rather, I asked, "How will you recruit the next 'suicide bomber' for Jesus?"

I realize the recent attacks in New York and D.C. left most of us loath to be compared to

religious terrorists.

However, Jesus called his followers to a similar level of commitment:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.



*Continued on page 30*



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# Cameo's Story

by Cameo Blackstone Casey

**S**EPTEMBER 19, 1993. The most difficult day in my young life. I told my parents something that altered our lives forever. I was pregnant. Though not feeling close to my parents at fifteen, this news would ultimately create a new bond between us. The closeness that evolved helped me through some of the most difficult times a teenager can face.

Growing up in a pastor's home, I knew what it meant to be a Christian. My parents encouraged me to make a relationship with the Lord my first priority. From childhood, Mom and Dad taught me about man's sinful nature and Christ's redemptive work on the cross. I confessed Jesus as Lord and pledged my life to Him. By faith, I knew that I was saved and forgiven. I read my Bible and prayed daily and my relationship with my Savior matured.

When I began attending junior high, my priorities changed. I became known as the "Pastor's Kid." My friends apologized for using bad language in my presence. My peers refrained from telling me things for fear of offending me. I felt left out. I hated being treated differently and longed to fit in so much that my con-

cern changed from pleasing the Lord to pleasing my classmates.

Over time, I turned into a selfish and disrespectful young teenager. I ignored God's Word. Personal pleasure became my objective in life. Nothing mattered except having fun and fitting in with my friends. I hid my activities from my parents. I wanted everything to revolve around me. No matter what my parents asked, I acted how I wanted to. The strain in our relationship took its toll.

The "boy of my dreams" entered my life during my freshman year of high school. I thought I had discovered happiness. He made me laugh. He made me feel

special. He made me feel loved. Being with him consumed me.

When my parents discerned the unhealthy direction of our relationship, they began to enforce rules to keep us from being together so often. I despised them for imposing such restrictions and found ways to circumvent their wishes to get what I desired. I put the Lord out of the car as I eased it on to the highway of my own version of love and happiness.

While attending church camp in the summer of 1993, the Lord convicted me of the need to end this relationship, which was poisoning my walk with him. I knew my life did not glorify God. I knew



Cameo Casey, with husband Toby, daughter Ashton, and son Aidan.



my dependence on my boyfriend hindered my growth in grace, but the thrill sin gave deafened me to the Holy Spirit's conviction.

The transgressions in my life caught up with me two weeks into my sophomore year of high school. I discovered that I was pregnant with a child due in May 1994. My emotions spun out of control. I was angry with myself and with God. Questions piled on questions. Why didn't I end the relationship after camp like I felt led to do? Why me, Lord? How would I break the news to my parents? This was not supposed to happen to me because Dad was a pastor. What would my grandparents say? How would the church react? I kept hoping that I would miscarry before having to face the pain of telling my parents.

We shed many tears that evening in September. I hated confessing to my parents about the wrong turn my life had taken. I was embarrassed to admit what I had done. I feared Dad and his reaction. Our relationship was already strained; I couldn't imagine what this would do to it. Later I realized that I was the sinner—that God hadn't done this to me. But at that moment, pride prevented me from acknowledging this hard truth. Still, grace continued its gentle work of restoring me to wholeness.

My parents finally knew the secret I had hidden for weeks; their little girl was 15 years old and pregnant. I felt a sense of relief. One hurdle cleared, two to go. How would my extended family and church family learn the news? Would Dad and Mom make

me go before the church and confess my sin? Would I be the one to make the phone calls to my grandparents? Over my dead body!

In my mind I dug in my heels. I would not confess my sin to the church. If Dad forced the issue, and I couldn't find a way out then I would confess with my mouth and not my heart. My earlier choices to be deceitful and selfish bore new fruit. My emotions as an unwed, pregnant, teen-age girl consumed me.

My parents assumed responsibility for breaking the news of my pregnancy. Most people extended love and support to my family and me. Friends and family began praying for us. My school friends offered encouragement. I received many hugs and cards during the first struggling days.

Although family and friends held us close, things remained tense at home. During the first trimester of my pregnancy we attended family counseling sessions. I listened to my parents express the guilt they felt. They assumed blame for my pregnancy. They discussed what they had done wrong



*Cameo and Ashton, with brother Elliot, and Mom and Dad*

as parents and could have done differently in raising me. As I watched them journey through their pain, guilt haunted me. The mistake was *mine*, not theirs. Without recognizing the Holy Spirit's conviction, it sprouted and took root in those moments.

I faced and confessed my sin, seeking God's forgiveness. I knew I couldn't face this situation in my strength alone. Nothing could change what had happened, but Jesus offered a new beginning. I determined to learn from the situation I could not escape.

The Lord continued to soften my heart and expose my need for him. As my restoration continued, I recognized the importance of seeking the forgiveness of those

around me. I wrote a letter to our church family acknowledging my sin and repenting of my actions. In it I encouraged parents to talk about my situation openly with their children, because I wanted families in the church to see God honored in spite of my sin.

After recommitting my life to Christ, my fears eased. My parents and I opened up about our feelings, lessening the strain in our relationship. Together we identified

and discussed decisions that needed to be made. They helped me research and weigh options but left ultimate choices to me.

Emotions overwhelmed me as I desperately sought answers. Faith and conviction eliminated abortion. I prayed and read God's Word for direction. I wanted to keep this child, but knew the baby growing inside of me needed me to be mature enough to put her first. I spent months agonizing over the best option, begging the Lord for wisdom.

Could I release my child for adoption? The thought made me weak. In the early months, my parents believed that giving the baby to a couple who could not have children would best provide for her needs. Mom and Dad arranged for me to talk with a young, Christian woman who had given her baby up for adoption after a teenage pregnancy. I asked many questions as I sought answers.

I could keep the child and raise it myself, but was I ready for

parenting? Could I support a child? Was I ready to give up teenage freedoms without feeling anger toward the baby? Could I handle the pressures of school, work, and parenting? Could I provide the stability this child needed?

In the end, a worksheet in one of the books I was reading crystallized my thinking. It asked me to circle what I considered to be the greatest needs for my unborn

baby. I pondered the items. A flashbulb blinded the eye of my mind. The list contained everything imaginable except for the need for Christ and his forgiveness, our "greatest need." I had grasped the significance of my relationship with him and realized how important it was for my unborn child to know my Savior. At that moment I gave my child to God, and I decided to assume the responsibility of raising my baby for the glory of the Lord.

After Ashton's birth the Holy Spirit continued his producing work. A still, small voice reminded me that I could not continue to experience spiritual growth as long as I was yoked with my boyfriend. The voice asked if this boy was the strong, spiritual husband I wanted to marry. Could he father our daughter in a way that pointed her

toward God? I knew the answers but my dream of a husband, children, a white picket fence, and happily-ever-after died hard. Thoughts of her growing up without an earthly father made it difficult to let go of him. I prayed and cried as I surrendered my fears to the Lord. Still I experienced peace knowing I was honoring God by ending the relationship.

Faced with struggles most teens my age didn't think about, I began to see the hardships I would face as a single mother. I handled discipline issues alone. On several occasions, plans were cancelled as a result of temper tantrums (hers not mine!). When I did go out, evenings were cut short to provide a consistent bedtime. Even with lots of family support, I longed to be a teenager with teenage problems. At times I envied my friends and the lives they were leading.

Every day I gave my problems to God because of my waning strength. A verse discovered during my pregnancy gave me great comfort: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I

will uphold you with my righteous right hand that saves you" (Isaiah 41:10). I consumed these words as a daily dose of encouragement.

My desire for the Lord intensified. I wanted to read his Word, develop a more intimate relation-

*I kept hoping that I would miscarry before having to face the pain of telling my parents.*

*I listened to my parents express the guilt they felt. They assumed blame for my pregnancy.*



ship with him and be involved in a Bible study with kids my age. After prayer and encouragement from my parents, I decided to lead a Bible study for teen girls in our church. Four girls, whom I knew very little about, and I agreed to meet together every week. Over the next two years, we learned how to follow Jesus and make him Lord of our lives. We developed an intimate relationship with our Savior and each other as we studied Scripture, prayed, sang, and shared burdens.

During the summer of 1996, my father accepted a call to a church in Maine. I made the decision to stay in Idaho with my daughter and attend college. The family I had bonded so closely with was leaving me. Saying goodbye to Mom and Dad was difficult. Ashton didn't understand why I cried so hard. I tried to explain they were moving far away and we wouldn't see them for a long time.

My spiritual family at Church of New Hope lived up to its name by embracing me. Families offered child-care as I continued actively participating in church life. This wonderful family in Christ didn't replace my family, but they filled the void I was feeling.

My spiritual sisters and I ended our Bible study group when I made the decision to take the next step in my journey, one that

landed me 3,000 miles away at Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies. I thought my choice as a high school sophomore destroyed my dream to attend BICS. Now President Steve Brown raised the

possibility that the dream was not dead after all. But the financial, emotional, and time responsibilities of being a single mom and keeping up with studies at this intense, one-year Christian school felt insurmountable. Again the Lord showed me that by trusting in him all things are possible.

The BICS faculty went out of their way to extend grace to my unique situation. The Lord opened the hearts of many people to make my year at BICS possible. Like Abraham, I moved my three-year-old daughter and myself by faith from the place we called home. By faith the Lord provided for every need throughout that year. People, many of them strangers, exercised gifts of hospitality and giving to cover the costs of child-care, groceries, rent, car, and tuition. Looking back I stand in awe of God's providing hand.

After my year at BICS, I married my best friend, whom I'd met during the year. By devoting our lives to Christ first, we are able to love each other more completely. He loves my daughter as his very own. Together we have committed our marriage and family to

Christ. Though trials never seem far away, we walk together in the comfort of God's promises to care for our needs.

After years of hard work outside of the home, the Lord has answered my prayer to be home with the children I love—schooling them, praying for them, and attending to their spiritual nourishment.

Since that difficult day in September, the eight-year journey has been longer and more difficult than I imagined when fifteen and pregnant, but the Lord has used this experience to shape me into the woman I am. Despite my sin, the Lord has graced my life with a deeper friendship with my family, a wonderful husband, a beautiful seven-year-old daughter, an intoeverything one-year-old son, and a restored relationship with my Savior. God's redeeming grace overwhelms me and reminds me of life's most important discovery: there is none more important than Jesus. †

*I had grasped  
the significance  
of my  
relationship  
with him and  
realized how  
important it was  
for my unborn  
child to know  
my Savior.*





*Her  
parents—  
how one  
Christian  
couple faced  
a  
parent's  
worst fear*

*Rev. and Mrs. Clayton and Hazel  
Blackstone minister in the Advent  
Christian Church, Bangor, Maine.*



# *The Day Hope Died*

*“We dare not breathe a prayer  
Or give our anguish scope.  
Something was dead in all of us  
And what was dead was hope.”*

*by Rev. Clayton Blackstone*

I THOUGHT THE OSCAR WILDE lines a bit morose until the day hope died for Hazel and me.

We had barely walked through the door when the phone rang. Our

daughter's boyfriend's mom wanted to get together with us the next evening. We pondered the request. We barely knew each other. We sensed incoming

bombs. “What’s this all about?”

Cameo remained stone-faced. “Wait until tomorrow. You’ll find out everything you need to know then.”

We couldn’t wait. We fired question after question, but the denials came in rapid-fire succession. I breathed deeply and finally managed what I believed to be the worst possibility: “Did Joe’s mom catch you two having sex?” Another “No,” and then a flood of

*(Continued on page 13)*

## *The Journey of a Mother’s Heart*

*“Little did I know that to grow a mother’s heart it  
would have to endure much pain.”*

*by Hazel Blackstone*

I NOTICED HER OUT of the corner of my eye, an attractive young woman scanning titles and lifting the covers of books in the “Home and Marriage” section of the Christian bookstore where I worked. Sensing her search yielded little success, I approached her.

“Is there something I can help you find?” I inquired.

“Probably not,” she replied. “I don’t even know what I’m looking for myself. You see... my best friend just found out her teenage daughter is pregnant. She hasn’t told her husband and dreads that encounter. She’s really hurting, but

I don’t know what to say or do to be supportive. I hoped something might jump out at me here.”

Tears welled up in my eyes as I listened to this one sharing in anguish her concerns. I, too, had sat in her friend’s position.

\* \* \*

In the fall of 1993, our church held a couples' retreat at a cabin in McCall, Idaho. We viewed the video series, "Love for a Lifetime," by Gary Smalley. In the final segment Smalley spent considerable time discussing how family crises handled correctly pull a family together. He interviewed families who had come through major family turmoils.

Clayton and I discussed how the concepts learned over the weekend might benefit our family. Armed with fresh ideas and renewed in determination and spirit, we looked forward to reuniting with our children. Little did we know that before night's end we would be blind-sided with a family crisis to test our emotional and spiritual fortitude.

Minutes after our arrival home the phone rang. The mother of our daughter's boyfriend asked if we could meet together the next evening to talk. As I hung up the phone I was stunned and puzzled by this request. We didn't socialize or travel in the same circles so why did

she want to talk? Clayton and I gazed at Cameo with questioning expressions. Quiet and withdrawn, Cameo didn't respond. Finally Clayton blurted out the question we both were afraid to ask.

"You're not pregnant are you!?!"

Having held that secret for days, Cameo collapsed into uncontrollable sobs. Clayton held her while they both cried. I retreated into my bedroom in a daze.

People respond differently in a crisis. Clayton felt the need to talk incessantly about it. He processed his feelings aloud. In contrast, I felt paralyzed by a bundle of swirling and conflicting emotions. This confused state left me immobilized, unable to express feelings. It would take me a

great deal more time to process my feelings, much less express them. I desperately wanted time to myself. I didn't want questions. This mother's heart was severely broken.

I remember the excitement of learning I was expecting our first child. I suppose my seedling mother's heart took form then. I embarked on the journey to motherhood by equipping myself with every book and article I could find on the subject. I desired only the best for my offspring.

Little Cameo (meaning, "a jewel") soon arrived on the scene. I swelled with pride at my first glimpse of her. She was beautiful! I was going to enjoy motherhood!

The rocking chair became my meeting place with God, an altar to bring my daughter. I prayed that Cameo would be and do everything I couldn't. I sang great songs of the faith to her. I smile remembering her sweet small voice pleading, "Mama, sing 'Golden.'" I didn't know which song she requested until weeks later.

One night at prayer meeting we sang, "Gleams of the Golden Morning" and she whispered loudly, "Mama, Golden!"

I created a master plan early. My goal: to develop happy, confident, intelligent, biblically-literate children. The regimen? Nightly devotions, family night activities, swimming lessons, gymnastics, preschool, field trips, family centered vacations... This mother, like the Proverbs 31 mother, would have "children who will rise up and call her blessed." I doubted any mother could love her children more than I.

One by one little trials of childhood encamped on our doorstep. Misunderstandings with friends. Hurt feelings. All the little injustices that tug at a young

***Little did we  
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emotional and  
spiritual  
fortitude.***



mother's heart. I embraced those pains and found in so doing my heart grew and loved with a greater capacity. Little did I know that to grow a mother's heart it would have to endure much pain.

Fifteen years later, with this new revelation, my heart lay in fragments, yielding to pain inflicted by my "jewel." This time it would take time. Much more time. I succumbed to swirling emotions that found no rest. "I don't understand. What happened to the perfect family I so carefully crafted?" Like Job, my internal tormenters wearied me with accusations:

***"You're a failure."***

I racked my brain to see where I went wrong. Surely Cameo knew moral right from wrong. She and I had covered sexual purity by reading a Christian book together concerning the facts of life. Clayton and I were the responsible parents who went to school and viewed the "Growing Up" video series before giving our 5th grader permission to watch them. Cameo had been privy to many Bible studies on abstinence in youth groups and camps. What more could I have done? Yet I blamed myself for the obvious hole in my child's moral education.

***"Hide."***

Clayton and I discovered that most of our first impulses were wrong. Faced with the dilemma of telling family, friends, and church people about the pregnancy, we felt like hiding from everyone and everything. We could go somewhere until the baby arrived, then give it up for adoption. Somehow we knew running from our



*Hazel and granddaughter Ashton*

problems wasn't the answer. We knew why some turn to abortion to rid themselves of the problem quickly, but we couldn't live with that option either.

***"You've lost your little girl."***

In some ways I had experienced a death. I pined for my little girl. I felt robbed of the teenage years in my daughter's life. After all, she was a mother in her own right now. Things would change in our relationship and I added grief to the mixture of churning emotions.

***"This is not a happy occasion, so don't celebrate."***

The nine months of Cameo's pregnancy dragged on, as did my depressed state. We did one thing right, though. We determined to come to a healthy resolution in this crisis and resorted to family counseling. This was very helpful, since on our own we tended to avoid talking about the issue—perhaps to spare each other's feelings. Clayton expressed intense anger towards Cameo's boyfriend. I still struggled with profound disappointment with Cameo.

Meanwhile she remained strong and upbeat in our presence, and continued with school. What a trooper! If she were in pain she wouldn't have come to me—I wasn't happy about the upcoming event and her plans to keep the baby. During the latter months of pregnancy people would say, "Are you getting excited about the baby?!" No. "Must be fun setting up the new nursery." No. "You'll love being a grandmother!" No, I won't. How can you be happy about something that shouldn't have happened? In my way of thinking, being happy about the baby bordered on condoning the sin.

Gradually the healing process began. A breakthrough came when a letter arrived from a dear friend who knew of my struggle. "You better start loving that baby NOW!" she wrote. I reread the letter from this saint and considered her God-given advice.

Another breakthrough came from a conversation with my dad. "You could have done it all right, and it still could have happened," he ventured. My heavenly Father gently affirmed that, too, and reminded me that his children disappoint him. In fact, the children of Israel proved to

be quite a discipline problem!

God began a cleansing process and bound up this mother's broken heart. A mountain of tears swept away layers of pride. I found solace in music. Praise music invaded the crevices of my being, permeating body, soul and spirit like a healing balm. The result? I yielded, surrendering and embracing this pain, too. This mother's heart not only survived, but carries a tender spot for the daughter who had to grow up so quickly.

What joy full surrender brings! Little Ashton instantly invaded our lives and stole our hearts. On the day she arrived home from the hospital I wrote:

*Hello rocker. It's been a long time...  
I hold in my arms a new generation.  
"Lord, I release any ownership  
of this life and  
offer no selfish prayers but this one.  
Validate this life that  
'wasn't suppose to be.'  
Use this bundle whose innards  
you fashioned  
as an ambassador to this dark world.  
May others look at her and rejoice in  
YOU, her Creator."*



I'm not naïve to believe that this mother's heart has reached its full potential to love. Other heartbreaks may come my way. But the Lord has proven faithful and done a work of grace, bringing healing in my life. As Oswald Chambers wrote, "Oh, the beauty of healing. The past is held in the arms of Jesus." †

*Hazel and Cameo on her wedding day*



(“The Day...” cont.)

tears.

Hazel and I gasped, overwhelmed with the inconceivable. “Cameo, are you pregnant?”

We sat in stunned silence. The marriage videos we watched the day before at a couples’ retreat encouraged us to use difficult situations to strengthen family bonds, but nothing could have prepared us for this moment. The consequences of our daughter’s errant choice crashed like dissonant cymbals, drowning out the melody of the future with a deafening clash.

The next day, I began to journal my descent into a world without hope:

Yesterday was the longest, most difficult day of my life. Sunday evening, we found out that Cameo is pregnant. Today, I sit in my office with little more desire than to sit and stare. I’ve eaten nothing. The thought of food sickens

me. What do I do? Who do I talk to? Where do we go from here? The urge is to pack up our bags and head back to the farm... I’m scared for her. I suppose the anger will probably come sometime. For now I feel only a million questions and a lingering sadness.

“Sometimes I think of my career, but most of the time I wonder what this will all mean for my bubbly, baby girl. She possesses brains, beauty, and talent. Will this scar her for life? Can she pick up the pieces and go on? Will her relationship with the Lord mature beyond my wildest dreams as a result of her descent into hell?”

Sin.

Little word.

Life altering word.

Forgotten word.

It knocks with seeming innocence

In the heat of passion.

Wrong seems right.

The mind disengages.

Reason abandons.

My baby loses her virtue.

My baby is having a baby,

And all I can do is cry.”

**9/22/93**

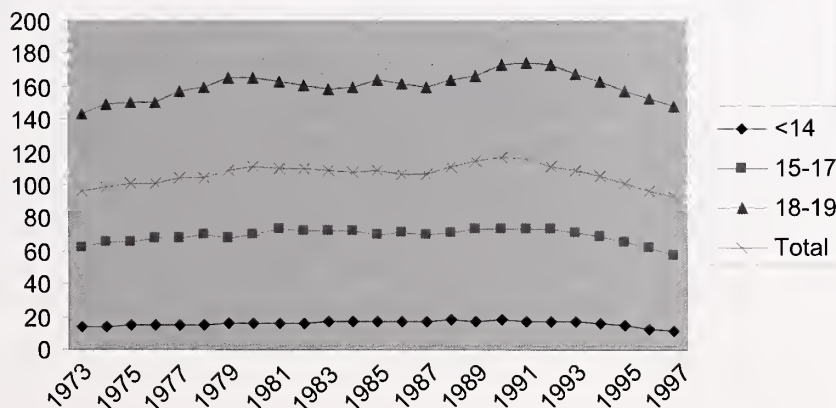
We told Elliot last night. He looked at Cameo. Fought back tears. Shook his head. Fought back tears. He went to his room and cried. I held him for awhile, but he finally

said, “Dad, I need some time by myself to think.” ...He’s a big loser in this. His near idolatry of his sister (whether he would admit it or not) disappeared with the revelation of his sister’s feet of clay...

**9/23/93**

It’s been a night haunted by fear... Is it really love? Perhaps he will be a good mate for her — but not now. Not at fifteen. They need time. Distance. A cooling of passion to find that out. I am more and more convinced

**Pregnancy Rates 1973-1997**



Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute, www.agi-usa.org, 1999.

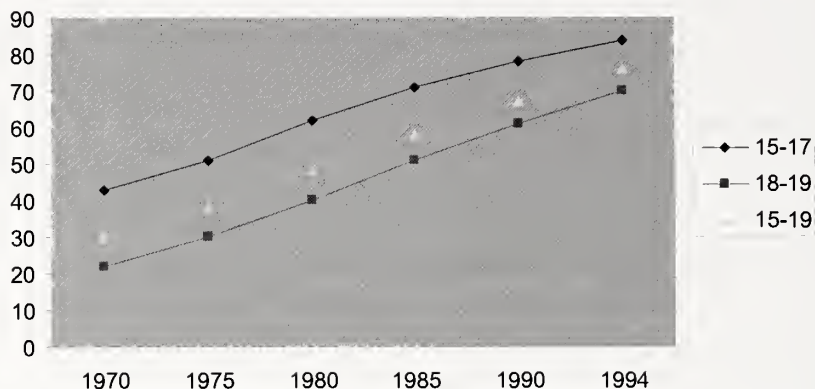
that can't happen while we are here. That's where the fear comes in. Would they do something stupid like run off in order to stay together and keep the child?

I feel horrible guilt. My depression over the past couple of years and my fluctuating moods could have created a climate ripe for such a thing to happen. Did I drive her into the arms of another by my self-absorbed conduct? Did I force her to begin a life of deception because of my sometimes verbally harsh responses? Others say, "No. She's a teen who made her own choices and now must live with the consequences." Still the experts pour on the guilt—lack of self-esteem, a poor home environment, a father who closes up the spirit of his daughter.

*(A couple of weeks after our world caved in, I attended a pre-Promise Keepers rally. "If a daughter gets pregnant, it's because a father hasn't covered her with prayer," the speaker declared. I almost bolted from the room as this man who knew nothing about my situation heaped coals of fire on my guilt. Eight years later, the same pain returned when I read the indictment of a respected Christian author: "If (pregnant teenage girls) had received godly affection and discipline from their fathers, they would not have been so vulnerable to their boyfriends' advances." Words crafted to encourage a father's attentiveness to his daughter, ripped the scab from my wound and the oozing began again.)*

I suppose blaming doesn't accomplish anything. It's done. The real question—can it be prevented from happening again. (Yes!) Can we rebuild a relationship of trust in our family again? Can we create a structure of rules and responsibilities without inciting rebellion? I have a hundred fears. A thousand questions. A million regrets. And no hope of watching my little girl grow slowly from teen to adult. The next nine months will change that forever.

Percent of teen births to unmarried teenagers



Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute, www.agi-usa.org, 1999.

Our dreams and hers were not a lot different.

A beautiful wedding.

Celebration.

The excitement of first time sexual union  
In a beautifully appointed and romantic honeymoon.

Today our dreams and hers lie on the floor of her future like a shattered mirror.

The dream will never be the same—

Destroyed by passion and short-circuited judgment.

My incurable romantic about to discover the cruel, harsh world of teen pregnancy.

Perhaps some day we can dream new dreams together.

Right now, we can only stare at the broken pieces of her life and cry.

**9/24/93**

Strange how my conception of what to do changes from day to day. Yesterday at this time I was ready to pack our bags and leave within a month. Today I realize that a quick exit could prove disastrous. To leave too early while the relationship is still bells and whistles would make us out to be the bad guys and set us up for some hardened rebellion down the road, a counselor friend warned. (Some of the best counsel given



during our journey.)

Cameo went to school a bit miffed at me this morning for not letting her ride with "him." Lord, how do we set safe guidelines for them to continue to see each other in controlled situations without boxing them in too tightly? We're new at this. It's tough to provide some freedom when your entire basis for trust has been eroded by the choices that they have made.

I made an appointment with Ron (a family counselor) this morning. Thanks Father, for providing Dave (Roper of Idaho Mountain Ministries) to walk through this with us. Without his offer to cover the cost of counseling, I'm not certain we would have opted for this route because we couldn't afford it. (Another wise decision—knowing that we would talk about our feelings at a set time each week allowed us to be more "normal" at other times.)

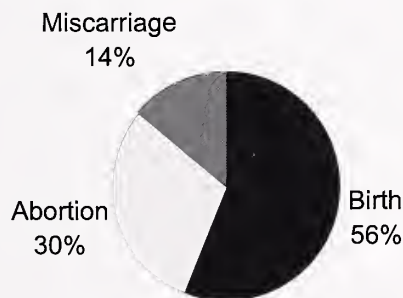
**9/25/93**

I don't want to lose her. I want my daughter back—even if it means a grandchild with her. Lord, please make Cameo tender before you. The apparent absence of remorse frightens us. It may be there, hidden beneath a false front, but it doesn't seem so. Perhaps as crises go, ours isn't that big a deal. It happens. Both kids are alive. Neither has a disease from which they will not recover. But it's a big one for us. I'm scared. Scared for Cameo and Joe. Scared for the baby. Scared for Hazel. Scared for Elliot. Scared for the church. Scared for me. "Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of this hour that we'll fail not men nor thee!"

Lord,  
Why the overwhelming fear?  
Because you live, I can face tomorrow.

You are my shelter in the time of storm.  
As darkness veils your lovely face, I rest  
in your unchanging grace.  
You show your wounded hands and name me  
as your own.  
I dread no condemnation because all is mine  
in you.  
You invite me to cast all my cares on you.  
You are my peace.  
Your strength is perfect when my strength  
is gone.  
You hide my soul in the cleft of the rock.  
You are the Rock I go to when there's no  
one else to turn to.

**Teen pregnancy outcomes, 1997**



Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute, [www.agi-usa.org](http://www.agi-usa.org), 1999.

But I'm still afraid. Please make these words more than tunes I sing. Burn them into my spirit. Somehow, make my mind as calm as the Sea of Galilee on the day you ordered it to be still.

**9/28/93**

On Sunday, God gifted me with grace in abundance. I did not anticipate making it through worship without welling up with tears.

Music does that to me, but it wasn't until the end of the sermon when I closed with the words of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" that I puddled up. "He shall reign..." in spite of the crisis we face. "He shall reign..." in spite of the manner in which fleshly passion has wreaked such havoc in our family. People embraced us. Reaffirmed their love. Promised their prayers. Somehow, I am not surprised. Both Hazel's dad and Dave (Ross) believe that we could not be in a more supportive and understanding church than we are.

...I felt my first rush of anger this morning—not so much at them, but at being deprived of so much of her growing up years.

I must pass through this place, Lord. It is part of the grieving process. Help me to travel the road as quickly as possible and with grace and dignity rather than rage and bitterness. I do not wish to be here any longer than necessary."

**9/29/93**

The mind just doesn't seem to want to shut off. It's like I'm trying to answer all the questions about our future as a family. Cameo's future. The baby's future. In addition, I feel the weight of decisions needing to be made now. Right now, Cameo seems certain that she wants to keep the baby. I think adoption would provide her with a greater chance of beginning again—even though I know that she would have to go through a terrible grieving process before she could see that. Still, I don't think that she has an inkling about what a dramatic difference a child will make in her life, plans, goals.

**10/29/93**

From Psalm 68 in my devotional reading this morning—a father to the fatherless. Could that be your promise to the baby taking form in Cameo and a response to my fears about the father not being around for the child. If the kids decide to keep the baby, it is a promise to which I will return often because I have great fear of her raising the baby as a single parent and an even greater fear that the responsibility will fall to us. The day has brought me encouragement in several forms—another example of the manner in which you consistently line our days with grace. Cameo heard the baby's heart beating this morning at the doctor's office. I know that it made her excited. How can people consider abortion at this stage in the pregnancy? I had a phone call from a good friend telling us that we were doing a good job at handling this unanticipated addition to our busy fall schedule. News from

the insurance company that in the event of complications, Cameo would be covered under our current policy and the baby covered from birth under the policy that we will take out for her. The financial hurdles don't seem quite so overwhelming now. At least we will not be responsible for the bulk of expenses if she encounters complications. Each day you put another piece or two of the puzzle in place. Forgive my impatience—I can't seem to escape my desire to see it completed yesterday. Just wanted to say thanks for today's evidences of grace.

## In retrospect

This reliving of our experience through the pages of a journal I hadn't looked at in years reopened the tear ducts, but this time the moisture that I wiped from wrinkled wells found their genesis in thanksgiving rather than pain. Almost none of my fears materialized. Cameo renewed her relationship with the Lord and her vow of chastity until marriage. On October 17, 1999, I walked her down the aisle and entrusted her to a knight in shining armor. And I swell with pride and love at the sight or sound of a little girl I once thought a candidate for adoption.

Almost none of my fears materialized, but all of my fears were real and each faced with faith strengthened by the process. Hope died for me on September 19, 1993, just like it died for a fledgling band of traveling companions of Jesus outside the city of Jerusalem at a place called Skull. And like those men and women, hope roused itself out of the ashes of death that covered it. For them it came quickly, for me, resurrection proved to be a process rather than an event. But still it came.

Today, there's nothing quite like seeing the light go on in Ashton's eyes when she discerns the Gospel in C. S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*. It sets the feet of a man, who became a grandpa at a more tender age than planned, dancing with hope. †



# Decision at Camp Georgolina

by Sarah Lucas

EVERYONE HAS AN EPIPHANY at some time in life. These life-changing experiences are hard to explain to others, but they mean a great deal to the one who experiences them. I had my epiphany one summer at camp.

It was the third week of June 1995. My family and I were heading to Camp Georgolina. My dad was the evangelist for the week, and my mom was leading music. My brother and I were both going as campers. I was dreading the week ahead of me. This was my first year going to this particular camp. I was accustomed to going to Camp Dixie in North Carolina, but my family had moved the previous summer, so we had to go to Camp Georgolina this year. Camp Dixie was an extremely nice campground with great facilities. All the buildings were air-conditioned. There was a pool as well as a big lake with bumper boats, a zip line, a water slide, and a blob. It also had a big gym with a go-cart track behind it. Georgolina, on the other hand, wasn't even a real camp. It was actually a state park in Milan, Georgia, that was rented for two weeks each year. There were two un-air-conditioned dorms (one for guys and one for the girls), a building used for meals, services, and any other indoor activities or games, and a pool. There was a lake too, but we weren't allowed near it because of alligators. I did have some friends from my church

that were going too, so at least they would make the week more bearable.

The negative perception I had before arriving didn't last long. As the week progressed, I realized that I was actually having fun. All of the people were awesome. I made some great friends. I could be myself around them and I didn't have to prove myself to anybody. They liked me for who I was. When we had our daily games or activities, no one cared who won or lost. Everyone was just having fun. It was unlike any place I'd ever been. I could sense the love that was there. It didn't matter that there was no air-conditioning or a big gymnasium. It was people who truly loved God that made this camp. The same camp that I dreaded coming to, I dreaded leaving on Friday.

Halfway through the week, I was sitting in one of the evening services listening to my dad speak. He asked if we had a personal relationship with Christ and if we were ready for Jesus to come back. This really got me thinking. My heart began to race. I had grown up in church all my life (with my dad being a minister I didn't really have a choice), but I'd never made a personal commitment to God. I knew I wasn't ready if Jesus were to come back that day. The whole room became very distant. My head was pounding. It was like I was the only person there, and he was talking directly to me. I couldn't wait for the altar call! I was ready to race down to

the front and make the decision to give my heart to Christ. As soon as my mom played the first note of the closing song and the congregation began to sing, "*Father, I adore you, lay my life before you...*" I stepped out. It was too late to stop now. I went to the front and my dad prayed with me. A wonderful feeling came over me. I felt like a new person. I felt like my life was now complete. It was an indescribable feeling.

My week at Georgolina was a life-changing experience. I no longer view Georgolina as the place I was dreading to go. I now think of it as that incredible place where I gave my heart to Jesus. It's the place where I set my life on the right track. Because of my experience there, Georgolina will always hold a special place in my heart. †



Sarah Lucas is the daughter of Rev. Wayne and Ruth Lucas. She is a junior at Walterboro, SC, High School.

# Elizabeth's Choice

*Anonymous*

MRS. COLLINS! MRS. COLLINS! Elizabeth is leaving school with some woman to get an abortion!"

"What did you say?" I stammered.

"Some woman in an old farm truck is waiting around the corner for Elizabeth. She told me this morning that she is going to sneak out after homeroom to go to an abortion clinic and didn't want her mom to know."

"Go tell the principal what you just told me. I'll go after her."

Jumping up from my desk, I ran down the hall as the bell rang to dismiss homeroom. I could see Elizabeth's long, blonde hair swinging from side to side as she briskly walked toward the exit. Through the window I could see an old farm truck pulling up the road slowly. I caught up to Elizabeth as she opened the truck door.

"Elizabeth! You cannot leave school property without your parents' permission or the permission of the administrator's office. If you do, you'll be in big trouble. Return to the school building now."

"What? Are you crazy? Elizabeth, get in the truck. Let's go!" yelled the driver.

"Lady, you will face legal charges if you remove this student from the school property." Hanging her head in shame, Elizabeth got out of the truck.

"How did you find out?" she asked.

"Carrie told me where you were going and why. Come to my apartment after school and we can talk about your situation. I want to help you, if I can." I said.

As we approached the door, the principal snapped, "I want to see both of you in my office."

"Elizabeth, I have to call your mother and tell her what just happened. I will only tell her that you attempted to leave school property without permission. Now go to your first class," said the principal.

As she quietly left the office, closing the door behind her, the principal stated emphatically and authoritatively, "Mrs. Collins, your involvement in this matter is completely unprofessional and unacceptable. What Elizabeth chooses to do about her pregnancy is not of our professional concern."

I countered, "Pregnancy is not the issue here. Unauthorized departure from school grounds is the issue and it is my professional concern. I know her mother and she would bring issue with the school allowing her daughter to leave with a woman she perceives as an enemy."

"You are dismissed, Mrs. Collins," he snapped.

That afternoon and evening, I waited for Elizabeth to call or come by my apartment. She didn't.

The next morning, before the homeroom bell rang, I heard Anne,

a bus driver, call my name, "Mrs. Collins! When I stopped at the intersection of River Front and Byrd Parkway, Elizabeth jumped off the bus as the other children were getting on. She climbed into an old farm truck. Carrie yelled for her not to go, and Carrie told me what happened yesterday." Anne stood weeping as the reality of Elizabeth's actions began to sink in.

I replied, "Anne, all we can do now is pray. Let's pray: 'Father, you know Elizabeth and where she is heading and what is in her heart to do. Please guard her, protect her, and help her in this time of despair. We ask you to put confusion into the enemy's plans for her. We pray especially for that baby, that you would place a hedge of protection around it, that you would guard it and hold it in the hollow of your hand. Hide it; shelter it in the shadow of your wing. Oh, God, give us wisdom in this situation. We thank you for your faithfulness.'"

Anne had to report to the principal, and I returned to my class. I didn't hear any news about Elizabeth for the remainder of the day. I went home and tried to grade some papers. Unable to concentrate, I decided to clean house and go to bed early. I fell asleep with a magazine across my chest.

As the phone rang, I reached for my glasses, "Ugh, it's 2:14 a.m. Who could that be?" I muttered.



"Mrs. Collins? This is Elizabeth... I'm in so much pain... Oh, God! I hurt! Help me! Help me!"

"Where are you?"

"At home, I don't want Mom to know."

"What did you do yesterday?"

"I got the first part of the abortion. They put something inside of me to make me start dilating and now I'm cramping. I go back at 10:00 tomorrow to have the suction abortion, but I can't do it!"

"Okay, Elizabeth... listen to me. You must tell your mom. Go get your mom up and tell her everything. She may get upset but right now she's the only one who can help you. Has your water broken?"

"I don't think so."

"Okay. Call me in a little while and tell me how you are." Trying to go back to bed, all I could do was pray for wisdom for everyone involved. A couple hours later Elizabeth's mom called me. "Can they stop this abortion?"

"I really don't know, but it sounds to me as if the cervix has dilated without the water breaking. My guess would be the baby hasn't been injured at this point."

"I'm taking her back there first thing this morning and telling them to remove that implant and stop the abortion."

The next day at school was long and tedious.

My mind was everywhere but where it needed to be. As I walked down the hall everyone looked away, and hushed their conversations until I passed. We all knew what the "buzz" was about. What I didn't know was that a clear line had been drawn. I had crossed over it. I was seen as a villain in the ghost town of morality. I had meddled with my "self-righteous" standards.



After a day of swimming in a sea of cold shoulders and eating lunch alone for the first time, I arrived home to find Elizabeth and her mom waiting in my driveway.

"They removed the implant, but said my baby will get an infection and die. If it lives, it will be deformed. Mom said we'll take the risk."

Her mom, with red-rimmed eyes, hugged her and they cried together.

"It won't be easy, we know. We just wanted to thank you for trying to help us."

"You're welcome. I know there is a special reason for this child. It will be God who preserves it. I can't wait to see what the Lord does with its life."

I watched as they drove away, remembering John 10:10, "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Elizabeth graduated high school in June of that year and gave birth to a robust, eight-pound baby boy, Jeremy. Several years later she married a man who loved her and accepted Jeremy as his own son. Jeremy is now a big brother to two little sisters. I saw Jeremy's grandmother in the grocery store last month, and she showed me his picture. He is now fourteen, playing high school football and on the honor roll. †

# The Right to



Just say  
NO!

by Roy Maynard

*Doug Yeo is bass trombonist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Along with his wife, Pat, and daughters Linda and Robin, Doug attends Hope Church, Lenox, Mass. (Advent Christian) during the Tanglewood Music Festival season.*

INDEPENDENCE IS STILL a source of contention here in this Boston-area town. Just ask Douglas Yeo, a parent who for five years has battled the town's school district over what his children are to be taught about sex.

The battle is shaping up into a possible Supreme Court fight, now that an appellate court has given Mr. Yeo's minutemen a boost. The dispute is over abstinence—not "abstinence only," the message of some curricula, but any significant mention of abstinence at all. Even in the public schools of Chautauqua County, New York where AIDS predator Nushawn Williams allegedly was able to infect, directly or indirectly, some 100 young women and girls with the HIV virus, abstinence is mentioned. "You might spend the first 20 minutes (of a two-week sex-ed. course) on abstinence," Jamestown High School principal Terry Redman said in *USA Today*.

In Lexington, Massachusetts,

school students don't even get those

20 minutes. Officials there have handed out condoms for years; why not at least address abstinence, Mr. Yeo wondered in 1992. The school's health curriculum included a list of 30 specific sexual acts ("I didn't know what 15 of them were, and I'm not sheltered," Mr. Yeo says), and he was troubled; he didn't want his two daughters sitting through such a one-sided indoctrination.

Nevertheless, Mr. Yeo was reluctant to take his daughters out of the public schools; both are talented musicians, and the local

Eighty-six percent of school districts with a sexuality education policy require promotion of abstinence; 51% require that abstinence be taught as the preferred option but also permit discussion of contraception as an effective means of protecting against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); and 35% require abstinence to be taught as the only option for unmarried people, while either prohibiting the discussion of contraception altogether or limiting discussion to contraceptive failure rates. Only 14% have a truly comprehensive policy that teaches about both abstinence and contraception as part of a broader program designed to prepare adolescents to become sexually healthy adults.

The AGI study found significant regional variation in the prevalence of abstinence-only policies. School districts in the South are most likely to have such policies (55%) and are least likely to have comprehensive programs (5%). In contrast, school districts in the Northeast are least likely to have an abstinence-only policy (20%).

Source: [www.agi-usa.org/pubs/ib\\_2-01.html](http://www.agi-usa.org/pubs/ib_2-01.html)



private schools do not have comparable music programs. And besides, he says, he chose to live in Lexington because of the high reputation of the public schools there.

But when he went to the school board, he was told, essentially, to sit down and shut up. The district wasn't interested in the subject of abstinence.

Because he refused to shut up (he got a spot on the next week's meeting agenda and had his say), he found himself heading a slowly coalescing group of parents, which eventually became LexNet, the Lexington Parents Information Network. "I seemed an unlikely person," admits Mr. Yeo. "I'm not an expert on sex-ed.—in fact, I've only had sex with one person in my whole life—my wife. And I'd never seen a condom before."

What's more, Mr. Yeo is employed in the arts (a traditionally liberal sector). He plays bass trombone for the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops, and he teaches at the New England Conservatory of Music. But his message produced discord; schools must be "realistic" about the sexual proclivities of students, Mr. Yeo was told.

"When they told me it's not possible for teenagers to refrain from sex, I just pointed to myself," he says. "And I pointed out that condoms don't make sex safe, and that we're not out there promoting 'safe smoking.' We didn't want to stop the sex education; we just wanted a balanced, realistic picture presented."

When the schools rejected the parents' attempts to get the absti-

nence message into the sex-ed. curriculum, LexNet turned to advertising. Parents attempted to buy space in the school newspaper which had solicited advertising from local groups and businesses; the ad read: "We Know You Can Do It! Abstinence: The Healthy Choice." The school turned down the ads as unacceptable.

The paper had already published an editorial lauding the condom policy. Clearly, the ads were rejected because of their viewpoint, not their subject matter. Mr. Yeo and LexNet decided to fight. Like the opening battles of the American Revolution, there were two large skirmishes in the abstinence battle. First, the parents gathered enough signatures to put an initiative on the ballot regarding the condom distribution policy at the school; it failed, 54-46 percent.

"Remember the Lexington Green," Mr. Yeo told the discouraged parents. "There were nine minutemen dead, and no British. In the long run, though, it was a victory."

The second skirmish came in court. Represented by attorney John W. Spillane with assistance from the Rutherford Institute, Mr. Yeo sued for the right to run the LexNet ad. He lost at the federal district level, but the First Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last summer that he had, indeed, been discriminated against.

"The record evidence shows that LexNet abstinence ads were not refused ultimately on the grounds that they were political or advocacy ads that violated some policy, but instead were rejected

because the school publications deemed them objectionable....," the court ruled. And because the publications are taxpayer-funded, they constitute a legitimate public forum.

While they are allowed to establish reasonable policies for banning certain ads, they are not allowed to reject ads arbitrarily and without a stated policy.

"Naturally, to some people I'm the bad guy in town," Mr. Yeo grins. His favorite bumper sticker is one that he sees from time to time: "Yeo, Douglas! Get a Life!"

"But I don't mind that. I think it's a great example to my daughters (one is at Wheaton College now, and the other is still at Lexington High School). And like I tell the other parents, a lot of things haven't gotten worse because we're there. This is what Christ means about being salt and light in the world." †

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1997.*



# mooks

## *Bypassing Parental Authority*

*BreakPoint with Chuck Colson*

DO YOU HAVE A “MOOK” living under your roof? Or do you have a “midriff” among your family members? You may, but if these expressions are unfamiliar to you, you’re not alone.

The expressions, and the characters they describe, are the creation of what a recent *Frontline* documentary on PBS called “The Merchants of Cool.” The merchants include the media, soft drink, and apparel companies that vie for the business of America’s teenagers.

Teenage consumers represent a “\$150 billion dream” to such companies — a staggering number. As one person interviewed said, “teens run today’s economy.” Even if that’s an exaggeration, it is an indication of how eager advertisers and media companies are to capture the attention and business of our kids.

How do they do it? One MTV executive told PBS, “[We need to know] more about them; know more about their lives; know more about... what they want... [and] what they don’t want.”

Well, one thing kids seem to want is an “adult-free universe.” So much so that depicting adults — or at least adults in charge — is considered incompatible with creating proper consumers.

This competition is not only affecting these



# & Midriffs



companies' bottom line, but it's shaping our kids, and our culture as well. As Mark Crispin-Miller of New York University told *Frontline*, "[Advertisers and programmers] are going to do whatever they think works fastest and with the most people, which means that they will drag standards down."

Which brings us back to mooks and midriffs. The "mook" is a character created to appeal to adolescent males. He's characterized by "infantile, boorish behavior," and is trapped in a state of "perpetual adolescence." Mooks are a staple on MTV and shows like *South Park*.

The "midriff" is a "highly-sexualized, world-weary sophisticate" who manages to retain a bit of the little girl. She's a central character on virtually every show on the WB Network and, especially, music videos.

Kids, especially girls, are emulating these characters. And that, in turn, encourages producers to give us more mooks and midriffs

that more and more kids will want to imitate.

Arresting this trend, if not reversing it, requires understanding that the main problem is the fact that our kids have become targets. When advertisers treat thirteen-year-olds like autonomous consumers, chances are the kids are going to feel autonomous in other ways as well. Giving them "what they want" invariably means validating their opinions and impulses—whether or not those impulses are good for them.

But it's not enough to complain about the objectionable content of television programming directed at teens. We have to get in between the advertisers and the kids — and talk directly to kids. You see, if advertisers can bypass parents, this junk is going to continue. And to get our kids' attention, the "merchants of cool" will go for an ever-lower lowest common denominator.

Unfortunately, the main reason the "merchants of cool" get away

with this is because of the "hands-off" approach of many parents today. But in light of the recent school shootings, our culture knows it needs something better. And we Christians, who know that parenting is a "hands-on" activity, ought to be in a great position to show them how it's done—and to make every home a "mook-free" environment. †

*Rosenfeld, Megan. "'Merchants of Cool,' Hot on Teens' Trail." Washington Post, 27 February 2001.*

*Radio Transcript No. 010315 © 2001 Prison Fellowship Ministries. All Rights Reserved. Reprinted by permission.*

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).

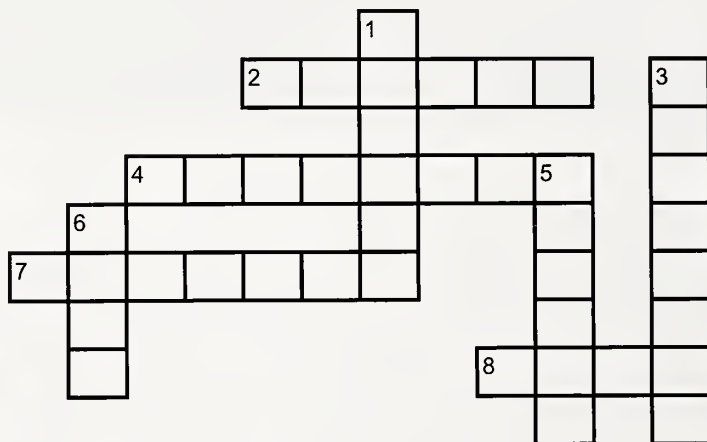
## Autumn Words

### Across

2. These turn colors
4. Great for carving and pies
7. Time when crops are gathered
8. What the weather feels like in the fall.

### Down

1. Wear this to keep warm
3. A popular sport in fall
5. This begins for children in late summer
6. Another word for autumn



Unscramble the words below, then match the words with the clues to the right. Enter the first letter of the word on the blank by the clue and read down when you're done. One has been done for you.

- dice \_\_\_\_\_
- sing \_\_\_\_\_
- sail \_\_\_\_\_
- sent \_\_\_\_\_
- lilt \_\_\_\_\_
- race care
- pier \_\_\_\_\_
- rain \_\_\_\_\_
- heat \_\_\_\_\_

- C 1. to show concern
- 2. intense feeling of dislike
- 3. ready to be picked
- 4. topped a cake
- 5. a command or direction
- 6. to turn up soil
- 7. Middle East country
- 8. to be sick
- 9. a bird's home



Unscrambled words: iced, sign, all's, nest, till, care, ripe, tran, hate





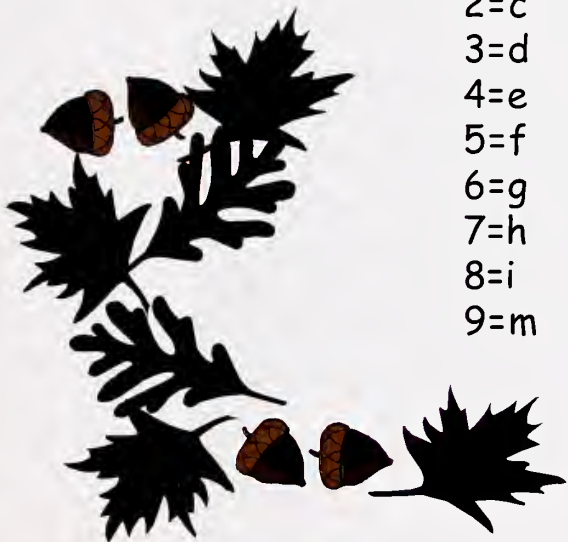
# As Children

"...Except ye become **as little children**, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

Decode this Bible verse.

- 1=a      10=n
- 2=c      11=o
- 3=d      12=r
- 4=e      13=s
- 5=f      14=t
- 6=g      15=u
- 7=h      16=v
- 8=i      17=y
- 9=m



14 7 4 12 4    8 13    1    14 8 9 4    5 11 12

4 16 4 12 17 14 7 8 10 6    1 10 3    1

13 4 1 13 11 10    5 11 12    4 16 4 12 17

1 2 14 8 16 8 14 17    15 10 3 4 12    7 4 1 16 4 10

--Eccl. 3:1

Fill in the missing vowels to complete the Bible verse.

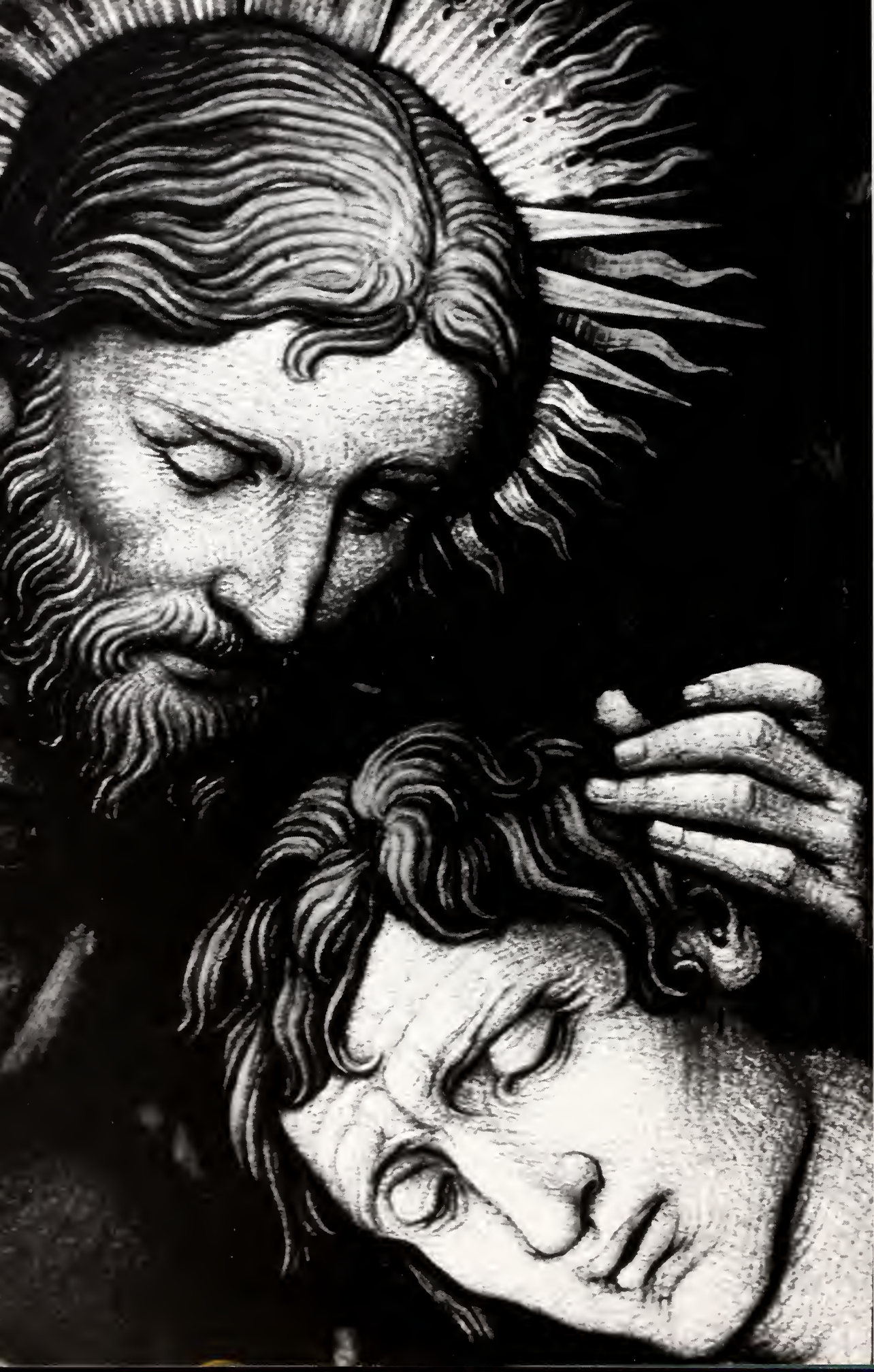
"T\_st m\_, \_h L\_rd, \_nd tr\_  
 m\_, \_x\_m\_n\_ m\_ h\_ \_rt \_nd  
 m\_ m\_nd" (Ps\_lm 26:2).

aaaa eeeee ii oo yyy



Unscramble the Bible verse.

"tomorrow worry Therefore do  
 about not" (Matthew 6:34a).





# The Wounded Spirit

by Frank Peretti

AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING, I'm close to fifty years of age, but I still remember the names and can see the faces of those individuals who made my life a living hell, day after day after day, during my childhood. I remember their words, their taunts, their blows, their spittle, and their humiliations. As I review my life, I think of all the decisions I shied from, all the risks I dared not take, all the questions I never asked, all the relationships I didn't pursue, simply because I didn't want to be hurt again.

Moreover, I am haunted by the tragedy of Littleton, Colorado, on

April 20, 1999. We've heard the many theories and pontifications on why two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, strode into Columbine High School and massacred their schoolmates and a teacher. I'm sure the theories about violence on television and movies, violent video and computer games, the availability of guns, and the unavailability of parents all have their legitimate place in the discussion. I don't pretend to know with certainty what was happening in the hearts and minds of those young killers, and yet I remember the thoughts I had, sitting alone in the school library after D. H. picked me up by my neck or sitting alone on the street curb,

eyes watering, after P. B. sprayed deodorant in my face. I remember what I wished I could do if only I had the strength, the skill in martial arts, or the advantage that a baseball bat might give me over the bullies who bludgeoned and batted me around verbally and physically.

Of course, my parents taught me never to fight. I was a Christian; I had a loving God to turn to when times got tough, and I had a biblical code of conduct that required a nonviolent solution. I knew the

Savior, who taught us to turn the other cheek and forgive. So instead of retaliation or confrontation, I sloughed off the wounds inflicted by my abusers and retreated to the solitude and safety of my room, where I identified with monsters and tried to get by.

But immersing oneself in make-believe stories about monsters isn't the only way to deal with the pain and humiliation of being devalued by other people.

Nowadays, kids are devising all sorts of ways to identify with those who feel trapped and put upon, and this new breed of monster will do almost anything for the power to change his situation and get even.

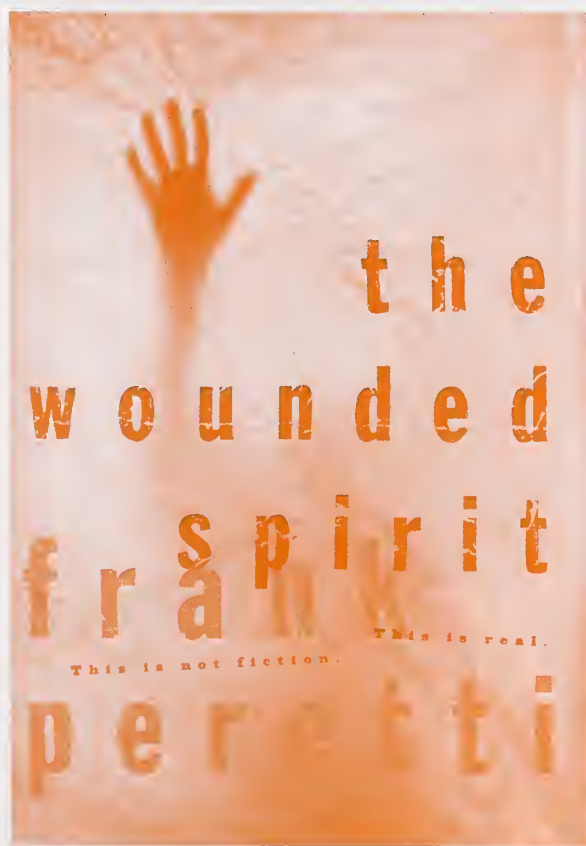
Instead of getting into monsters, a modern-day victim of abuse can gravitate to violent video games, in which he can vent his pain and anger by blasting his enemies into atoms.

He can watch movies—so many movies—in which the hero solves his situation by shooting everybody and blowing everything up.

He can live in a fantasy world, in which he's the guy with all the power and all the guns.

He and his cohort can make a video for a class project, in which they dress in dark trench coats, carry guns, and blow away all the jocks.

He can customize the bloody "shoot-'em-up" game "DOOM," creating two shooters instead of



one, giving them extra weapons and unlimited ammunition, and programming the game so the people he encounters can't fight back.

He might identify with a historical monster: Adolf Hitler, a tyrant who had total life-or-death control over millions, who could scare and terrorize people, and who could solve all his problems with guns and bombs.

He can fill his mind with Nazi mythology, wear a black shirt with a swastika, speak German in the halls and on his Web pages, and talk about whom he hates and whom he'd like to kill.

He can vent his rage with

threats and obscenities on the Internet. The rantings of the Columbine killers are terrifying:

"... for those of you who happen to know me and know that I respect you, may peace be with you and don't be in my line of fire. For the rest of you, you all better hide in your houses because I'm coming for everyone soon, and I WILL be armed to the teeth and I WILL shoot to kill and I WILL KILL EVERYTHING!

...Dead people can't do many things, like argue, whine, ... complain, narc, rat out, criticize, or even talk. So that's the only way to solve arguments with all you out

there, I just kill. God, I can't wait till I can kill you people. I'll just go to some downtown area in some big city and blow up and shoot everything I can. Feel no remorse, no sense of shame. I will rig up explosives all over a town and detonate each one of them at will after I mow down a whole area full of you snotty, rich, high-strung, godlike-attitude-having worthless pieces of \_\_\_\_\_. I don't care if I live or die in the shootout. All I want to do is kill and injure as many of you as I can..."<sup>1</sup>

He can give in to the hate that grows out of his wounds and talk about a plan to attack his school





so much, and for so long, that eventually, as James 1:14-15 warns, the thought becomes an act, and the act brings forth death.

Finally, on April 20, 1999, Hitler's 110th birthday, he can carry out his most gruesome fantasy. And what better place than the school, where everyone, from the parents and teachers on down, has all the power, and he doesn't? What better place than in the high-school cafeteria, where students once surrounded Eric and Dylan and squirted ketchup packets all over them, laughing at them and calling them faggots while teachers watched and did nothing? <sup>2</sup>

And he can leave behind an e-mailed suicide note to the police (allegedly written by Eric Harris):

"... Your children, who have ridiculed me, who have chosen not to accept me, who have treated me like I am not worth their time, are dead. **THEY ARE \_\_\_\_\_ DEAD.** Surely you will try to blame it on the clothes I wear, the music I listen to, or the way I choose to present myself—but no. Do not hide behind my choices. You need to face the fact that this comes as a result of **YOUR CHOICES.** Parents and Teachers, **YOU [fouled] UP.** You have taught these kids to be gears and sheep. To think and act like those who came before them, to not accept what is different. **YOU ARE IN THE WRONG.** I may have taken their lives and my own—but it was your doing. Teachers, Parents, **LET THIS MASSACRE BE ON YOUR SHOULDERS UNTIL THE DAY YOU DIE...**"<sup>3</sup>

Everyone has his or her own theory. Here is mine:

Simply put, I believe that what happened at Columbine was the result of a *wounded spirit*.

Although the authorship of the above suicide note is in question, as

are many details surrounding that day, to me, in the overarching scheme of things, it doesn't really matter. Whoever wrote it pegged the problem. We now have in our society myriad young people and adults who have been deeply wounded by the demeaning words or actions of authority figures or peers.

It is no secret that kids on the fringes of the cool crowd of Columbine endured their share of taunts and abuse. They were called faggots, were bashed into lockers, and had rocks thrown at them. They were shoved, pelted with pop cans or cups of sticky soda, splattered with mashed potatoes and ketchup, even sideswiped by cars while they rode their bikes to or from school.



Photo courtesy of [www.thewoundedspirit.com](http://www.thewoundedspirit.com).

One anonymous teen spoke of waking on school days with a knot in his stomach and the dread of having to face more humiliation at school. He would avoid certain hallways and even make his way to classes outside the school building to escape being ridiculed or bashed against lockers.<sup>4</sup> He knew Harris and Klebold were being tormented as well, and he said, "I'm not saying what they did was OK, but I know what it's like to be cornered, pushed day after day. Tell people that we were harassed and that sometimes it was impossible to take. Tell people that... eventually, someone was going to snap."<sup>5</sup>

I know how that feels. Maybe you do too.

Why is it so important that we address the problem of bullying and other demeaning attitudes and behaviors in our society? Because

one in four bullies will end up in the criminal correction system.<sup>6</sup> Because those who have been wounded often become those who *wound* others. Because we could be allowing the creation of more monsters—the kind you never see, never expect, until they snap and take desperate, violent measures. And all of us—those who have been wounded as well as those who wound others—need healing, forgiveness, and a new heart attitude toward our fellow human beings.

No longer can we hide our heads in the sand and pretend that atrocities such as Columbine don't happen in our backyard. No longer can we live in denial, pretending that abuse does not occur in our family, church, or workplace.

It's time for change. †

#### Notes:

1. Gavin DeBecker, "What the Columbine Report Didn't Tell You," APBnews.com, 19 May 2000.

2. From Alan Prendergast, "The Missing Motive," from westword.com, originally published by *Westword*, 13 July 2000, copyright 2000 New Times, Inc. All rights reserved.

3. Gavin DeBecker, "What the Columbine Report Didn't Tell You."

4. Susan Greene, "Teen describes school life filled with taunts, abuse," DenverPost.com, 24 April 1999.

5. Ibid.

6. Suellen Fried and Paule Fried, *Bullies and Victims* (New York: M. Evans and Company, 1996), 87.

*Excerpted from The Wounded Spirit by Frank Peretti, © 2000 Word Publishing. Used by permission. This book can be purchased from Venture Bookstore for \$18.99. Call 1-800-676-0694.*

*(editorial continued)*

And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26 & 27 NIV).

Jesus asks no less from his followers than what the Tamil Tigers require of their recruits. He asks his disciples to lay down their lives. To take up one's cross is not just sacrifice; it's a kind of suicide. We are lying when we tell unbelievers the Gospel is anything less. Evangelism is not marketing a new and improved way of life. It's recruiting martyrs.

So how does one recruit a suicide bomber? In Dhanu's case people invested years in her life.

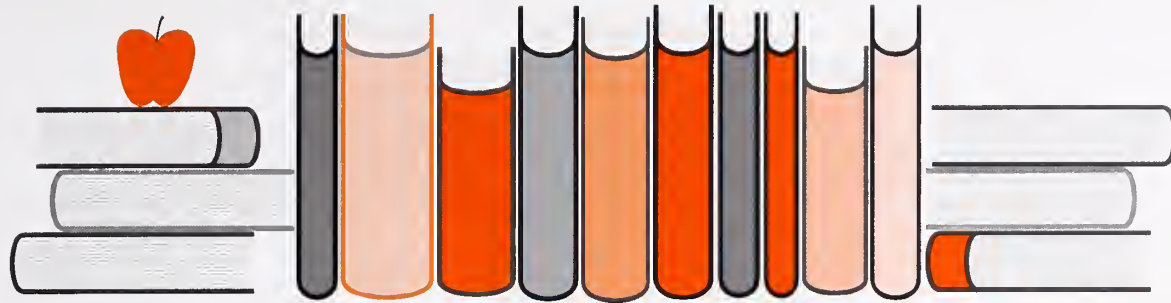
Rather than spending a couple of hours each Sunday with a few people, she *lived* with the Tamil Tigers. She had a relationship that superseded her own rights to life. She watched others give their lives for the cause. She knew the people she was fighting for; she knew what the Tamil Tigers stood for; and she was convinced her cause was worth dying for.

Few people become committed Christians by a passing comment, or a tract, or a single evangelistic service. Jesus didn't evangelize that way. He developed relationships with people. He let them see his way

of life, where he lived, what he ate. He let them see his spiritual power. He let them hear his beliefs. Then, when he knew they understood his mission, he said, "Are you in?" That's making disciples. By the way, Jesus' disciples gave their lives for the "cause"—all but John were martyred for the Gospel.

I can't imagine anyone today joining the Tamil Tigers or Osama bin Laden's clan without being aware of the commitment. I wish the same could be said for all members of today's church. †





# Luree's Bookshelf



*The Meeting Place*, by Janette Oke & T. Davis Bunn, Bethany House, 1999. Two young women—one French and the other English—

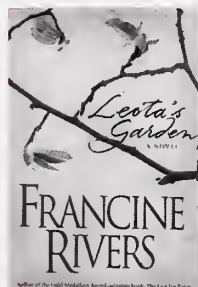
living in neighboring towns strike up a forbidden friendship in this 18th century story. True bonding takes place as they each marry and give birth to beautiful baby daughters. Intense conflict resulting in the deportation of the French Acadians separates the women, but their families are forever connected through an unforeseen chain of events—a “David and Jonathan” story that will tug at your heart.

*The Sacred Shore*, by Janette Oke & T. Davis Bunn, Bethany House, 2000. A sequel to *The Meeting Place*, this book continues the story of the French and English women who have been separated by the deportation of the Acadians. The now-grown daughters seek answers to their own identity and place in their earthly families as well as the family of God. A new decade ushers in a more complicated plot with new characters entering the pic-

ture. Though distance separated the families they will always be interconnected.

*Can a Busy Christian Develop Her Spiritual Life?* by Kay Arthur, Jill Briscoe and Carole Mayhall, Bethany House, 1994. These well known authors seek to help the reader face issues related to spiritual life and growth. The three sections of the book encourage each one to accept her uniqueness, to confront her doubts, and to find one’s place of service. Exercises at the end of each chapter help the reader “make it happen.” An excellent book for individual or group study.

*Leota’s Garden*, by Francine Rivers, Tyndale House, 1999. This novel tells the story of a family intent on keeping family secrets, which foster misunderstandings. Through a long process entrenched hurts are resolved and issues of love and forgiveness come to the forefront. The story moves along quickly and holds the reader’s interest as characters deal with their relationship with God, as well as their neighbors.



*Bad Girls of the Bible and What We Can Learn From Them*, by Liz Curtis Higgs, Waterbrook Press, 1999. Liz Higgs introduces



a series of Bible women and contemporary women, drawing lessons from each of them. Some were “bad to the bone,” or in other words, stayed bad to the end. Some were “bad for the moment,” or “bad for a season, but not forever.” She points out ways God worked in his people then and continues to do the same work now. †



*Luree Wotton serves as Women’s Ministries Coordinator of the Advent Christian General Conference.*



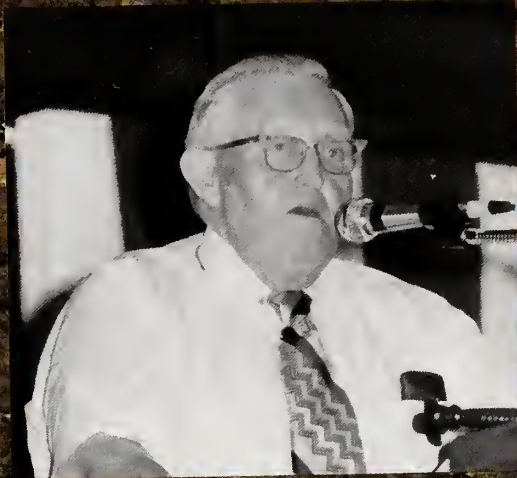
# Their Leadership Left a Legacy



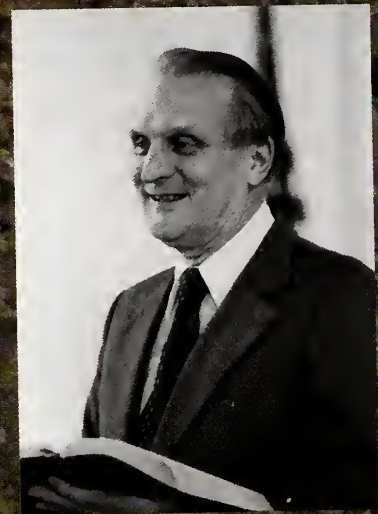
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# WITNESS

Advent Christian

November/December 2001

*Just Married!*

*Happily  
Ever After...*





# WITNESS

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## From the Editor

I always wanted to be married. This desire could be explained several ways. A young man committed to a chaste lifestyle has hormonal pressures, which may fuel his eagerness. Insecurity can also be a potent factor. Some might suggest both causes played a role in my zeal for matrimony.

However, I prefer to believe it was another reason. Long before puberty I became convinced that "it is not good for the man to be alone." In my mind, marriage was the ideal human relationship. Every girl I dated was a prospective wife. In fact, I never dated anyone I wouldn't consider marrying. Sometimes that really limited the field.

Now that I'm married, the field seems wide open... for my single friends. If only they could see it! Usually, they don't appreciate my attempts to show them the light.

Proverbs 18:22 states, "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord." I will readily testify to the truth of that verse. My marriage has exceeded my high ideals. So who can blame

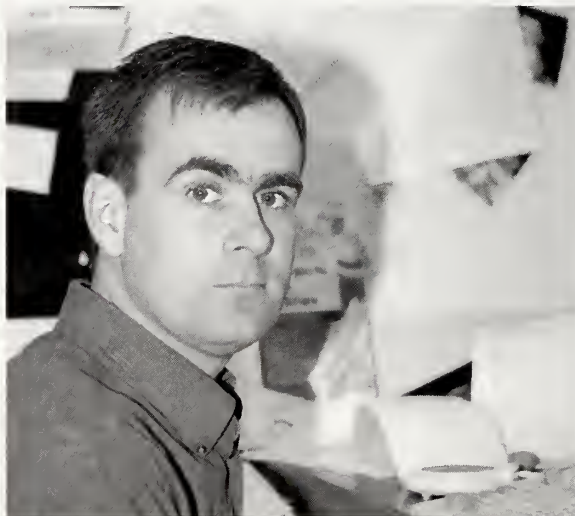
me for wanting to help others "find what is good"?

Since most singles don't seem to appreciate my input on marriage, I've decided to offer some advice to married couples. I don't pretend to be a marriage expert or a certified counselor. These are just a few tips I've found to be helpful for me to succeed in enjoying the marriage ideal.

• **Avoid recreational spending.** Some people don't appear to enjoy themselves unless they're spending money. It's like a sport or hobby. But financial problems devour marriages. Couples will be better off walking in the park than in the mall.

• **Avoid unsupportive people.** This can be particularly difficult if your immediate family thinks you married an idiot. Even if they're right, your husband or wife needs your loyalty and commitment. Too many critical remarks about one's spouse, like too many x-rays, create a cancer in a relationship that can be fatal.

• **Avoid spousal competition.** Many couples fail to realize they're on the same team. Instead, they keep some sort of score on each other, based on earnings or time or past transgressions. I don't understand prenuptial agreements or separate bank accounts because neither seems to reflect a commitment to the marriage team.



*Continued on page 19*



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# Taking the Hits for Your Wife and Family

by Dr. David Alves

**No one wants to suffer, especially for doing good. We expect that if we do what is right, we will not experience pain.**

**W**HEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, my father came home one evening with a giant plastic clown punching bag. I remember the teamwork between my mother and father as they got dizzy blowing the thing up. The top of the clown's head tapered down to a round base that was filled with sand. This shape and the heavy base made the clown resilient. In addition, his huge red grin seemed to say, "Go ahead, hit me. I dare you! I won't feel a thing." To add to his unique personality, my clown had a red nose that squeaked when punched. How tempting!

Someone designed this bag with a simple function in mind—to take hits. Hit this clown and no

matter how far back he leaned, he would always bounce back for more. One day, angry because my father had disciplined me, I went downstairs to our finished basement and vented on my plastic friend. Somehow pummeling him always made me feel better. I could go down there steaming and come up a new boy. He took my punches and hits and always bounced back for more without complaint—except for his noisy nose.

According to the Scriptures, husbands are to have a similar ministry to their wives. In first Peter 3:7, husbands are enjoined to "be considerate" of their wives and to "treat them with respect as the



weaker” partner. In the Greek text we find several interesting possibilities:

*Husbands, IN THE SAME WAY, live together in intimate knowledge of your wife since she is the needy vessel and treasure her, since you are co-inheritors of the grace-gift of life, so that nothing will cut into your communication with God.*

Notice the phrase “in the same way.” In the same way as *what*? That question points us back to verse one, where wives are commanded “in the same way” to be submissive to their husbands. And that phrase points us back to verses 19-24 of chapter two. Notice in verse 19 the admonition to bear up “under the pain of unjust suffering.” The husband is to do this because he knows God. He is called to suffer even for doing good. Suffering is a repugnant theme for many Americans. No one wants to suffer, especially for doing good. We expect that if we do what is right, we will not experience pain. This is untrue, but it appeals to our narcissistic culture.

In verse 21, the reader is called to emulate Christ who has suffered, giving us an example. The Christian is *commanded* to follow this example. Notice the elements of this imperative. First, he is to commit no sin nor practice deceit. Second, when insulted he is not to retaliate. When he suffers, even unjustly, he is not to threaten. Instead, he is to entrust himself to the one who judges justly.

Can you imagine what would happen in a family if the husband/father were willing to respond as Jesus did no matter what his wife or children said or did? Imagine a husband who did not succumb to the temptation to return hit for hit. Imagine a man who refused to practice deceit. Picture a husband at the onset of an argument with his wife. She has insulted him, but he refuses to retaliate. What would happen in a rela-

tionship if the husband set an example like that of Jesus, who bore no malice toward those who persecuted him? He did not passively disengage. He remained engaged in communication, but his dignity and love showed through. How would the children of a man who behaves like this turn out? What would this man’s reactions and responses be communicating to his family?

I can hear some men asking, “Fine, but what about her?” That was Adam’s question, but God did not release him from responsibility. The wife who refuses to respond to a husband who is totally submitted and obedient to Christ will have God to deal with. I have seen this both in Scripture and from experience. However, when a husband loves his wife as Christ loves the church, rarely will the wife not respond positively and bibli-

**Just as Jesus  
lays his life  
down for the  
church, so a  
husband lays  
down his life  
for his wife.**



cally.

The scriptural principal is this: Jesus absorbed the insults, pain, injustice, and all that came against him. As a result, we know that we are treasured—though weaker vessels—and by his wounds are healed. He takes the hits for us.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, writes “Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus” (Gal. 6:17). One has to wonder what Paul meant by “the marks of Jesus.” Apparently, following his stonings or beatings, he saw his scars as proof of having taken the hits for Jesus. Could this be what Paul meant by knowing Christ in the “fellowship of his suffering”? Certainly there is something strange

and marvelous woven into the idea of propitiatory healing. Think of the phrase “by his stripes you are healed.” How can it be that through someone else’s suffering I am healed?

***I can hear some men asking, “Fine, but what about her?” That was Adam’s question, but God did not release him from responsibility.***

Husbands reflect this healing ministry of Jesus to their wives. They are commanded in Ephesians 5:25 to love their wives *in the same way* that Jesus loves the church and gave himself up *for her*. Just as Jesus lays his life down for the church, so a husband lays down his life for his wife. The ministry he is achieving by taking the hits for his wife is spelled out in verses 26-27. He is making her holy, cleansing and washing her by his intimate communication with God, hearing God’s words for her. This special ministry results in the

presentation to himself of a radiant wife “without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” I believe this is what 1 Corinthians 11:7 refers to when it asserts: “the woman is the glory of man.” In other words, she is the reflection of her husband’s ministry to her. Just as we individual Christians are learning to reflect Jesus in our lives (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 3: 20), so too wives reflect their husbands to the world around them. Has your ministry been so effective that your wife can be said to be “without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless?” Men, we need to attain this goal.

The word derived from the Greek term *gnosis* used in 1 Peter 3:7 has the connotation of an initiated, intimate knowing of esoteric spiritual truth. The NIV lessens the impact of *gnosis* by substituting “be considerate.” Being considerate generally means being nice, whereas having intimate knowledge suggests a much greater investment of





time and togetherness. I may need to be considerate of a stranger when she is ahead of me in a line at the supermarket, but being polite is much different than knowing in the sense of having intimate knowledge of that person.

Notice in the verse that this intimacy with his wife is closely tied to the husband's communication with God. So much so, that the man's communication with God can be hindered. The godly husband is expected to invest time to inquire of God about his wife (and household). Jesus said to us through the Apostle John, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant *does not know his master's business*. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father *I have made known to you*" (John 15:14-15; cf. 3:29, Rev. 3:20). That means that we can be assured of intimate communication when we need wisdom to choose what is right and best in our relationships (James 1:5).

This concept of "taking the hits" for our wives extends to our children and other dependents as well. Paul says that "if we are poured out it is for your sakes..." He regarded what happened to him to be a sacrifice that would bring blessing and healing to those for whom he had responsibility.

Perhaps we would see the astonishing divorce rate among evangelical Christians drop if we husbands were willing to take the hits for our wives and families and let them see the beauty of Jesus instead of the selfishness of man.

Who would want to place himself in the way of an oncoming car or bullet for a loved one? Jesus would. Who would be willing to overlook a harsh tone or accusation? Jesus would. We are being conformed to his image and he wants our wives, our

households, to come to know him intimately through our living example of his self-sacrificial love. Be encouraged that somehow unjust suffering produces fruit. Righteousness, holiness, and beauty await the wives of husbands who, like Jesus, will stand in the gap and take the hits for his sake. And the husbands whom the Lord assigns to suffer in this way will come to experience what Paul meant by sharing the fellowship of his suffering. †

**Who would want to place himself in the way of an oncoming car or bullet for a loved one? Jesus would.**

*Dr. David Alves is senior pastor of New Life Fellowship (Advent Christian), Concord, N.H. He also serves as executive director of Frontline Ministries, Inc., a leadership and revitalization ministry to local churches primarily in New England. He and his wife, Marcy, also write and speak at retreats and conferences.*







What? Me  
Submit?

by Marcy Alves

**I**N MARCH, MY HUSBAND, David, and I were facilitating a marriage retreat. During a session with the women, I presented two directives in the New Testament given to wives. What I intended for edification turned into agitation for several of the women. As I share those principles in this article, I trust it will not leave you frustrated, but wise and willing to test God as you apply them to your life.

I have become aware during my marriage of 22+ years that this relationship between man and woman, established and sanctified by God, works best when both husband and wife are living in reliance on God and in full compliance with His instructions on marriage. However, even in a marriage of unequal effort, our Father will bless the obedient partner.

God's instruction to wives about their attitude toward their husbands is straightforward:

1. Honor (respect) him
2. Submit to him.

Both commands are easier said than done.

During the women's session of the marriage retreat, when I taxied out for take-off on runway #2—submission—a young woman seated on the front row said, "Whoa—I'm out of here. I can't handle this!" I responded, "Please fasten your seatbelt and remain seated until we land. If I don't answer your questions and objections during the teaching part, I'll speak with you privately later." She stayed, sitting forward, gripping her seat, and gritting her teeth.



When we approach God's Word we need to ask three questions: What does it say? What does it mean? What should I do about it? Far too often it's not that we don't know what God is asking us to do, we just don't want to do it. However, the place of blessing and fulfillment in marriage is found in obedience, not excuse-making and finger-pointing.

In Titus 2, older women are instructed to train younger women to love their husbands, to be self-controlled, pure, busy at home, kind, and subject to (submissive to) their husbands, so that "no one will malign the word of God". When we don't do things God's way, the Gospel is discredited (maligned) by our poor example of Christian marriage. The world needs to see Christian marriages lived God's way.

According to Titus, we need **to learn** to love our husbands. "I thought that was God's word for husbands!" you say. "I thought they were instructed to love us!" Now you know the rest of the story. Older women were told in this passage to "train the younger women" —training indicates showing how to do something. And part of that training encompasses loving our husbands and being submissive to them. We apparently do neither of those things naturally; we have to be trained.

Submission to our husbands is very important to God. He brings it up again in Ephesians 5:15. God tells us to "live wisely, making the most of every opportunity, understanding what God's will is, being filled with the Spirit, always giv-

ing thanks." These directives precede God's word to wives in verse 22 to be submissive to their husbands. Submission is difficult indeed if a woman is not wise, understanding God's will, filled with his Holy Spirit, and always being thankful.

What does being filled with the Spirit have to do with submission? First of all, without the Holy Spirit we cannot understand God's will. First Cor. 2:11, 14 tells us that, "No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God... The woman without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to her, and she cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Why does God want women to know his will? So that they can be thankful, even when immediate circumstances don't look good. Much of the difficulty we have in being submissive is because we are focused on our circumstances, our desires, and not on God and his will for us. Some of the things that God allows my husband to do—even his mistakes—are for my benefit, to build things into my character, to teach me to trust my heavenly Father no matter what. God is constantly dealing with my responses to show me what needs healing inside me in order for me

to become more like Jesus.

Ephesians 5:21 commands mutual submission out of reverence for Christ. When we are filled with God's Spirit, understanding God's will, and being thankful, it's much easier to be submissive—it flows out of reverence for Christ.

A more specific application for submission is given in verse 22, "Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord." A woman's submission to the Lord is evidenced by submission to her husband. Even if I am not motivated to please my husband in a given instance, I should

want to please God and be in submission to him.

God speaks to us again in 1 Peter 3:1: "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands." There is a potential payoff for the Christian wife in submission: "...so that, if any of them (husbands) do not believe the word, they may be won over **without words by the behavior of their wives**, when they see the purity and reverence (*respect*) of your lives."

There is something else that God values in a submissive wife. First Peter 3:4 says the way to be truly beautiful is in "...your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight." Does this

***Much of the difficulty we have in being submissive is because we are focused on our circumstances, our desires, and not on God and his will for us.***

mean a woman can't be outgoing? Enthusiastic? High energy? Not at all. But inside her there is to be quietness before God and gentleness of spirit. You can be all God created you to be in the manner of personality without being abrasive in speech or conduct. A quiet and gentle spirit puts its hope in God and doesn't seek to boss others around or run the show. There is something extremely attractive about gentleness and a "resting" spirit. It makes even a very plain physical countenance appear beautiful.

As I presented these Scriptures to the group of wives in Pennsylvania, the woman on the front row almost choked when I got to 1 Peter 3:6, which says we are to be submissive "...like Sa-

rah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master." "No way!" she blurted out. "He is not going to be my master!" (I wondered if she were married to an abusive husband.) I continued in verse 6: "You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."

Many women who are not submissive to their husbands are full of fear. They do not trust their husbands and they do not trust God. They are not in a real love relationship with their heavenly Father, for God tells us in 2 Tim. 1:7 that he has not given us a spirit of fear. And 1 John 4:18 says that "perfect love casts out all fear" (NASB). God can be trusted even if my husband fails in some way. God can and will redeem my

husband's mistakes, bad decisions, or errors in judgment. When we let ourselves fear instead of trusting God, we try to climb into the driver's seat and pull the steering wheel out of our husband's hands. And every struggle for control of a moving vehicle results in an accident where someone gets hurt—the husband, the wife, or the family.

One woman said to me several years ago, "I have no problem submitting to my husband in things on which we agree. It's when we disagree that I have problems submitting." I had to laugh at that one, though my friend was very serious. It is not really submission when you both agree, it is **agreement**. When you disagree and defer to his decision, that is **submission**.





I think of submission in three aspects:

1. True submission involves offering (submitting) your opinion, viewpoint, or wise advice. It's like submitting your term paper to your professor. You are familiar with the material. You have researched and thought through the issues. You are not acting out of raw emotion.

2. The second part of submission is agreeing to support your husband's decision however you can, without sinning in the process. Sometimes that support is expressed through prayer or determining not to criticize or belittle his decision, especially in front of others.

3. When we submit, it has to be in the context of trust in God and his love for us. He will take care of the results.

Real submission may be the hardest work you will ever do, especially if your husband is not doing his part. Peter introduces what the work entails by his opening phrase in 1 Peter 3: "Wives, **in the same way** be submissive to your husbands . . ." We have to ask, in what "same way"? To discover the answer, we must look back at 2:20-21:

*"But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for do-*

*ing wrong and endure it? (He's speaking to slaves here.) But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."*

I want to be very careful to qualify what you need to endure



as "suffering for doing what is right". A woman should not remain in an abusive situation. But we need to distinguish between real "abuse" and suffering because of our poor attitude or improper behavior. A woman who flirts with other men and opens herself to retaliation from a jealous husband, or who belittles her husband in front of others and receives an angry response, is suffering for her own wrong actions. Her husband

has to answer to God for his responses, but she must also answer to God for her actions. Continuing with 1 Peter 2:22-24:

*"He (Jesus) committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."*

What will our submission look like if we follow Christ's example and are submissive to our husbands "in the same way"?

**1. We will not sin in the way we submit.**

(We will not hold grudges or unforgiveness. We won't keep score or wait for the moment of payback.)

**2. We will not deceive our spouse.** (This includes pretending we agree if we don't really agree.)

**3. We will not retaliate when insulted.** (Let him think you're not as smart as he is, you know better.)

**4. We will not threaten our hus-**

**bands.** (One woman threatened divorce so often that her husband took her challenge and divorced her first.)

**5. We will entrust ourselves “to Him who judges justly” — God.**

**6. We will bear with the sins of others, yet live for righteousness ourselves.**

Sometimes we feel we need to argue the case with our mate, but Peter said in 3:1, that when we are properly submissive, “...they (*our husbands*) may be won over **without words...**” Although Peter’s emphasis is on winning an unsaved husband over to the Lord, I have found that the principle will also “win over” a saved husband. An accepting, gracious, loving attitude from you will help him to be open with you, to consider more carefully your views, to share more with you, to be more careful with how he treats you.

In Eph. 5:22-27,33 we read:

*“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands **in everything**. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless... However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”*

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It is not easy for a husband to be the proper head of his wife and family. But it is a job God has given him to do—in both temporal and spiritual things. It’s quite a responsibility for your husband to wash you and present you clean before God, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, following his example of Christ and his bride, the church. And the wife is told to be submissive “in everything” (v. 24), cooperating with his efforts to lead.

Finally, in Eph. 5:33: “...the wife **must** respect her husband.” This command was given in a culture where marriages were arranged. Often the couple did not even know each other, let alone “fall in love” before they were married. Occasionally, when I tell women

they must respect their husbands, they respond, “You’ve got to be kidding! You don’t know my husband, I can’t respect him!” I am often tempted to ask, “Why did you ever marry a man you didn’t respect? You weren’t forced to marry him, were you?” Frequently a woman did not take the time to get to know her future mate before the wedding. Some marriages were not based on love for God or love for the person, but on convenience, need, or sexual passion. Nevertheless, a Christian woman must choose to respect her mate if

she wants God’s blessing on her marriage.

Some women have lost sight of the things they once respected about their husband because they have fixated on the petty things of life—he never remembers to take out the trash, he doesn’t hang up his clothes, he picks his teeth at the table—instead of focusing on the larger issues: he is a hard worker, generous, non-complaining; a good father, dedicated to his family; he loves God and is kind to people. As we show respect and gratitude,



our spouses will frequently respond with more effort to please and to deserve our respect.

When the women at the marriage retreat were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 5 on the degree of their submission and respect, three out of thirteen women in my discussion group said they rated 0-1, they could not submit or respect their men. Their husbands didn't deserve respect and would take advantage of them if they submitted. The woman from the front row reported that she had a higher paying job than her husband and deserved **his** respect—they were in this thing 50-50 and she would give hers when he gave his. I asked her if she was a committed disciple of Jesus. She said, "Yes." I asked her if she loved Jesus. She answered, "Definitely, yes!" I reminded her that according to John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." I then pointed out that there seemed to be a discrepancy between her actions and Jesus' words.

We often think we know what is right, so we do not consult God. We live our lives based on what we believe, but we sometimes believe the wrong things. We are often more interested in pleasing ourselves than in pleasing God. We usually think that our situation is the exception. Yet submission to and respect for our husbands are commands of God, not situational suggestions. If we love God, we will obey him. If we live in obedience to him, he will be true to his word in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in **all things God works for the good of those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose."

I truly hope that you are not frustrated, but encouraged to obey God and trust him

for the outcome. The details of how you are to demonstrate submission to and respect for your husband should be worked out between you and God. Remember, James says in his epistle, that if you lack wisdom, you are to ask God. Your Father will be delighted to share with you all you need to know in order for your marriage to be pleasing to him and rewarding to you and your spouse. Obedience to God always results in blessing. †

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# *Developing a Healthy, Biblical View of Sex*

**C**HRISTIANS OFTEN STRUGGLE WITH how to relate to their sexuality. Approaches have veered from medieval prudishness and negative attitudes toward sex, to modern permissiveness that ignores God-given moral standards.

We need God's help to steer a course between those extremes. His Word can renew our minds and help us develop a balanced and healthy attitude toward our sexuality.

## **God invented sex**

In the beginning, God created humans male and female, then blessed and commanded them to "Multiply and fill the earth..." (Genesis 1:27-28 NLT). Their procreative, sexual capacity was part of that sinless world that was "very good" (Genesis 1:31 NKJ). The Bible celebrates the God-given attraction between a man and woman (cf. the Song of Solomon). So should we. It is intrinsically good and beautiful.

## **Its relationship context**

The first mention of sexual intimacy in Scripture is Genesis 4:1, "Adam *knew* Eve his wife, and she conceived..." (NKJ). Sexual union is seen as intimate knowledge of each another; it's described with a *relational* term. Sex was not designed to be a casual activity, meant for one-night stands. It was meant to be an expression of totally committed love, in a lifelong union.

Children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5). But sex is not solely for procreation. It is relational: a special means of closeness, intimacy, pleasure, and comfort. The passion that brings a husband and wife together is a normal part of a wise and godly life (Proverbs 5:15-19).

## **Marriage points to redemption**

The marriage relationship is a symbol of a passionate love between Christ and his church. We the redeemed are betrothed to him, like a bride waiting for her wedding day, when our heavenly Groom shall appear and receive us to himself (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-32).

Eternity with the Lord will begin, then, like a honeymoon! This hints that sexual union is a symbol of our coming entrance into the full glory of God, at Christ's return. Marriage points to eternal joys to come.

## **Legitimate passion vs. sinful desire**

In a fallen world, sexuality—like everything else—has suffered the effects of sin. The Bible calls on each believer to "avoid sexual immoral-

**In 1970, the median age at first marriage was 20.8 years for women and 23.2 years for men. By 2000, these ages had risen to 25.1 years for women and 26.8 years for men.(U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey)**





ity [and] learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen who do not know God” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 NIV). Rather than following the world in its misuse of sex, we’re to avoid intercourse outside of marriage: “Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does” (1 Corinthians 6:18 NLT). Sex outside of marriage deeply affects those involved.

Desire for one’s own partner is right and good (Proverbs 5:15-19); but “passionate lust” is sexual desire out of control, aimed at someone other than one’s spouse. With God’s Spirit helping us, we can learn to control our passions.

The learning process may be painful and take time, but God is gracious and patient with those who long to find freedom from slavery to the sexual drive. We can pray with David: “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... Restore to me the joy of your salvation” (Psalm 51:10,12 NIV). He will hear and answer.

### **Taming the sexual impulse**

Some may wonder, “Why did God give me such a strong sexual drive?” Part of the problem is our over-sexualized culture. The media pushes sexual images at us everywhere we turn. Popular clothing styles are too often immodest. In many ways the world around us “revs up” sexual interest more than God intended.

We need to be careful about what we watch

on T.V., what we read, and find an internet service that filters out pornographic websites. “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 25:41 NKJ). We can’t afford to play games with lust; it’s like playing with fire.

That’s not to suggest that we should try to “kill” our sexual instinct! A better approach would be to “tame” it. If you bought a wild horse that had never been ridden, you wouldn’t want to shame it, hurt it, or break its spirit. You’d want to teach it to be responsive to your wishes—to bring all its energy under control.

It’s much the same with our sexual drive. Don’t kill it; tame it. It is a God-given impulse, but that doesn’t mean that everyone should marry.

### **Singleness has its advantages**

If you’re single, God can give you the gift of self-control. With that, singleness has some advantages over married life, in the judgment of a satisfied bachelor, the apostle Paul:

*An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord’s work and thinking how to please him. But a married man can’t do that so well. He has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife. His interests*

**The proportion of women 20-24 years old who had never married doubled between 1970 and 2000—from 36% to 73%. The proportion of men 20-24 years old also increased from 55% in 1970 to 84% in 2000. (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey)**

*are divided. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be more devoted to the Lord in body and in spirit, while the married woman must be concerned about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband (1 Cor. 7:32b-34 NLT).*

If God calls you to singleness, he can give you deep friendships and a level of emotional intimacy that will satisfy the soul—and special grace to resist sexual temptation. Ask for that, and try to cultivate satisfying Christian relationships. Personal fulfillment and a full life do not depend on marriage and sex.

### **For singles who still struggle**

If the struggle with sexual desire and loneliness continues to distract you too much from the Lord—if God doesn't seem to answer your prayer for self-control and emotional intimacy—then ask him to help you find a believing marriage partner. And when you find the right person, don't postpone marriage too long. Listen again to Paul's inspired advice on the subject:

*I wish everyone could get along without marrying, just as I do. But we are not all the same. God gives some the gift of marriage, and to others he gives the gift of singleness. Now I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as I am. But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's better to marry than to burn with lust (1 Cor. 7:7-9 NLT).*

Sexual desire can be a powerful reminder that “it is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Let it prompt you to pray for a partner, and for patience to wait for the right one.

### **Don't wait too long**

People who advise singles to always finish college before marriage, or to plan a long engagement, may be pushing them into unnecessary temptation. When their hormones are say-

ing, “Get married!” who are we to say that early marriage is necessarily wrong? It's important to find the right person. But once you do, why delay marriage?

Pastors, do you require months and months of premarital counseling? Are you sure that's wise and biblical? Why not shorten the requirement and include some post-marital counseling appointments?

My wife and I knew each other only about ten months when we married at age 21. A relatively short courtship helped us postpone sexual intimacy until the honeymoon. To wait any longer would have interfered with the natural “blossoming” of our relationship. (This advice does not necessarily apply to teenagers who think they're in love!)

### **Advice for married people**

Married couples also face sexual temptation, but there's a very practical way to lessen its power: take time to engage in frequent lovemaking. That's what the apostle Paul advised when someone asked if it was a good idea to remain single and celibate:

**Seventy-eight percent of those who have been divorced engaged in sexual intercourse prior to marriage. Those who had engaged in sex before marriage were more likely to commit adultery than those who had no premarital sexual experience. (*Christianity Today*, July 1992)**





*Now about the questions you asked in your letter. Yes, it is good to live a celibate life. But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won't be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control (1 Cor. 7:1-5 NLT).*

This clearly indicates that most people should be married, and that frequent sexual intimacy is normal and good. Beyond the closeness, pleasure, and comfort it can provide, it also offers protection from temptation.

That Scripture should never be used as a “club” to bully one’s spouse. It gives the woman exactly the same rights as the husband in sexual matters. Both are to concentrate on pleasing the other person, rather than using sex selfishly, or withholding affection and sexual pleasure. Lovemaking should be mutually enjoyable, not a mere “duty.”

### **A very personal question**

Husbands and wives, are you following Paul’s inspired advice? Do you set aside regular times for romantic encounters? Or do you allow the pressures of life, overwork, children, ministry, or too much time in front of the television or on the internet to rob you of the joys of intimacy?

It’s no wonder that some marriages become unromantic and cold, or are threatened by sexual unfaithfulness. If husbands and wives neglect each other, their need for closeness and affection won’t disappear. One or both partners may end up feeling frustrated, lonely, depressed and resentful.

**Forty percent of cohabitational relationships will disrupt before marriage, and marriages that are preceded by living together have 50% higher disruption rates than marriage without premarital cohabitation. (Journal of Marriage and Family, Vol. 53, 1991)**

## Sex and golf

Sexual desire is part of the emotional “glue” that God intended to hold a husband and wife together for life. It’s a good gift. But, like learning to use an expensive set of golf clubs, proficiency in sexual intimacy requires careful attention and regular practice.

Some lovemaking experiences can be as frustrating as a bad round of golf, but that isn’t sufficient reason to give up. With practice, golf and physical intimacy can be very pleasant and even thrilling!

But what if you or your partner no longer desires physical intimacy? Perhaps he had a childhood sexual trauma that left emotional scars that have never healed. Or maybe her parents passed along negative attitudes toward sex that she’s never really outgrown. One partner may have

never learned how to gently, patiently please the other. Or perhaps there’s a medical problem of some kind. Is there any help in situations like these? Yes.

Sometimes what we need, in order to find greater satisfaction in golf, is a good instructor. Who would think he could master the game of golf without some pointers from a professional—either in person, from a book or from the Golf Channel. The same principle is true with lovemaking. We probably won’t reach a maximum level of satisfaction in marital intimacy without expert advice.

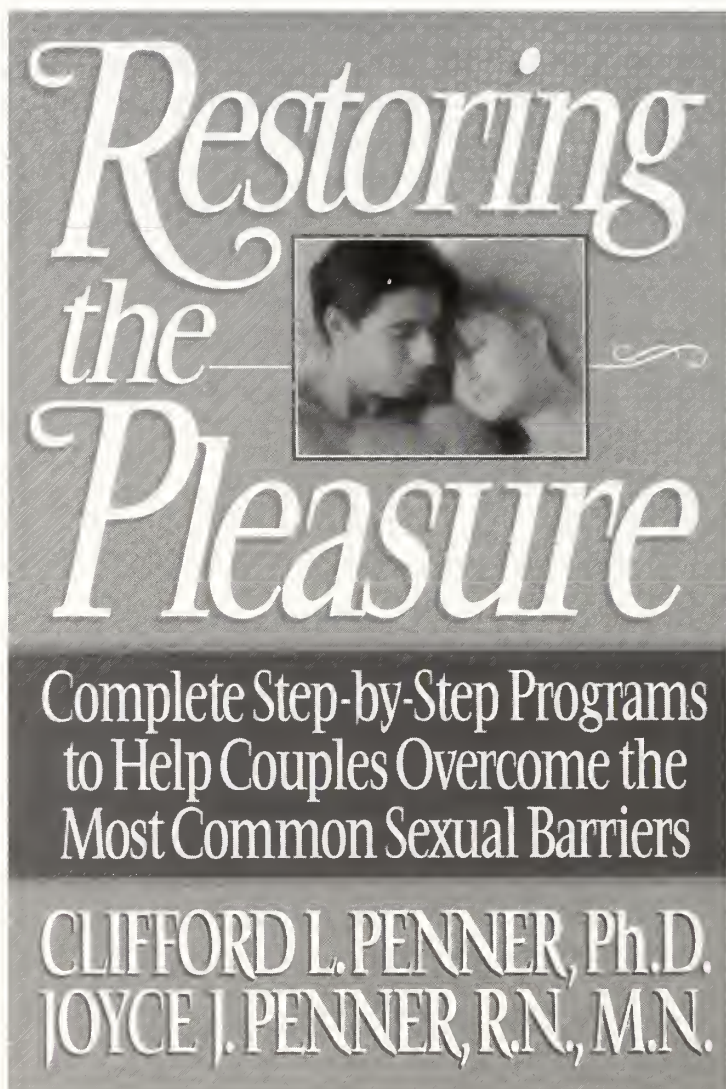
Unfortunately, some listen to ungodly advice on the subject, or even try to learn techniques from pornography. This is very unwise and cheapens the beauty of married love.

## The best help I’ve found

When a couple’s sexual relationship becomes a source of frustration, rather than delight—or, when a happy couple wants to make a good thing even better—they can benefit greatly from godly, professional guidance. I highly recommend *Restoring the Pleasure* by Dr. Cliff and Joyce Penner. These committed Christians have devoted years to understanding and helping married couples overcome barriers to sexual fulfillment.

Their 360-page book guides a couple through gradual, step-by-step exercises that can help

**Couples who had cohabited prior to marriage reported “greater marital conflict and poorer communication” than marrieds who had never cohabited. (*Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 54, 1992)**



*Restoring  
the  
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Complete Step-by-Step Programs  
to Help Couples Overcome the  
Most Common Sexual Barriers

CLIFFORD L. PENNER, Ph.D.  
JOYCE J. PENNER, R.N., M.N.



them overcome all kinds of common problems. In some cases, a husband and/or wife may need help from a medical doctor or other professional. But the wise counsel of the Penners will address most issues.

Engaged couples should read their book *Getting Your Sex Life Off To A Great Start* before the honeymoon. These are wonderful tools that God has provided through gifted servants. There are other authors and other books on the subject, but I know of none better.

As a couple seeks to follow wise counsel, they can trust God for grace to strengthen this aspect of their marriage. Sex is his idea, and he wants husbands and wives to find freedom and enjoyment in it. †

*The author prefers to remain anonymous. Questions or comments can be directed to him through the editor. Recommended books can be ordered from Venture Bookstore: 1-800-676-0694. (Pastors, ask for your discount.) Or order with a credit card at the Penners' website ([www.passionatecommitment.com](http://www.passionatecommitment.com)) or by calling 1-626-449-2525.*

# GETTING YOUR SEX LIFE OFF TO A GREAT START

*A Guide for Engaged  
and Newlywed Couples*

CLIFFORD L. PENNER, P.H.D.  
JOYCE J. PENNER, R.N., M.N.

## Editorial - Continued from page 2

• **Avoid blaming your spouse for your mistakes.** A good example of this is when a Christian marries a non-Christian. When the inevitable conflict arises it's easy for the Christian to cry out, "Woe is me, my spouse won't support my faith!" The Bible is very clear about marrying unbelievers, so anyone who ignores it has no one to blame but himself. On a lesser scale, we knowingly marry flawed people who have irritating or unattractive features and habits. Don't blame your spouse for being short, too outgoing, or a Yankees fan. Overlooking these things was your mistake when you said, "I do." Once married, you must accept your mate as he is, like you promised you would, "for better or for worse."

• **Avoid a worldly view of marriage.** A Charlotte dating service advertises by showing the last few frames of a romance movie, with the newly married couple riding off into the sunset. Cleverly inserted after "the end" scrolls a list of the joys of dating, such as "flirting on the treadmill," "foreplay," and even more sexually explicit "benefits" the dating life has to offer. The message is clear: "Enjoy yourself while you're single, because marriage is a drag." Compare this to Hebrews 13:4, which begins "Marriage should be honored by all..." If we fail to honor marriage as a gift from God, we may find ourselves longing to be rid of our spouse so we, too, can experience the joys of "flirting on the treadmill."

For me the reality of marriage exceeds all the empty promises of that dating service. Besides, I don't know how to flirt and I've never gotten anywhere on a treadmill! †

# THE OTHER WOMAN



## *Good Advice for Any Man Married to a Minister's Wife*

By Linda Riley

**L**YDIA IS A MINISTER'S WIFE and she despises the church.

We met at a conference last summer and she asked to talk with me privately. Tearful, she confessed, "I don't know what's wrong with me. I wanted to be a pastor's wife, but now I resent our church so much. I cringe when the phone rings. I dread Sunday mornings."

Lydia has no date nights or romantic rendezvous to look forward to, just meetings and ministry. Her pleas for attention are met with guilt-inducing spiritual admonitions that make her feel angry with God.

She told me that her husband recently broke a yearlong promise to attend an annual family reunion. The church needed him, he said. For 15 years, Lydia has attended the reunion alone.

If Lydia's rival were another

woman, who wouldn't understand her anger? But for her and many other minister's wives, the "other woman" is the church. A wife fighting for her husband in this love triangle may feel guilty for getting in the way of God's work.

Finding the balance between marriage and ministry is a challenge for any minister and his (or her) mate. So it is tempting to ignore the resentment, hoping it will go away. (And it may, sadly: Some emotionally starved ministry wives do leave their husbands.) However, ministry couples can evaluate their commitments before it's too late—and husbands in ministry should pay attention.

### **Acknowledge her feelings and respond lovingly.**

Listen. Respond with empathy, not spiritual platitudes. And if you are guilty of nothing more than doing God's work to the best of

your ability and your wife is too demanding? Respond to insecurity with compassion and reassurance, not exasperation and rejection.

### **Honor your wife.**

Remind your wife that she is the most treasured person in your life—indirectly as well as directly. Maybe Mrs. Baker makes a great pie, but never say it is the *best* you ever tasted. (Would you like your wife to publicly proclaim a colleague's sermon the best she ever heard?) A visiting guest once declared our home the most comfortable he'd ever enjoyed. His wife was visibly hurt.

Save lavish praise for your wife only. If you want a Proverbs 31 woman, be a Proverbs 31 man. Praise her in the gates: "Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all" (v. 29).

### **Reassure your wife.**

Every church goes through in-



tense times of ministry: three funerals in a week, multiple requests for crisis counseling, or just the annual holiday rush. Keep your wife apprised of your schedule. Phone to let her know when a meeting will run late. Reassure her that you'll reconnect soon, and then follow through. Scheduling times to rest and romance can compensate for times when you are mostly unavailable.

### **Make her feel included.**

What would she enjoy doing with you? Accompanying you on visitation? Traveling with you on your next conference trip? Helping research and evaluate sermons as you prepare? You can avoid resentment when you don't leave your wife on the sidelines.

### **Share her life too.**

I know an extremely busy church leader whose wife is a schoolteacher. He helps her prepare her classroom for each new school year. They work together on home projects. He's an active parent for their children. This man travels the world, but his wife cheerfully endures weeks of absence, knowing he is fully hers when he returns.

### **Publicly affirm your partnership.**

Hold hands in public. Praise her in front of others. Greet people as a couple. Sit together in church when possible. When you are not needed in the pulpit, worship with your family. Respect your family, and the church will too.

### **Seek counseling.**

Some ministers are addicted to work or use their ministry to avoid an intimate relationship. If you experience chronic conflict in this area, godly counsel can bring your marriage and ministry goals back into harmony. No one enjoys communicating through a counselor, but it beats communicating through a lawyer.

### **Be considerate.**

After church, do you leave your wife wrestling with three toddlers while you visit with or even counsel members for 10 minutes or more? There is usually no need for the minister's family to make such concessions when better planning can avoid them. Your wife

won't resent an occasionally imposition, if it truly is occasional.

### **Keep thee only to her.**

The church is Christ's bride, not yours. Your bride is waiting for you to love, cherish, and comfort her as you vowed. The Lord has many who tend to the needs of his church. Only one man vowed to be your wife's husband. You're the one—the only one who can fulfill the calling to cherish this special daughter of the King. †

*Linda Riley is the author of "The Call to Love; unleashing the power to love God and others in your everyday life" (Tyndale). Visit her website at [www.learntolove.org](http://www.learntolove.org).*

## ***Is the Love of Your Life Not Your Wife?***

Six (slightly) tongue-in-cheek signs that you may have let your love for ministry overtake your love for your mate:

1. You speak sharply to your wife but answer the phone with a syrupy, "Oh, hello, Mrs. Windbag. Of course I have time to talk!"
2. She suggests a family vacation. Your next sermon is on the evils of self-indulgence.
3. When you get home late from a meeting, your wife is wearing something frilly. You crawl into bed beside her and grunt, "G'night, Dear." Minutes later, the phone rings and you spend 15 minutes talking with the treasurer about the building program. When you return to bed, your wife is in flannel. You never see that frilly thing again.
4. Your wife observes your intense eye contact and personal warmth with church members. At home, she says, "Uh. Honey, I have this problem..." You interrupt: "And I know you'll work it out!"
5. When your wife says she needs a little fun, you sign her up as a chaperon for the junior high lock-in.
6. Your wife now refers to you as Reverend.

# Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus!

by Miriam Snow Priebe

Last Sunday I went with friends to a church of another denomination. They were celebrating Advent. One of the hymns we sang was “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus.” We don’t sing that song very often in our churches, but it is a marvelous hymn. I’ve found myself humming the tune and thinking about the words all week.

Friends of ours recently adopted a little boy. The announcements they sent out had the following message: “I wasn’t expected. I was selected.”

Jesus was both expected and selected—expected by many generations of faithful Israelites—selected by God. He was selected to free all men from their fears, to deliver men from the bondage of sin. Jesus was selected to reign!

When we sing this beautiful hymn as a prayer, we are asking our Lord to come to us, and we are expecting that after he comes things will be different. No fear is too small or foolish to ask him to take

from us. No sin is too large or terrible to ask him to forgive.

In this Advent hymn we are also asking him to be ruler of our lives. This means turning over our plans for his inspection. It means obedience to his commands as we understand them in the Gospels. This isn’t easy!

However, the last two lines of the hymn remind us of our Lord’s own words in Revelation 3:21, “To those who win the victory I will give the right to sit by me on my throne.”

If anyone should sing and appreciate this hymn it is an Advent Christian who has been brought up to look for Christ’s return and to rejoice in what he did for us in his first coming! I suggest that this hymn would be a good addition to the songs we sing before Easter. I am singing “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” with thanksgiving—that he came to save me and that he is coming again! †





# The Neglected Truth About Baby Jesus

by William Kilgore

OVER MANY YEARS, various details concerning the Christmas story have become somewhat blurred with the secularized retelling. For example, the fact that Mary was only about 14 years old when pregnant with Jesus. Or that the manger was most likely a cave used to keep animals in. Oh, and then there are the wise men. Traditionally three, but we really do not know how many there were. Furthermore, they came long after the shepherds, visiting Jesus as a toddler in a house! We could go on and on with this for some time.

Who knows why such details have become so cluttered? All I know is that there is one grand truth that cannot—and must not—be obscured in the Christmas story. This truth is fundamental and essential to the biblical Gospel. Yet with all the manger scenes displayed in homes and on lawns—you will rarely hear it mentioned.

We are not celebrating the birth of a baby. Babies are born all the time without so much fanfare. Rather, we celebrate the Incarnation - the infinite mystery whereby the eternal Word, who was both “with God” (distinction) and in fact “was God” (unity), *became* flesh (John 1:1-2,14). The fullness of deity dwelled in Jesus, born in Bethlehem (Col. 1:19; 2:9).

The baby that lay in the manger represents the richest One in all the

universe becoming poor for our sakes (2 Cor. 8:9)! He who was “very God of very God” became “very man of very man” in the greatest act of humility in all of history (Phil. 2:5-8). Veiling his deity (Heb. 10:20), he proceeded to grow as a child, perfectly fulfilling the Law of God through dependence on his Spirit (Luke 2:40,52; John 4:34; 15:10; Heb. 5:8-9).



This isn't a cute story. It really happened! And he wasn't just pretending to be human—he truly was. I love the rich lyrics of the Christmas hymns sung every year. Nevertheless (and I hope that I won't face a heresy charge for saying this), I have always cringed at the hymn “Away in the Manger,” specifically the line that reads:

*“The cattle are lowing, the poor  
Baby wakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He  
makes...”*

What? “NO CRYING HE MAKES”??? What in the world does that mean? Did he just tap Mary on the shoulder and say, “Excuse me, God is hungry”? Did Jesus change himself? Of course not. Understand—Jesus was a *real* baby! Jesus wasn't God wearing a “human baby mask”!

In human infancy, crying is the one audible form of communication available to get mom's attention. I have no doubt that the baby Jesus cried just as other human babies do. After all, he cried tears of anguish later in life, did he not? I suspect that this line of the hymn is expressive of some (possibly subconscious) docetic (Jesus wasn't really human) tendency on the part of the unknown writer.

In any case, let us remember that our celebration of Jesus must always center around both truths. Jesus was not some “super baby”—God pretending to be human. Nor was he merely a human baby. The awesome truth of the Incarnation is fundamental—Jesus was true God, who condescended to actually become true man for our redemption. Selah. †

*William Kilgore is a freelance writer living in Pasadena, Texas. His website is <http://www.flash.net/~thinkman>.*

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**

Decode these titles of Christmas carols. Once a letter is decoded, it remains the same throughout the list. Look for recurring combinations of letters, letters that appear frequently, or double letters. (Hint I=R)

1. TL BCILL XMDOV

2. BCL AMIVB DFLJ

3. VMJLDB DMOCB

4. PLUX BCL CYJJV

5. F CFJE DMOCB

6. GMDOJL HLJJV

7. YTYE MD Y KYDOLI

8. TCYB UCMJP MV BCMV

9. JLB MB VDFT

10. GFE BF BCL TFIJP



Answer the following multiple-choice questions and then put the letter you chose in the proper space below. The first one has been done for you.

1. How many gifts were given by the wise men?

- A. 3
- B. 4
- C. 1

2. Who was Jesus' mother?

- B. Mary
- C. Elizabeth
- D. Joseph

3. Where did He lay?

- C. cradle
- D. manger
- E. swing

4. In what city was Jesus born?

- F. Jerusalem
- G. Nazareth
- H. Bethlehem

5. Who were the two people waiting in the temple to see the Messiah?

- I. Anna & Simeon
- J. Elizabeth and Zechariah
- K. Paul & Barnabas

6. What did Mary and Joseph ride to get to Bethlehem?

- P. horse
- Q. camel
- R. donkey

7. Who were the first men to see Jesus?

- R. wise men
- S. Joseph's brothers
- T. shepherds

8. Who announced Jesus' birth?

- X. shepherds
- Y. angels
- Z. Mary

A  
 $\frac{2}{2} \frac{5}{5} \frac{6}{6} \frac{7}{7} \frac{4}{4} \frac{3}{3} \frac{1}{1} \frac{8}{8}$





"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

# As Children



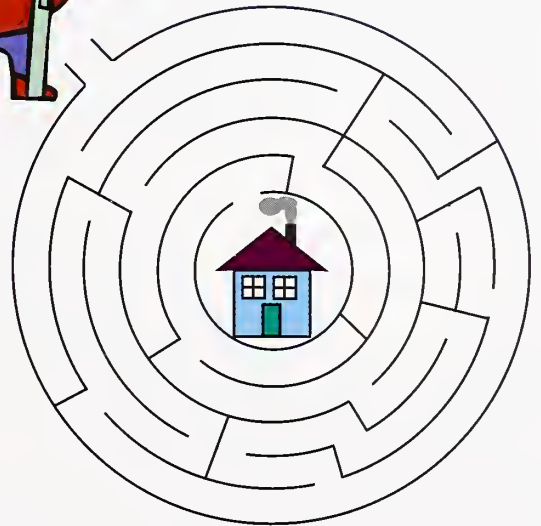
Help the kids get to Grandma's house.

Write the letter that comes before each of these letters in the alphabet.

m fu vt d p n f c f g p s f i j n x j u i

u i b o l t h j w j o h b o e f y u p m i j n x j u i

n v t j d b o e t p o h .



—Psalm 95:2



Unscramble these words associated with Thanksgiving.

- |            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| 1. uktyer  | 6. mpupikn eip |
| 2. orcn    | 7. alfl        |
| 3. amh     | 8. rpaaed      |
| 4. primlig | 9. sigftnfu    |
| 5. mlyfai  |                |



Unscramble answers: 1. turkey, 2. corn, 3. ham, 4. pilgrim, 5. family, 6. pumpkin pie, 7. fall, 8. parade, 9. stuffing, 10. Joy to the World  
Christmas carol answers: 1. We Three Kings, 2. The First Noel, 3. Silent Night, 4. Deck the Halls, 5. O Holy Night, 6. Jingle Bells, 7. Away in a Manger, 8. What Child is This, 9. Let It Snow, 10. Joy to the World

# Beyond Casual Gratitude

by Noelle Carle

**P**HIL CONNORS CHECKS HIS watch, rechecks it, then starts running. He arrives at the foot of a tree just in time to catch a boy who slips out of the branches. The boy laughs and wriggles away, while Phil, panting, entreats the boy, "Say thank you. Say thank you. You have never thanked me." Then to the boy's retreating back, "See you tomorrow!" Of course, Phil Connors is a fictional character from the movie "Groundhog Day," who is caught in his own personal time warp, living the same day over and over. But the writers of this screenplay touched on truth in that line, "You have never thanked me." Our attitude toward God may be likened to that falling boy's attitude toward Phil. We expect God to catch us, then we don't even bother to toss back a thank you.

I've never had a near death experience—that I know of. Only God knows how many times my life was in the balance and I was unaware of it. An old Amy Grant song, "Angels Watching Over Me," elaborates on the possible scenarios that we never encounter because of God's watch care over us. We are blissfully ignorant,

but also too casually grateful.

One possible reason for this casual approach is that we believe we have the right to live. In a society that prides itself in questioning authority, we endeavor to live under no one's authority. Our rights have become more important than submission, thus encouraging the widespread attitude that says, "No one can tell me what to do!" The Bible presents a different worldview. On the first occasion of fallen man's extermination from the earth—the flood—what grieved God was the fact that he had made man in the first place. He not only had the right, but he held the power of life and death in his hands. In dealing with the fickle Israelites, God made no apologies for the consequences

when they were in breach of contract. God not only has the power to give us life, but the right to take it. "You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'He did not make me'? Can the pot say of the potter, 'He knows nothing'?" (Isaiah 29:16).

Our immersion in this world has softened the awareness of our precarious position. We make sure we don't actually have to trust

God to provide for us because we've got good credit. We insure ourselves against illness, fire, floods, accidents, death, and dismemberment; a tacit agreement with fate that none of these will happen, and if they do we'll be okay. We surround ourselves with warmth and comfort. We install our security systems while failing to commit ourselves to him who alone can provide true security. We put our trust in our defense structure and a strong military, forgetting to entrust ourselves to the eternal God who alone can save us. We insulate ourselves from trouble and prefer to avoid those situations that may require something more from us than an hour a week. Often, we live without reference to God, unaware that our heart keeps beating because he says so.

I began writing this piece on September 10, 2001. On September 11, I questioned whether I ought to write it at all. My intention isn't to diminish the experiences of those who have suffered firsthand in this tragedy. Rather, I believe it helps underscore my initial point. I have read accounts of those who have faced death. For years, I've had a particular interest in the stories of those who have survived things: wars, trips to the Arctic, concentration camps, storms at sea, cancer or other illnesses. I have also known personally those who thought they were

*We expect  
God to catch  
us, then we  
don't even  
bother to toss  
back a thank  
you.*



going to die. Their reactions almost always include a profound sense of gratitude. They are glad to be alive. They rejoice in waking up in the morning. My friend, whose beautiful mother is dying from cancer, counts each morning that finds her mother still alive a blessing from God.

Our gratitude ought to equal theirs. We trust in a God who is not fickle, capricious or arbitrary. We trust in a God who has our very best interest at heart. We trust in a God who loves us deeply and for some reason tolerates so much from us. We trust in a God who has decided to use man as his medium. Therefore, even though life slams us sometimes, even though we face various trials, even though the future is uncertain, we can and ought to be grateful for life.

Gratitude can't be legislated. It can't be marketed. Neither should it be practiced merely one day a year. As Christians, our thanksgiving should be a daily event. Our prayers ought to be prefaced with a litany of thanksgiving. We should not be grateful to be alive because we almost died; we should be grateful that God gives us breath each morning. We should stop every day and consider the marvel that is at work in us; our hearts beat without us telling them to, blood races through hundreds of miles of arteries and veins, our hair grows, our cells regenerate, our bodies fight germs, we blink hundreds of times of day without having to keep track. Even when we're ill our bodies work like soldiers to make us well. We breathe without thinking, our bodies go about the business of living whether we are conscious of it or not. That is a gift from God. That is a mercy from God, and his mercies are new every morning.



Gratitude can't be legislated, but it is commanded. God's will, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, is that we give thanks in all circumstances. Colossians 2:6-7 says we should be overflowing with thanksgiving. And Ephesians 5:20 highlights thanksgiving as the stuff of which our lives are made, woven into our speech and songs and prayers. These verses make no exceptions for circumstances, but rather emphasize the importance of thanksgiving in whatever circumstance we find ourselves. A pretty tall order, but one made with integrity by a man who knew his share of suffering, beyond what most of us have ever had to endure. Unfortunately, we have the tendency either to ignore those verses when we lack the heart to be thankful, or our thankfulness is by rote, a gesture made to fulfill the law. I believe that Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, had a different intent. He intended for our joy to be deeply rooted in the fact of God's mercy, for our faith to hinge on the certainty of who God is, and for our thankfulness to

be bound up in those things that do not change when everything around us screams of chaos.

How do we become people who are characterized by thankfulness? My husband has the ability (or disability!) to overlook whatever he is searching for. He can be staring directly at something and not see it. And somehow he has passed on that gift to our two sons. Now when Peter comes to me and says "I can't find..." I tell him two things: think about what you're looking for, and use your eyes to find it. Those two directives are cogent to this question. If we are careful in our effort to be thankful, if we turn our minds to it conscientiously, then at the very least we will remember God's mercy, his love, his faithfulness, his promise of salvation. Beyond that the possibilities are boundless. And if we are mindful of what we're looking for and practice using our eyes, God will reveal to us the abundance of his goodness even in the most dire circumstances.

The example of others who live lives of thankfulness can be a powerful lesson for us and for our children. My mother has made her life appear to be perfectly tranquil and free from anxiety. I know it hasn't been, and I believe that part of what I see is because she has a heart of thankfulness and praise. At a time in our life when one of my sisters was terribly wounded and hospitalized for several months, it was my mother's reaction that taught me a lifelong attitude about trials. Even as she rushed to the hospital in the ambulance with my sister, she looked for things about which she could be thankful. And she was very vocal when she found them! I will never forget the example she was for me in my formative years.

We are people of God. Shame on us if it has taken hard times to make us think about thankfulness. As it's described in Colossians, our gratitude should be overflowing. This brings to mind a picture of thanks unable to be contained or stopped; not meted out once a year in a feast, which at times is just a nod to tradition. I do love Thanksgiving Day, but I want to *live* thanksgiving. †

*Noelle Carle and her husband, Russell, serve the Portsmouth Advent Christian Church, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.*





# The 2002

## Women's Challenge

**R**ECENTLY I READ AN ARTICLE in which the author listed six areas of life and asked the reader to prioritize them: work, family, God, self, community/world, and church.

She tried this experiment in groups she addressed. Every group insisted God ought to be number one. And every group chose the same least important area. Can you guess? It's community/world involvement. Deborah Brunt drives home her point by saying,

*Truth is, if we wait until we've fulfilled all our obligations to family, work, and church and perhaps scrounged in a few minutes to ourselves, most of us will never find a minute for involvement in our community and world. Ever.... After all, God sacrificed everything for the community and world that we shuffle to the bottom of our priority lists.*

I'm sure we agree that many women's priorities are skewed. But decrying their lack of interest serves no purpose and could potentially damage the cause. Instead, I offer two challenges to those involved in WHFMS or Women's Ministries groups.

### *The 2002 Call to Prayer for Leadership*

I invite women across America and Canada to join me in a year of targeted prayer asking God to raise up new leadership among our women. Plead to the Father on behalf of younger women in our denomination. Boldly ask him to send renewal and speak

to the hearts of Advent Christian women. As women's organizations we're at a crucial point in our history. I urge you to join me in this commitment to engage our heavenly Father in seeking his will and blessing on our future.

### *The 2002 Call to Sow Seeds in Another's Life*

Seek out one young woman in your congregation to mentor. By mentoring I simply mean to walk along side of her. Put extra effort into befriending and getting to know this woman. Make frequent calls to encourage her. Drop appropriate cards in the mail to remind her that she's important to you. Show genuine care by looking for ways you can help lighten the load she carries. Listen when she needs your ear. Pray for her and let her know you do. Ask if there are areas you can specifically pray for her. It's crucial for the health of our societies that each of us, in whatever limited way we can, make the first move in the direction of a younger woman. Jesus poured himself into the lives of twelve men for three years. I challenge you to pour yourself into the life of one woman this year. Make it a matter of prayer and the Lord will prompt you with a name.

As we approach another General Conference year and National WHFMS Business Meeting, we face a transition in leadership. Join me before the Father's throne asking the Lord of the harvest to raise up leadership and give us his mind and focus for the coming years.

—Hazel Blackstone

# From the Mission Archives

*Helen Seery Lyman served as an Advent Christian missionary to China from 1923-1927. The following is one of her letters from the mission field.*

Wuhu, China  
January 7, 1926

Dear Home Folks,

Here goes another family letter. I am wondering if our little Wuhu got its name in the home papers. If it did, I imagine you wonder what has happened to the family prodigal in the far country.

The people here have been expecting trouble all fall, but as nothing had happened for months we began to think nothing would. The other evening Molly Kennington and Stella, who was on her way to school in Nanking, were staying with us, as we had gotten home from a meeting rather late. About eight o'clock we were startled by the sounds of guns. The firing kept up for about two hours and seemed to be all over the city. We decided the soldiers were looting. The looting continued until day-break, with firing at intervals throughout the night. I was told the method they use is to knock at your door and fire a shot in the air. If you open the door they come in and help themselves to anything they can find, but seldom harm the people in the home. However, if you don't let them in, they hammer the door down, if possible, and shoot into the building. Several people were killed this way, but remarkably few resisted.

No children came to school the next morning, so we were free to go calling on friends and church members. There were several sad cases of homes looted clean, even the bedding and clothes. The city was a grim sight. Houses that had been looted hung out white strips of paper beside the doors with characters saying that they had been looted. Many

people thought the looting would continue the second night, so we had callers all day asking to spend the night.

We agreed to open up the church and school as well as our homes, but told them they could not bring any valuables. You can imagine how hard it would be to leave everything you prized in your home and expect to come back and find it cleaned out! While they agreed not to bring any boxes of valuables, many came with a small package or box and coaxed us to let them put it in our attic. We allowed a couple in and then so many were coming that we had to refuse. A camp of soldiers on the hill opposite us were watching the performance. The compound was filling up with people, and if too many valuables came in, we were afraid they would be tempted to call on us in the night, endangering the lives of those who had come for refuge. So we had to stand at the gate and refuse anyone who had a box of valuables. It wasn't easy to do.

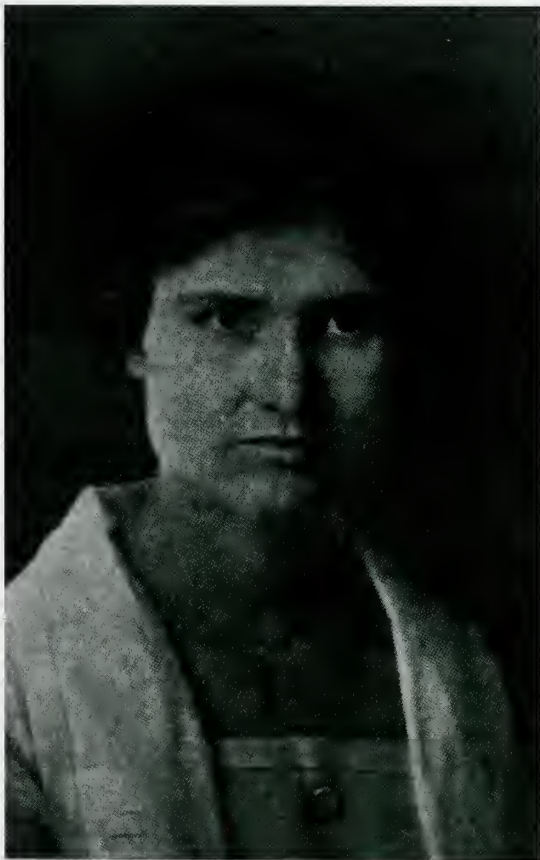
The night passed peacefully, but as the people are still panic-stricken, we are having a flood of guests each evening. For the last three nights there have been seven of us in a little bedroom. The school has also been filled, and we made up shakedown on the dining and sitting room floors. The girl schoolteachers are here visiting now, which is one reason I am having such a hard time expressing my thoughts. We hope the scare will be over enough tomorrow so stores will open, and we hope by



Monday to have school again. There doesn't seem to be any danger now.

The soldiers looted because they hadn't been paid for two months. They have helped themselves to enough to keep them going for awhile. The only danger seems to be that another army will come along and collect in the same way. The Chamber of Commerce has collected for the soldiers a number of times, so people have been taxed heavily. This time they asked for thirty thousand and were only give seven, which the officers kept. Soldiers were given permission to loot, but told not to burn or kill. There was no burning and they didn't kill unless they had to in order to collect. (Very decent of them, wasn't it?)

The Singleterrys came in Tuesday evening when excitement was at its highest. They took it all very coolly for folks who have only been in China for two months. They went home yesterday and expect to start for Nanking to attend language school today.



This is a dark rainy morning and we just finished breakfast at eight-thirty, so you see we made up some lost sleep today. Some of our guests haven't gotten up yet. Don't get excited when you read our names in the paper, for it always sounds much worse than it really is. We are safe and well, and trying to make the most of these circumstances to prove what the love of Christ can do for a fellow.

During the fear of looting I received three package slips from the post office. As the place had been looted the night before, I hurried down and got my packages. One of them was from you, so I was sure glad I did. We had some of both kinds of cake for supper, and it tasted just as it used to at home. I could picture it in the process of being made, which made it taste even better. The shoes fit just fine and are such pretty ones. I never had a pair of new shoes that slipped on with such a perfect fit and were so comfortable. I'm glad I didn't send any size or directions as I'm sure I couldn't have done as well. The candy is fine also, and the Haskell kiddies have a bid in for the box when it is empty. They think it will be fine to carry their lunch to school in next fall.

The sheet has been given a place in my hope chest as I am sleeping in woolen blankets now. I expect it will be used in the spring. I don't quite know whether the little purse and top are for my own amusement or whether I am supposed to pass them on. At present I am playing with them. We will find a place for the tinsel on our Christmas tree next year. I have never seen any before with the green in it. It is very pretty. A great big thank you to you all.

In my other two packages were three records and a lovely gray handbag. When I told you before of my Christmas gifts, I guess my silver knives and forks had not arrived. Santa brought me more this year than ever before. I think the old chap is getting old and foolish!

I must make the most of this holiday and get some studying done. Write when you can.

Much love,  
*Helen*

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# From the Editor

“High school has nothing to do with God.”

A Queen’s, New York, tenth grader made the comment in January, when the New York City Board of Education banned the written phrase “God bless you” on school property. The parents’ association placed a sign in front of the school that read “God bless you,” prompting the local teacher’s union to threaten legal action.

Scholars and lawyers can argue about the constitutionality of the decision, but the real battlefield is already cold. The student knows: “High school has nothing to do with God.” It’s a done deal, the Creator’s role has been erased from the daily life of New York City’s school children.

This really bothers me. It’s now assumed that one can make sense of the world without any reference to God. We’re not talking about promoting a particular belief in God; simply acknowledging a divine factor, a supernatural element in life.

I pity public school teachers who must try to explain a world without God. History, literature, science, art... without God, they’re all empty piñatas. How many historical documents will now have to be neutered by the thought-veterinarians,

*Continued on page 28*



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Earl and Martha Wright - India



Desiré and Martina Ahola - Croatia

# *A Micro-History of Advent Christian Missions*





Jeff and Penny Vann and family - Philippines



Moses Okon - Nigeria

*By Gordon Isaac*

ONE SHORT ARTICLE can hardly do justice to the multi-faceted and varied missions work carried out by Advent Christian people. There are too many names and faces that would need to be mentioned and too many stories of dedication, hard work, disappointment, and celebration that need to be told. So, instead of being comprehensive, we will have to be brief. In place of telling the entire story we will content ourselves by providing an overall impression. So how shall we begin?

The story of Advent Christian missions begins here at home. The denomination was formed as the Civil War was starting. During these turbulent days, a call went out to increase evangelistic work at home and abroad. At a summer campmeeting in 1865, several leaders discussed ways of fulfilling the great commission command "with special reference to missionary effort among the freedmen." From this meeting the American Advent Mission Society (A.A.M.S.) was formed.

The society wanted to address the social and spiritual needs emerging out of the conflict between the States. William B. Herron pointed out at the time that there were vast numbers of whites and blacks that had

little education, and practically no training in the Bible or things spiritual. The time was right to promote the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to prepare a people for his near and coming kingdom.

After conditions in the perspective fields were investigated and funds were gathered, the work began. Special effort was given to work in St. Louis, East St. Louis, Compton Hills, Memphis, Osceola, and Lagrange. Several thousand people received instruction and learned about the Lord through this early effort, and several churches were established as a result. In addition, home mission efforts extended to work in New York City, Philadelphia, and other large urban centers. It is worth noting that many of the early teachers in this home-mission effort were well-educated and tenacious women, many of whom were advocates of women's rights.

Home missions found an interesting way of moving itself into foreign missions. This was accomplished primarily through the use of Scripture tracts and other printed literature. A.C. Johnson reports that the Adventist brethren from the *Bible Banner*, a Christian publication from the Philadelphia area, entered into cor-



Mr. & Mrs. T. Devairakkam - Malaysia



Marion Damon, Barbara White, Mary Brown - India

responsed with Capt. James Spence of India. Their assistance made it possible to publish the message of "Life Only in Christ" in the languages of South India. These pamphlets helped to shape the theology of Capt. Spence as well as gather together some important leaders of like mind. Beginning in July 1882, the work consisted almost entirely of printing pamphlets in the languages spoken and read in that part of the country. Many read the Bible truths contained in this literature and came to know what Advent Christians refer to as "Life Only in Christ." In 1886, Captain Spence added preaching to the distribution of literature. And in 1892 a school was established to provide general and religious training to the outcasts of Indian society.

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In this early phase of the India field, the ladies of the Woman's Home and Foreign Mission Society played an important role. In 1898, the school at Velacherie was turned over to the Society. Advent Christian women readily gave generously to the needy children of India. To the one school at Velacherie a second was added in nearby Guindy. The work has

steadily grown since those early days. Many missionaries and national workers have labored, making a difference by building for the coming kingdom. Presently, our India mission consists of 90 churches, two Bible colleges, a Christian school system with 14,000 students and more than 400 teachers, and approximately 17,000 believers.

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The mission work in China also began before the turn of the century. In 1897 the AAMS secured the services of G. H. Malone. From 1892 to 1896, Malone served with another mission in China. But when he could no longer endorse his mission's doctrinal statement on the immortality of the soul and the eternal conscious suffering of the wicked, Malone had to return to North America.

Leaders on the AAMS became aware of Malone and, through a series of meetings, became impressed with his evangelistic zeal and doctrinal agreement. They decided to sponsor his return to China, which took place that year. Malone and his new bride located in Nanking, a large city 250 miles inland on China's Yangtze River. Space was rented in an ancient Buddhist temple.

Right away, Malone set to work identifying with the Chinese people in every way he knew. It was his habit to dress in the Chinese custom and to wear his hair in the traditional manner. Since the people saw very few foreigners, simply taking a walk around the city attracted





Frank and Frances Toothe - Japan & Philippines

immense curiosity and opened doors for evangelism.

The new work grew steadily and branched out into the areas of famine relief, caring for orphans, and establishing schools to train future leaders for ministry. In addition to the numerical increase of the mission through conversions, new missionaries from North America were also added to the work. At one time, the missionary staff reached 24, the largest number of Advent Christian missionaries at one time in any single field.

In spite of the almost constant political upheaval, including the Sino-Japanese War (1937), World War II (1941), the communist take-over (1947), and the cultural revolution (1966-76), there has been a consistent gospel witness. Today, in the face of harsh repression, there continues to be approximately 3,000 Chinese Christians as a result of the faithful service of Advent Christians.

Nearby is the Japanese field that was opened in 1898 by Masador Iwagoye. The expanding work benefited from the labors of several career and short-term missionaries. The Japanese conference presently has approximately 1,000 believers.



Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Sanderlin - Memphis, Tenn.

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Around 1950, Advent Christians began a work in the Philippines in an area in northern Mindanao that had been previously closed to Protestants. Over 50 churches now minister to approximately 3,000 Advent Christians. Oro Bible College helps to prepare pastors for full-time ministry.

Malaysia and Mexico came next with dedicated workers and bright prospects for the future. But of special interest are the fast-growing works on the continent of Africa and in Europe. The speed with which these fields have emerged has kept the Director of Advent Christian World Missions scrambling for ways to keep up.

Great things have been done in the past by faithful Advent Christians to extend the Kingdom. Even greater things will be done in the future. This is a story that will soon be told in much greater detail. Even now, Dr. David Dean is diligently working on a volume that gives account of the history of Advent Christian missions. I can't wait to read the whole story. ✚

# World Today

*By Rhonda Walsh*

MY FAMILY AND I have been in the Philippines for 11 months. We have been able to adjust to many of the cultural differences, but everyday we are reminded that we are still foreigners. I'd like to share our experiences and perceptions as new missionaries in a rapidly growing city in the Philippines.

For people like us, who are used to four seasons, the weather itself is a big adjustment. The forecast is the same nearly every day—hot with a chance of rain (unless it is March, April or May, then it's just hot). So it's like summer all year long.

On hot summer days in the States I either wear shorts and a tank top or feel very uncomfortable. Here it's hot all the time, yet most adults dress professionally and look as though they aren't bothered. As a person with fully functional sweat glands, I wonder how in the world they do it. I often take two showers a day, use very effective deodorant, cover myself with powder, and dress as coolly as possible. After just a short time, and without any activity, I find my face oily, my hair frizzy, my clothes dampening, and an unpleasant odor beginning to form. It makes me appreciate the refreshing breezes that blow through our windows. They are sent from God.

One thing that comes to mind when we Americans think of summer is the outdoors.

*Continued on page 13*



Rhonda Walsh with children Benjamin and Isaac and some newfound Filipino friends.



# Missions and Yesterday

*By Luree Wotton*

IT WAS HOT, steamy hot, in October. But my mind was busy wondering what was about to happen. After a long wait for visas and then that never-ending plane ride, Laura Putnam and I were finally in the Philippines. We had wondered if this day would ever come and even at the last minute paperwork seemed to be hindering us. But now we were there. Who would meet us? What would it be like to get through these lines and then see the country we had come to? It was with mixed emotions that we discovered a sign welcoming us, held by a Filipino gentleman instead of familiar faces. But we soon learned that this gentleman was a lawyer who would get us settled and through immigration. Thank you, Lord.

After clearing airport immigration with no problems, we were taken by taxi to a guesthouse and settled in. We were also informed that one of the lawyer's secretaries would pick us up early in the morning to escort us across the city to where we were to begin language school. We would get enrolled and then start on the true immigration red tape. So, after a long trip and so many changes, we were ready for a night of rest and then eager to start our new life in this country.

Early the next morning, we rode the bus for about an hour across town to the language school, which was just a short walk from the bus line. We became acquainted with the school and then were escorted home. The next

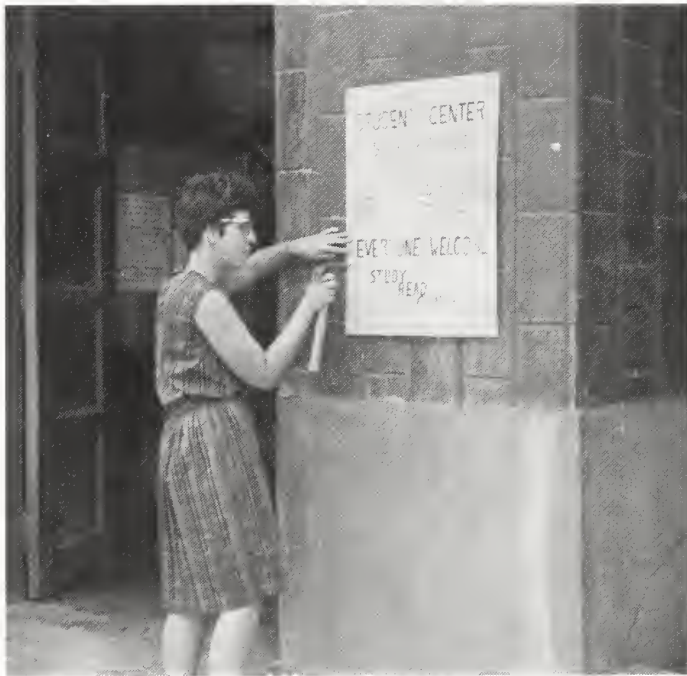
day we went to immigration with the secretary, who decided we were able to travel by ourselves, so we were on our own to get to the school after that. Praise God, the signs were in our script and many of the people spoke English, so we never got too lost after that.

Within a couple of weeks the Townes arrived and helped us move into an apartment within walking distance of the school. It was over a grocery store where we were able to do some of our shopping and by then we felt we were almost home.

We had barely settled into our apartment when the Teshera family arrived. They came by freighter and, when they arrived, the ship could not dock because there was no space



Luree Wotton and Laura Putnam



Luree putting up the sign at the Student Center.

at the pier. Our lawyer friend took us out to meet them by tug and they were able to disembark, but without luggage. They were very eager to get onto dry land. To prepare for their coming, I had baked a chocolate cake and put it on the counter to cool. I mixed up some chocolate frosting and had the bottom layer done when I noticed that the top layer was covered with small brown ants. What to do? I brushed them off and finished frosting. So it may be that our first guests had the honor of eating chocolate covered ants. It was only after we had all been in this country for several years that the story got out of my *maybe* serving our guests ants.

Our first trip to Mindanao, where the Advent Christian work is mostly located, was over the Christmas holidays. We traveled with the Teshera family via "Fast" airlines because it was less expensive. The name of the airline belied its speed. I guess its airspeed was okay, but we had a layover in Cebu city that went on and on. It was hot. There was no air-conditioning and the accommodations left a lot to be desired. How wonderful to get to Cagayan de Oro and see a few familiar faces.

Christmas in the Philippines is another story. I am sure it has changed in the past 18

years, but back then it was a new experience. Our tree was a branch wrapped with Japanese paper (something like tissue paper) and decorated simply. The season began on December 17 and lasted until Three Kings (first Sunday in January). During this time you could have many carolers. Since our apartment was three floors up we did not have as many. When these people came, you were to listen and then reward them, preferably with money. Gift giving was common and gifts were not saved for a special day but were given at the time of purchase or when you saw the person. Children especially looked forward to these and might even ask for them if you were a godparent. Our first Christmas day there was spent at the Claveria church, with sort of traditional services, followed by Philippine food and entertainment. It was a celebration of both Christ's birthday and our arrival.

Life in the Philippines changed over the years while I was there, and has changed even more since I left. Transportation was a challenge. After I moved to Mindanao a trip to the mountains, where our work was, entailed a bus ride that was never dull. The Lucky Trans. was a big red bus. One side of the bus was



Frances Toothe giving an injection.



open so you climbed up and slid into the long seat. If you were lucky you got enough space to sit! If not, you waited until the bus made a quick stop or rounded a corner and when everyone slid a bit, you pushed yourself back into the space now available. You were also lucky if you got to your destination within a few hours. Men and boys also rode on the top of the bus with some of the cargo. Many of the roads were not yet paved and some were very narrow. If the bus met another vehicle in a narrow spot, both had to stop and negotiate who would back up to a wider place. I marveled at some of the passings; it did make life interesting.

One of my first assignments, while I was practicing my language skills, was in the city of Cagayan de Oro. I was living with Laura and a dorm full of high school and college girls. The main responsibility for the dorm fell to Laura, while I was to learn some tropical medicine. I helped at the county hospital, but didn't get the instruction I hoped for. However, I did get to see first hand the medical aid available, spending several mornings a week giving injections in the clinic. Supplies were scarce and we had one syringe for penicillin, another for vitamins, etc. Surprisingly, we had few problems with this system. I also had the opportunity to travel with a Christian doctor to the mountains to help out and learn from him. He and his family were missionaries to their own people and, even today, his daughters are serving the Lord, one in this country working in a mission office and the other as a doctor over there.

We had electricity and running water in the city, and cars were becoming more abundant but traffic, even on the main street, was light. We had markets for shopping and, while some of the foods were new to us, they were good. We had a kerosene stove and even a refrigerator (electric). We never had a washing machine but we usually had helpers who did the laundry and

other chores for us.

After a few months I moved to the mountains to help Betty Allen with the clinic and learn more of tropical medicine. It was always a challenge, as you never knew who would show up and what their problem might be. At first, I needed help both with the language and with the treatments but, as time passed, I became more proficient in both. In the mountains there was no electricity or plumbing. If it rained, our tanks got filled. If not, we hired someone to carry water for us. I learned to use a pressure lamp and kerosene refrigerator. It never made sense to light a fire under the refrigerator to get it cold but it worked. By then the mission had a jeep—"Professor Fumble"—and I mastered driving it up and down the mountain and in a few other places. It made trips to town much easier than by bus.

Clinics were held in our house and in different villages. The trips to the villages were always a challenge. Sometimes we could drive, sometimes hike and sometimes it was a combination of both. We tried to meet both physical and spiritual needs, the latter by a Bible study, by taking home studies to people, or by children's classes. Cebuano materials were not abundant and so we had some Filipino people translate material, especially for Sunday school. Later, we got them from an-



The Jeepney

other group and just checked for any doctrinal problems.

Twenty years of living in the Philippines passed very quickly. What was most special about being there? I think it was the people. The “house girls,” or helpers as we called them, became special friends. We worked together to make life good. We celebrated together, laughed together, and even cried together. Other wonderful people were those we worked with in spreading the Gospel. I learned to appreciate the national pastors and Sunday school teachers. We met with these teachers each quarter to introduce new materials and do some teacher training. I did some of the pastoral training and, thanks to good materials, I was able to teach sermon preparation. It was my first course on that topic as well.

The last part of my time there was mostly spent at the Bible College. Making the decision to start the

college was a big step of faith for us all. I spent one vacation learning how to write objectives and then taking the courses I was to teach and outlining how to do it. Praise God, we got off to a good start and have built on it ever since. Oro Bible College has always had a great reputation among the churches of the Philippines and it is because we knew we were in “over our heads” and relied on the Lord to give us guidance. My co-workers in the college were special because of this. It was great to see people grow up in the Lord and begin to assume leadership themselves. Some of the leaders there today were my students. Some of them lived with me as they studied in high school and college, and I trust that my life, as well as the teaching, had a part in their being what they are today.

What don't I miss? I don't miss the cold-water baths. Hot water was a luxury. I don't miss some of the

inconvenient “conveniences.” I don't miss the crowds in the cities. In Manila, at times, you needed to hold the hand of your friend or else you might get separated—the traffic was unbelievable. I also do not miss the heat and humidity that sapped my strength.

What do I miss? I miss the times of wondering what will happen next. Even then we experienced terrorism, but to a much lesser degree than now. I didn't think I would miss that, but I do. It meant relying on God for safety and he was ever faithful. I miss the struggle to be sure I was communicating across both language and cultural lines. I even miss the effort to keep ahead of my students when I had a new subject to teach.

Life has changed so much since then. Communication is fast. They now have e-mail. When I was there, we couldn't even get a telephone. If I wanted to call the States, I had to go to the telephone office and have them place the call for me. That was fine, except for the time difference. That meant we could not consult across the sea and, so, had to consult with our heavenly Father; not a bad thing after all. But I do miss the people. The Filipino people as a group are very special. They are a caring and sharing people. They were my friends and family. We are all a part of the family of God and I am so thankful that God gave me the opportunity to have this enlarged family while living on earth. †

*Luree Wotton served as an Advent Christian missionary to the Philippines from 1963-1982.*



Philippine missionaries in 1970 (l-r): George Teshera, Jim Jensen with baby Todd, Sherry Jensen, Margaret Helms, Howard Towne, Anna May Towne, Laura Putnam, Roger Teshera, Luree Wotton, Beverly Teshera, Bessie Smith; front- Annie Teshera, Marilyn Towne



**Today Continued from page 8**

There is little difference between outdoors and indoors here. It's not uncommon to see outdoor animals (stray dogs, birds, frogs, snakes, bats) coming inside or "indoor activities" being done outside. Most people cook and do laundry outdoors. Many "private" things are done outdoors as well. Once I was tying the curtains back in an upstairs window when I happened to look out. There, in plain view, my neighbor was bathing in his underwear. How embarrassing for me!

The great outdoors is also used for a toilet. How awkward it is to pass a grown man standing very close to a bush or even his car. The feelings change to nausea when I'm in my kitchen preparing breakfast while the neighbor stands outside to get sick.

An ugly fact about summer is the

bugs it brings. With no winter to kill them, the bugs here are overwhelming. That is one of the most difficult things for me. All of our food must be in sealed containers or in the fridge. With our two small boys, the ants have a feast at mealtime. If mealtime lasts too long, the ants won't wait for the food to drop to the floor; they will come to the plate. Instead of warning our boys that their food will get cold if they don't eat it, we say, "You had better eat or the ants will get it." I am often frustrated by the never-ending ant, termite, and mosquito wars.

The language barrier has been another difficult thing for us to deal with. English is more of a status symbol than a common language here. Those that speak English are educated. Most of the people speak very little English, and are too ashamed to use it. Sometimes store

clerks or public transportation drivers sometimes literally run away from us because they're ashamed. At first it was difficult for us not to take it personally.

This attachment of status to the English language was a big surprise to me. People here idealize America, and I was shocked by how Americanized many things are. Many Filipinos dream of going to America and want to learn English. It's strange to possess something that so many desire—my nationality. Some seek out an American friend if only to practice their English. Even in church we sing many songs in English that are familiar to us.

Though many Filipinos do speak English, the nonverbal language is quite different. There are the unnoticed gestures. Pointing with the lips and saying "yes" by raising the eyebrows didn't mean anything to us at



Oro Bible College faculty, staff, and students.





Oro Bible College students on a weekend ministry trip to Libertad.

first. We thought people were just ignoring us. There are also those things that are just commonly known, though not to a foreigner. Imagine not knowing how to get anywhere, how to get a doctor's appointment, how to get money, or how to use the bathroom! These are the problems we faced when we first arrived.

We didn't know how the public transportation system worked. There are not only the routes and fares to learn, but also how to let the driver know you want a ride or you want to get off. A gesture gets them to pick you up, and a tap on the ceiling tells them to stop. These are so subtle that I had no idea what was going on when the Vanns accompanied us on our first jeepney ride.

Doctor visits are interesting. There are no appointments. It's first come first serve. So if it happens that several people need to see the doctor on the same day, the wait can easily be hours long.

Once I arrived at the doctor's

waiting room, and sat down for the long wait. I wanted to talk with the woman sitting next to me. She was older but well dressed so I wasn't sure if she spoke English. I spent a while in silence trying to piece together a question to ask in Visayan. After fumbling with the words she started to laugh. Then she asked me in English, "What are you trying to say?" I was trying to ask if she had been waiting long, but what I said was, "Have you been sitting on many minutes?"

Filipinos are generally good-natured people. This is what I enjoy the most about being here. Friendliness is a part of Filipino culture. They love to laugh and enjoy life. This is a good lesson for me.

At the bank there are no lines but there is still waiting. Each customer gives the teller the transaction information and then sits down to wait for the teller to get to it. People don't "politely" wait their turn. If you aren't assertive, you don't get anywhere.

About the bathrooms: In most

bathrooms there is a toilet bowl low to the ground with no seat or cover, a large bucket of water and a small dipper. There is no toilet paper and sometimes no sink. I figured out how to squat instead of sit and how to flush the toilet with the dipper of water, but I still don't know how to clean myself without getting my clothes wet. I usually just go at home if I can. Public bathrooms in malls and restaurants are more western, but the waiting system is different. You stand in front of the stall you want instead of just in a general line. It didn't take long for me to figure this out!

The economy is something else we are adjusting to. I remember my first time at the wet market (a large, smelly, crowded room with vendors displaying their freshly slaughtered animals). Penny Vann was helping me with my first purchase. How hard could it be? In the States I had always bought about 5 lbs. of beef for one week for about \$10.00. Though my mind was slow with jet lag, I figured that it would be about 2.5 kilograms of beef, and it would be about 500 pesos. So I brought a 1000 peso bill to be safe. Well, 2.5 kg is an uncommonly large purchase here, and it was only 265 pesos. When Penny saw me withdrawing the bill from my pocket, she emphatically told me to hide it and she would pay for it. Many people at the market have never *seen* a real 1000 peso bill!

Low prices are a blessing. We are paid in US dollars, and a US dollar goes much farther here. This is good not only for our budget, it's wonderful for sharing with others. We feel like we are helping greatly, though the gifts are small by our stan-



dards. Unfortunately, most Filipinos earn very little. The wage for an unskilled laborer is 20 pesos/hour. At the current rate of 51 pesos to one US dollar, that is just small change. So even employed people are very poor. Add to that the unemployed, and the poverty is just overwhelming. There is no escaping it. Whenever we go people ask us for money. It's heartbreaking and confusing. Some are truly helpless, but others are just taking the easy way out.

What makes it worse is that most Filipinos assume we are very wealthy. We are, after all, Americans. It has been a huge adjustment for us to be "rich." In this economy, perhaps we are, but our other foot is in an economy where we are considered poor. Of course, it seems no one here understands this. Strangers and acquaintances ask us for help all the time. Each situation is unique, and some days there are multiple "urgent" requests for our assistance. We don't want people to be dependent upon us, but at the same time we want to help, and always be good stewards. This type of decision-making is emotionally taxing.

We help some OBC students by giving them employment at our house. This has been strange for me. Sure, it's wonderful to have someone else do the cooking, cleaning, laundry, etc. That means, however, that I have to be organized enough to assign the various chores. When I first arrived I didn't realize that the dusting had to be done *daily*, or that doing the amount of laundry we dirty with a primitive machine is an all day chore or that the grass is cut with a long knife, so it takes awhile also. These things took a little while to

learn. I also had to adjust to the work of an employer: keeping track of hours, disciplining, saying "no" when I have enough workers, etc. This has been a different experience for me.

When we first arrived we realized how different we are from Filipinos: we couldn't communicate with them; we didn't understand their behaviors; we didn't know how to do most things: and we didn't have the same economic perspective. Had it not been for the Vanns, we would have felt completely isolated. Fortunately, these feelings have dimin-

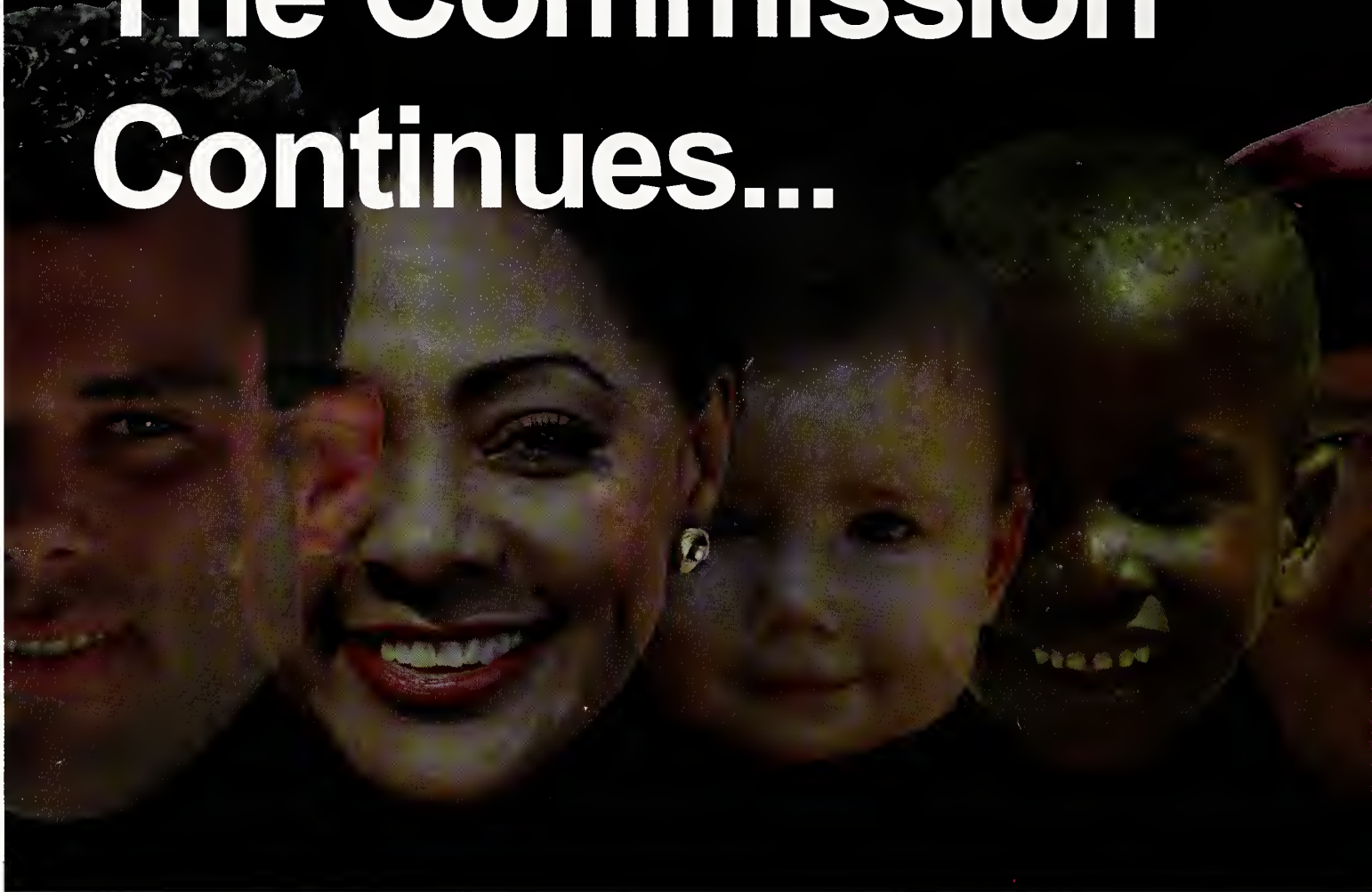
ished as we have learned some of the "secrets" of the culture. What a blessing it has been for us to experience the diversities of God's people! †

*Rhonda and Jeff Walsh serve as missionaries to the Philippines. Jeff is taking a leave of absence from his studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary to fill the position vacated by Jeff and Penny Vann, who are currently on furlough in the United States. Both Rhonda and Jeff are natives of New York state, and have two boys: Benjamin, 4, and Isaac, 2.*



Jeff, Rhonda, Benjamin, and Isaac.

# The Commission Continues...



## *Some Things Never Change !!!*

*In 1942 the American Advent Mission Society set goals that included:*

- *Entry into new fields*
- *Enlistment of missionary applicants*
- *Training of nationals for pastoral and evangelistic work and other places of leadership*
- *Raising money to support the mission work*
- *Raising money for "Tools for the Task"*

*In 1956, the American Advent Mission Society set goals that included:*

- *Entry into new fields*
- *Enlistment of missionary applicants*
- *Training of nationals for pastoral and evangelistic work and other places of leadership*
- *Raising money to support the mission work*
- *Raising money for "Tools for the Task"*

*In 2002, goals of Advent Christian World Missions include:*

- *Entry into new fields*
- *Enlistment of missionary candidates*
- *Training of nationals for pastoral and evangelistic work and other places of leadership*
- *Raising money to support the mission work*
- *Raising money for "Tools for the Task"*

*In November 1954, after receiving a jeep for transportation, one of the missionaries writes: "We are grateful... In reality, this means just about another missionary in the field because of the time and energy it will save our missionaries."*



# Mission's Capital Fund Drive



## *OK, some things do change!*

*In 1954, Mission director Clarence Kirby had to travel eight months at a time by boat to visit the mission fields.*

*Today, Missions Director Hal Patterson usually travels eight times a month to keep up with the growing work.*

*In 1984, we were serving 6 nations.*

*Today, we are serving more than 30 nations*

***But what still hasn't changed... the need to raise capital funds to provide "Tools for the Task"***

*The need for church buildings... to hold the ever growing group that is meeting on a porch  
Jeeps... transportation so that pastors won't have to walk the long and sometimes dangerous trek  
from village to village*

*Speaker systems and loud speakers for worship and for broadcasting the message*

*Housing dorms for pastoral students*

*Housing needs, building needs, transportation needs*

***And what still continues is... Our Call to the Great Commission !***

# *Interview with World Missions*

*Advent Christian World Missions exploded during the past decade. The number of nations with an Advent Christian presence increased, therefore we interview the man largely responsible for envisioning and leading this dramatic work—Advent Christian World Missions Director Rev. Harold Patterson.*

## **How long have you been Director of World Missions?**

I've been Director of World Missions for more than fifteen years. I was appointed in February, but did not assume the position officially until the 1st of July 1986.

## **When did you first become interested in missions?**

I've always had some interest in missions. For 35 years, my mother was president of the WHFMS Evening Circle in the Westfield, Massachusetts, church. Whenever our church entertained missionaries or a mission director, we generally hosted them for a meal in our home. I can remember meeting many missionaries in our home. In fact, I remember as a teenager having Clarence Kirby, Director of World Missions, pull me aside while waiting for noon meal to be served to encourage me to be interested in missions. Only in recent years have I remembered a statement that he made to me. "Young man," he said, "you really ought to be interested in missions. Who knows, someday you

might have my job." I've often wondered if he had some prophetic insight in that.

I owe much of my mission interest to my wife, who was also raised in a home with mission-minded parents: Rev. Wade and Bessie Massengill, from eastern North Carolina. Clarence Kirby usually made their home his headquarters when visiting in eastern North Carolina. My wife met virtually all the missionaries and had a chance to visit with them. She has a strong burden for missions, and is a great inspiration, encouragement, and help to me in promoting missions and mission conferences in the churches that we have served. She continues to be very involved in promoting missions across the denomination.

## **How has world missions changed during your time as director?**

We have gone through more than one change in the fifteen years, moving from a more traditional "colonial mission," where the missionary was the principle force providing direction and strategy for the works in the national fields, to encouraging the development of national conferences and leadership, to our becoming partners with these fields, and, now, the bulk of our fields are those that were founded by national leaders who came to us sharing a common theological conviction.

Discipleship has played a great part in missions, especially in recent years. Not only do our missionaries disciple national pastors, training them to disciple their people, but many of our new fields are discipling believers in *other* fields to expand the work. It's like the proverbial stone tossed in a puddle: the circles keep going out further and further.

## **What event has impressed you most since assuming your role?**

I probably could write a book on various events that have happened during these fifteen years in Advent Christian World Missions. My first impression being here was the tremendous commitment of our long-term missionaries—those who have given thirty and forty years of missionary service to Christ and to our denomination. Their faithfulness and their willingness to go back even after retirement to help us through difficult situations stands out above anything else.

The next important development is the number of people that are coming to us having discovered in Scripture our understanding of the truths and wanting to be part of it. It's almost like we have been "discovered" as a people. For those who are firm believers in Conditional Immortality, where do they go? The options today are either the Seventh Day Adventists or us. If these people do not keep the Seventh Day, we are the natural choice. Along with this



# Director Harold Patterson

has come the tremendous commitment and enthusiasm of these people to preach the Gospel and to make our doctrinal distinctives their message, and to declare our distinctives in an evangelistic mode. The desire for expansion, training, and sharing is exemplary. God has given us some of the most gifted men and women you could ask for overseas. He has brought them to us and they are helping in the great and rapid advancement of the work.

One of the great examples of a combination of all these things is a young woman from the Philippines who found Christ as a result of the ministry of one of our churches. After being disciplined by her pastor, she got a chance to study in Japan, and took that opportunity to reach out to the other internationals in her university and win them to Christ, starting an Advent Christian work and discipleship program in Japan. What a testimony of faithfulness and discipleship at all levels! Some of these internationals are taking our understanding of Scripture back to their own countries.

## **What do you see as the role of short-term mission trips in the larger ministry of missions?**

Short-term missions provide many people the opportunity to respond to a longing in their spirit to be involved in sharing the gospel cross-culturally. It is my conviction that short-term mission trips do

more for the individual who goes than for the ministry they perform on the fields they visit. They come back with a better view of what it is to share the gospel to those who need to hear it, and experience the spiritual hunger that people have in the world. I think, too, that there is a challenge to each of them to consider a continuing ministry in missions.

The question of short-term mission trips as a major source of future career missionaries is still unanswered among all groups who have short-term missions. There is not yet the statistical data to indicate that short-term mission trips produce greater numbers of missionaries for a career. The role of short-term missions today may be to assist national works. People can go to fields short-term to provide services, training, and encouragement to national pastors, churches, Bible schools, etc., that need some temporary help to improve their ministry.

## **Why do you think we should be promoting *Advent Christian* missions, instead of simply spreading the Gospel?**

Certainly we are all committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commission in reaching everyone with the Gospel. Spreading the Good News and building Christ's Kingdom is the primary objective.

In addition to this, we are shar-

ing our understanding of the Bible, and I too believe we have an evangelistic message built around the distinctiveness of our doctrines. Others that are coming to us from around the world agree. They see it as the great answer to preaching to their cultures. For instance, consider people converting from Hinduism or Animism to Christianity. We are able to say that people do not naturally live forever and they don't come back in some other form; there is not reincarnation or a spirit world that deals with departed souls of men. We have a Biblical answer for those questions.

I feel a responsibility, too, as Director of Advent Christian Missions, to see that the money given by Advent Christians is used to expand and grow the Advent Christian church worldwide. I really believe that this is the intent of people who give to us. If they did not want that, they would be giving it to parachurch missions rather than to us.

## **What is the greatest need today in Advent Christian missions?**

It is hard to single out one need. I think there are three major needs today.

- First of all is personnel. We must never reach a point where we are not a sending denomination. We desperately need full-time missionaries for the Philippines, for India, for New Zealand, and for Hondu-

ras. And we are looking at other possibilities. Do you realize the tremendous need for missionaries to France and to England and to Eastern Europe? We could use Advent Christians feeling this call.

- Our second greatest need is to provide training for pastors and leaders. We have had so much rapid growth on our fields where we have pastors—willing, energetic, gifted, evangelistic pastors—who need training to be better servants of the Lord. I can remember being in Liberia when a young man wept in front of me pleading, “Help me, train me to be a better minister of the Gospel!” We need men and women who will join us to help train pastors on short-term trips to our fields.

- This brings us to the third need. Obviously, all this takes money—increasing amounts of money. More and more the economies of the world are improving, which means the cost of living in any country is going up. The cost of doing ministry in any country is increasing. Advent Christian Missions involves continuing to raise more dollars to continue and expand this ministry.

I believe with all my heart that God has preserved us as a people with our message for such a time as this. Here in the very last days of time, God has given us a much greater ministry in the world than our forefathers ever had imagined. I believe that in these remaining days of time, God has a special, dynamic, thrilling ministry for the Advent Christian church worldwide. †





# IS THE MAIN THING THE MAIN THING?

By Dr. Nelson B. Melvin

**T**HE PHONE RANG. The president of the Chamber of Commerce in New Albany, Indiana called to request that I offer the prayer of invocation at the Chamber meeting on Tuesday. I accepted without hesitation. The occasion would give the Advent Christian Church name recognition and I would have the privilege of meeting some of the movers and shakers in the city.

Later, something bothered me. If I had been asked to go to the Chamber meeting on Wednesday, I would have declined. Wednesday was Bible study and prayer meeting night. About 25 members attended, but there were never any unsaved people present. Tuesday was visitation night. I took a different man with me each Tuesday to visit two unchurched or unsaved families. When trained, two of the men were partnered and I added others. If witnessing to the lost is the main mission of the church, I needed to give it the highest priority. I promised God that I would never again let anything interfere with Tuesday that I would not let cancel the mid-week service.

The Executive Committee of the General Conference took note of what God was doing in New Albany and asked me to serve as the Director of Evangelism and Conserva-

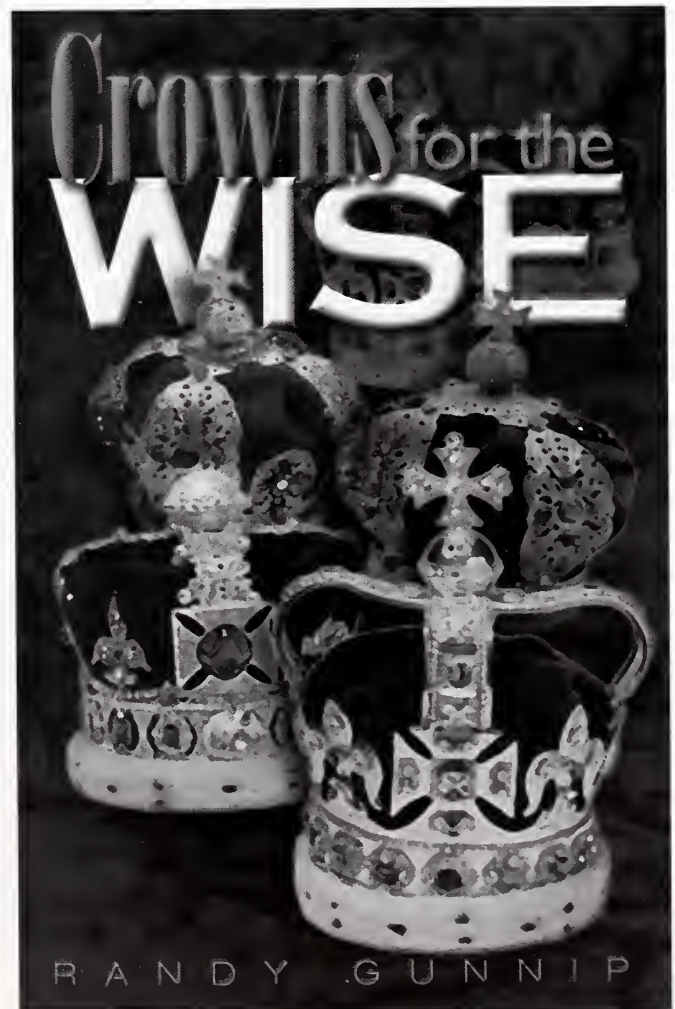
tion. They encouraged me to go to churches across the country, training pastors and church members in personal evangelism. Recently, a person asked me, "Do you remember when we visited...?" Although over a half-century has passed, the joy of leading someone to Jesus is still a precious memory for that person.

For the past 36 years I have been involved in administrative and publication responsibilities. While I have been involved in Evangelism Explosion and recently in the FAITH outreach program, personal evangelism has not had the priority that it once did. *That is, until I read a book last June. That book, written by a friend of mine, has changed my life.*

Randy Gunnip was a fighter pilot in the Korean conflict. He is senior vice president on one of the world's

largest investment institutions. In 1997 and 1998, he ranked first in his firm out of 10,000 advisors in the opening of new large investment consulting services accounts. Randy has been extremely successful, both financially and professionally. More importantly, Randy is a soul winner.

He told me that writing *Crowns for the Wise* has been one of the



most difficult things he has done. Dr. Jimmy Hester, a former head of World Outreach for the Southern Baptist Association, concluded that *Crowns for the Wise* is the best book on soul winning that he has read. I have read dozens of books on evangelism and I agree.

In the first chapter, Randy tells of the time when he invited 78-year-old Sam Martin to lunch to learn everything he could from this elderly man known for his successful witnessing. As they entered the hotel, Sam said to the Bell Captain, "I'm Sam Martin. I want to tell you about a friend you need and who will never let you down. If I give you something, will you read it?" He handed the man a tract. Sam repeated that same message when they were greeted by the maitre d' and again when the waiter came to the table. Randy writes, "Every person with whom Sam had contact that day, he offered each a chance to meet the Lord Jesus Christ. He never missed a single one."

When I read that, I said to myself, "I can do that." Anybody can do that and everybody should. I believe that the most significant change that I have experienced since I read the book is that I look into the faces of the people that I meet and wonder if they are going to enjoy eternity with Jesus? Or, are they headed toward the flames of destruction. Randy says, "More people are going to hell, not because of the

enormity of their sins, but because no one has told them about the Savior."

**If we only fish  
in our churches,  
it is the equivalent  
of fishing in  
a bathtub,  
where there is  
only a plastic  
whale and a  
rubber duck.**

*Crowns for the Wise* is about much more than passing out tracts. It provides practical, biblical information about outreach from seedtime to harvest.

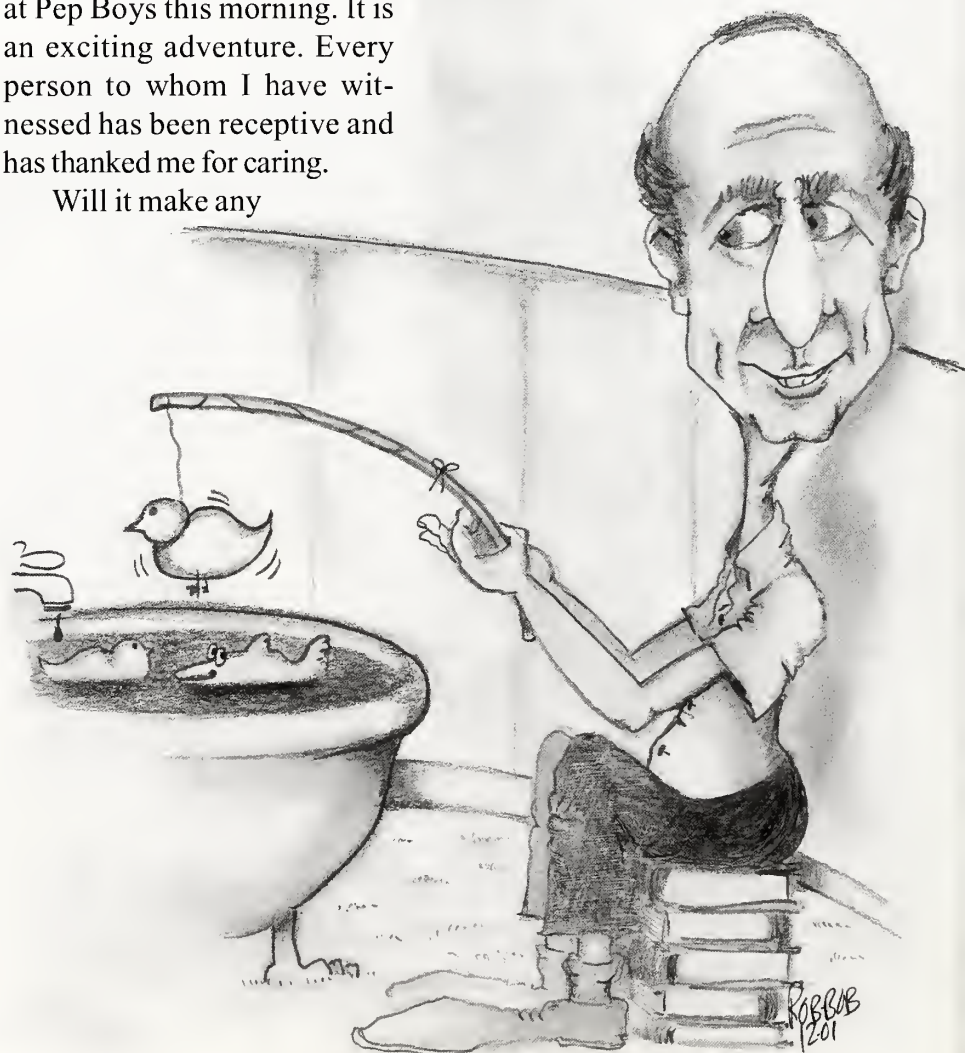
I have found people who need the Lord are everywhere: waitresses in a seafood restaurant at the beach,

a black father with his children in McDonalds, a paramedic responding to a call at my neighbor's house, and the clerk at Pep Boys this morning. It is an exciting adventure. Every person to whom I have witnessed has been receptive and has thanked me for caring.

Will it make any

difference if you witness? Let me answer that by sharing two true stories in *Crowns for the Wise*.

A young man visited Sunday school and signed a card indicating that he would like to have a visit. When the cards were turned in, the pastor asked the teacher if he had made the visit. He said that he hadn't had time. The boy came back a second Sunday and a third. Each time he requested a visit and each time the teacher offered the same excuse. The young man's name was Lee Harvey Oswald, the man believed to have shot President Kennedy. Obviously, Lee Harvey Oswald had needs—needs nobody took time to





meet. Could a visit have made a difference?

In contrast, back in the 1940s, Sam Jones was going out with some teenage friends. He told them that he wanted to stop at the Iris theatre to tell the popcorn boy that Jesus loves him. Soon after that night, the boy accepted Jesus as his Savior.

More than 50 years later, a friend of Randy Gunnip related the following experience. He and his wife flew from South America to attend the funeral of Dr. John Osteen, pastor of Lakewood Church. More than 9,000 people crowded into the church, including senators, congressmen and internationally known Christian leaders. Thousands more stood outside, where flags of the many countries where John Osteen had proclaimed the Gospel blew in the breeze. Through his pulpit ministry, missionary trips, television and radio, John Osteen had ministered to millions. Before the funeral service began, Randy's friend, referring to Daniel 12:3, whispered to his wife, "Think of all the stars John Osteen will have in his crown." His wife pointed across the aisle to a white-headed man and said, "That's your friend, Sam Martin." For every star that John Osteen has in his crown, Sam Martin will have that many and one more. John Osteen was the popcorn boy. What a tremendous difference one witness to a seemingly insignificant lad has made.

### **Is the Main Thing the Main Thing with You or Your Church?**

Jesus commissioned us to go into all the world. We hire missionaries to go in our place to the ends of the earth and we fail to go to our

"Jerusalem." The Great Commission had become the great omission. Ninety-five percent of church members never lead another person to Christ. Ninety-eight percent do not witness on a regular basis. We have become keepers of the aquarium instead of fishers of men. If we only fish in our churches, it is the equivalent of fishing in a bathtub, where there is only a plastic whale and a rubber duck. If we truly believe that there is life only in Christ and that Jesus is coming soon, we need to repent and to take steps to make our churches life-saving stations.

Here are some practical steps that will breathe new life into our fellowships:

1. Pray for a burden for the lost. Pray for boldness. Pray for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to make us effective witnesses. Pray that God will put someone in your path each day with whom you can share the good news.

2. Phone the American Tract Society (1-800-54-TRACT) for a catalogue, or visit their web site at [www.ATStracts.org](http://www.ATStracts.org), then order a supply of tracts. Most of us meet many people a day. What if you and nine others in your church witnessed to only one person a day and gave them a tract. Five days a week times 50 weeks a year would result in 2,500 people receiving a gospel message with your church's address and telephone number on it. The apostle Paul tells us that the abundance of the harvest is

determined by the amount of seed sown.

3. I would encourage each pastor to set aside one night a week and to take one or two church members with him to visit the unchurched and the unsaved.

4. Send for a copy of *Crowns for the Wise*. (\$10, including S&H) At my encouragement, Randy is going to prepare a teaching manual and overhead transparencies that can be used in training sessions, or in elective Sunday school classes. I am not a book salesman. I just want you to experience the fire this book has rekindled in me. Send your order to 4731 Metroon Drive, Charlotte, NC 28227

I am confident that if we will take these steps, the Advent Christian Church will experience the greatest harvest it has ever known. ✚



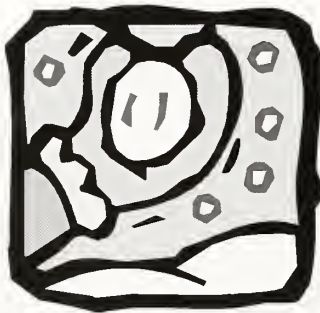
*Dr. Nelson Melvin has been an ordained minister of the Advent Christian Church since 1944. He is currently the editor of Testimony magazine and is a trainer in the FAITH evangelistic ministry.*

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**



When the letters are dropped into the columns below in the right order you will be able to read 2 Timothy 4:2 (NIV).

B	A	S	I	R	O	P	N	H	D	D	E	T	C	O	R
R	E	E	E	S	W	N	E	C	E	R	W	I	R	A	T
P	F	T	U	E	E	C	T	R	N	U	R	N	C	T	R
E	S	B	O	N	H	N	A	D	O	R	R	O	I	D	S
P	A	G	P	K	E	A	T	O	A	G	O	E	C	O	N
R	E	U	A	C	N	I	A	R	U	U	R	T	I	O	F
E	R	U	A	C	N	I	A	R	U	U	R	T	I	O	F



I C F R S I D L O C O A  
 F O I C E S K A T E S C  
 R D R A O K B T S F I S  
 A N E S M A R F N H P K  
 C U P L I T T A E D L S  
 S C L E S I O W T H A K  
 N N A M W O N S T E P I  
 O L C I G N U K I C F S  
 M I E F S C E D M E R W  
 E L D S N O T A N C A O  
 N E L I C I C L E G E M  
 S E K A L F W O N S T I

Find these winter words.

- snowman
- sled
- mittens
- cold
- coat
- ice skates
- scarf
- skis
- fireplace
- icicle
- snowflakes





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

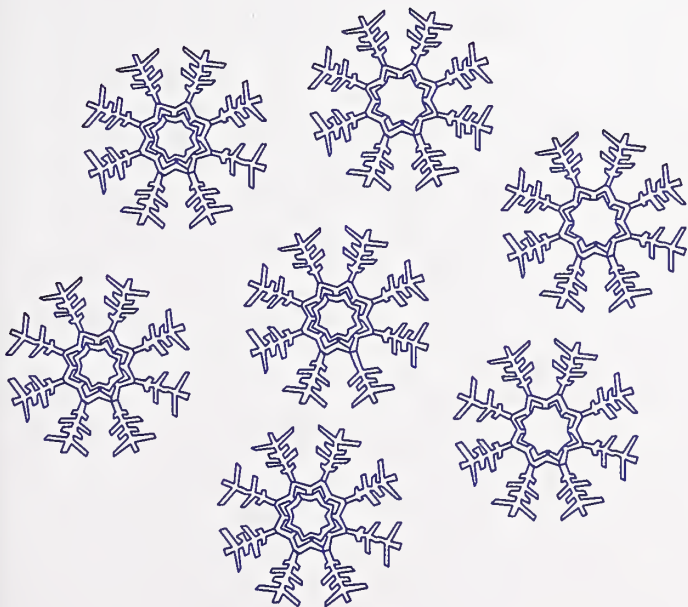
by Dawn Russell

Where are we? Cross off every other letter to find the country these missionaries are from.

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Earl & Martha Wright | PIBNEDGINA             |
| E.H. Ekperikpe       | PNAILGHECROIRA         |
| Desiré Ahola         | XCHRTOHAITPIYA         |
| Jeff & Rhonda Walsh  | APCHGIALHIPPIPJIDNLESS |
| Ernest Umanah        | LSIOTUMTAHPACFHRDIWCKA |



Find the two matching snowflakes.



Who am I? Read these clues and identify the prophet.

1. I was swallowed by a fish.
2. I was born before Jesus and told of His coming.
3. I lived with Eli when I was young and heard God call my name.
4. I was thrown in the lion's den.
5. I was taken away in a whirlwind.

- John the Baptist
- Samuel
- Jonah
- Elijah
- Daniel

*“Behold, I Come Quickly”*

*—Jesus*





JESUS SPOKE THESE WORDS several times in the Bible and was speaking of the *abruptness* of his return to earth. He said his coming would be like the springing of a trap (Luke 21:35), like a flash of lightning (Matthew 24:27), and like an interruption of business (Matthew 24:41-42). The recent destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City was something like a mini-view of Armageddon. At least thirty nations were represented there. Most workers were rescued; some perished.

Jesus spoke of his coming nearly 2000 years ago and Christians have looked for his return to earth ever since. When there were wars, famines, earthquakes and great persecutions they longed for Him to return. Had he not promised to come to deliver his people? Yes! However, Jesus had prepared them (and us) for the delay with these words: “the end is not yet” (Matthew 24:6, 25:19).

God has a sign-table. At the hour of Jesus’ coming, the world will be unbelieving like in Noah’s day and very wicked as in Lot’s day (Luke 17:16-28). Jesus said there would be wars, famines, earthquakes, false prophets, and great tribulation. These signs are in evidence today. Why doesn’t Jesus come and save us? Think of the famines today and the spread of fatal diseases. Wars are raging in Afghanistan and in various places. What about those martyred in Indonesia, the Sudan and in Columbia, South America? Persecution is everywhere. Why doesn’t Jesus come now?

Jesus said, “No man knows the date I return. I myself do not know and neither do the angels of heaven, but my Father knows” (Matthew 24:36). God has appointed the day for Jesus’ return (Acts 17:31). Jesus said, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every person.” Hasn’t the gospel been preached everywhere? Think of mis-

sion societies, publications, Trans World Radio, Far Fast Broadcasting Company, HCJB Quito, and other radio stations. Not to mention television and the internet—the whole world is covered by the net! The earth is being blanketed with the gospel of peace. Isn’t it time for Jesus to come?

Jesus wants to return. He longs to return. He hears the prayers of his people. He wants to be with his bride. Scripture reads, “Be patient brethren. The farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth—you too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:7-8). Jesus, like the farmer, is waiting for the Father to say, “Thrust in the sickle. Reap the earth” (Revelation 14:15)!

What is keeping Jesus from returning? Can it be that there are other prophecies to be fulfilled? Does God intend for us to literally reach the extremities of the earth with the gospel? That’s what his Word says: “This gospel of the kingdom shall (must) be preached in *all* the world for a witness unto *all* nations; and *then the end shall come*” (Matthew 24:14).

It’s dangerous to preach the gospel today. Think of the opposition, persecution, spiritual warfare and the sacrifices that have to be made. Let’s get the job done. Jesus said: “Pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest” (Matthew 9:38). “A little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:26-39). With John the revelator, let us say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen.” †

*Rev. Victor Osborne is a retired minister living in Toccoa, Georgia, with his wife Louise. He has pastored churches in Canada, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Hampshire, Georgia, Vermont, and Florida.*

because the word “God” is used? The Magna Carta; the Declaration of Independence, even President Bush’s 2002 state of the union address make frequent reference to God. How can these writings be welcome in a school that “has nothing to do with God”?

One might attempt to explain politics or history apart from God, but imagine trying to teach art! Why did Michelangelo paint that ceiling? Who is this “Messiah” Handel is singing about? And literature... is there any classic writing that is completely sanitized of God’s presence?

On the plus side..., there is a “God-shaped void” in all of us, even New York City high school students. If you think of life as a quiz, Jesus is the answer. He made this claim when he said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

I suspect a “God-shaped” void is gnawing at many students’ souls, even right now. Perhaps day after day of attending a place that “has nothing to do with God” has made them hunger for a place or a person who has something to do with God. I’ve heard there is a tremendous receptivity to the Gospel in many third-world countries, where God has never been known. Natives living in a land that “has nothing to do with God” are eager to hear the Answer to life’s big question.

Throughout 2002, the *Advent Christian Witness* will focus on world missions. Many great and eternal things have happened and are happening on this planet because Advent Christians are committed to giving the Answer to questioning souls. Because of our efforts there are fewer places today where it can be said, “this place has nothing to do with God.” This year, Advent Christians are sharing the Gospel in more than thirty different nations. Next year? Maybe even in a New York City high school! †



## For Pastors Only

Disillusionment. Depression. Moral failure. Rage. Like most people, pastors experience these hazards of life. Yet a pastor isn’t always free to share with his church his spiritual struggles. Where can he go for prayer support when trials and temptations threaten his ministry? At the National Pastors’ Conference held March 2001 at the Advent Christian Village, Dowling Park, Florida, Dr. Terry Tekyl shared the vision of a prayer center that would be developed to serve pastors, missionaries, and their families as special needs might arise. Advent Christian Village, in partnership with Advent Christian General Conference, is making this vision a reality.

Beginning January 1, a national prayer-line for pastors was made available. Manned by those experienced in the ministry, the toll-free, twenty-four-hour service provides a trusted prayer partner for full-time Christian workers. The line is supported by a cell phone and back-up voicemail. A high degree of sensitivity and confidentiality is assured, as the prayer partners are empathetic to the special needs of those in ministry. Callers may even choose to remain anonymous. There will be an opportunity to follow up on the prayer call if the caller gives permission to do so.

Any pastor, full-time Christian worker, or their immediate family is welcome to call day or night toll-free, 877-336-7729. †



# A Testimony of God's Faithfulness

By Pastora Edi Naelga

**W**HEN I WAS A CHILD I dreamed of becoming a nun so that I could serve the Lord. So in my early years I learned to lead the prayers for the dead. I was very religious, trying to please God with my life.

One day Satan came to destroy my family. My mother left my father who was very ill. My brother was six years old and I was in my second year of high school at a private school.

Then God came to rescue us both physically and spiritually. My aunt brought us to her place and introduced my father to the missionary nurses, Betty Allen and Luree Wotton, to receive medical treatment. By the grace of God my father was healed.



Since we were living at their place and the missionaries were conducting their Sunday services and home Bible studies, I was invited to attend. Inside the chapel, I didn't want to listen to the sermon by Betty Allen. Rather, the Lord brought my attention to the New Testament book that was beside me. I opened the book and my eyes caught sight of chapters and verses that looked similar to those I wrote during my religion time in school. I remembered my father talking to my aunt about the Bible. I concluded that perhaps this was the Bible.



Right after that encounter, I started reading the Bible. Margaret Helms helped me to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as my own Lord and Savior.

Both Miss Helms and Miss Wotton helped me to use my God-given ability to teach children. The Lord rekindled my desire to serve Him.

At present, I am doing pastoral work in Pasay City, Metro Manila. We have an extension work in Pasig, which is a two-hour ride from here.

Praise God, for his grace is sufficient to carry me through these twenty years of serving in his vineyard. I have nothing of my own to boast of, but I thank God always for your prayers because they became a pillar that helped me to be faithful and remain in his service. †

*Photos (clockwise from left): Edi Naelga joins the Maranatha Bible Church; laying on of hands at commissioning service; Edi with Pastor Pudy Sanniliana*



# Thanks, Luree!

By Hazel Blackstone

**T**HE E-MAIL WAS SHORT, but unsettling.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking and am leaning towards giving up my position in Charlotte."

I immediately shot back a response.

"Certainly you should give yourself more time to rest and recuperate. That decision can wait."

Luree is not a complainer. You don't hear about her pain, but with three surgeries inside of three months, pain is no stranger to her. Even in her resignation her principal concern was her inability to serve in her position effectively. She focused not on the pain she's endured these last months.

Five years ago Executive Director David Ross called to inform me of Luree's appointment as Coordinator of Women's Ministries. I was delighted. I knew her name, but didn't know her on a personal level. The last few years have changed that as our paths crossed regularly. Most of our shared time involved working on WHFMS issues. But we managed to create a few memories along the way.

One year Luree, Carolyn Schaeffner and I flew to Tustin, California for WHFMS Program Committee meetings with ladies in the Western Region. Luree was new in her position. Our planning went exceptionally well and we finished the project a day early. Consequently, the three of us had a day to kill before our scheduled departure flights. We decided to do some sightseeing. Carolyn, adept at driving and taking pictures simultaneously, commandeered the wheel of the rental compact car. I sat next to her with maps and area attractions pamphlets in my lap. Luree sat quietly in the back seat. We set our sights on Hollywood, the birthplace of Carolyn's mother (Barbara Schaeffner). At times Carolyn and I wondered how the former missionary put up with our nonsense as we drove from one Hollywood attraction to another. Film developed of that trip mostly revealed pictures of gates to movie star homes—I haven't a clue whose.

Another fond memory is General Conference 1999 in Arrowhead Springs, California. Luree and I felt pampered when escorted to our room—Elizabeth Taylor's honeymoon suite with her first husband.



Luree Wotton

The week of my 25th wedding anniversary was spent in luxury, but not with my husband.

Luree probably would cite memories of my problem flights or lost luggage. She was there to bail me out or to share her spare nightgown.

My most cherished memories of Luree, though, involve her love and devotion to her Savior. She led with a servant's heart. Her words of wisdom and encouragement were perfectly timed. Frequently cards, letters, books, magazines, or small inspirational gifts arrived in the mail. She talked about mentoring, but her life modeled it.

Luree, I thank God for the privilege of serving along beside you. You've been a quiet influence in my life. Thanks for sharing yourself at home and abroad for the cause of Advent Christian women. ✚





# *Why I'm Proud to Be an Advent Christian*

You may call it coincidence but I know it was God's plan for me to find my first job in Northern Maine. My wife Pam and I settled into the small village of Crouseville and fell in love with the people there. I regularly dropped our two daughters off at the only church in town for Sunday school because it seemed to be the right thing to do. In a short period of time, those relationships led to some serious late evening talks, and Pam and I gave our hearts to Jesus Christ. We were baptized and became members of the Crouseville Church and discovered that it was an Advent Christian Church.

I had lots of questions in those days. I didn't know much about the Bible or the Advent Christian denomination. As I read the Bible to learn about Jesus, I was impressed with how Advent Christian doctrinal distinctives were supported in the Scriptures. My pastor and friend, Rev. Floyd McIntyre, was very patient with me as we used God's infallible word to learn about the second coming of Jesus Christ, conditional immortality, sleep of the dead,

and other important aspects of the Christian faith.

I thank God for sending my family to northern Maine, where we found a people who loved us and led us to the Lord. I also thank God for the Advent Christian Church and its emphasis on developing a personal relationship with Christ. †



*Curt Beveridge is an electrical engineer with Central Maine Power Company. He and his wife Pam live in Sidney, Maine, and attend Blessed Hope Advent Christian Church in Waterville.*

.....

Advent Christian General Conference consists of more than 300 churches in North America, bound by the common hope of Christ's soon return. This hope fuels the Advent Christian desire to make disciples while there is yet time. Because of this "Great Commission effort," now there are more Advent Christian believers in other parts of the world than here in North America! For more information regarding who we are and what we believe, visit our website at [www.adventchristian.org](http://www.adventchristian.org), or call 800-676-0694.

# The Commission Continues...



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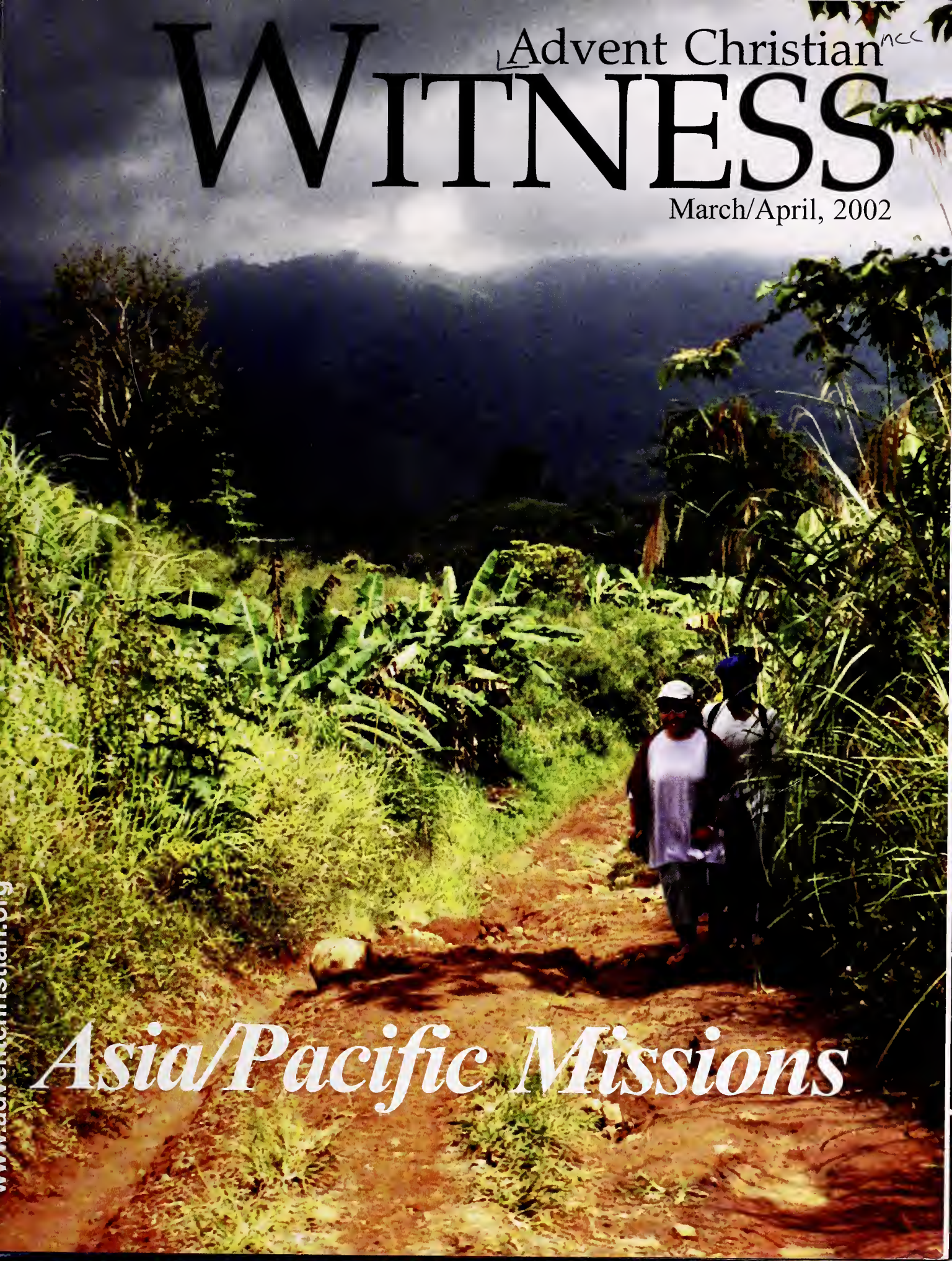
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# WITNESS

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*Asia/Pacific Missions*



# WITNESS

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# From the Editor

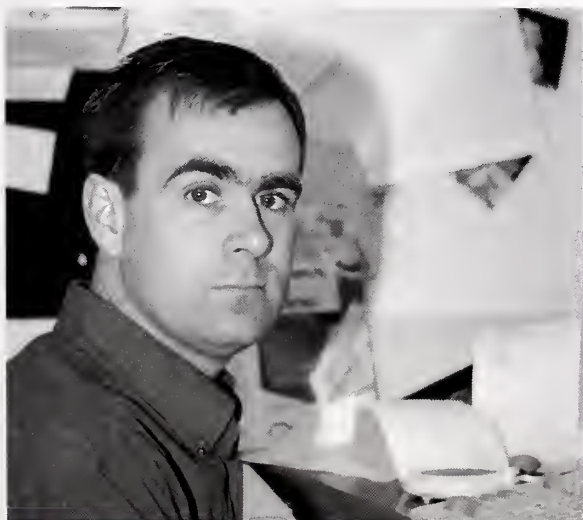
What can you buy for twenty-five cents? I remember buying a candy bar for a quarter, but those days are gone. Some pay phones will allow a local call for twenty-five cents, but they're an endangered species. Apart from those gumball machines outside the supermarket, there aren't many places where a quarter will buy anything. Unless you're in China.

In China, twenty-five pennies will buy one hour of a worker's day—if he's lucky. Working at least twelve hours, it will take him only about two days to earn an hour's minimum wage in the United States. Of course, we're talking about one of the fortunate ones. Some are paid far less than China's twenty-five cent minimum wage, and many Chinese laborers work in virtual concentration camps, earning nothing but their daily bread.

All enemies of the state—murderers, drug-dealers, Christians, rapists, etc.—are likely to be sentenced to years of “re-education through labor.” (For more about this, log on to [www.Loagai.org](http://www.Loagai.org), a website detailing China's extensive forced labor camps.) On the plus side, American consumers enjoy great savings due to China's low production costs.

Some argue that buying Chinese goods helps the Chinese workers: “It's twenty-five cents more than

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**On the Cover:** Farrah Mae Penpeña and Pastor Sonny Ekid seek shade during a hike from Libertad. Photo by K. Camille Nims.

# *Six Weeks on*



Photo by K. Camille Nims



# Mindanao

*By K. Camille Nims*

THE SIX WEEKS that I spent in the Philippines were some of the most unusual I have ever experienced. During my first full day there I attended a funeral, watched a mother pick lice from her daughter's hair, and noticed someone's footprints on a toilet seat. My experiences ranged from dreadful to delightful to dull, but, like all the other trips I've taken, I wouldn't trade any of it for the world.

## **Where Was I, When Was I There, and For How Long?**

I went to Cagayan de Oro, the Philippines, for six weeks in the winter of 2000. I had planned to be there for only three weeks, but shortly after I arrived, I realized there wouldn't be nearly enough time to complete my assignment so I changed my flight and extended my visa.

## **Why Did I Go?**

I have been an Advent Christian all my life and grew up hearing about Oro Bible College (OBC), but I had never seen a picture of it. And coming from the same church as Dave Vignali, who was a missionary in the Philippines for many years, I also grew up hearing about his experiences there.

In August 2000, I attended my region's family camp where Rev. George Teshera spoke about his job as Area Director for Asia/Pacific Missions. When he asked if anyone would be willing to go to the Philippines to do data entry for the OBC library to help them fulfill government accreditation requirements, I raised my

hand.

I thought it was rare that a short-term mission assignment would involve computer work, so God must have been speaking to me. I was a computer programmer for ten years and knew I could do what was needed. I love to travel and experience new cultures, even if they are uncomfortable or worse. I was curious to see Oro Bible College after hearing about it for so many years. And I was not encumbered by a job at that time. I was ready.

I spent the next few months praying and pestering Rev. Teshera with email about going to the Philippines. In October, he put me in touch with Jeff and Penny Vann, the current missionaries in the Philippines. Jeff told me it would be best if I came right away because early November was the start of a new semester, an ideal time to train the students in general computer use. Also, Penny would be returning from a trip to the United States at that time and would be able to meet me in Manila. So I went.

## **What Did I Do There?**

Oro Bible College is attempting to fulfill the Philippine government's new requirements for accreditation. My main goal at OBC was to computerize the library's card catalog, helping the college meet one of those requirements.

After giving me some time to recover from jetlag, Jeff showed me the library, the card catalog, the computer, some notes on the government requirements, and a list of the classes offered at the college. I started compiling all the information and designing a database.



*Kids at Libertad. Photo by K. Camille Nims*

When the database was completed, I built a simple button interface to make it easy for everyone to use and then taught one of the students how to enter the data from the card catalogs into the database. Students and faculty can now use the database to search for any book in the library by title, author, course number, or subject.

In addition, I did a variety of other things such as writing “how-to” documents for the database, creating templates making it easy to print new book cards using the computer, and installing virus protection software. One of my more rewarding tasks was teaching basic computer skills to the students. Unfortunately, I only managed to cover the bare minimum. They really need hands-on practice to get comfortable with the computer, but there is only one computer for them to use at the school.

Aside from the work I did at the college, the Vanns took me to several of the villages and churches around Cagayan de Oro. Some of the churches were nearby; others were up in the mountains, accessible only on foot. Many of my most cherished memories of the Philippines grew out of these visits.

## **How Did God Provide?**

The best part of my trip, by far, was experiencing God’s provision. He provided in ways both great and small, all of which were significant to me.

## **God Provided Money**

Money was an issue when deciding whether or not to go to the Philippines. Having been unemployed for a while, I didn’t have the cash on hand for the airfare. And since the Vanns wanted me to come right away, I didn’t have time to do any fund-raising. I decided to write a letter to the World Mission Committee at my church asking for money from our short-term mission fund. Incredibly, within days of my sending the letter, I had the money for the airfare. Best of all, the money came from a variety of unexpected sources, including an anonymous donor, so I didn’t deplete the mission fund. I remain deeply grateful and in awe of how God threw the money together so quickly.



## God Provided Packing Wisdom

I had no idea what I would need for three weeks in the Philippines, yet I ended up having almost exactly what I needed in every situation, even though I doubled the duration of my visit. And I didn't bring too much; almost every item I brought I used. This may not sound like a big deal, but it was remarkable to me. Related to this is the amount of cash I brought. I don't usually travel with large amounts of cash; I prefer to use credit cards, ATMs, or possibly traveler's checks overseas. Fortunately, for some reason, I brought plenty of cash on this trip. No bank in Cagayan de Oro would cash a traveler's check or allow me to draw from a credit or debit card, and none of the ATMs accepted any of my credit cards. But the banks would gladly change U.S. dollars into Philippine pesos. Again, God provided what I needed.

## God Provided Health

Coming from a sterilized, shrink-wrapped country like the United States, my body is pretty susceptible to random parasites and diseases found in other parts of the world. There were some days when my stomach wasn't quite right. My energy levels ebbed and flowed like the tide, and my feet were laughably swollen the entire time. But none of these ailments prevented me from accomplishing my mission.

## My Most Unforgettable Experience of God's Provision

Of all the ways that God provided, I treasure most an experience I had when visiting a local elementary school. Daisy Bactol, a student at OBC, invited me to see the school she ran. She told me it would be fun for the kids to see an American. I was reluctant, but since I only envisioned a sort of "show-and-tell" where I would simply wave to all the kids, I agreed.

Then next day Daisy arrived to accompany me to the school. On the way she asked if I had anything to "share" with the kids. I thought she meant gifts, like candy, but she clarified by saying it would be nice if I could sing a song. A red flag went up in my mind. I don't speak in public let alone sing. I gulped and nodded as I wracked my brain to come up with all the words to any song.

When we arrived at the school another red flag went up. There were parents milling about and a big sign saying "Welcome, Sister Camille!" Daisy informed me that she put together a "program" for my visit. Each class had prepared a little song and dance to perform for me. This was becoming much more than a show-and-tell visit.

When we all gathered inside, and the kids began performing for me, Daisy gave me the final blow. She asked me to write down information about myself so she would know how to introduce me. "Introduce me?" I asked, astonished. There were about a hundred kids and their parents in the audience.

"Yes, could you get up and say a few things? Maybe give your testimony or tell some stories from the Bible?" Daisy asked.

I was dumbfounded but couldn't refuse now. I asked if the kids spoke English. Daisy said, "Not really, but their parents do, and many of them aren't Christians. They just bring their kids to this Christian school because it's a good school." I realized it was an opportunity to witness. And I realized how clever God was, bringing me here to witness without me knowing about it.

Jeff told me later that he is always expected to speak at places he visits. I guess they don't realize I'm just a computer programmer, not a "missionary." I had no idea what I could say to these kids or their parents that would be meaningful.

I was so unprepared I hadn't even brought my Bible, so I asked Daisy to bring me one. One thing I had been studying was how to know God's will. I had a few key Bible verses that I knew would be helpful in talking about this, but I couldn't, for the life of me, remember where they were. As I flipped through the Bible, searching in vain while also trying to look appreciative of the kids and their performances, I realized I was completely unable to do what was being asked of me. I finally started praying, "God, you brought me here. You wanted me to trust you. Now, I have to. I have no idea what I'm doing. If you have something for me to say, you better give it to me quickly! I'm running out of time. And please take away this terror."

After admitting my helplessness, I remembered one of the verses I wanted was in Jeremiah. As I turned to Jeremiah my borrowed Bible flopped open to a page where the very passage I was looking for was high-

lighted. I stared at the page stunned. I had never had such a quick and obvious answer to a desperate prayer. Then I remembered the other verse was in Romans. The same thing happened. I turned to Romans, and the Bible flopped open to a page where my verse was highlighted. I will never forget the verses now: Jeremiah 29:11-13 and Romans 12:2.

At this point, the kids finished their songs and dances, Daisy introduced me, and I got up to speak. Expecting to be twitchy and nervous like I usually am when speaking in public, I was amazed by the peace I felt instead. As the kids chatted away, I noticed the parents were listening intently. I have no idea what I

said exactly. I had the sensation that God was speaking, and I was just sitting back, amused. I spoke for about ten minutes, and afterwards sang not one, but two songs.

God provided peace and guidance in a situation that was terrifying for me. I never would have agreed to speak at the school if I had known what Daisy wanted. God knew that and chose not to let me know until it was too late. I couldn't back out, and I had to trust him. He wanted me to learn just how trustworthy he is, not to mention how tricky he can be when dealing with a fearful and stubborn person like me.

## What Did I Learn?

My trip was uncomfortable at times. I had to speak in front of a school full of squirmy elementary children. While visiting one of the villages I had to get up in the middle of the night and put on a raincoat to keep the leaky roof from dripping on my back. I had to sleep with earplugs to muffle the sounds of dog fights and roosters crowing. I had to figure out how to ignore all the honks and stares caused by my blond hair in a sea of black hair and dark faces. I had to kill the largest and fastest cockroach I've ever seen!

But the comfort I found in how God revealed himself to me outweighs all of these uncomfortable experiences and more. God treated me to a glimpse of the incredible depth of his love for his children, his creativity, his faithfulness, his provision, his grace, his peace, and his presence, even in far-away, unfamiliar, uncomfortable places. And I learned how God can use a computer programmer to do his work in unexpected ways. ✝



*K. Camille Nims attends the Seattle Advent Christian Church. She spent six weeks in the Philippines working at Oro Bible College.*



(editorial cont.)

they'd have if we didn't buy their products." Many also believe that the corrupting influence of the American dollar will eventually corrode China's Communist base. The theory is the more capital that finds its way into China, the more capitalistic China becomes.

I'm not buying it, and I'm not buying anything else made in China. My family boycotts their goods. Before my kids think about buying something, they look at where it was made. Here's a challenge: go to Wal-Mart and try to find a toy that's not made in China. For that matter, try to find a lamp or a spatula or a pair of sneakers.

This issue of the Advent Christian Witness features our ministries in the Asian/Pacific part of our world. Sadly, we can't share anything about what could be our largest field. Advent Christians founded an

extensive work in China more than one hundred years ago. Hundreds of Chinese called themselves Advent Christian. Decades of unrest culminating in the Communist takeover leave the present Advent Christian work shrouded in mystery. Only God knows how many Chinese are believers today as a result of our missionaries' efforts a century ago. We do have contacts in China today, but printing a name or photo could give them a new career in some Wal-Mart manufacturing center, a.k.a. a re-education labor camp.

I really don't know if boycotting China is the right thing to do. I do know that one day I'll be standing before the Throne of Judgment, right next to many of my Chinese brothers and sisters. On that Day I don't want to be wearing shoes they made at a slave labor camp... even if they only cost me twenty-five cents. †

## acpub@adventchristian.org — emails to the editor:

Dear Editor:

I must reply to your comments in the most recent *Witness* where you state that you "pity" public school teachers who must try to explain a world without God.

As a Christian, fourth-generation Adventist, and public school educator, I have been troubled by the underlying tone of recent articles in our magazine and materials that seem to imply that Christians should not support public education. I would guess that most of us owe our gratitude to this system.

Each day thousands of Christian teachers and students merge with non-Christians to study, grow, learn, and, for the Christian, witness. Opportunities are opened every day for sharing the faith. Instead of pitying these neighbors, we should be praying for their strength and steadfastness.

Weekly, my sixteen-year-old daughter and her friends gather for Bible study and singing prior to the opening of their public high school. Just yesterday, she came home thrilled because a young man she barely knew stopped her in the hall and asked her to pray for his relative who was ill. He sought the faith of a fellow student in time of need.

As a former legislator and now state-education policy maker, I will always uphold the right of any parent to choose the type of educational setting best for their child, be it public, parochial, private, or home-schooling. However, I will never join with proponents who suggest that all Christian families should exodus the public school system!

While the quality of some schools may be questioned, others are superior; and, no doubt, if more qualified and caring teachers were available, those classrooms would flourish as well. We Christians in the public school system do not need your pity. We covet your prayers and support as we follow the charge to "go into the world and teach."

Sincerely,  
Molly Mitchell Spearman  
Saluda, S.C.

*Molly Spearman is a former public school teacher, principal, state legislator, and currently Deputy Superintendent of Education for Governmental Affairs, South Carolina Department of Education.*

*Advent Christian Missions are divided into four distinct geographical locations: Asia/Pacific; Africa/Europe; Latin America; and Urban & Ethnic ministries in North America. Currently, Asia/Pacific is the only area where North Americans are serving as full-time missionaries. Floyd and Musa Powers have served as missionaries to Japan for more than fifty years. Jeff and Rhonda Walsh interrupted their seminary work to become interim missionaries to the Philippines during Jeff and Penny Vann's year of furlough. Earl and Martha Wright assumed leadership of the Advent Christian mission in India four years ago. By responding to a simple questionnaire each of these couples gives us a glimpse at ....*

## ***Foreign Missions: what it's really like.***

**1. While on the field, what do you miss the most about America?**

Floyd Powers: Freeways and reasonable highway tolls. On Sundays we visit churches within a 60-mile radius. Tolls are from \$20 to \$30.

Musa Powers: Singing of hymns, gospel songs in worship, prayer and other meetings.

Walshes: Family, the four seasons.

Wrights: Family and friends, and, of course, a Big Mac would not be remiss.

**2. Name the biggest cultural shock for you when you first arrived at your mission.**

FP: When offered a drink of milk I couldn't remember the most basic words like "please" or "thank you" even though I had tried to memorize them.

MP: The toilets, baths.

J/RW: Everyone stares at us, even through the windows of our house and car. Though it still happens we are more used to it now.

E/MW: The great number of poor people, poverty. Many live under tarps by the side of the roads or in small huts. However there is a growing middle class and much construction is taking place.

**3. How has the Lord prepared you for the ministry you're involved with now?**

FP: By giving me in the past many experiences that required patience.

MP: Frequent moves, making new friends made the last place easy to enter and adjust. Having served in many churches, we can now visit and encourage them on Sundays.

J/RW: We have had high quality undergraduate education, and Jeff has been blessed to be able to attend world-class seminaries. We both have the gift of teaching. We enjoy cross-cultural experience. Jeff's parents demonstrated a dedication to Christian ministry. Rhonda's diverse experiences growing up have enabled her to adapt.

E/MW: Thirty-six years of pastoral ministry. We also had been living some distance from our children and grandchildren for several years. We lived in Florida (probably in training for the heat of India) for four years; the adjustment to the heat was more tolerable because of that. It was like jumping from the frying pan into the fire!



**4. How has mission work changed you spiritually? politically? socially?**

FP: Spiritually - I see more clearly that God is a God of grace.

Politically - I am dense about politics. It's a conundrum to me.

Socially- I want to give people more "turf" in which to maneuver.

MP: Spiritually - more and more reliant on divine direction in making decisions, God loves me!

Haven't had a desire to be come politically involved in local or governmental issues, but try to keep informed.

Socially - I give consideration to those struggling with right and wrong, accept those different from me.

RW: Spiritually - God has opened my eyes to see that He is the God of people all over the world. This place is so different from home. The people are so different from Americans. Yet, the God they worship is the same as the One we worship in the States. Seeing news from America in a foreign country and receiving news from a different perspective has made me understand things a little differently than I otherwise would have.

JW: More than ever before I've had to rely on the Lord to guide me & help me because I have faced many situations in which I had no idea what to do. Politically - I have come to see how the church, in many parts of the world like the Philippines, is such an integrated part of society. Religion is not compartmentalized here like it is in America.

E/MW: Spiritually, we have become more dependent on God. Politically, we have a broader outlook and realize the governments of other countries have many good points. The news we receive has a different viewpoint that forces us to re-evaluate our own political outlooks. Socially, we feel somewhat isolated due to language differences, but we are treated like royalty wherever we go.

**5. What is the biggest frustration of your missionary work?**

FP: The Japanese language. We still need dictionaries when almost any communication comes to us in Japanese if it's written.

MP: Biggest frustration - Continually confronting new words, reading and writing the Japanese language.

J/RW: Our biggest frustration is not being able to communicate well with the people here. The language barrier.

E/MW: Difficulty in communicating due to language problems. We struggle with Tamil and will probably never be free from the use of interpreters.

**6. What have Advent Christians in America done to encourage you during your assignment?**

FP: Some have come to Japan to see us and meet Christians here. That is a great encouragement.

MP: Through cards, letters, e-mail, keeping contact and reminding us that they pray for us.

J/RW: We have received countless encouraging e-mail messages, letters, cards, packages, and even some phone calls. It is very encouraging to know that people go to such effort to pray and encourage us. Sometimes we haven't been able to respond to everyone's messages and letters, but each one is cherished deeply.

E/MW: We have received many letters, cards, emails, boxes of materials, and care packages (food). Most of all, the assurances of prayers said on our behalf and on the behalf of the work in India. We feel the power of your prayers.

**7. Give one example of a joyful experience you've had since becoming a missionary.**

FP: Back in the 60s God gave me the privilege of leading to Christ four high school girls and baptizing them at the same time in a small rural Japanese church. One died leaving two small boys but a tremendous testimony. She wrote down her feelings as she faced death.

MP: After a furlough, we needed to rent a house in an area where we did not know anyone. The church we attended was in the next town and one member was a realtor. A local broker showed us a house. We were not employees of a reliable company; furthermore we were foreigners, so could have been denied the rent. We mentioned that Mr. Furusawa had agreed to be our guarantor if we needed one. At that the broker said, "No problem, you can rent the house." Thank God for friends!

J/RW: We have seen how eagerly and enthusiastically the people here have accepted us as part of their "family." The OBC students are especially wonderful when it comes to our children. We praise God that, though we miss our natural families in America very much, he has provided us with a very supportive and loving extended family here.

E/MW: We worshipped at a church in one of the poorest slum areas Palm Sunday. They had a procession through their neighborhood carrying palm crosses and singing God's praises. The worship service was wall-to-wall people and an overflow crowd. To see the joy on their faces and the praise in their hearts was an uplifting experience.

**8. How are the people you're with different from Americans?**

FP: Japanese do not find it easy to share their successes or failures even among friends.

MP: Americans are free and desire to change jobs or place of residence, but Japanese prefer/desire the security of lifetime employment and not changing residence.

J/RW: There are too many differences to relate in detail. But one outstanding difference is that Filipinos encourage interdependency while Americans encourage independence. This is especially seen in the way we raise children. Filipinos place high value on relationships, more so than independence. For example, it is not uncommon here for a Filipino to be married and still live with his father and mother. In America we would likely consider him to be lazy and not fitting into society well. No such stigma here.

E/MW: They think differently. Many believe if you are born in a Christian home you are a Christian. They expect to have to pay extra for all services—oiling the wheels of official government, and many private sector areas. It's hard to keep this thinking out of the church. However, in most important areas, we are alike. They want to improve their lives, have better lives for their children, live in peace, and be able to practice their religion without fear.



**9. What is the first thing you want to do when you return to the U.S.?**

FP: Go visit the grave of a dear friend who died in January.

MP: Visit with friends in person or on the phone.

**10. Share one Biblical story/person that has become especially meaningful for you since entering the mission field.**

FP: I have come to appreciate the story of Jesus and the thief on the cross.

MP: The Lord said to Abram, "Leave... and go to the place I will show you. I will bless you... You will be a blessing." So Abram left as the Lord had told him" (Genesis 12:1-4). Stepping into the unknown with God's promise.

RW: Take a hot bath and then a long walk in the cool, clean country air with no one staring at me.  
JW: Take a hot shower, and then go trout fishing.

JW: Daniel's life has become for me a great model of integrity, spirituality, and godly leadership. I have become more and more impressed with Daniel's faith and trust in God and his willingness to follow God no matter what the cost.

E/MW: Visit our children and grandchildren. Then share with people during deputation the joys and sorrows of the people here.

EW: Gen. 15 tells of God's promise to Abraham that he would have offspring as numerous as the stars. V. 6, "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." Then God promises Abram the land in which he lived. He doubted God and asked, "How can I know that I will gain possession of it?" It shows how fickle we human beings can be.

MW: I think often of the widow's mite. So many of our churches have widows and they do have a very difficult life here. I have never been in a service where these women have not contributed their mite to the collection. There are many who could give more here, as there are in America, but the widows give out of their need and they have a joyful expression on their faces when they place their offering into the offering bag.



*Rev. Floyd and Musa Powers*



*Rhonda, Isaac, Jeff and Benjamin Walsh*



*Rev. Earl and Martha Walsh*

# George Teshera:



*Supervising field staff and national workers is a daunting task. Advent Christian General Conference employs Area Directors, charged with the responsibility of overcoming the hurdles of distance, language and culture. For the past eight years Rev. George Teshera has overseen Advent Christian missions in the Asia/Pacific Area—an area that spans nine time-zones and more than a quarter of the globe's surface. Having announced his retirement this summer, Rev. Teshera shares with us his thoughts regarding world missions.*

## ***How did you become the Asia/Pacific Area Director?***

After retiring from the pastorate in 1990, Advent Christian World Missions Director Rev. Harold Patterson asked me to take several trips to the Philippines for surveying and counseling. Then in 1994, he invited leaders from all of the Asia/Pacific fields to the Philippines for a strategy conference, which I chaired. Later, I was asked to become the Area Director for the Asia/Pacific fields. My agreed-upon term of commitment was two years. At the end of

August 2002, this will have stretched into eight years. The position of Asia/Pacific Area Director has not been an easy one to fill as it requires pastoral experience, a missions heart, and a teaching spirit as well as a global outlook. It's a demanding task covering seven countries and languages, to say nothing of cultural differences in all seven countries. It is also a matter of dealing with differing monetary systems that fluctuate daily.

## ***What previous experiences did you have that prepared you for this work?***

While a student at New England School of Theology, Bev and I attended a mission conference at the renowned Park Street Church in Boston where Dr. Oswald Smith was speaking. He gave this invitation: "Would you be willing to go to the mission field if God should call you?" I was a new Christian, barely a year old. As far as I was concerned, there was only one answer: "Yes." While I didn't really expect to go to the mission field, I never forgot my commitment to God.

While I was pastoring the Santa Cruz Advent Christian Church in California, missionary David Osborne came home from Japan. Standing on the steps of the Santa Cruz Church he asked, "Why aren't you on the mission field?" My reply was, "Whenever God wants me to go, I'm ready to go."

Soon, Beverly, our two young sons, and I set sail for the Philippines. Our daughter was born a few months after our arrival. Once there, we were privileged to assist organizing the Philippine Conference, in planting the Maranatha Bible Church, and in founding the Oro Bible College, which I directed for seven years.

Returning to the United States after sixteen years, I was invited to be on the International Missions Advisory Committee. Later, I served as chairman of the IMAC until Harold asked me to assume the duties of Asia/Pacific Area Director.



# *Asia/Pacific's Leading Man*

## *Share some of the people who made an impact on your ministry.*

Until the age of 25, I very seldom attended any church. It was in the Bellingham Advent Christian Church, under the leadership of Pastor Joe Tom Tate, that I heard the actual message of salvation. It was preached in such a way that it touched my heart deeply, convinced me of my need and desire for the Savior, and changed my life completely. I attended the Advent Christian Church with the lovely Beverly Ehle, whom I later married, and who has walked beside me throughout all of our ministry together. We have two sons, a daughter, and their spouses, as well as five grandchildren.

In my early years as a Christian three men greatly influenced my life: Rev. Joe Tom Tate—my Pastor; Dr. Alvin Lobb—my encourager; and Dr. Carlyle Roberts—a man who walked close to the Spirit of the Lord. There were many others, but these three stand out as really molding and shaping my life.

## *What is your most memorable experience as Area Director?*

God has blessed me with many privileges, and perhaps too many to be able to label any as the “most memorable.” It could be when I first went to China and spent time with the son of David Yang. Shortly after my conversion, I had heard the remarkable story of David and had begun praying for him regularly at that time, with his picture displayed on my desk. Or, it could have been when sitting in the Narita, Japan airport with no evident signs of being a Christian (such as a Bible visible) and having a young Chinese student approach me to ask, “You are a Christian, aren’t you? May I talk

with you?” Or, perhaps it was at a house cleansing in Malaysia when the Spirit of the Lord revealed an object of heathen worship. Or, perhaps it was when God, by his Spirit, brought the divided India Advent Christian Conference back together after a bitter separation that divided conferences, churches, and even families. What seemed to be an impossibility became a reality under the guidance of God through his Spirit.

## *What significant changes do you envision in the near future for the Asia/Pacific Area?*

The entire world is shrinking in size as well as becoming very young. Therefore, we will see changes in methods of communication, training, and in doing church work. We must enter into the cyberoptic world if we are to survive. The world is already there. We must catch up. It also means that we have to be progressively proactive to the younger generation. That’s where the action will be in the future. †



*George Teshera, serving as director of Oro Bible College in 1971.*

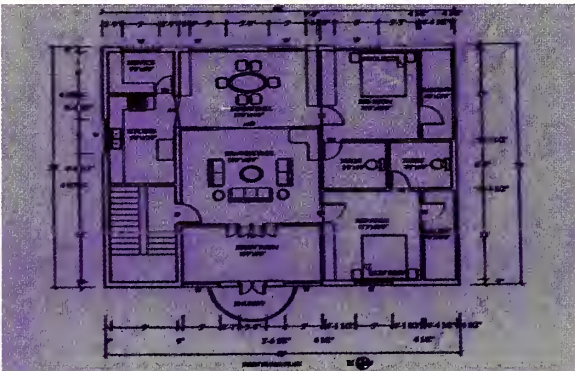
# The Commission Continues...



*Pictured above are Advent Christians from the Asia/Pacific Area, starting at left with the Philippines, Japan, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, India, and Malaysia.*

## Office Building in India

Offices for the President of the Conference, a central meeting and training location with housing for pastors who travel great distances to participate and a library to facilitate this training are critical to the continued development of our ministry in India. We need \$27,000 to build the ground floor and first floor each. Contact the World Missions Office, 1-800-676-0694, for more information on providing funds to support this key capital need in order to continue fulfilling the Great Commission on our international fields!



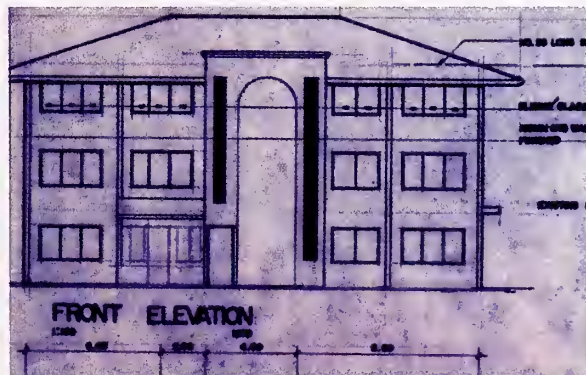


# Mission's Capital Fund Drive



## Oro Bible College in the Philippines

Oro Bible College has been a key component in the growth of our international ministry in the Philippines; over 90% of our pastors have attended Oro Bible College. We are counting on more new graduates to plant new churches, and attendance has greatly increased over the past two years. As we move towards CHED accreditation (which will bring in more students) finishing the boy's dorm, classrooms and faculty housing are a must. We need \$16,000 to complete this third story project. Contact the World Missions Office, 1-800-676-0694, for more information on providing funds to support this key capital need in order to continue fulfilling the Great Commission on our international fields!







*A Harvest  
of Grace*

*in the  
Shadow of a  
Cross*

*By Rev. Clayton  
Blackstone*





God is teaching you how to die.”

The comment by one with whom I engage in regular spiritual conversation hit me broadside. When we talk, I look for encouragement. Perhaps a nugget that enables me to steer clear of the back eddies that threaten to pull me under or a word from the Lord that helps me discern his workings in my life. “God is teaching you how to die” wasn’t what I wanted to hear that day or any day.

I thought he was suggesting that God was preparing me to die *die*. To ready myself for the undertaker. To pick out my burying suit. Perhaps he was. But after rereading the account of the last week of Jesus’ life, I suspect he was saying something more.

The Master had been trying to prepare his disciples for the death he anticipated soon. He asked them who people thought he was. His friend, Peter, reeled off a great answer: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” I imagine Peter’s chest swelled when Jesus said that God had inspired that answer. Mine would have.

Later, when Jesus began to explain that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things and be killed, Peter took him aside to rebuke him. That’s when Jesus said what my friend wanted me to understand: “The one who tries to save his life loses it but the one who loses his life for [Jesus’] sake will find it” (Matt. 16:13-25).

The other day, author John Eldredge provided me with a fresh charge of counselor’s dynamite: “The most dangerous man on earth,” he wrote, “is the man who

has reckoned with his own death. All men die; but few men ever really live” (*Wild at Heart*, p. 169).

Trapped in the old story of saving our skin, we diminish our effectiveness as agents of grace because grace always grows and bears fruit in the shadow of a cross. The paradox unnerves us—at least it unnerves me because I don’t want to die.

Two thousand years have dulled the edge of the cross on which Jesus fleshed out his theology of living and dying. We speak of this barbaric event without wince or shutter because our sense of civility blunts its cruelty. The Gospel writers add almost nothing to our understanding because they spent little time developing the physical pain and suffering side of things. By resisting the temptation to play on its shock value, they revered it highly by teaching it modestly. Dale Bruner observes that “To play upon the pain debases. The cross can handle itself” (*Matthew: A Commentary*, p. 1040).

So following their lead while attempting to make an unfamiliar form of execution familiar, here’s the crucifixion in a nutshell. The condemned man walked to the site of the execution between four soldiers. He carried the crossbeam to which he would be nailed and wore, hanging from his neck, the charge for

which he was being executed. They never took a shortcut, always walking the longest distance between two points so as many people as possible could see the sight and take warning.

Sometimes the soldiers nailed the criminal to the beam. Sometimes they tied him. But always, the position made breathing difficult. The victim pulled with his arms and pushed with his legs to keep his chest cavity open for breathing. The beatings, the loss of blood and the shock of the pain produced an intense agony that might go on for days. Breaking the legs hastened death.

Roman law reserved this fate for the worst of criminals and the lowest classes of people. No Roman citizen could die by crucifixion except by the direct order of Caesar. According to Jewish Law, people who died like this were “cursed by God” (Deut. 21:23).

The events on the night of his betrayal prevented Jesus from catching even a quick nap. He staggered under the weight of the beam the soldiers forced him to carry. That’s when he met Simon from Cyrene, North Africa, a Passover pilgrim. Perhaps it had taken a lifetime to save enough money to visit Jerusalem during the holy feast. Now, the North African stood with hundreds watch-

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ing the spectacle unfold. I doubt he knew more than a few fragments of local gossip about the prisoner who struggled under the burden. Still he watched in rapt attention.

As fate would have it—if you believe in fate—the soldiers singled him out to carry the cross for Jesus. The shame of the crossbearer now fell on him, soiling the vacation of a lifetime. Still, he carried it all the way to Skull Hill.

I wonder if he stayed to watch. If he caught desperation in the demanding cry of Jesus: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”. I wonder if he waited around till the end.

The soldiers drove nails through his wrists and feet into the

wood. According to tradition, victims were given drugged wine prepared as an act of mercy by older women in the city. Perhaps the soldiers offered this drink to Jesus to dull his pain. Others have suggested that the bitter substance added to the wine made it undrinkable—a sort of warped teasing. But whether offered as an act of kindness or spite, Jesus refused anything but a taste. In an act of determined obedience, he resisted any substance that would cause him to do or say anything that would

compromise his life of total obedience to the Father’s will (Bruner, 1039).

The King of the Jews, or so the sign announced, was dying between a couple of terrorists. The one people called a “friend of sinners” hung between two of them.

The religious leaders and others caught up in the spectacle taunted him. “Show us your stuff, you who bragged about destroying the Temple and rebuilding it in three days.”

They had a great time poking fun. “He saved others but he can’t

**“The one who tries to save his life loses it, but the one who loses his life for my sake will find it.”**



.....

*When “Die”  
Doesn’t Mean  
**Die** Die:*

*A personal wrestling match with the  
call of Jesus*



save himself. Take yourself off the cross. Come down. Then we will believe you.” “Since he trusts in God, it’s in God’s hands now. Let God rescue him if he desires.”

To add insult to injury, the sinner on each side picked up the taunt (Matt. 27:39-44). But they didn’t know what Jesus knew—that “the one who tries to save his life loses it, but the one who loses his life for my sake will find it.” Grace always grows and bears fruit in the shadow of a cross.

On the worst day of their lives, grace began to bud in the lives of two men who spent that day in the shadow of Jesus’ cross.

Mark, one of the Gospel storytellers, clues us in to the rest of the Simon of Cyrene story. He tells us that Simon was the father of

Alexander and Rufus and writes as if the folks in Rome knew the three as followers of Jesus (Mark 15:21. See also Romans 16:13). Something the Jerusalem visitor saw or felt or experienced that day changed his life forever. He signed on as a traveling companion of the one who refused to write himself into the “saving my own skin” story.

Another less honorable than the North African pilgrim drank from the cup of grace that day on Skull Hill. The winsome grace Jesus died living turned the taunting of one of the terrorists into a confession of faith. “We’re getting what we deserve,” he told his buddy. “This man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:41). Then he turned to Jesus. “Remember me

when you come in to your kingdom.”

And Jesus said, “I tell you this with absolute certainty, on the day I come into my kingdom you shall be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:42-43).

Jesus graced the terrorist with forgiveness. The one who had done nothing wrong promised the one who deserved to die that they would be together on the day his kingdom came. The terrorist died with what he needed most—forgiving grace laced with hope.

“Try to hang on to your life and you lose it. Lose it for Jesus’ sake and you find it.” If Simon the Cyrene and the forgiven terrorist could speak, they would tell us that grace always grows and bears fruit in the shadow of a cross. †

.....

**T**heory seldom stretches me in the classroom. It’s the practical application that kills me.

In the safety of my spiritual counselor’s office, the suggestion that God was preparing me to die caught my attention but failed at that moment to produce more than a chuckle. After all, I’ve got another fifteen years until retirement and at least ten as a greeter for Wal-Mart before my burying suit requires dry-cleaning for the final time. Two thirty-something’s funerals within seven days followed the life-altering comment, causing me to rethink my version of the future. I almost drew up my will.

Now weeks of germinating theory turn practical as I reflect on this story of Jesus. How do his words translate into practical application if my spiritual guide meant more than die *die*? If Jesus doesn’t ask me to exercise the spiritual gift of martyrdom, what does losing my life look like? And who has, on the worst day imaginable, experienced grace ripening on the vine in the shadow of my cross? If I didn’t want to hear about God teaching me how to die that day, I really didn’t want to hear about it during the weeks I wrestled with



times when Jesus asks me to die but not die *die*.

I realized early in the process that to die in this context means different things to different people. For instance, even though friends and family think I'm tight with

***For some of my friends, a call to a place where they didn't want to live has meant a kind of dying...***

money, I like to be generous, even with limited resources, when given the opportunity. While some might struggle with the Spirit-inspired urge to give, it's not much of a battle for me. Thanks to a mother's example of sacrifice and a dad's generosity (greater than I realized in my youth), I usually experience a degree of ease when giving time, emotional energy or financial resources to others.

Sometimes I feel the strain. Sometimes I resent the call to give. But most of the time, I only wince. Minor pain perhaps, but a long way from dying.

For some of my friends, a call to a place where they didn't want to live has meant a kind of dying, but that didn't resonate with my spirit.

During a time when the urge for adventure boiled to the surface, we packed up our family and moved all our earthly possessions westward. Attaching an "Idaho Famous Potatoes" license plate to a car still dusty from the potato fields of Aroostook County, Maine produced a bit of emotional angst. Still, the great and memo-

rable years we spent in Idaho hardly merit passing mention in the "How to die to your earthly desires" Hall of Fame.

Some people I know die for the sake of a relationship with a spouse. A friend remains in a relationship with a man most women would have abandoned years ago. Through heartbreak and disappointment

she has remained a faithful and supportive wife for a single reason—her conviction that she represents the presence of Jesus in a home ravaged by the enemy. She

***For me the call to die is the call to give up control.***

continues to cling to the conviction that "the one who tries to save his life loses it, but the one who loses his life for my sake will find it." That grace always grows and bears fruit in the shadow of a cross.

This is her invitation to die but it is not mine. With a wife more patient with me than I deserve and more gracious than I ever imagined a

w o m a n could be in spite of my sometimes self-centered ways, any protests about dying are more whimpers than cries of agony.

And then I knew. For me the

call to die is the call to give up control. I began hand-to-hand combat with the issue the night I learned that our fifteen-year old daughter was pregnant. (See the September/October 2001 issue of *The Witness*.) Some might have wished that I had begun that war sooner but spiritual blinders often shield us from facing our personal demons head on. During the intervening years, that supposedly-defeated enemy at an earlier Skull Hill has revived and engaged me in further skirmishes.

Turning 50 has meant another visit to Skull Hill. This one feels more painful than the first; but maybe time has healed those old wounds.

After my friend told me that God is preparing me to die, I pulled my old dreams for life out of the attic closet and held them up to the sunlight of God's providence. Few things in my career have turned out like I imagined at twenty-five. Back then, I dreamed that overcrowding would be the only major problem facing any church I would pastor. This winter after months of positive attendance trends, ours headed south. All the logical rea-

***...the visits to my personal Skull Hill will likely continue in one form or another until I die die.***

sons offered by supportive church leadership did little to stem the self-flagellation.



Then Hazel accepted an invitation to serve as Coordinator of Women's Ministries for the Advent Christian General Conference. I am thrilled that she has been afforded the opportunity to showcase her Spirit-given gifts. I encouraged her to rise to the challenge. But years ago I was the one who held leadership positions. Years ago, I danced with visions of national responsibility in my head.

Today I know my strengths are suited best for the place I find myself. Most days, I love the one-to-one relationships of smaller church ministry. The rough and tumble world of organizational life frustrates me. But because old dreams do not easily die, the visits to my personal Skull Hill will likely continue in one form or another until I die *die*.

Until then, I find hope in the story of Jesus and two men who discovered grace bearing fruit in the shadow of his cross. And, if Jesus is to be believed, hope that someone will experience that same grace ripening on the vine in the shadow of mine.

Lord Jesus, hear my prayer! †

*Rev. Clayon Blackstone is pastor of the Advent Christian Church, Bangor, Maine.*

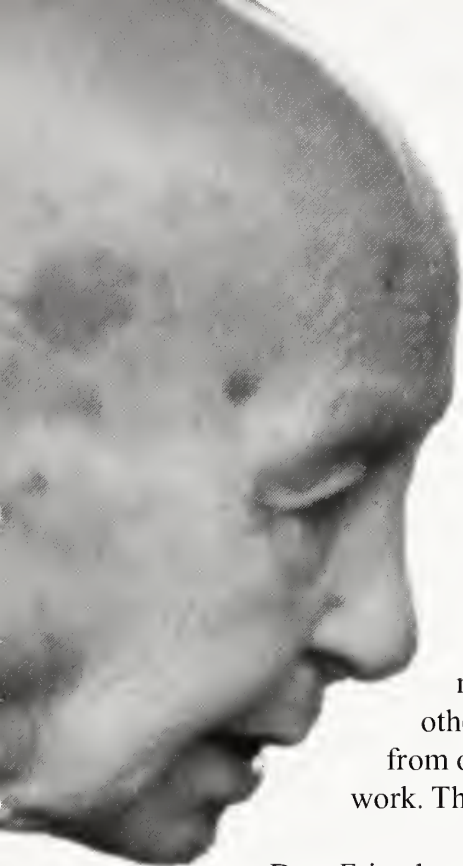


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ACGC 2002 Triennial Convention  
June 20-26  
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Call 1-800-676-0694.**



# Christian Sensei

Anonymous



A CHRISTIAN MAN worked with a Japanese company to build a new product. Afterward, the man who had served as his translator wrote asking his advice on work and family. The Japanese man considered the other a *sensei* (master of art) from observing his family and work. The Christian wrote back:

Dear Friend,

Thank you for the card and letter. I do not feel like *sensei*. My children probably do not feel that I am *sensei*. Eventually, my children will make me become *sensei*—by experience!

I will offer what I know from experience. For me, it starts at the end. At my funeral, what do I want people to say?

- If I want them to say, “He was a very rich man,” then I must put my effort into making much money. The probability of failure is *high*.
- If I want them to say, “He was a generous man,” then I must make much money and give it away. I must also give my time away too. The probability of failure is *high*.
- If I want people to say, “He was a great engineer,” then I must work hard and make things that people buy and find useful. The probability of failure is *high*.
- If I want people to say, “He has wonderful children,” then I am lost. No matter how much time and money I give to my children, I may fail. Children can do what they want. The probability of failure is *high*.

Once I know what I want, then it is just like your company. I take the resources I have and build the product that I desire.

For me, I want them to say, “He loved his wife, he loved his children, he loved the people he knew.” Probability of failure is *low*. I can control all of these things. I can love my wife—I treat her as very precious. I can love my children. I protect them. I can show them that I care about them very much. Sometimes that means teaching them what is right and wrong (and punishing them for doing wrong). This way I teach them grace. I can love the people who know me by treating them like I want to be treated.

I take my resources, mostly time and money, and use them to build the relationships with family and friends. Money is important, but I must be wise to get only enough, not too much, because it takes time, and time is very important to building relationships. So it is a balance.

Where do I find the strength to do this? I have a partnership. My wife and I have a three-way partnership with God. We believe God came to earth as Jesus and showed us love. God forgives me when I make mistakes—this is love. Sometimes when I make mistakes, he punishes me for my mistakes—this is love too, because he still forgives me. This teaches me to forgive my wife and children when they make mistakes. I can forgive people when they make mistakes, even though it may hurt me. Forgiveness allows me to keep going, even when someone hurts me. I do not carry hate or desire for revenge. These are heavy. So my strength comes from God. Everything I have comes from God—even my next breath. I will pray that you can find the balance for your resources, and the strength you need to be the father you want to be. I promise.

One last thing—children are always growing, always changing. When you are frustrated, remind yourself, “They are changing.” In awhile they will be different. The problems of today will go away. Be patient. I did not say the problems would get smaller, just different. But if you are patient, they will see that you love them. That is the goal.

So start at the end. How do you want to finish this life? Once you know, then the strength is all applied in the right direction. †



# A Testimony of God's Faithfulness

By Marina Bradley

I ACCEPTED CHRIST as my Savior at an early age, but grew up worshiping idols. My family was very devoted in praying to idols. We thought that idols were our mediator to God. Our priest told us that it was a sin to read the Bible. We were warned that if we read the Bible we would go crazy. I am sad that my forefathers died without knowing the real God.

I am thankful to the Advent Christian denomination for sending missionaries to the Philippines. We would never have known the truth if no one was willing to support those who were willing to go. The missionaries lived like we did. They ate what we ate. They went out of their way to learn the language in order to be more effective in sharing the Gospel. They trained Filipino nationals to plant churches.

The pastor in Bohol (where I am originally from) was one of the many fruits of missionary labors. A Bible study was conducted in my parents' house. I remember my father trying to get away on the day the pastor was

scheduled to come. My mother was the first convert in our family. We were shocked when my mother stopped waking us up for the routine Catholic prayers in the morning and evening. I liked the new schedule. Before my mother was baptized, she took all the idols we had in the



house to be burned. The day the pastor burned the idols, my mother was confronted with the prince of darkness. She literally saw a huge figure with very fierce, dark red eyes looking at her. She was very scared, but she remembered the verse in the Bible that says, "Greater is he who is in me than he that is in the world." My mother rebuked the prince of darkness, commanded him to leave, and he was gone forever.

Everything changed in our household. My father was the next convert. He used to smoke. After he received Christ into his life, he stopped smoking and swearing. We saw the change in our parents' lives. After my parents, I was next to accept Christ into my life. Our family was persecuted and made fun of, and our relatives stopped talking to us. They treated us like a plague. I was in second grade, and I lost friends at the beginning. They weren't allowed to have anything to do with me. I was lonely at first, but God was greater than the rejection I received. We went through a lot of tough times, but God was gracious and true to his promises. We continued to show our relatives, friends, and community the life we had in Christ. They saw that there was something in us that they could not understand. Eventually they became friendly with us again.

My parents are now active in the Advent Christian work in the Philippines. My husband, children, and I are looking for a ministry opportunity. We know that the Lord has something special in mind for us. We will continue to follow his leading. †

*Marina now lives in Florida with her husband James, who she met through the Teen Missions International program.*

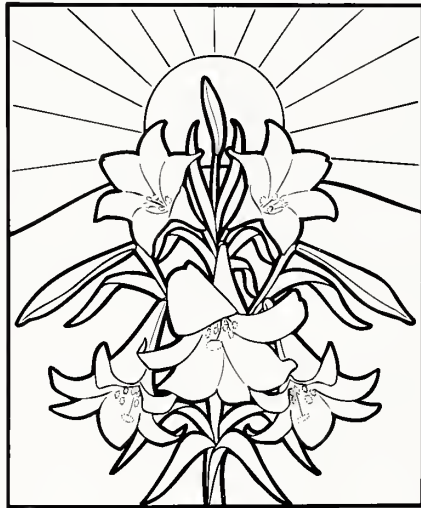
**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**

Decode the message by replacing the numbers with their corresponding letters. (Not all letters will be used.) A few letters have been done for you.

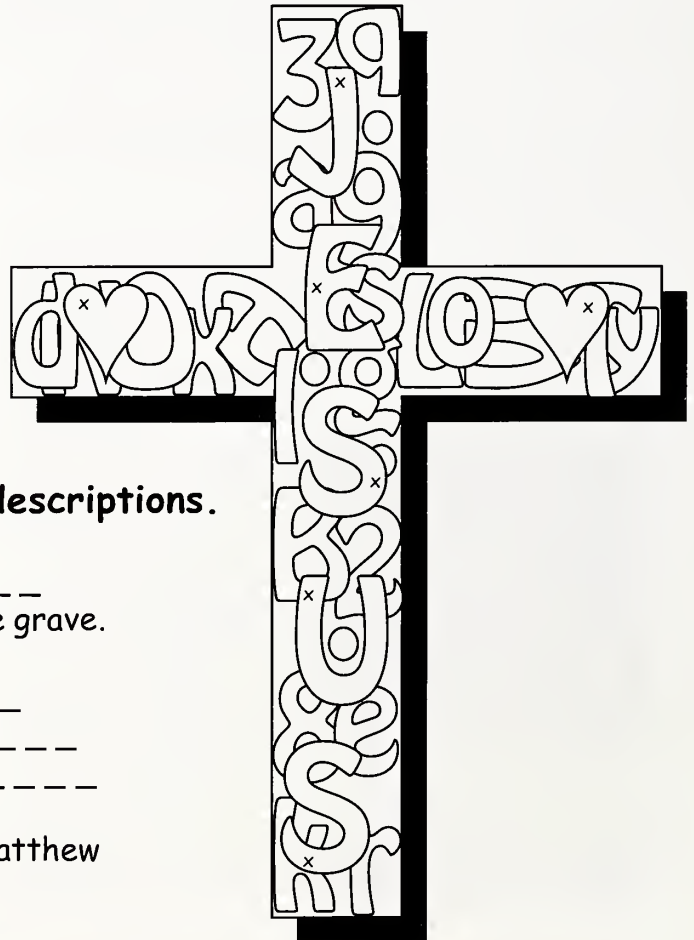


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Color in the areas marked by an x.

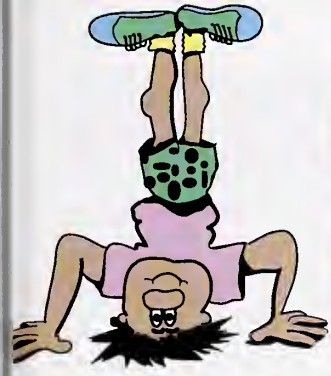


Match the disciples to their descriptions.

- I denied Jesus three times. \_\_\_\_\_
- I doubted that Jesus rose from the grave.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I was a tax collector. \_\_\_\_\_
- I betrayed Jesus with a kiss. \_\_\_\_\_
- We were brothers. \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

James, Thomas, Judas, John, Peter, Matthew





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

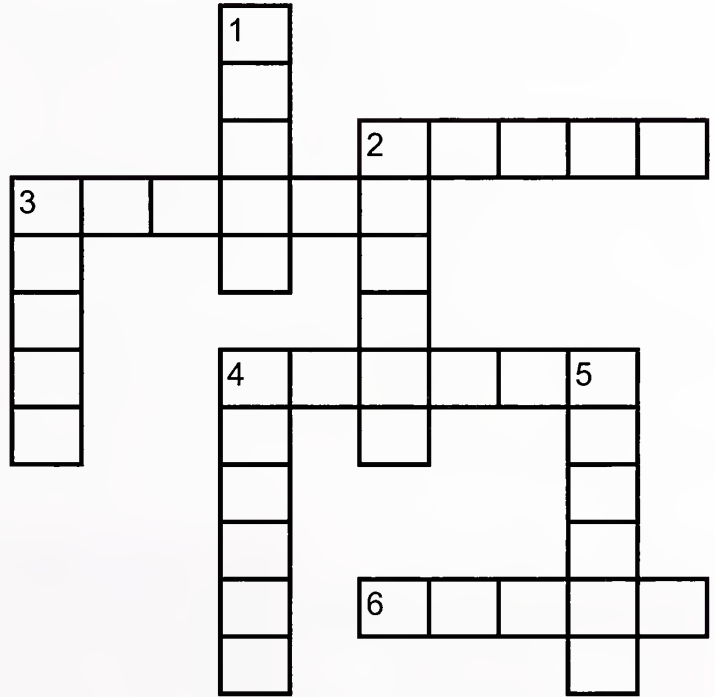
Fill in the crossword with words about Easter.

**Across:**

- 2. Jesus was dead for this many days.
- 3. This man buried Jesus in his tomb. (He also had the same name as Jesus' earthly father.)
- 4. Jesus did this in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- 6. I told the women at the tomb that Jesus was alive.

**Down:**

- 1. He denied Jesus three times.
- 2. This man wouldn't believe Jesus was alive until he saw and touched Him.
- 3. He betrayed Jesus.
- 4. He was in charge of Jesus' trial.
- 5. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on this.



Fill in the missing vowels to read this Bible verse.

\_ \_m th\_ w\_y, th\_ tr\_th, \_nd th\_  
 l\_f\_, n\_ \_n\_ c\_m\_s t\_ th\_ F\_th\_r  
 b\_t by m\_.  
 -J\_hn 14:6

# My "Chance" Encounter with a Muslim Woman

By Hazel Blackstone

Drat! I would sustain a nail catastrophe the day before my scheduled departure to meet the Executive Council in Charlotte! I remember a sign in the hair salon I frequented in Idaho. "Nails are jewels, not tools." My thumbnail now sported a vertical crack into the nail bed as a result of ignoring that advice. How do you smooth a crack that deep to prevent it from snagging on clothing?

Then I recalled a gift certificate received at Christmas for services at a beauty school nearby. Perhaps they could rescue me from my dilemma.

At the reception desk I inquired about the prospect of getting a manicure.

"I don't know if we can fit you in," the woman answered. "We've had an unusual number of color jobs today... but wait a minute, let me just check out back."

After a few minutes she returned. "We do have someone who can do your nails. Take a seat and she'll be right out."

It was Saturday, and knowing that the school closed at 1:00, I felt fortunate to get an appointment.

Soon a woman emerged and I stared in disbelief when she called my name. The woman was cloaked from head-to-toe in a robe, her hair hidden with a covering. She looked of Middle Eastern descent. It was shocking to me that one who kept her hair hid-

den would seek training in cosmetology. I took the seat opposite hers and watched with profound curiosity.

"Do you live in Bangor?" I quizzed.

"No, in Bucksport," she replied. "We moved from New York in November." Her English wasn't perfect, but understandable.

"I not like New York. Too violent. I ask my friend, 'Where can I go to be quiet and safe?' She says, 'If you want quiet and safe, move to Maine. Maine is the place.' We live in shelter first, we have no place to sleep. I never live in shelter before. Then we find a home in Bucksport."

"It must be difficult traveling that distance during the winter months," I continued. We were experiencing some freezing rain at the time.

"Yes. I not want to come today. My husband home with the kids. My girl sick, so sick she cries and not eat. I cry to God and he not hear me. I wish I could take her sickness."

Her face showed anguish. I longed to know more about her, the country of her descent and her religion, but I wasn't sure how to move the conversation in that direction.

"What seems to be her problem?" I continued.

"She can't go. She try so hard and she can't go. It's been weeks. She cries and cries. I can't take it."

"Has she seen a doctor?" I quizzed.

"Yes, she has medicine, but







she not take it. She won't swallow. She just choke," she willingly disclosed.

"That's hard on a parent, isn't it?" I recalled times when we had to hold down and force-feed medicine to our children.

As she studied my thumb I apologized profusely for the condition of my nails and related my disaster story. "I'm leaving for Charlotte tomorrow and I want my nails to look decent."

"On business trip?" she asked.

"Yes. I work for my church denomination," I ventured, hoping to direct the conversation back to a spiritual nature.

"Oh, do you know Sister Mary Ann?" she asked with interest.

"No. Are you Catholic?" I broached.

"No, I'm Muslim," she responded with her eyes studying mine. "Sister Mary Ann helped me

when we moved here. I was so afraid. I watch TV and see everything happening. I was fearful. Finally, my husband say, 'You need to get a job so you not watch TV all day. You should learn to do hair and nails. Lots of security in that in America. Women spend a lot on hair and nails.'"

"Your husband is very observant," I replied thoughtfully. "What does he do?"

"He taking English classes to speak English. He want to be mechanic, but he need to learn language," she continued.

"You speak English very well," I commented.

"I move to the states with my mother several years ago. My husband, he stay in Afghanistan. I go back to marry him and bring him to America," she explained.

"So your husband is from Afghanistan?"

"We both from Afghanistan. I was promised to my husband when I was child. He is my second cousin," she revealed as she again looked up to study my face.

"My, with everything that's going on in America and Afghanistan, these must be hard months for you and your family!" I ventured, surprised by her revelation.

She glanced up and gave me a timid smile.

"Have you heard from your family in Afghanistan?" I further probed.

"No. I miss Afghanistan.

It's a beautiful country. It is much prettier than you see on news. You should go there to visit sometime. It has wonderful food!" She continued to speak nostalgically about her homeland and revealed that she was pregnant. Her schooling would be interrupted long enough to have the baby and she would return to finish her certificate.

But I was lost in thought. Thoughts of what Jesus would do in a chance encounter with a Muslim woman. Thoughts of why our paths had crossed. Thoughts of what to do with this particular moment in time.

The cosmetology students were in a cleaning frenzy. It was 1:00. Doors were locked. With almost dry nails I stood to leave. Leaving a more generous tip than usual I thanked my Muslim manicurist.

"God bless you and the baby," I said with heartfelt sincerity, making



one last eye contact.

I couldn't get her off my mind. Did I miss an opportunity? Should I have been more open with my testimony? Questions riddled my conscience as I sat on the plane the next day. Every time I looked at my nails her image came to mind.

My second day in Charlotte I picked up the new "Just Between Us" magazine. To my astonishment I opened to the testimony of a Muslim woman who had come to know Jesus as Savior. As a sidebar with the article were "Ten Ways to Pray for Muslim Women."

In a year of heightened awareness of Muslim extremists I sense the Lord prompting me concerning the plight of Muslim women. I'll use the prayer guide for Muslim women, but one face will personalize those prayers. A face I encountered by chance in a cosmetology school. ☩

## 10 Ways to Pray for Muslim Women

1. Muslims believe that the Bible is corrupt and has been changed. Pray that Muslims will come to believe that the authenticity of God's Word stands forever. Pray that Muslims' hearts will be open to reading the Bible.
2. Muslims believe that Jesus was never crucified, that God sent someone who looked just like him to be crucified in his place. Pray that God will show Muslims the truth about Christ's death and resurrection.
3. Muslims fear God's wrath and strive to earn his favor and heaven by doing good deeds. Pray they will see that they already have God's favor—that he loved them so much that he sent his only Son to die on a cross for them.
4. Muslim women are oppressed in the religion of Islam. Pray that God will open their eyes to see how Jesus treated women versus how Mohammed treated women. Pray that they will see how valuable they are to God and how Jesus liberated women.
5. Muslim women are afraid to convert to Christianity for fear of disgracing their families, and for fear of being punished, even killed by their families. Pray that God will give them courage to search for his truth and the strength to receive it. Pray for God's protection over them.
6. Muslim women think that the women they see on American television are Christian women, and thus, Christian women are exploited. Pray that God will remove this misconception from their minds, as well as the many misconceptions they have about Christianity.
7. Pray that God will surround Muslim women in America with godly Christian women who will love them and reach out to them.
8. Pray that Christian women will not shy away from reaching out to Muslim women out of fear that they need to understand Islam. Pray for Christian women to realize that they only need to understand their own faith to effectively reach Muslim women.
9. Pray that the harvest will be ripened by the Holy Spirit as he works in the hearts of Muslim women. Pray that the workers will be plentiful among Christian women.
10. Pray for the church at large to have a deep burden and commitment for praying for Muslims, particularly the Muslims in North America.

*Written by a believer who is a former Muslim. Reprinted by permission from the Spring 2002 issue of Just Between Us magazine, 777 S. Barker Road, Brookfield, WI 53045.*



# Why I'm Proud to Be an Advent Christian

I suppose being an Advent Christian is a lot like being a farrier. Or a numismatist. Or a spelunker. You hear the phrase, "You're a *what?*" rather often.

I've attended our Advent Christian church from my earliest memory. It seems that one good way of explaining what Advent Christians are has been to give folks a glimpse of what I've experienced so far...

I fondly recall our Sunday evening services in summer: the back doors open to catch the slightest breeze; the preacher, in tie and shirtsleeves, encouraging the faithful to stand and sing one more verse of "Bringing in the Sheaves;" the wasps lazily circling the lights overhead looking for the perfect place for a nest. The songs were sung in earnest. The prayers were petitions laid at the feet of our Lord in full anticipation that he heard every word. The preacher was a messenger, holding the open, worn Bible in one hand while underscoring his point with the other.

I learned early on that what we were doing there was making sure that we were getting ready for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come back again. I gathered from the words of the hymns and the sermons of the preacher and the response of the people that when he comes back we want him to find us waiting and able to show him that we have been busy working for him. When he comes back, because we believe he is who he is, we will get to be with him forever. He loves us.

Over time I've come to truly appreciate other things as well: this way that Advent Christians have of emphasizing Scripture, the words of God, and the hope and the promises that are contained there. The former things, the pain and misery, will be utterly consumed, destroyed and forgotten; our loved ones who have passed away are asleep and will be gathered with us to him for judgment when he comes again; that his justice is pure, his mercy is great. I also believe that we are blessed with

an abundance of learned men and women of God, disproportionate to our size as a denomination. I appreciate that we emphasize one's personal relationship with God, and discourage bureaucracy or procedure that would interfere with or distract from it. There is among us a humble regard that we are here by God's grace, and a confident hope that we have been preserved for a purpose.

Perhaps soon people won't be puzzled by "what" we are. Just as they find that someone who shoes horses or collects coins or explores caves can have some pretty interesting things to talk about, it's rather certain they won't be disappointed when they engage an Advent Christian in conversation, either. †



*Julia Allen Brock is the secretary for the World Missions department at ACGC. She and her husband Tom have two daughters, Malia (13) and Cara (10).*

.....

Advent Christian General Conference consists of more than 300 churches in North America, bound by the common hope of Christ's soon return. This hope fuels the Advent Christian desire to make disciples while there is yet time. Because of this "Great Commission effort" there are now more Advent Christian believers in other parts of the world than here in North America! For more information regarding who we are and what we believe, visit our website at [www.adventchristian.org](http://www.adventchristian.org), or call 800-676-0694.





Oro Bible College boy's dorm  
under expansion. Turn to pages  
16 & 17 to see how you can help.

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for Christ*

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# From the Editor

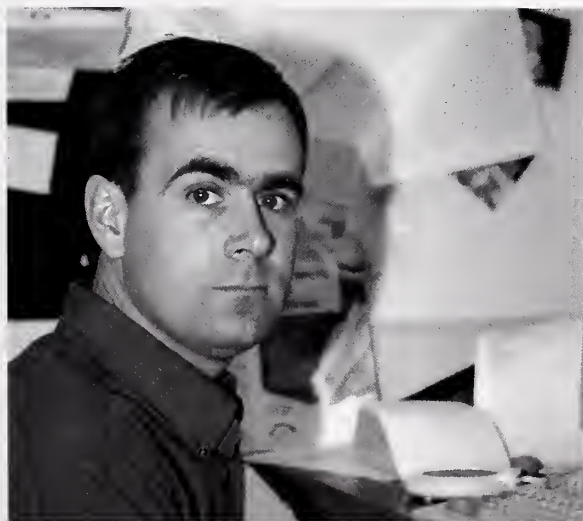
## *Is faith a group activity?*

It's an honest question. I really don't know the answer. I'm inclined to think not, and here's why: I can find no Scripture that describes a *group* of people as having faith. Consider the "faith chapter," Hebrews 11. The author recounts history from day one by pointing out acts of faith, virtually all done by individuals.

Whenever Christians gather together to conduct business they are usually encouraged to make bold steps of faith—as a group. I myself have been guilty of preaching such words of inspiration the one time I spoke at a conference meeting. But I was young and foolish then, and, now that I'm a little older and much wiser, I wonder if it's even possible for a group to "step out in faith."

No issue begs this question more than finances. Two schools of thought collide whenever a Christian organization wrestles with its budget. Some members see budgetary decisions as tests of faith. They argue, "We should base our budget on the opportunities the Lord has laid before us, not on last year's figures." The second approach counters with these words, "We should be good stewards of the resources the Lord has already given, rather than spend money we don't have."

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# ***What in the World***

A satellite photograph of Earth from space, showing the Americas and surrounding oceans. The image features swirling white cloud patterns over the blue oceans and green and brown landmasses. The text 'What in the World' is overlaid in a large, white, italicized, bold font at the top.

***Are We Doing?***



## **The Mission of the ACGC denominational office is to help local Advent Christian congregations to succeed, both individually and collectively, in fulfilling their role in the Great Commission of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).**

IT'S BEEN NEARLY TEN YEARS since this mission statement was embraced. The statement itself was reflective of an official delegate vote by the Advent Christian General Conference in 1987, authorizing denominational leadership to move forward with the process of focusing all Advent Christians toward Great Commission obedience in anticipation of our Lord's imminent return. No small assignment!

How do you go about such a task? Understanding that Jesus commanded His followers to continue making disciples "even to the end of the age," if the church over the course of 2000 years has wandered somewhat off-task, how do we call this matter to our collective attention and get refocused? If any group is up to such a task, it should be Advent Christians—we who urge preparedness because the coming of our Lord is at hand!

So we've taken this charge seriously, and set about to restore a Great Commission passion in the heart of the Advent Christian Church. For the denomination's leadership, this has called for a good deal of personal soul-searching. As one of my Christian college professors used to tell us pastors-in-training, "You cannot lead where you have not been." We've had to measure our own commitment to Great

Commission obedience, making some lifestyle changes where we found ourselves inadvertently to have been out of focus or off-task. And I confess that for me, this is a process that requires ongoing continuous vigilance and discipline. Yet it is wonderfully rewarding! Even as a freshly realigned automobile handles with a beautiful responsiveness to the road, so rediscovering and identifying with the heart and passion of Christ brings a special sense of peace and fulfillment.

However, the purpose of this article is to reflect on how the mission statement articulated a decade ago has been implemented and what difference it has made. Other than serving as a personal challenge to those of us involved in denominational leadership, this mission statement has had significant implications for how we strategize and structure for ministry. Annually, we have re-evaluated our ministries as a staff to determine how well they reflect our stated mission, as well as what impact they seem to be making. Virtually every year has seen some level of restructuring in the commitment to do the task more effectively. For example, this year we are moving A.C. Youth Ministries into a merged continuum with A.C. Student Ministries to strive for a focused, integrated approach to disciple-making

from middle-school ages right on through college. We cannot allow ourselves merely to program for youth. Rather, we must be discipling young people who will in turn be making disciples.

To help local Advent Christian churches succeed *individually* (or in their own communities) in fulfilling their role in the Great Commission is a unique challenge. After all, we are structured congregationally, and local congregations will decide for themselves what the focus of their ministry will be. How can we influence that process from a denominational level? Hopefully by several means, including:

### **1) Example**

We want to demonstrate what it means to live in Great Commission obedience. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20 to "teach them how to obey." Such teaching requires submissive, humble obedience.

### **2) Championing Great Commission Values**

We are telling the story of those who are doing it and citing the difference it is making. In our itinerant speaking and in our publications we love to tell the story!

---

*Continued on page 11*



# *Discipling Our Next Generation*



*Advent Christian Student Ministries is a team of people who are committed to making disciples of students while they are on college campuses. To mention all those who are faithful in this ministry would be impossible. But you know who you are, and more importantly God knows, and so do the students. Thank you. Here are some quotes from a few students who recently shared what Student Ministries has meant to them.*

*I hope that some of you who read this will want to be part of this ongoing process. If so, I would love to hear from you ([acsministries@juno.com](mailto:acsministries@juno.com)).*

*Grace,  
Dwight E. Carpenter  
A.C. Student Ministries/Leadership Development*



**M**y first contact with Student Ministries was in 1997, my freshman year in undergraduate study. Over the years, it has helped me develop and nurture my calling into ministry. Because of constant communication and prayer, I am unmistakably clear about my call to Christian ministry. As in so many other cases, however, just what form that call shall take is still in formation for me. I am currently serving as a pastor of an Advent Christian church plant in Knightdale, North Carolina. We are located right outside of Raleigh.

Student Ministries has had a tremendous impact on my life and work in the ministry. It has helped me develop my potential as a minister in the Advent Christian church. Dwight Carpenter has shown me how to be open, caring, responsive, and insightful in my relationships; and how to have a heart for ministry to others. I have also learned to share the Gospel with others through the witness of word and life. My own testimony has been strengthened through the evidence demonstrated in Dwight's life, and others involved in this ministry. I recommend Student Ministries as a discipling process that is changing lives for the kingdom!

—Pastor Adrian Dixon  
Campbell University Grad  
Duke Divinity School Student  
Pastor, Northside Community Church (A.C.), Knightdale, N.C.

I am currently a senior at Lancaster Bible College and plan to attend Reformed Theological Seminary where I plan to receive a Masters Degree not yet determined. Through the discipleship of student ministries within the denomination and at BICS, my decision to attend seminary has been aided in an area where I can continue my ministry, prayerfully as an assistant pastor.

I am also encouraged with the possibility of a student life center in Lancaster where leaders have the ability to disciple young students. The key to any ministry must be discipleship and the student ministries and leadership ministries of the Advent Christian denomination are aware of it and are doing it.

It has been a wonderful progress in my life as a Christian to be a disciple under these different ministries where I then can go and disciple other believers and non-believers.

—Nick Foss  
Lancaster Bible College Student

I n the fall of 1991 as a freshman in college, I was introduced to a concept that was somewhat foreign to me at the time: disciple-making. God brought people into my life whose relationships helped encourage, challenge, and support my adventurous walk with my Savior. Through Student Ministries I not only enjoyed the intimacy of discipleship but made contacts with others in the ministry that have proven invaluable.

Over the years God has led me through many experiences including summer ministry teams, summer internships, youth pastor, associate pastor, and now pastor. Through each of these I found Student Ministries and Leadership Development to be tremendous resources in ministry and my personal walk. I can honestly say that without these ministries I do not know if I would have the confidence and passion in ministry that I have today.

—Rev. Chris Hall  
Aurora University and Appalachian State Grad  
Southwestern Theological Seminary Grad  
Pastor, Villisca Advent Christian Church, Iowa

**T**hree Advent Christian leaders have taught me that while discipleship takes time, the fruits of such labor are sweet and long lasting. Dwight Carpenter, Warren Conary, and Paul Bertolino have made immense investments in my life, through conversation, prayer, meals and correspondence. None of these men knew where this faltering young woman would end up, yet they chose to faithfully disciple her. Discipleship is rooted in relationship, thus it takes time. These men, in the same way Jesus did with His disciples, taught, patiently answered my many questions, gently strove to calm my life storms, and challenged me to “do business” with my heavenly Father. Last May as I graduated from Gordon College, they released me to the world in the same spirit in which Christ sent forth His disciples. I am blessed to have experienced first hand the joys of being disciplined. Now it is my turn to put into practice what I know. Here amongst people from all nations my calling is clear; “Go and make disciples!”

—Amy Bascom  
Gordon College Grad  
University of Cambridge Student

**T**his past year has been the most amazing of my life. The lengths God has carried me is a testament to His power and the fruit that comes when people pour their lives into others, not to cure but to care. I still feel lonely, guilty, and broken some times, but I am no longer alone, no longer guilty, and I know who I am in Christ. I will always be grateful for the key role Student Ministries has and continues to play in my life.

—Steve Fenrick  
University of Wisconsin Grad  
Southwestern Theological Seminary Student

**I** accepted Christ through the youth ministry of Willow Creek Community Church and had a vague idea that the Lord wanted me to serve Him in some way. I had no idea exactly what that calling meant and where it would lead me.

The Lord knew what He was doing though, and He brought Dwight Carpenter into my life as a college freshman. I knew that I needed to grow as a Christian, and God gave me a discipler — exactly what I needed. Dwight taught me about grace, what it means to have life only in Christ, and disciple-making. I had begun to question the traditional Christian teachings about what happens to us when we die, and I soon learned that there was another view: conditional immortality. I felt at home in the Advent Christian Church immediately.

Student Ministries gave me the opportunity to learn more about my call to ministry by allowing me to do ministry. For three summers, I served on and led ministry teams. This experience helped me to confirm my calling and learn how I was gifted for service. Along the way, I met Kathy Rogers, of Ballwin, MO, who was also involved with Student Ministries. We were married in 1996, and God has blessed us with a son, Joshua.

—Rev. Mark & Kathy Woolfington  
Aurora University Grad  
Southwestern Theological Seminary Grad  
Pastor, Tustin Advent Christian Church, CA



**M**y second year of college was the first time in my life that I was outside the Advent Christian Church. Student Ministries has proven to be a great resource for me, visiting the Lancaster Bible College campus a number of times in the past year. On each occasion, I have been given the opportunity to meet with Dwight Carpenter, and with a group of other Advent Christian students. This has helped me to become aware of other A.C. students at the college.

Recently, Chet Hart and Dwight told LBC students of the possibility of an A.C. student house somewhere near the campus. This seems like a great opportunity for each of us to grow spiritually. Already, A.C. Student Ministries develops relationships with students, helping to develop their relationship with Christ in all ways, from their theology to their attitudes.

—Nathaniel Bickford  
*Berkshire Institute for Christian Studies Grad  
Lancaster Bible College Student*

**S**tudent Ministries has helped me become aware of other A.C. students on my campus and develop relationships with them and made me feel at home. Also, the ministry (Dwight Carpenter visiting and taking time to talk with me) gave me guidance on what to do this fall to gain experience in youth ministry. Now I am going to be in an internship working with an A.C. youth minister.

—Leigh Massengill  
*Eastern University Student*

**I**t is nearly impossible to explain all the ways Student Ministries has impacted my personal life and ministry. When I went to college my faith and doctrine were challenged on a daily basis. My only connection to other Advent Christians was our college email list-serve, which I read faithfully. When Dwight Carpenter came to our campus, I was so excited. Although I barely knew him, I desperately wanted to feel connected with our denomination again. He spoke with each of us Advent Christians while he was on campus. Many people forget about college students as soon as they walk out the church doors. These visits reminded me that the denomination still cared about us, even though we were unable to attend an A.C. church. To a college student this reminder was a blessing.

By their example our Student Ministries leadership has taught the enormous value of disciple making. This type of ministry affects lives because it invests in them. It requires a great deal of time and energy. The only way to bring people to Christ and keep them grounded in Him is to invest in their lives. We must go and make disciples who make disciples who make disciples. Student Ministries is doing just that, and it is my prayer to be one of those disciples who goes and, by God's grace, makes more disciples who do the same.

—Allison Hall  
*Milligan College Grad  
Youth Minister, Princeton A. C. Church, W.Va.*

Often as college students we are cut off from our ties at home and the church family that surrounded us during these formative years. It is critical to the spiritual vitality of our students that intentional disciple-making relationships are forged during this time.

I can think of no other denomination that engaged in personal disciple making and pastoral care on my college campus like Advent Christian General Conference leaders — from pastors like Brent Ross and Joe Pritchett to national leaders such as Dave Ross, Richard Russell, and Dwight Carpenter — made a lasting mark on the lives of students. One of the reasons I chose to minister in the Advent Christian denomination is because of these men and their commitment to such an undertaking. I thank God for my “fathers” in the faith, and celebrate their response to the call of God to make sure that the next generation isn’t a forgotten generation.

—Rev. Michael Bassett  
Toccoa Falls College Grad  
Pastor, First AC Church, Augusta, GA

I first became involved in student ministries when I started college at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Though I’d been raised Advent Christian, I really didn’t know any AC’s my own age until then. A group of us met fairly regularly for Bible study and fellowship, and whenever Dwight Carpenter was in town he would meet with us. As a result of relationships built during that time, I was encouraged to join in summer ministries teams for two of the years I was in college. Also, the contact with other Advent Christians influenced my decision to attend Wheaton Graduate School so that I could be part of the Aurora Advent Christian Church, where I had previously attended several Friends Forever high school/college retreats. And if it weren’t for significant relationships with Advent Christian leaders, I probably wouldn’t have arranged an internship with then-editor Bob Mayer that resulted in a full-time ministry position at the Advent Christian General Conference.

Though A.C. Student Ministries didn’t officially become part of the Advent Christian General Conference until 1997, the denomination has reaped the benefits of numerous lives impacted by being discipled as college students. Many pastors, youth leaders, and other denominational leaders can trace their paths back to significant discipling relationships that began during their college years. God has blessed this denomination, and many of us individually, by the ministry of those who love college students and purposefully use their time and energy to make a difference in the lives of those they disciple.

Aside from the corporate benefits, there are personal benefits from having a relationship with someone you know cares about you. When circumstances seem overwhelming, when you’re struggling with a particular issue, or when difficult decisions need to be made, there is someone to turn to for advice, encouragement, and prayer support. Young adults are looking for someone they can trust, and the leaders involved in student ministries often become that person for the students. In a world full of uncertainties, the love and grace of God, poured through the life of a discipler, can literally be the salvation of one in need. On behalf of all the students listed above, and many others, thank you!

—Dawn Rutan  
Bethel College and Wheaton Graduate School Grad  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Student  
Assistant Editor, Advent Christian General Conference



### **3) Resourcing Pastors and Other Church Leaders**

In recent years we have made a major commitment to providing A.C. pastors with the resources (i.e.-training opportunities, teaching materials) and encouragement to be more strategically obedient to Christ's Great Commission and to lead their church in being so as well. Our partnership with Sonlife Ministries has certainly helped with this objective, since well over 300 A.C. pastors and leaders have already received formal training and coaching to this end. The results in terms of increasing church health are becoming evident, as measured by increased numbers of decisions for Christ and baptisms, increased church attendance (10% over 10 years), and the most rapid rate of Advent Christian church planting in over two decades.

### **4) Prayer Covenants**

The A.C. Intercessory Forces (a.k.a. "IF Team") now numbers well over 500 who have joined together in a covenant renewed each week at the throne of grace, which is stated as follows: "As the Lord enables and reminds me, I covenant to pray at (or near) noontime each Thursday for Great Commission obedience in the Advent Christian Church, which includes in my own life, in my local congregation, and throughout the world." Each Wednesday an IF Team reminder is circulated via email with specific requests, challenges,

and a fresh call to prayer. This has become part of a prayer movement that is changing our lives, our church, and our world!

That brings us to the other part of our mission statement, helping local A.C. congregations to succeed *collectively* in fulfilling their role in the Great Commission of Christ. Here are some indications that God is graciously honoring our commitment to Him in this regard:

#### **1) Financial Investments**

Specific investment from our local congregations in Penny Crusade for Missions now involves the greatest number of participating congregations in our history. This has resulted in the investment of over half a million dollars in this missions drive in each of the past two years for the first time ever, representing the largest percentage increase in two decades.

#### **2) Conversions**

Well over 2000 people came to faith in Christ through the witness of the Advent Christian Church in the past year alone!

#### **3) Multiplying Fields**

A.C. World Missions have matured in the past decade to the point of Great Commission multiplication (not merely addition). Now we are seeing not only disciples multiplying disciples, and congregations multiplying congregations, but also mission fields multiplying mission fields internationally.

#### **4) New Outreaches**

As a practical result, in the past dozen years, Advent Christian outreaches have expanded from six nations to thirty-one (and counting!). In the past year, works have begun in Kenya, Mozambique, and Malawi.

#### **5) Urban/Ethnic Ministries**

Meanwhile, our ethnic A.C. congregations in the U.S. have grown from only two in 1986 (both in one region) to eight or nine today (involving all five regions). And others will launch soon, as many of the "all nations" spoken of in the Great Commission have come to America today!

#### **6) Church Plants**

On average, a new Advent Christian congregation is being planted somewhere in the world about once every two and a half weeks.

So what in the world are we doing about the Great Commission? Actually, we are only striving to be obedient and watching the Lord, who has "all authority" and promises "to be with us always," honor His Word, and build His church! In so doing, the Advent Christian Church in these last days of time has experienced a decade of growth unparalleled in our history, or at least since the earliest days of our movement in the mid-nineteenth century. And the best is yet to come! Our Lord is coming soon, He is awesome, and He is at work among us! Maranatha! †



# SONLIFE *Ministries*

By Rev. Paul Dean

PASTOR DEAN, when can I get with you to talk to you about something that came up in our last ladies meeting?" If there were ever words that could make a pastor's heart stop, I just heard them! I was able to regain my breath, and we set up a time to meet. I worried, *What could this be about?*

As we sat in my office and the vision was unfolded to me, oh, how my heart was filled with joy and praise to God. "So let me be sure I have this correct. The ladies group of our church wants to sponsor an outreach event for the community in which they want to show love to those in our community who do not know Jesus. And you want it to be a cultivating event with no strings attached. To just show them we love them and try to develop relationships between the church and the lost in town. But before you went ahead with your plans, you wanted to make sure it was okay with me first?"

"Yes, it is perfectly okay with me!" I said with great praise to God.

We are beginning to take steps toward Great "Everyday" Commission health. After preaching, teaching, exhibiting Healthy Church principles and lifestyles for many years, we are starting to get it.

The strategy of the Son's life is beginning to take root in the life of our church. Jesus not only taught us about the kingdom of God, He gave us a strategy to follow by His own life and ministry while here on earth. We are becoming convinced, like Dr. Dann Spader, that not only did Jesus give us the message, but also the *method* of building the kingdom and that a careful study of the life of Christ will reveal this to us. For over ten years now I have been exposed to, taught, and trained to train others in these healthy church principles of Christ's call to all believers to "make disciples" through

winning the lost, building the believers and equipping the worker. I have taught it and preached it and lived it in our church and we are beginning to be transformed in our life and ministry as a church.

That opening conversation took place over three years ago and we have had our fourth annual outreach/cultivating event. This year there was a special effort put forth to pray for everyone involved in this year's event so that God would bless as relationships between church people and the lost would be cultivated and strengthened for God's kingdom. Since that first event, our church has had a Sunday school class sponsor an outreach Valentine's dinner and a community birthday party. All to show God's love and cultivate relationships with the lost. We are beginning to look at all ministries and things we do through the eyes of disciple-making principles.

I wish I could take the time to share with you more, but I have got to run. A new segment of our church is getting ready to do their first outreach event. The youth are planning an "Act of kindness" event where they are going to give away free cold sodas at the beach during graduation weekend, just to show the love of Christ to others with no strings attached.

Boy, is ministry becoming fun! But don't tell anyone, they may think we aren't doing it right.

Jesus called us to "Make Disciples" and the strategy of Christ through the teaching and support of "Sonlife" ministries is helping our church catch the vision and become Great "Everyday" Commission conscious and healthy. †

*Rev. Paul Dean is pastor of Potter's Hill Advent Christian Church, Pink Hill, N.C.*



# ADVENT CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

DOWLING PARK, FLORIDA

*Serving the Advent Christian Church Since 1913*

*As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Galatians 6:10

For eighty-eight years, Advent Christian Village (ACV) has nurtured a dream to bring glory to God by serving the Village community, the Advent Christian Church, and our neighbors. Many Advent Christian Church partners share this dream.



## LET'S JOIN HANDS

Churches and ACV join hands to express Christ's love by providing compassionate care and quality comprehensive services for senior adults, families with special needs, and children. A primary desire of ACV is to serve the local Advent Christian Church and Advent Christian ministerial families. We do this in several ways.

### SERVICES TO RESIDENTS & CLERGY

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Offerings from Advent Christian Churches assist Village residents who have depleted their personal funds. This church partnership is vital to the continuing excellence in care that is a hallmark of Village life.

Upon retirement at ACV, clergy and their spouses receive special admission and services considerations.

Counseling advice is available through the REACH program with Dr. Sidney L. Bradley. REACH is an acronym for Resources to Enrich and Enable Advent Christian Homes. ACV funds and sponsors Dr. Bradley's services. He can be contacted at 704-527-9909 or e-mail sbradley@gcts.edu.

ACV partners with your pastor through a special personal telephone prayer line sponsored by Bixler Memorial Church. This is a private and secure phone line providing your pastor with encouragement and prayer support.

The Village provides respite care for active clergy and their families as special needs are identified.

### SERVICES TO THE DENOMINATION

Once each triennium, ACV in cooperation with denominational offices hosts a Pastor's Conference at Dowling Park. The Executive Council of the denomination meets in ACV's conference facilities on a regular basis.

For a quarter of a century, ACV has sponsored an Advent Christian Winter Retreat, now called Suwannee Safari.

ACV offers Planned-Giving Seminars for churches and conferences through Craig A. Carter of the Office for Resource Development.

The ACGC Department of World Missions uses the Village staff to screen and debrief missionaries.

Bixler Memorial Advent Christian Church generously supports denominational ministry and regularly sends short-term missionaries.

### SERVICES FOR YOU

ACV is a Christian retirement community. Many Advent Christian ministers, missionaries, and laity have made Dowling Park their retirement home. The compassionate care and quality comprehensive services bring comfort and freedom in later years. People 55-years of age and older enjoy an active lifestyle in a serene setting by the Suwannee River. You're invited to visit the campus, take a tour, and investigate the investment you and your church have made in this ministry.

### SHARE THE DREAM

We are grateful for churches that share the ACV dream. To catch the dream of Advent Christian Village, consider adding ACV to your church mission budget. And please include ACV on your church's prayer list.

**Advent Christian Village, P.O. Box 4305, Dowling Park, FL 32064  
1-800-714-3134**

Visit our web site at [www.acvillage.net](http://www.acvillage.net)

An ACV information packet and videotape are available by calling the Admissions Office at 1-800-747-3353.

# *Berkshire Christian College*

## *Training for Kingdom work*



Berkshire Christian College (BCC) has existed for over a century to train men and women for Advent Christian ministerial vocations. In the past decade, BCC leadership envisioned a college “without walls” that equips Advent Christians for effective leadership around the world. BCC now delivers distinctive education by creative partnerships with established Christian institutions and through distance learning programs. The result of this educational design is a continuum of education ranging from certificate programs through doctoral studies.

**1. The Center for Advent Christian Studies**, through association with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, offers ten graduate programs at three locations: South Hamilton and Boston, Massachusetts, and Charlotte, North Carolina. The Center for Advent Christian Studies is currently completing eleven years of operation. Part of the center is an extensive collection of Adventual and Millerite history and archival materials.

Dr. Sidney Bradley, dean of the Charlotte campus, says, “Advent Christian people are abundantly blessed to have the Center for Advent Christian Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Under the capable and godly guidance of Dr. Gordon Isaac, we have an opportunity to raise up a new generation of leaders who have studied to show themselves approved. The combination of truly superior biblical scholarship, practical preparation for ministry, and tuition assistance, in a context of precious Advent Christian distinctives, is remarkable evidence of our Lord’s providential preparation for future fruit to be laid at the Master’s feet.”

**2. BCC partners with Eastern University** (EU), a co-educational, comprehensive Christian institution of the arts, sciences, and professions, located in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. BCC offers scholarships to qualifying Advent Christian students and EU scholarship assistance is available. Dr. Robert W. Price is the interim campus mentor who encourages students.

**3. Long Distance Learning. TEMPE** (Theological Education for Ministerial Preparation by Extension) delivers training “without walls” around the world. A professor with a minimum of a Master’s degree is assigned to consult with students. On-site courses have been conducted in churches, on campgrounds, and on the mission fields.

BCC is committed to being the training arm of the Advent Christian Church. The regions of the denomination and the Executive Council elect seven members of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees practices forward funding. Their vision for the immediate future involves funding the Berkshire Professorship at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and increasing the endowment fund that provides student scholarships and resources for administrative expenses.

*Contact Berkshire Christian College (P.O. Box 826, Haverhill, MA 01820, or phone 978-372-8122) to inquire about independent-study courses, scholarship aid, or funding of new projects.*



By Linda Register

*“And He (Jesus) spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1 KJV).*

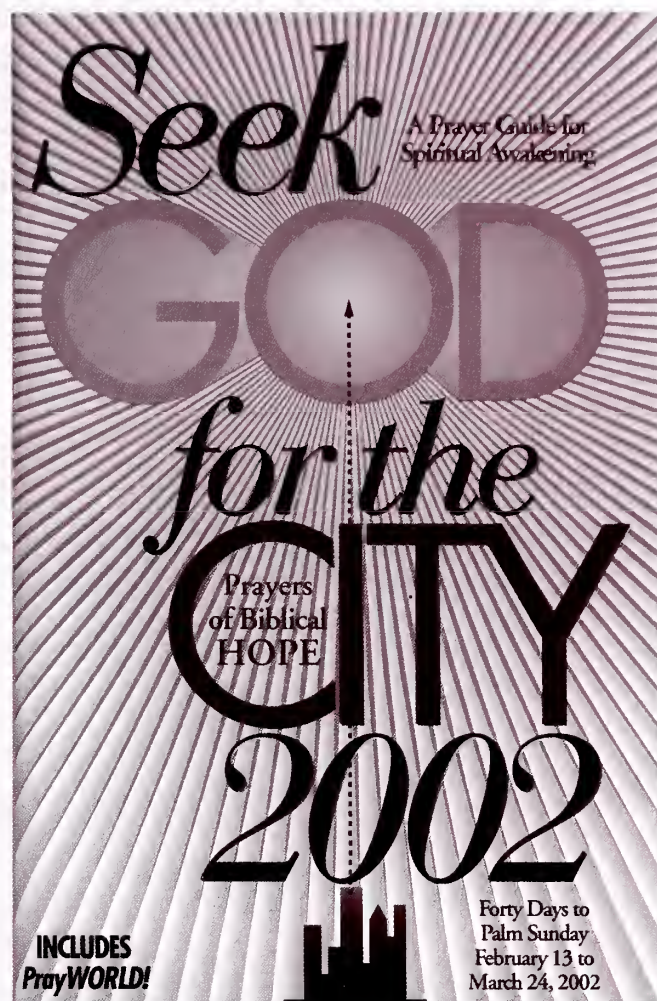
Castle Hayne Advent Church is located in a suburb of Wilmington, N.C., on the southeastern coast. With our great weather, many people like to live and retire here. The people of Wilmington are culturally diverse and, like everywhere else, there are multitudes of people who need to acknowledge their need of a Savior.

What could a small congregation do to help make our hometown a better place to live? Well, even the youngest or weakest among us can pray. And after all, this is one of Jesus commandments!

While browsing the Venture Bookstore table during the Eastern North Carolina WHFMS annual meeting, I picked up a booklet titled, *Seek God for the City 2002*. The cover said it was a “prayer guide for spiritual awakening to be used the forty days prior to Palm Sunday.” Our church had never promoted the Christian observance of fasting and penitence beginning on Ash Wednesday and lasting forty weekdays to Easter.

Our local WHFMS voted to place one of the *Seek God for the City 2002* booklets in the home of every church family. We purchased the books and encouraged the use of this prayer guide throughout the Lenten season. We were finally praying in one accord. On February 16 we were to seek God on behalf of pastors. The idea was to pray inconspicuously outside a nearby church building for the pastor. We have five Advent Christian churches in our coastal area. That day I rode past each of these churches and called out the pastor’s name in prayer. February 18 we were challenged to seek God on behalf of sick people. I parked in front of a nursing care facility near my home and prayed for the patients and those that care for them. March 11 we were asked to seek God on behalf of broken families. I made a list of the many broken homes that I knew personally. I prayed for all involved, especially the children; I asked God to bring reconciliation where possible and to bring about friendship to those who could not reconcile.

As we prayed in unity, the church family at CHACC would share among ourselves where God had led us to



pray. We sought God’s benevolence on behalf of substance abusers, law enforcement officials, our military personnel, unemployed people, and even for racial reconciliation. We were finally praying without ceasing for others instead of praying our own personal “wish lists.”

March 24, 2002 was Palm Sunday and we had been praying for 40 days. The final prayer was for church unity. Did God hear our prayers? On Sunday evening May 19, 2002, during our service one man stood up and confessed that he had had a serious disagreement with another brother and had been very angry. He publicly asked that brother to forgive him. They both stood before the congregation and embraced and returned to their pews once more “brothers in Christ.” This was an answer to prayer

I challenge any of you, either personally or as a congregation, to agree to pray in unity. Be like the prophet Isaiah and boldly state: Here am I, send me! †

Available from Venture Bookstore, 1-800-676-0694.



# WHY YOU CAN'T IGNORE HEAVEN AND HELL

MAKING 'CHRISTIANISE' WHAT MAKES WORSHIP GENUINE?

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WHY YOU CAN'T IGNORE HEAVEN AND HELL

Conditionalism is the belief that human beings do not naturally have eternal souls. Rather, only by meeting God's conditions for salvation will anyone be granted eternal life. Historically, most Christians are taught that man does live forever; his final destiny being either eternity in Christ's kingdom or eternity suffering in hell. After a national magazine misrepresented the basis for conditionalism — an Advent Christian doctrine — a contributing editor of the *Advent Christian Witness* confronted that publication. Following is his letter of concern.



# ND HELL

Andrew Scheer, Managing Editor  
Moody Magazine

July 26, 2001

Dear Andrew,

The reason I'm writing is to respond to one of the articles in the May/June 2001 issue of your magazine about hell. This is an unpleasant subject; I admire you for giving space to it. But, I was disappointed that one of your authors so quickly dismissed the view of hell to which I, and a growing number of evangelicals, hold. I'm referring to Donald Carson's comments about annihilationism (p.14, "Living Without Heaven or Hell"). He wrote:

"Two thirds of Americans do not believe in the existence of a personal Satan, according to the pollster George Barna. More than half of professing Christians are in the same camp. The existence of hell, with its threat of conscious, eternal torment, has proved so repugnant in recent decades that a rising number of evangelical thinkers argue that the Bible really teaches annihilation; that after a time, those who are lost simply cease to exist. That is their eternal punishment."

I believe Carson's statement is quite unfair, for the following reasons:

1. He seems to equate belief in annihilation with the denial of Satan's existence. Nowhere does he acknowledge that many biblical descriptions of the fate of the lost actually *do* seem to predict a final end of the ungodly. Scripture says that they *will perish, be destroyed, be burned up, etc.* Those who defend the eternal conscious suffering view of hell often spend a lot of energy trying to show why those words *don't* mean what they seem to mean. That is evidence that we who've adopted the annihilation view have not simply rejected biblical statements, as is the case with those who deny the existence of Satan.

2. Carson suggests that belief in annihilation is the result of an emotional aversion to the traditional view of hell, rather than the result of careful study. He ought to admit that his view has *many* problem texts, and that some honest interpreters have been persuaded by those and other

texts to adopt a different view. No less an evangelical scholar than John Stott has confessed that he believes the Bible supports the annihilation view of hell. As you may know, Stott has *never* been known as one easily swayed by sentimentalism. He's a world evangelical leader, regarded as a faithful interpreter of God's Word by nearly everyone—until he confessed his belief that hell will finally result in the actual destruction of the lost. In Carson's estimate, he and others who share his view have denied a clear teaching of Scripture, all because the "threat of conscious, eternal torment, has proved so repugnant" to them. Not true.

3. Carson also misrepresents what most annihilationists really believe, as if we think hell will mean that the lost "simply cease to exist," implying an almost painless end. Actually, we believe that those who are condemned will experience terrifying, painful, conscious torment to whatever degree each person deserves (cf. Luke 12:47-48), finally culminating in the literal destruction of body and soul (Matthew 10:28). It will be much, much worse than "simply ceasing to exist."

If you decide to treat the subject of hell again, Andrew, please encourage your author(s) to be more fair in treating the annihilation view. We, like you, have a sincere desire to believe and teach whatever God's Word says.

May God bless your ministry and continue to use your magazine to encourage his people and point the lost to Jesus Christ. We can certainly agree that, whatever hell involves, we want to help people avoid it.

All because of grace,  
Tom Warner

*Rev. Tom Warner and his wife, Shelley, have pastored churches throughout North America. They currently reside in Dowling Park, Florida.*

# Venture Bookstore

Venture Bookstore provides Sunday school material, Vacation Bible School material, Bible studies, and other Christian books, videos, CDs, music books, software, and more for current retail prices. Pastors receive a 10% discount for books for their personal library. Others can receive a 10% discount for orders of 10 or more copies of a book. Email [Venture@adventchristian.org](mailto:Venture@adventchristian.org) or call 1-800-676-0694 to order or to ask about pricing. You can also be put on an email list to receive notification of special sales.

We can order Sunday school or Vacation Bible School curriculum materials from:

- ◆ David C. Cook (Advent Christian edited Sunday school materials are kept in stock.)
- ◆ Gospel Light
- ◆ Group
- ◆ Concordia
- ◆ Standard Publishing

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## The Media Center

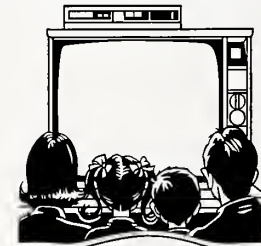
The Advent Christian General Conference provides resources for pastors, churches, and members. Through the Media Center we provide over 400 video cassettes and series to churches for a small rental fee. Write or call for a current catalog of videos and other media available, or email [DRutan@adventchristian.org](mailto:DRutan@adventchristian.org) with your video requests or questions. Some items have a waiting list, so put your requests in early.

Some popular videos in the past year are:

- 1) Becoming a Contagious Christian
- 2) Dynamics of Successful Marriage
- 3) Experiencing God
- 4) The Jesus I Never Knew
- 5) Quigley's Village (children)
- 6) Unfiltered vols. 1-3 (youth)
- 7) Adventures in Odyssey (children)
- 8) Ee-Taow! (missions)
- 9) Having a Girls' Night Out (women)
- 10) Bad Girls of the Bible (women)



### The Media Center Catalog 2002



The Media Center  
Advent Christian General Conference  
P.O. Box 23152  
14,601 Albemarle Rd.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28227  
1-800-676-0694  
Updated April 2002



It's extremely important to recognize both camps include mature, committed Christians. No one actually suggests the other side is spiritually stunted; only that they lack either faith or wisdom. But I think both sides might be missing the deeper question: is it even possible for a group to have a collective faith?

Faith—not saving faith, but working faith—involves risk. (Someone pointed out to me that accepting Jesus is a step of faith, but not necessarily a risky step. But I'm not addressing matters of salvation; rather, the idea of Christian obedience.) Abraham, the epitome of faith, was commended because of his willingness to risk everything to obey God. He put himself in a position with only two possible outcomes: supernatural intervention or disaster. That's a risky place to be. What if he misunderstood God's commands or God changed his mind? Abraham could spend the rest of his life explaining to Sarah why they were homeless, penniless, and the laughingstock of the Chaldeans.

How can the members of any organization collectively share similar risks? For example, my church may vote to build a bowling alley—"in faith believing the Lord will use it to reach the community bowlers with the Gospel." As a member of the church I can support the project, oppose the project, move my membership to

another church, or do nothing but wait to see what happens. I'm not obligated to risk anything personally. Since I'm part of the group but I'm not required to personally invest in this "step of faith," can it be called an "act of faith" for the group?

The farther such "steps of faith" are removed from personal risk, the more complicated the issue becomes. Conference delegates usually meet once a year to decide their plans for the future. Since each delegate (or even his church for that matter) has virtually no personal risk, can conference decisions really be considered "acts of faith?"

Since it is the Lord's intent for Christians to minister through groups, we need to discover how faith is included in our group activities. Is it cumulative—does it compound as each individual invests his own faith? Or is it more like the proverbial chain, with the weakest member's faith limiting the rest? Perhaps organized ministry is similar to a corporation, the amount of each person's faith being the amount of "stock" they have in the company.

It's not very satisfying to raise questions without answers. Consider this an invitation to find the answer. As we strive to serve the Lord together we need the answer. Otherwise, our organizations will never know if they're doing great works of faith, or just some other group activity. †





## Holton Chapel, Waycross, Georgia

By Mary Jo Poole

Holton Chapel Advent Christian Church was completely destroyed by fire following a severe thunderstorm on August 13, 1999. Firemen were able to save the steeple, which now rests atop the new church. We were blessed to have three men in our church who took charge of the rebuilding, and many in the community donated their time.

On May 7, 2000, we held our dedication of the new church, with approximately 150 people attending. Dr. Larry Withrow, superintendent of the Southern Region, gave the dedicatory sermon. Pastor Morris Brantley was presented a check for \$10,000 from the New Church Builders Union. We also received several donations from individuals who belong to the NCBU. We thank NCBU for the generous donation. When the last nail was driven, we were debt free.

God blessed us from the tragedy of losing the church, to the joy of rebuilding and completion of our new church. We can't praise God and the donors enough! †



*Holton Chapel's old building (before the steeple was added).*



*Holton Chapel's new church building.*





## Villisca Advent Christian Church, Villisca, Iowa

*By Rev. Chris Hall*

**N** Christmas Eve, 1995, a bitter winter wind blew in, contrasting the flames that reflected off of tear-streaked faces. The church that so many had been a part of, the building that stood on the corner for so many years, was quickly burning to the ground. Many questions entered the minds of the congregation. What do we do now? Where do we go from here? Who do we turn to? God did not waste much time in answering the last question as support from friends, family, neighbors, and the community as a whole joined together to rebuild the church building that was a symbol of the church body that was loved by so many.

**C** As the rebuilding process began, questions continued to rise. One by one God continued to answer them in ways that assured the people that he was still in control. One Sunday God revealed himself through a very special gift. Rev. Mike Gardner, the regional superintendent, came with a check for nearly \$10,000!

**B** Through the ministry of the NCBU God had led churches from all over the country to give so generously. Once again God was using others to bring motivation and inspiration to a once-discouraged congregation. Because of such generous giving it was not long before the church body was enjoying a new building—one that was more accessible, more spacious, and to top it off, one without a mortgage! Hallelujah!

**U** The new building was dedicated September 8, 1997. I have only been the pastor here in Villisca for nine months. However, coming into this ministry I found a group of people willing to share what God had so generously provided so that his ministry could continue in this town. Through the ministry of NCBU and the support of others our church does not have to worry itself with paying off a debt for years to come but can immediately focus all energy and money towards worshiping who God is, growing as we discover who we are in Christ, and reaching out to whoever God is putting in our path. †



*Villisca A.C. Church's new building.*





# *Advent Christian Retirement Communities*



One summer day in 1919 the pastor's wife at the Advent Christian Church of Vernon, Vt., glanced up and saw that the hotel across the street was for sale. That one glance spawned a vision for a retirement home that, by the grace of God, has since grown into two vibrant communities in Vermont and Maine where seniors with varying needs are served.

Today, Advent Christian Retirement Communities includes Vernon Home, providing a variety of health care and living alternatives, and Meetinghouse Village, a growing independent-living community. And the same mission instilled by our godly forebears continues in these locations today as we seek to care and serve in his name.

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# Stealing Sheep

## *The Church's Hidden Problems with Transfer Growth*

Reviewed by Floyd McIntyre

By William Chadwick. InterVarsity Press, 2001.  
(Chadwick is an Advent Christian pastor.)

AT ONE TIME or another every pastor has experienced the results of Transfer Growth. Sometimes the experience has been a positive one while at other times it may have been less than pleasing. This depends, of course, on what side of the transfer the pastor finds himself. Dr. Chadwick's book addresses the complex problem and suggests a solution.

Many Advent Christian churches are considered

small churches. It is in the context of ministry in the small churches that the negative side of transfer growth is most strongly felt. Chadwick hits the bulls eye when he describes the emotions felt by the pastor who sees members of his congregation leave for and become involved in a larger more exciting ministry. This is especially true if the "receiving congregation" happens to be just across town!

Stunned by a statement from a church growth professor suggesting that "our initial research indicates that there has been no appreciable growth in the American evangelical population as a whole in the last ten years," Chadwick chases down the reasons for the statement and comes face to face with the hard reality and truth of the statement.

One strength of the book is found in the transparency of the author. It is best said in his own words. "When something is wrong, when a practice does not truly benefit the kingdom but simply gratifies our won desires, are we equally bold in rectifying that mistake as we are in plunging into another experiment?"

For years I have lived a lie, believing that just because our numbers were increasing we were doing the Lord's work." (9)

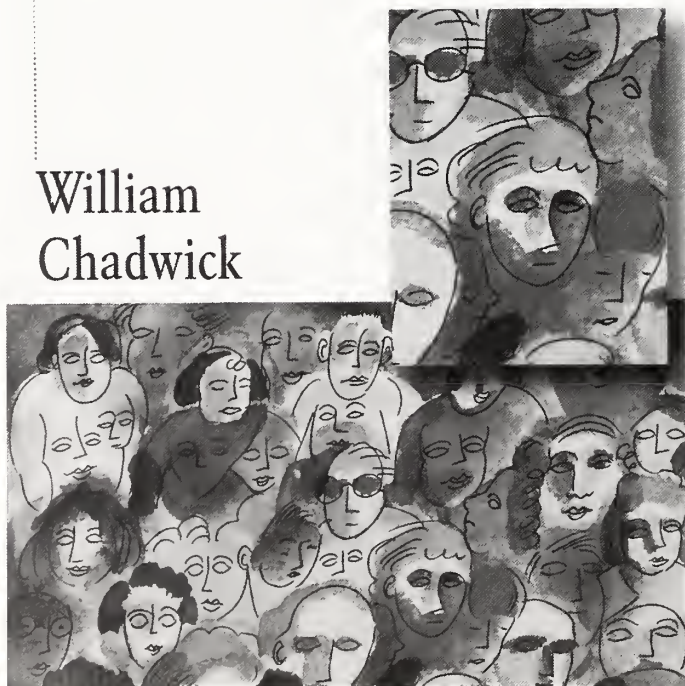
"Now, after many years of ministry, I wish to right a wrong. Sheep stealing as a church growth philosophy is a violation of Christian ethics. As a church growth tool it is unacceptable, for the honest result of simply recirculating the saints is no kingdom growth at all. The shifting of saints from one church to another is killing the church." (10)

In addition to exposing the church growth justification of "sheep stealing," Chadwick lays bare the raw nerves that have been cut by the experience. In a section titled "Killing Church Leaders" Chadwick exposes three dominant themes that kept recurring in pastoral interviews. They are the investment factor, hard hearts, and loss of mission. Each theme is described in detail



The Church's Hidden Problems  
with Transfer Growth

William  
Chadwick

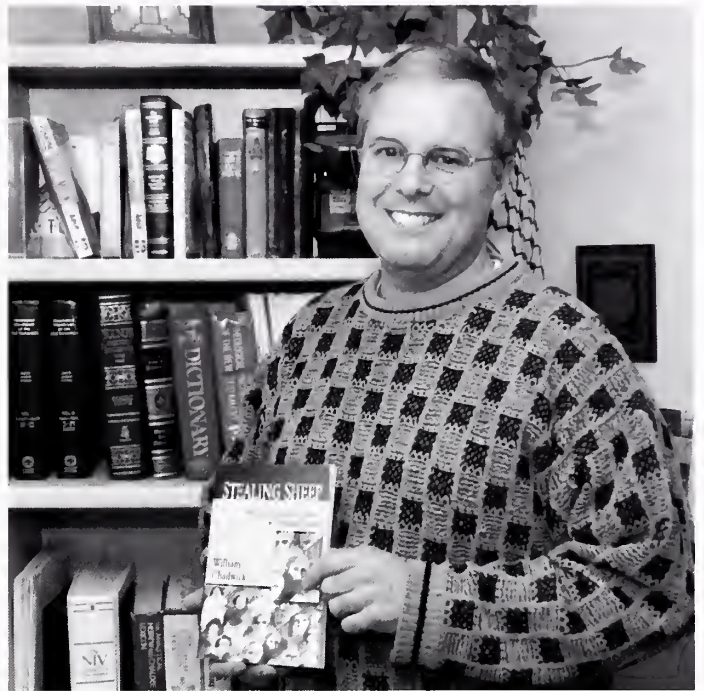




with supporting illustrations. Suffice to say, it is the feeling of rejection that resides in all of these themes. In summary, he says, "Although sheep stealing is only one of many reasons that pastors are leaving the ministry, I believe it to be a significant factor. Nothing erodes pastors' self-esteem or challenges their call more quickly than the loss of members from their charge. Satan glories in the pastoral killing fields created by transfer growth." (116).

There are legitimate reasons for transfer growth. Chadwick discusses them as well, but the thrust of the book is clearly in the direction of the problems left in the wake of the phenomenon.

Stealing Sheep is a powerful and challenging book. It needs to be read by pastors of small churches as well as large and growing ones. Pastor Chadwick has provided the church with a truth that has been hidden for too long. The book not only helps those of us who have experienced the "pain" to realize that others have been there too, but also challenges us to meet the challenge of compassionate confrontation and counsel when the temptation comes our way to welcome into our fellowship those troubled saints from the "church across town." †



*Rev. William Chadwick, author of Stealing Sheep.*

*Reprinted from the Fall 2001 issue of Henceforth...*

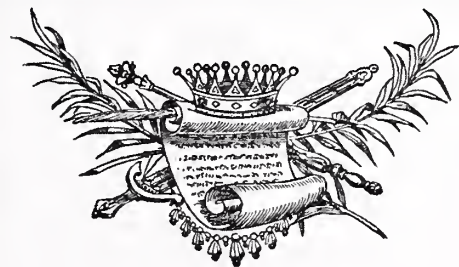
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**Henceforth**

Volume XXVII, Number 2  
Fall 2000

*"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of  
righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge,  
shall give me at that day" —2 Timothy 4:8*

## Logic Problem

There are five missionaries to five different countries. They each speak the language of their country fluently. Match their first and last names, countries, and favorite food. (You may have to make an educated guess after you fill in what you know.)

1. The five missionaries are: Louise, Foreman, the one who speaks Chinese, the one who likes cheese, and the one who likes pizza (who is not Elliston).
2. Baker doesn't like burgers, and Louise doesn't know French. (Note: Four missionaries are mentioned here.)
3. Neither Walter nor the missionary who likes shrimp can speak German; neither Walter nor Anderson is the Mexican missionary who likes burgers.
4. Joe and Foreman are friends with two of the others: Roy and the German missionary.
5. Joe and Anderson don't like shrimp. Joe is thinking of learning Italian.
6. Neither Coleson nor the missionary who likes shrimp can speak French.

	Anderson	Baker	Coleson	Elliston	Foreman	China	France	Germany	Italy	Mexico	Burgers	Cheese	Chicken	Pizza	Shrimp
Joe															
Louise															
Margaret															
Roy															
Walter															
Burgers															
Cheese															
Chicken															
Pizza															
Shrimp															
China															
France															
Germany															
Italy															
Mexico															

First Name	Last Name	Food	Country
Joe	_____	_____	_____
Louise	_____	_____	_____
Margaret	_____	_____	_____
Roy	_____	_____	_____
Walter	_____	_____	_____

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt. 19:14).





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

Decode the vowels to meet the senior staff at the Advent Christian General Conference.

a=u   e=i   i=o   o=a   u=e

Hozul Blockstinu - Wimun's Menestreus

Dweght Corpuntur - Stadunt Men./  
Luodurshep Duvulipmunt

Chut Hort - Rusiarcu Duvulipmunt

Horild Pottursin - Wirlid Messeins

Jihn Rillur - Arbon/Uthnec Menestreus

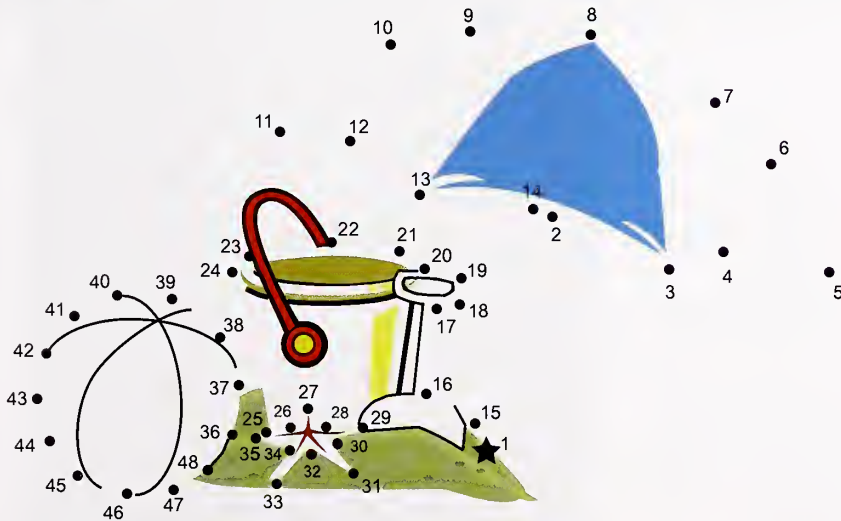
Doved Riss - Uxucatevu Deructir

Rechord Rassull - Charch Ruloteins

Jomus Smeth - Fenoncus/Survecus

Kueth Whootin - Pablecoteins

Connect the dots to see some things at the beach.



Fill in the missing words listed below to read the ACGC Mission Statement.

The Mission of the ACGC denominational

office is to \_\_\_\_\_

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i \_\_\_\_\_

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(Matthew 28:18-20).

of  
in  
in  
to  
and  
the  
both  
role  
help  
their  
local

Great  
Advent  
Christ  
succeed  
Christian  
fulfilling  
Commission  
collectively  
individually  
congregations



# What Women These

By Hazel Blackstone

THE PROCLAMATION BY LIBANIUS, a fourth century pagan philosopher, grabbed my attention. If the pagan world noticed the conduct of Christian women, they must have been doing something right! I wanted details, names, stories. But the quote stood in isolation under a chapter heading in a book I was reading. What did fourth century Christian women do to catch the eye of their world? I had to know. So began my journey to search for Christian female contemporaries of Libanius.

The search engine online revealed multiple sites containing his speeches. He was noted as the greatest orator of his time. I skimmed a few of his orations, but my search yielded little of what I yearned for.

I scanned my bookshelf, almost certain that my collection held a weakness in the area of church history, hoping a forgotten book might be tucked in among others. My eyes locked on a title that piqued my interest. As I perused the pages of *Great Christian Women of the Faith*, I found names of fourth century women unfamiliar to me. I chose one and began to read.

“Heavens! What women these Christians have!” the great pagan orator Libanius exclaimed in admiration when he learned about the self-sacrifice and purity of Anthusa.

The first sentence disclosed the name behind the quote—Anthusa.

Anthusa’s husband joined the Imperial Army of Syria and died shortly after, leaving the 20-year-old a widow with an infant son to raise. She possessed the means to give

her son a good education but didn’t want to raise him among the corruption of Antioch, her hometown. She concentrated her love, care, wealth and energies on her son, John, who displayed a high degree of intelligence and a gentle loving spirit even as a child. This mother believed her chief calling was to nurture him in the qualities of Christian character. She taught John a high respect for God’s word, “enthusiasm for good, moral energy, aversion to ostentation, zeal for justice and truth, and a steadfast faith.”

Anthusa did not marry again. She felt her child should come before her own happiness. A lover of Greek philosophers and poets, she transmitted





# Christians Have!



that love to her son. That's why she included as part of John's education a stint studying under the great orator, Libanius. Libanius watched the interaction of Anthusa and her son with interest. She left a telling impression upon the man who made no bones about his own lack of spiritual persuasion. His quote concerning the admirable Anthusa has survived through the centuries. And her son, John, became a great Christian leader, so renowned for his preaching that he earned the name Chrysostom, meaning, "Golden-Mouthed."

My thoughts returned to our post-modern world. How can 21st century women be influential in our soci-

ety? According to Ruth Deen, the author of the story, Anthusa taught "*Enthusiasm* for good, moral *energy*, aversion to ostentation, *zeal* for justice and truth, and a *steadfast* faith" in her homeschool curriculum. I want to catch the Anthusa spirit! Many times I return home after work feeling more like "dry bones!" The world can't help but notice women smitten with energy, enthusiasm, and zeal for their Lord. Women who:

- like Hannah, passionately believe in prayer
- like Esther, boldly stand for what's right
- like Ruth, are faithful friends
- like Elizabeth to Mary, the mother of Jesus, seek ways

to mentor younger women

- like Mary, sister of Martha, have insight to choose the best
- like the women who rose early to lovingly prepare Jesus' body, become enthusiastic messengers of the Easter story
- like Dorcas, profoundly love God and display servant hearts to those in need
- like Lydia, give God first place and exercise hospitality.

.....

A young lady stood in tears on our doorstep. She, her husband, and two young children had attended church for several years. A very attractive, well-dressed lady, from all appearances she seemed to have it altogether.

We invited her in and she told us her story. She was thirteen when her mother died of cancer. Her father committed suicide. Abandoned by both parents, an older relative assumed the role of guardian. A lifestyle of bad choices ensued. She looked for love in all the wrong places and found herself a pregnant teen. An abortion appeared the only way out. Things at home deteriorated and she ran off with her boyfriend, later experiencing abuse and bankruptcy before he, too, disappeared from her life. Her story continued with details of a life of poor choices. I found it hard to believe that someone who looked so together carried so much baggage! I wonder how many others sit in our pews with heavy loads.

My heart for younger women was born anew that

evening. I think we women sometimes have little patience with younger women's inability to commit themselves to our societies and service projects. The problem may be that many of them suffer spiritually and emotionally. A missionary addresses the physical needs of the nationals before gaining an audience to share the Gospel. We can learn a lesson from them. Attend to the needs of this culture so that we have spiritually healthy and functional women. We are advanced in our life-guard commitment to rescue the perishing in other countries, an admirable mindset! But we cannot afford to ignore those around us who are drowning or struggling to keep their heads above water. Perhaps we need to evaluate and come to a healthy balance in our approach to the Great Commission. It makes sense— ***Disciple women... disciple the world.***

I've entered a new decade of life. A lot of soul searching compels me to journey down a new, unfamiliar road. I'm not sure of the scenery—whether it will be picturesque, or a parched, barren desert, a smooth ride, or rocky and bumpy terrain. I've been commissioned to start with my Jerusalem—women in my hometown—to look for entry points into their lives, to invite them to walk in, nose around and curl up by the hearth of my heart, then to expand beyond my borders. The pagan world waits. I hope I don't travel this road alone. I'd like nothing better than for you to catch the Anthonia spirit and join me for the journey. †

*Hazel Blackstone is the Women's Ministries Coordinator of the Advent Christian General Conference.*

## Did You Know...

- The average WHFMS local is made up of sixteen members.
- There are approximately 107 WHFMS locals.
- Seventy-four WHFMS achieved Honor status for the 2001-year.
- For all purposes WHFMS raises about \$230,000 per year (from locals who reported in 2002).
- A National Coordinator directs the work of the WHFMS from an office at the Advent Christian General Conference in Charlotte, N.C.



- The WHFMS has been a powerful arm of the denomination since 1897.
- From 1906 until 1956 the WHFMS had full responsibility of the work in India.
- “Christmas in October” is a special project of the WHFMS to give missionaries and national workers Christmas gifts.
- The WHFMS contributes inspirational articles for the *AC Witness* and news clips for the *AC News*.
- The National Office produces various materials to assist each local in reaching its potential to the glory of God.
- WHFMS writes yearly programming for children, teen girls and women.
- Any Advent Christian woman may become a member of this active organization.
- The fourth Sunday in September is designated by our denomination as WHFMS (Women’s) Sunday.

*“A woman with a helper heart is willing to bleed love as long as necessary to reach her world for Jesus” (Susan Hunt).*



***Prayerfully consider the plight of women around the world:***

- ❖ An estimated 15 million women around the world are infected with HIV.
- ❖ Fifty percent of homeless women are fleeing battering relationships.
- ❖ Twenty-five to thirty-five percent of battered women are pregnant.
- ❖ In Papua New Guinea, 61 to 70 percent of homicide victims are women.
- ❖ In the US, 30 percent of female murder victims are killed by a man in the family or a boyfriend.
- ❖ In Mexico, it’s estimated that 70 percent of women have been beaten. The reports are similar for Korea, Thailand, and Peru.
- ❖ Eighty percent of women in one US prison are there for crimes related to having been battered.
- ❖ In Afghanistan, women have the lowest life expectancy in the world: 41 years. Also, 94 percent of women are illiterate. Women have an average of 6.9 children.
- ❖ In Iran the legal age of execution of girls is 10; for boys it is 16.
- ❖ Women in the US attempt suicide three times more often than men, but they succeed only one-fourth as often.
- ❖ Millions of females have been eradicated through selective abortion of female fetuses and through neglect or murder of baby girls.
- ❖ In every country of the world, employed women make lower salaries than their male counterparts. Japan has the lowest ratio, with women making 50 cents on the male dollar, and Sweden the highest, with 89 cents. †

*Statistics taken from Mission Mosaics, July 1997.*





# WITNESS

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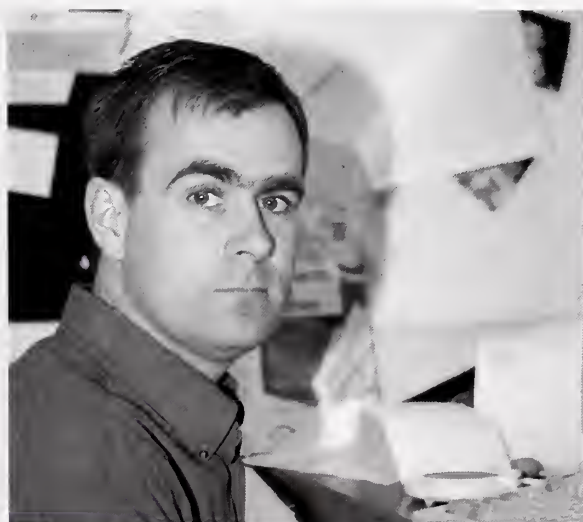
# From the Editor

## When the Gospel is not enough

Last year I visited Tecate Bible Institute (now called Seminario Teológico de Baja California) in Mexico. I had heard good things about the school and, since many Advent Christians visit and support it, was eager to verify the reports. I was not disappointed. The modest campus was equipped with an outstanding faculty; students and alumni appeared to possess exceptional spiritual depth and maturity. By all accounts, any contribution to the school's ministry was an investment in eternity. I left Tecate convinced of two things: they were engaged in a great work; and, Advent Christian General Conference should not fund it. Yes, they were spreading the Gospel but they weren't Advent Christians.

Tecate is one example of many fine ministries Advent Christians may support. Ed Whitford, founder of Tecate, and I had a friendly discussion regarding the school's association with Advent Christians. He made it clear that the school had no intentions of being an Advent Christian institution. That is not to say he wasn't appreciative of all that Advent Christians were doing to support the work.

*(Continued on page 25)*



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**On the cover:  
mother and child from our  
newest church in Malawi**  
photo by Frank Jewett



# The road to

# road

# to





# Malawi

By Rev. Frank R. Jewett



"This VW Golf is just the vehicle to get us down this road," I said as we bumped along. "This is a road isn't it? I've been on beaches in Maine with less sand than the roads we're plowing through in Malawi!"

My heart goes out to the old men that I see trying to negotiate sand dunes with their balloon-tired bicycles. A plume of dust in the distance signals an approaching vehicle. Shutting ourselves in the hot car with closed windows as we pass it seems to be the lesser of two evils—taking in a mouth full of hot air is preferable to inhaling dust any time.

I was told it would take "only" six more hours to get to Nsanje. Pastor Peter responds to a question about the remoteness of the village by saying, "Nsanje is as far away as anyone can get in the world." But, didn't Jesus tell us to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth? I'm glad to be part of a denomination that wants to obey him.

I met Pastor Peter Ndamba a few weeks earlier at the North Scituate Advent Christian church in Rhode Island. While serving as speaker at a missions conference, Rev. Scott Aiken introduced me to Pastor Peter. He is from Zimbabwe and has a God-given burden for the poor Christians in the neighboring countries of Malawi and Mozambique. He'd traveled these rough roads several times, carrying aid and materials from caring people in the West.

Pastor Peter had recently visited the area near the Zambezi River to help the survivors of a horrible flood. I had difficulty imagining fifteen feet of water covering the dry lowlands through which we traveled. Only the love of Christ could bring a man like Peter fifteen hours from his home to that area where the two countries share a border. The more I was around this gracious man, the more I grew to appreciate how God's love overflows from his heart to the Malawi people.

Pastor Peter works at a Full Apostolic Church located near the capitol of Zimbabwe. At our first visit he gave me a document he thought I might find interesting. It listed several churches in Malawi and Mozambique that are called "Advent Christian." As Peter spoke about them, it became obvious that these believers he'd met were as enthusiastic about the Second Advent of Christ as I am. But I wondered, "How could Advent Christian churches be in Malawi? Shouldn't I be aware of this as the region's Area Director?" I called our Director of World Missions, Hal Patterson, to ask if he'd heard of these churches. He had not. We discussed whether a visit might be appropriate.

*(Continued on page 14)*

# From Seattle to South Africa

By Rev. Clio Thomas



*Rev. Clio Thomas with  
Ghanaian pastor  
Emmanuel Barwon  
and family*



**M**y adventure began on Sunday, August 12, at the Kidd Valley Hamburger stand on the third level at Safeco Field in Seattle, Washington. Frank Jewett and I were picking up some food before the start of a Mariners–White Sox game (which the Mariners won!) Frank had been our evening speaker at camp, where he told stories about his adventures in Africa as the Area Director of Advent Christian Missions. We talked about his trips and I asked when he was going again. “Probably in November,” he answered, and went on to say that one or two of the fellows he was counting on going with him were bailing out. He asked if I’d like to go. I said I’d think about it. Before long I committed to go and began preparations: getting shots, a visa to Ghana, travel insurance, airline tickets, planning curriculum, ordering books, and lining up people to pray, which was the most important part.

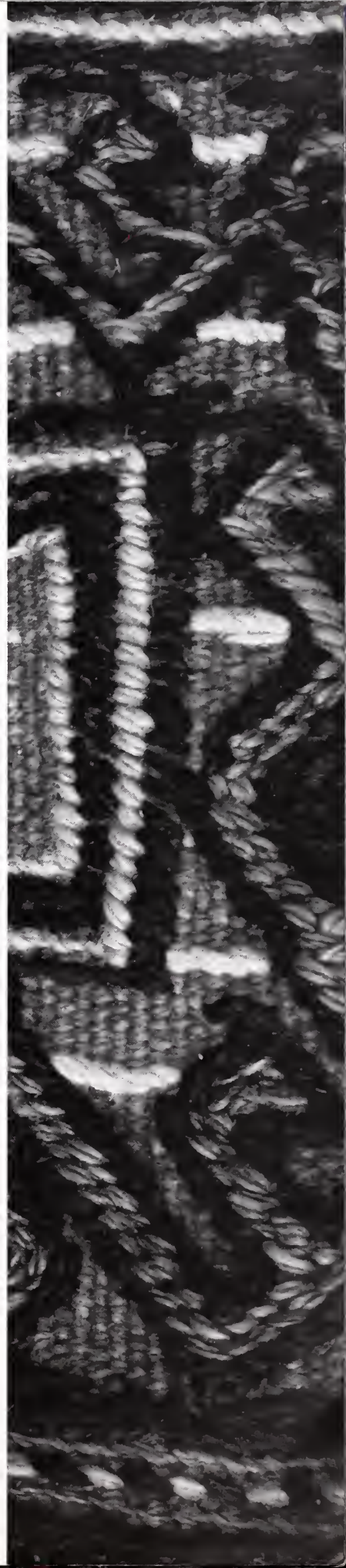
I was to be the teacher of pastors in two of the African countries where we have Advent Christian churches. Pastors were lined up to come to Accra, Ghana for five days, and to Johannesburg, South Africa for five days. I’d teach two sessions on Advent Christian Theology each morning, Monday through Friday. The afternoons would be used for study time to prepare for the following day. Evenings would be set aside for discussion of issues facing the pastors and churches, and for prayer and worship.

From the beginning, I had a settled peace that this was what God wanted me to do; then came September 11 and the terrible events in New York City, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania. Even then, I had a strong sense that our trip was of God and, unless the world situation got much worse, it should not be cancelled. People in the West Valley Church, where I serve, and throughout the world were praying for us.

On Friday, November 23, 2001, I left home at 10:30 P.M., with my wife Kathleen, and Tom and Nelda Lobb. They accompanied me to SeaTac Airport to see me off. I departed at 12:55 A.M., November 24 and arrived in New York at JFK Airport at 9:00 A.M. There I met Frank Jewett and Harold (Hat) Turner. We had dinner and left JFK on a Ghana Airways flight at 4:00 P.M. (9:00 P.M., Ghanaian time). Ten hours later we were on the ground at Accra, Ghana—at 7:00 A.M.

By then it was Sunday. We checked through immigration at Accra and got in a very long line to get our bags. Mine came through, but Frank and Hat’s did not. We reported the lost bags to a man who seemed to be an airline employee (at least he had a badge).

We then went through customs and outside to see if anyone was waiting for us. No one was there, so we proceeded to find a taxi to go to the hotel. That was *very* interesting. Frank talked with one man who seemed to be the dispatcher of the cabs. What ensued was a big argument between eight or ten drivers about





who would take us. The dispatcher put us in a van that had only one back seat that wasn't even bolted down. By then, all the prospective drivers had gathered around the van and were yelling at each other about who should be the driver. One man got into the driver's seat, but couldn't leave until the dispatcher took a lock off the left front wheel. We sped away as the yelling continued.

In about twenty minutes we arrived at our hotel near the beach. We got cleaned up and had dinner. I'd been traveling for two days with only a few hours sleep. Frank and Hat had no luggage except their carry-ons. Frank had one change of clothes, and his bag came on Monday. Hat's had not yet arrived by Thursday, so he bought a couple pairs of pants and t-shirts at the hotel shop.

The hotel was nice and the food good, presenting no problems health-wise. The meeting room in the hotel was quite comfortable. Everything was air conditioned, but our room unit worked poorly. We didn't complain. The temperatures outside were between 90 and 105 degrees during the day, cooling to 80 degrees at night.

I knew that the culture in Ghana would be very different from anything I'd experienced. I've seen poverty among the Palestinians in Lebanon and Israel, but it's nothing compared to Ghana, except maybe in the Jericho refugee camp. A Ghanaian family of five lives on about \$300 a year. In Liberia, where they've just been through a war, it's more like \$150. I couldn't help but think how many families of five could live on what an average Seattleite spends on lattes each year.



*Rev. Thomas congratulates a pastor training seminar participant.*



We gave the pastors money for their meals at the hotel. Instead, they went outside to get a little rice and then saved the rest of the money to take home to their wives and children. It broke our hearts. They are so committed to Jesus and to ministry, and all have to work at other jobs to make a living. One young man, named Prince, had just lost his job and was told by his landlord that he must pay 2,000,000 CDs (\$300 U.S. dollars) to cover his rent for the next three years. One US dollar is worth 7,000 CDs.

We saw the villages where the families live: mud brick or concrete blockhouses, one or two rooms, and dirt floors with mats. One village we saw consisted of rows and rows of dilapidated steel shipping containers with doors cut into their ends and families living inside. In stark contrast to this we were amazed to see them come to class, dressed in nicely pressed shirts and pants, and the women in nice dresses. Looking nice is very important to them.

The village we visited was Kuchikrum where we have an Advent Christian church. The village has a small school where children attend for only two or three years. There are no stores or markets, no doctors, no public sanitation or central water supply. Water comes from nearby streams and is not good for drinking. Children, goats, chickens, and rats share the areas outside the homes. In fact, we saw a little girl get bitten by a rat at a church welcoming ceremony.

We were welcomed by the chief in a small area under some trees where they'd placed benches for the chief, his elders, and us, their guests. Welcoming speeches were given. It was obvious the place was cleaned up for the event—there was no litter anywhere to be seen in the village center. A few hundred feet away we saw plenty. Friendly children were everywhere, wanting to hold our hands and walk with us. When we were arriving or leaving in the van, they called out and gave us the “thumbs up” sign. When we responded in kind, they laughed and giggled with delight.

There were pastors and wives from Ghana, some who live in Ghana but who are Nigerian. One man, Abraham David, was there from Liberia. The Liberians and Nigerians are better educated and tend to be the leaders. During the classes the Nigerians asked most of the questions and made the most comments. Sometimes I asked a Ghanaian to read a Scripture or to respond to a question; however, a few of them do not read or write.

Ghanaian seemed to be most responsive to the teaching, and were particularly animated when it came to a study on wisdom and another on Advent Christian theology—especially the resurrection of the body and Second Coming of Jesus. Some of the men are very bright and very interested in building a strong Ghanaian Advent Christian Church. They need training, Bibles, books, and teaching materials. Ghanaian leadership is developing. Of the five officers elected during the week, three were Ghanaian, including the president.







*Rev. Thomas presents a certificate of training to pastor Emmanuel Barwon*

On Friday we gave Certificates of Completion to fifteen of the leaders who completed all the classes. It meant a lot to them. They are hungry for any affirmation, and have so little of anything.

Friday evening we packed, left the hotel and headed to the airport. When we got to the ticketing area we were quite surprised to discover that our Ghana Airways tickets would no longer be honored by South Africa Airways! Their shared agreement was cancelled by South African Airways earlier that week. We decided to return to the hotel and come back Saturday night to catch a Ghana Air flight to Johannesburg. The extra night at the hotel was a blessing, giving us needed rest. We flew out on Saturday night and arrived in Johannesburg on Sunday morning.

God worked out the details, and our hosts did all they could to take care of us. The first four sessions of teaching in South Africa were carefully planned. We set the stage with the nature of God in all his holiness, power, supremacy, and wisdom. Next, we studied Ephesians chapter one about our destiny planned by God from creation—that we should be redeemed and be “in Christ.” Then we looked at Jesus as the Word become flesh, and how God visited this planet in Jesus to redeem creation. Finally, we looked at the unique nature of the Church as God’s ecclesia (his community, Christ’s “body”). We discovered that the mission God has for the Church is the same as that of his Son, Jesus: to proclaim the gospel of deliverance and release.

*(continued on page 12)*

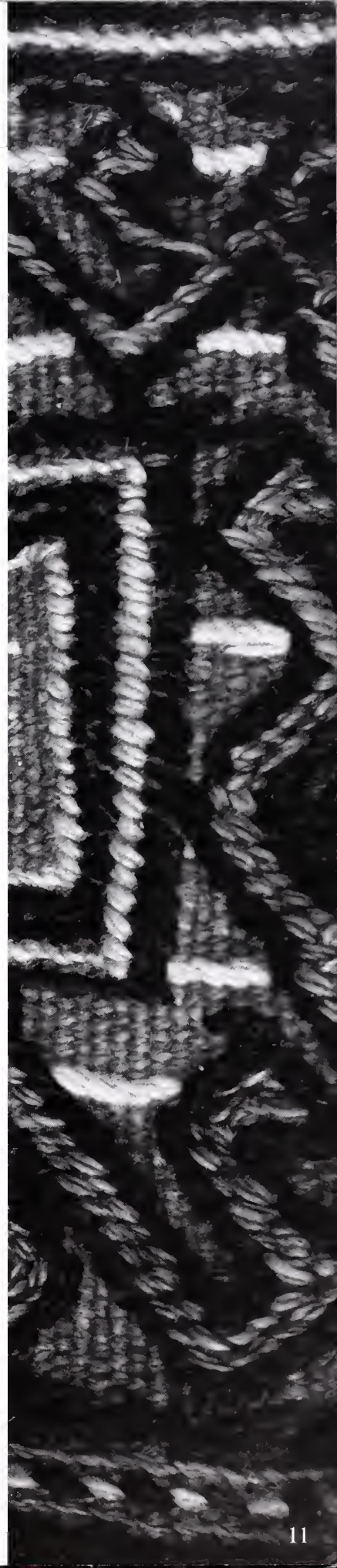


# Clio's reflections:

As I've thought back on those two weeks, several things stand out in my mind:

1. The deep faith of the pastors in Ghana and South Africa.
2. Their passion to win the lost to Christ.
3. Their commitment to make disciples, especially in South Africa.
4. Their willingness to work for so little as far as this world's goods are concerned.
5. The need for the American church to be more "lean and mean." We need leaders that are more focused, proactive, and willing to "get their hands dirty." We can't lead only from the pulpit, but must be in the trenches with our people, showing them how to do ministry. We must be leaders in prayer and other spiritual disciplines that nurture a vital, burning faith in Jesus. Instead of just talking about these things we must model them. The people will go no farther than their leaders.
6. We must find ways of partnering with our African comrades in Christ. They need some of our resources and we need their passion and to learn from their successes. We must become more at one with the Church throughout the world.
7. It is imperative that we help with scholarships, books, and other study and teaching aids for these leaders and churches.
8. The Advent Christian General Conference needs to find ways of using these people to teach and train us in the ministry methods that they are finding effective and productive.
9. More of us should be giving up lattes and snacks here, so we can put the money in a special fund for the support of works overseas that could build incentive and rapport.
10. We need to find ways to seek each other's prayer support. Maybe some of these overseas folk could be on the IF Team (Intercessory Forces).

After being in Africa I'm motivated to pray as Mother Teresa: "Help us, O loving Father, to take whatever you give, and to give whatever you take with a big smile. Amen."





*(from Seattle cont.)*

The men latched onto these concepts and seemed thrilled with what God is doing in the world. In a morning prayer session, Nathan Fernando prayed, "Father, thanks for these men coming here with their teaching, and for all the people who have given to make this possible. We could not have purchased what we are receiving even if we had thousands of dollars."

The pastors know that the task of the Church is to win people to Jesus, to assist them in growing from spiritual infancy to maturity, to help them discover their gifts, and to become effective ministers of the gospel of Christ. The men asked us for teaching materials on spiritual gift discovery and discipleship training; we must get these into their hands. The church will grow even faster if they have good materials to use.

During the last of our class time, discussion centered on the Resurrection of the Dead and the Second Coming of Christ. Most of the pastors seemed to understand the simplicity and significance of those key Biblical truths, except for two who were hung up on speculative theories about a Pre-tribulation Rapture, Tribulation, Millennium, and Mark of the Beast. The others seemed thrilled with the ideas we presented about a more-or-less simultaneous occurrence of Christ's return, the raising of the dead, the catching up of the church, the descent of the holy city, the cleansing of the earth, and the arrival of the saints with Jesus and the Holy City to live with him forever and ever. †

*Rev. Clio Thomas is pastor of West Valley Advent Christian Church, Auburn, WA. Recently he was appointed Area Director of Asia/Pacific Advent Christian Missions, overseeing our missions in India, China, Japan, New Zealand, Malaysia, and the Philippines.*



*Rev. Frank Jewett and Rev. Clio Thomas recognize Moses Angbongi's participation in the pastoral training seminars.*



# Pastor's Mentoring Program

*We have had many requests from our overseas fields that what they need most is training for their pastors in the various functions and duties of a pastor. In response to this, the World Missions Department is seeking to enlist pastors who'd be willing to serve as teachers and mentors to our national pastors overseas.*

➤ ***Who are we looking for?***

Pastors who would be willing to visit our mission fields to teach at pastors' conferences, retreats, training seminars, and to be guest faculty at our Bible colleges. Assignments will be based on education and experience.

➤ ***What subjects are needed to be taught?***

Pastoral theology	Church growth	Homiletics
Stewardship	Youth work	AC doctrine
Studies on various Bible books providing sermon ideas		

➤ ***How much time is involved?***

A period of one to two weeks, which may involve one or more fields

➤ ***How would it be financed?***

Participating pastors will be asked to pay for:

- air and land transportation
- pre-travel costs (passport, visas, shots, etc.)
- any material used in the seminars
- housing costs, depending on whether formal conf. or a field visit

➤ ***How do you start?***

Contact the World Missions office,  
worldmissions@adventchristian.org  
or (704) 545-6161, expressing your willingness to be involved and the dates that you are available.

➤ ***Will you go alone?***

No, you will be part of a team lead by an Area Director or appointed Mission representative

➤ ***What about the language requirement?***

In most of the fields that we are recruiting for, attendees will understand English. In those fields where English is not the primary language for the seminar, the Mission will provide interpreters. Handouts would need to be translated in advance.



(Malawi cont.)

Our dusty drive was drawing to a close, and the vehicle had developed a front-end suspension problem. It crawled along slowly the last twenty miles, with the tire rubbing every time it emerged from another large pothole. We booked a room at an establishment the locals called a "motel." The manager headed off on a bicycle to find us a mechanic. I thought to myself, "It's going to take more than forty-five minutes for the AAA man to find us here! Surely, there is no tow-truck within a hundred miles; there are hardly any car sightings." Incredibly, a mechanic was found. After an hour of banging and welding, our vehicle was declared "good to go"—all for about \$7.00. I thanked God as we drove to the motel to meet Pastor Paul Sosono.

The paper on the lobby table was two weeks old, featuring a story about a traditional medicine man's supposed cure of AIDS. That subject is in the air in Malawi. Signs along the road advertise condoms as frequently as we see signs along U.S. highways advertising Burger King. A booklet Pastor Peter authored contends that the HIV/AIDS epidemic could be stopped if we would all allow Jesus to "give us his morality."

I found Pastor Paul Sosono to be a gentle man with a broad smile. He has dedicated himself to working with people in what most of us would consider unacceptable living conditions. The country is being ravaged by AIDS and is still recovering from the terrible devastation of flood. In the midst of this trouble, God has called this humble man to share Jesus and oversee a group of churches he calls "Advent Christian." He and his wife, Angelina, have three children: Isaac, Mary, and Patricia.

When Paul received Christ he was adamant about his faith. He noticed that many men who claimed to be believers had three wives, and he challenged their practice. Consequently, he was pushed away; so he began praying with six other men. They prayed and prayed. "What would you have us do?" they asked the Lord. God eventually multiplied their group into several congregations. They became concerned to find a denominational "connection" so that they could be viewed as legitimate by their government.

In 1999, Paul Sosono read an article by Val Halloran in *Above Rubies* magazine. A biographical note mentioned that her husband was the pastor of New Hope Advent Christian Church in Bell, Florida. So, Pastor Paul wrote and inquired about what they believed. Pastor Halloran responded, "We follow the Bible." Pastor Sosono appreciated that answer and

the Bible study materials the Hallorans later sent him. Establishing contact with Americans who emphasized Biblical authority was very encouraging to those African believers, and they inquired about officially affiliating with Advent Christians.

Before going with Pastors Paul and Peter to visit one of the churches, I felt the need for a walk. On the way to the Nsanje market area, I passed under what I call a "Pelican tree." The arboreal was a kind of high-rise apartment complex for at least twenty stork and pelican families. The white frosted tree had over forty birds in it, with some huge nests. Some of the birds are the size of turkeys. As I bought crackers and a bottle of water at the market I asked, "Lord, are you adding to my

responsibilities another branch of the AC family tree?" It was time to check out that church!

Our trusty car seemed strong as we headed back onto the sandy road. We'd driven only a few miles when Pastor Peter slowed the car and declared that we'd arrived. I could see nothing but shoulder-high grass on both sides of the road. No hint of a driveway to a church, or any other building for that matter. An occasional hut or giant termite pile could be seen out on the range in the midst of the groves of acacia trees, but I could see no reason to stop there.



*Above the platform in our newest African church*

Pastor Peter barely paused before he made a left-hand turn over the edge of the road and onto the plain. We drove through the grass following a path that he alone could see, then stopped in a yard in front of two mud brick buildings. The first was Pastor Paul's home. We climbed out of the car and were greeted by a sea of smiling faces. We learned that some of the people had been awaiting our arrival for several days. At the adjacent building I was introduced to several other pastors who are leaders at "Advent Christian Member" churches.

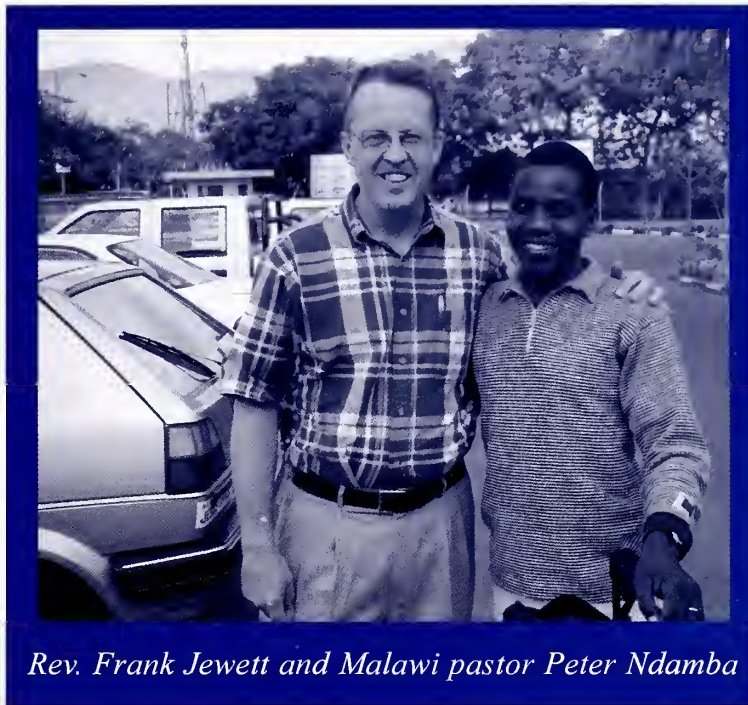
I was warned to lower my head as I entered the building because of the low door. (Or maybe it was the tall head!) It was a surprise to find that the pews, platform and pulpit were all made of mud, but it was a beautiful church. The building quickly filled with people, some of whom seemed quite fascinated by my light skin. I could feel their love and acceptance immediately.

As I stepped up to the platform, I was filled with assurance that this was indeed a portion of the work the Lord has assigned me. The writing was literally on the front wall: in white letters, about five inches high, were the words, "New Hope Advent Christian Church." I wept when I saw them; God had brought me to my destination.



Our family tree is growing. I found sixteen Advent Christian churches in that area. Eight are on the Malawi side of the river. Eight others are on the Mozambique side, but flooded roads prevented me from visiting them. Since my return, another church has been added to their number, and Malawi has been recognized as our newest Advent Christian mission field. Our General Conference office has sent them literature describing our Biblical convictions and theological distinctives; and, we hope we can eventually return to conduct some training sessions.

While at the Triennial Session in Virginia, in June, I had the privilege to sit with another man who has a heart for the people of the Nsanje region! Dr. Clive Calver, President of World Relief, informed me that he intended to make this same trip to Malawi very soon. He told me that instead of the devastation of flood, our brothers and sisters there are now under the curse of famine. This is a country of extremes. He predicted that before the end of August 2002 over one million people in that part of the world will die of starvation. Malawi may be far away, but through our prayers and gifts you and I can reach out to these newly discovered brothers and sisters. †



*Rev. Frank Jewett and Malawi pastor Peter Ndamba*

*Rev. Frank Jewett is area director for Advent Christian missions in Africa and Europe. He is also associate pastor of the Advent Christian Church, Oxford, ME.*

# Facts about Malawi\*



Population:	10,548,250
Life expectancy at birth:	37.08 years
HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:	15.96% (1999 est.)
Literacy:	58% (1999 est.)
Area - comparative:	slightly smaller than Pennsylvania
Natural resources:	limestone, arable land, hydropower, uranium, coal, and bauxite
Climate:	sub-tropical; rainy season (November to May); dry season (May to November)
Population below poverty line:	54% (FY90/91 est.)
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	29.5% (2000)
Highways:	total: 16,451 km (paved: 3,126 km unpaved: 13,325 km (1997))
Languages:	English (official), Chichewa (official), other languages important regionally

\*as recorded in the CIA World Factbook 2001

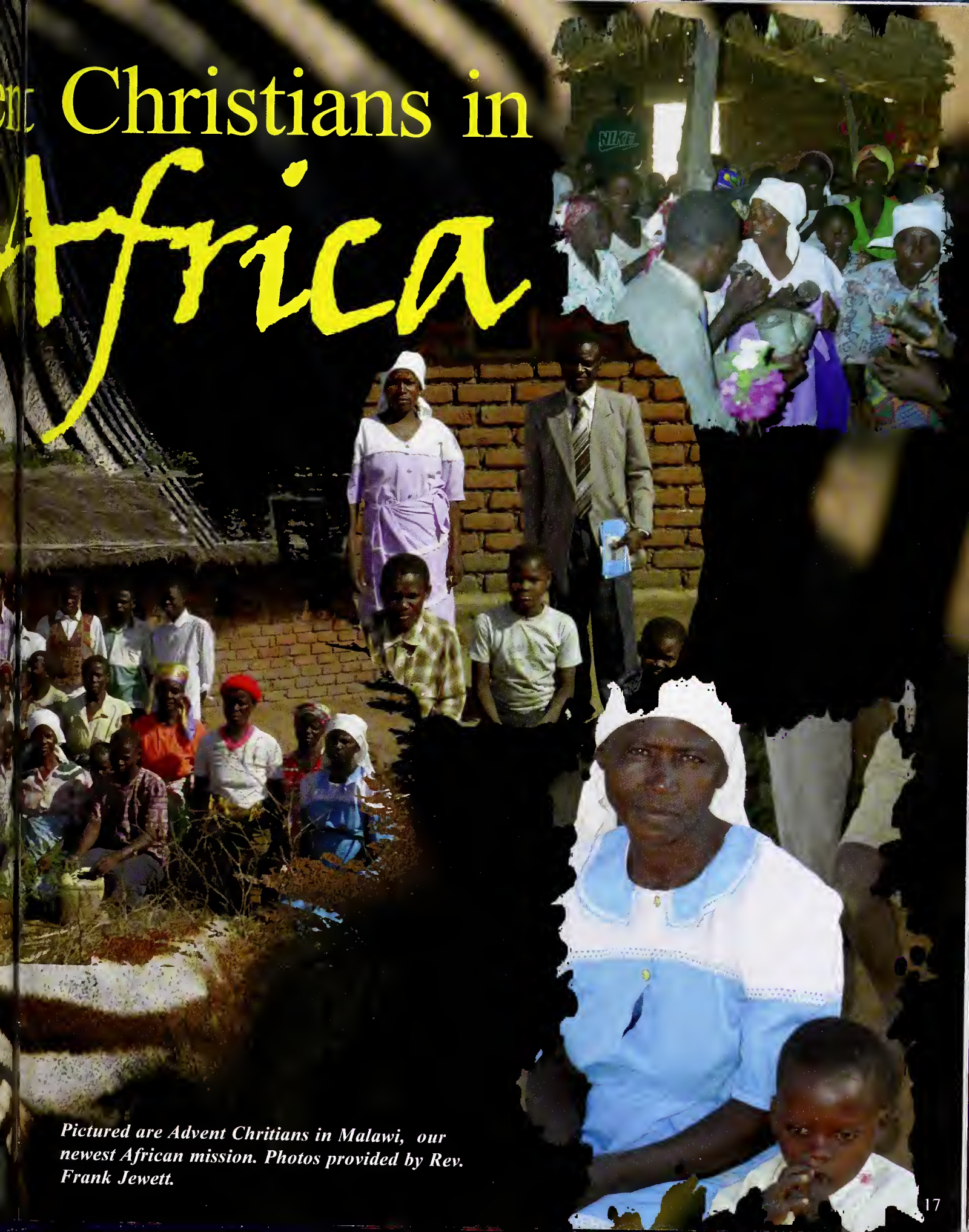


Advent





# Christians in Africa



*Pictured are Advent Christians in Malawi, our newest African mission. Photos provided by Rev. Frank Jewett.*



# HOPE

## AMID AFRICA'S AIDS CRISIS

By Dr. Clive Calver, President, World Relief

Bonnie Mukagihana weeps as she tells her horrific story. During the genocide in Rwanda eight years ago, Bonnie was forced to watch as soldiers butchered her husband and five of her eight children. The soldiers raped her repeatedly. Finally, they thrust a bayonet deep into her body, killing the unborn baby inside.

Today, Bonnie bears the deep physical and psychological scars of these atrocities. The knife slashes are clearly visible on her body, but perhaps the most dreadful scar is unseen - Bonnie has HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

"Many times, I have wondered why God allowed me to live, because life holds no meaning for me," she says.

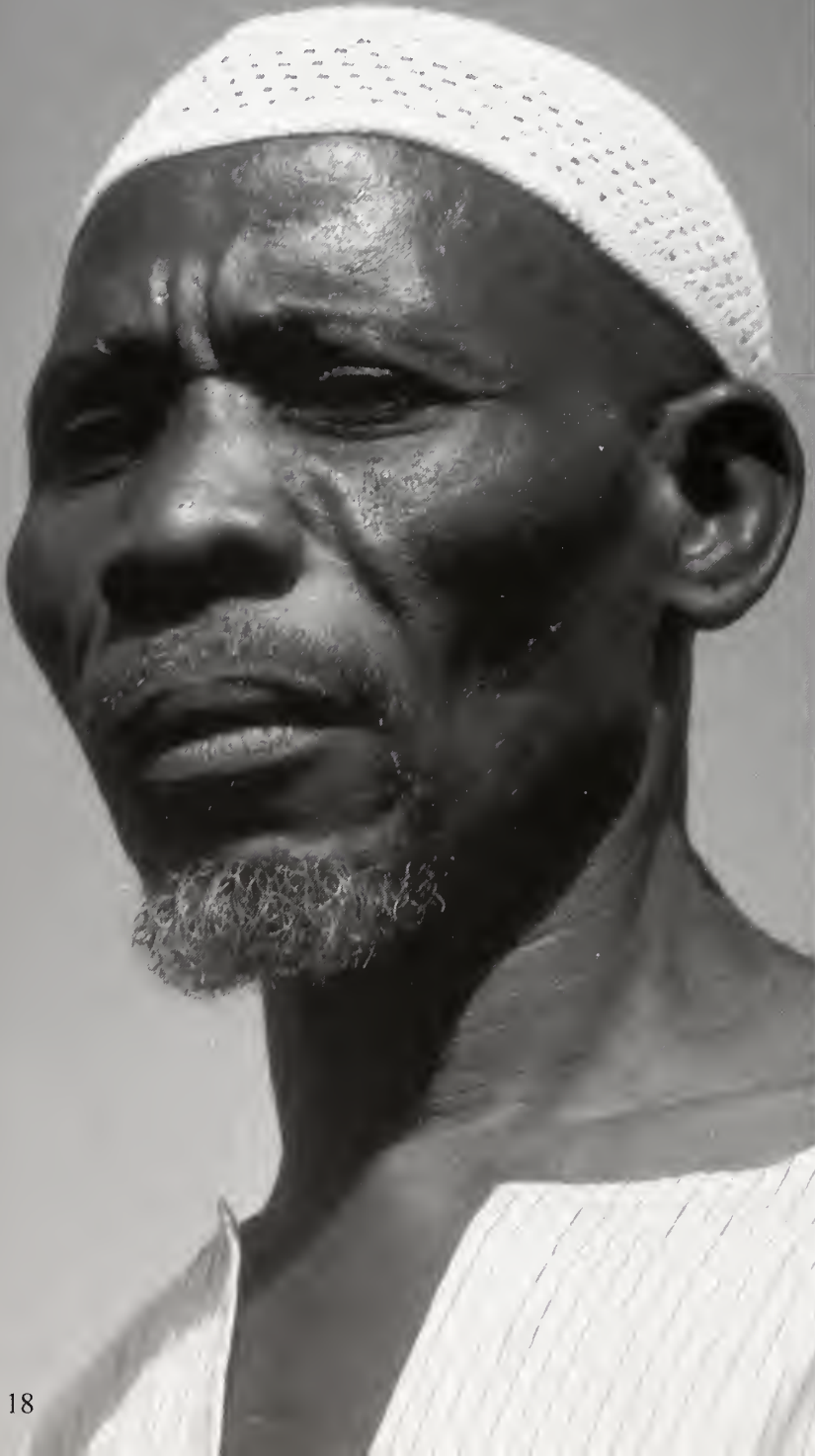
### The Scourge of AIDS

Across Africa, suffering people identify with Bonnie's despair. Their stories might not be as dramatic; their agony not as intense, but they know the dread of living with AIDS.

*AIDS is the leading cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa.* The United Nations describes AIDS as "the most devastating disease humankind has ever faced."

The statistics are bleak. Today, 28.5 million Africans south of the Sahara have HIV/AIDS. In some areas, as many as *one in three* people has HIV/AIDS. Last year, there were almost 3.5 million new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa alone...that's 9,590 every day. There is still no vaccine. Only aggressive prevention efforts will slow its spread.

Like a stealthy enemy, HIV often goes undetected until full-blown AIDS develops. Meanwhile, millions of vulnerable people know nothing - or too little - about HIV to protect themselves.





# The Legacy of AIDS

Across Africa, AIDS is taking a terrible toll. When parents fall sick, they can no longer work to support the family, and children struggle to care for their bed-ridden parents. Many of the sick suffer in silence without even an aspirin to ease their pain.

When parents die, young children are usually left to fend for themselves. The fortunate ones are adopted by extended family, but the burden of extra mouths to feed is often too great. In cities and villages, orphans as young as six or seven sleep on the streets, huddled together on beds of cardboard. These children live hand-to-mouth and are highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

In Malawi, 12-year-old Luke Duncan and his 15-year-old brother are raising three younger siblings, doing odd jobs to earn a few cents to buy food. It's a perilous day-to-day battle for survival. "Every day, we ask God to give us food," Luke says.

Luke is one of the staggering 11 million children in Africa who have lost their mother, or both parents, to AIDS. By 2010, the number of orphans is projected to increase to 42 million – that's greater than the entire population of California.

## AIDS and the Poor

As AIDS sweeps through Africa, the poorest of the poor are the hardest-hit. Odeth Mukasine is a widow in Rwanda. Like thousands of women in Africa, she is desperately trying to care for her young children – alone. Odeth also has HIV.

Her family's tiny one-room mud house has two chairs and a small table. Odeth used to make \$5 a week selling goods at the local market. But now she doesn't have the strength to work because AIDS is weakening her body. With no regular income, Odeth struggles to pay the rent. And she bears the crushing anxiety of what will happen to her three children when she dies. "It scares me to think they will become street children," she whispers.

For Odeth and countless thousands like her, there is no safety net - no government welfare system. Struggling mothers, their meager resources stretched to the limit, face a seemingly unsolvable dilemma: how do they feed their children?

Odeth often begs for money. Some mothers are so desperate they sell their bodies, further spreading HIV.

## AIDS and Famine

The famine currently threatening Southern Africa puts an estimated 12.8 million people at risk in six countries. The high rates of HIV/AIDS exacerbate the effects of the drought by further reducing family income. The collapse of social safety nets leaves people vulnerable.

In Malawi, Chipiliro Malithano is caring for her six young grandchildren since their parents died of AIDS. As food becomes scarce after widespread



crop failures, this grandmother's burdens grow heavier. "Pray that I will live long enough to raise my grandchildren," she earnestly tells local church leaders.

## Hope Despite AIDS

The situation might appear hopeless. *But there is hope for Africa's afflicted millions. Hope is being delivered by the Church.*

Churches are rising to the enormous challenge, and throughout Africa, churches partnering with World Relief are making a dramatic difference in their AIDS-ravaged communities. As local Christians help their needy neighbors in Jesus' name, hurting families are experiencing the hands-on compassion of Christ.

African pastor Vincent Ilboudo says: "Previously for me, AIDS was a worldly matter, a payback for sin, but now I am convinced that the Church should seek those affected by AIDS with acceptance, compassion and a message of hope."

To equip churches to do this, World Relief launched *Mobilizing for Life*, an AIDS ministry that empowers churches to care for orphans, widows and the sick by providing vital practical support, food, friendship, encouragement and counseling.

Equipped with Scripture-focused materials, pastors and trained church members visit the sick, counsel the suffering, and present the Gospel, giving many AIDS-afflicted families new hope in Jesus.

*Mobilizing for Life* also equips church leaders to educate their congregations and communities about HIV/AIDS and promote godly behavior. Through a Bible-based curriculum, churches show Africa's vulnerable youth that God has a higher purpose for their lives - a calling to purity and holiness.

AIDS-affected families struggling with the sudden loss of steady income receive a crucial hand-up from World Relief's small loan program. They use the money to start or expand modest income-generating ventures, so they can afford food, shelter and basic healthcare - restoring dignity and a sense of self-worth.

## Jesus: Africa's True Hope

Despite the desperation in sub-Saharan Africa, the Church shines as a beacon of hope in a variety of ways. But most importantly, the Church offers the only true hope - Jesus.

As Christ's followers, we - the body of believers worldwide - must be Jesus' hands and feet and help Africa's AIDS-afflicted families. At this critical moment in history, the hurting people of Africa are looking to the Church. Together, we are the Church. *And Jesus is looking straight at you and me.* †

*Dr. Clive Calver is President of World Relief, the international assistance arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, representing churches across America. For more information, call toll-free 1-800-535-5433 or visit online at [www.worldrelief.org](http://www.worldrelief.org)*



*Dr. Clive Calver, as he addresses the 2002 Triennial Convention of Advent Christian General Conference.*



# Desire Ahola: our man in Eastern Europe

*A decade ago Rev. Harold Patterson, director of Advent Christian World Missions, received a letter from a Bible student in West Africa—Desire Ahola. Shared theologies led to shared ministries and by 1996 an entirely new Advent Christian mission field was opened in Eastern Europe, with Zagreb, Croatia as the center. Today, Desire Ahola continues to be the only Advent Christian missionary on the continent; he faces twin obstacles of persecution and poverty as he strives to make disciples where he is called. He, his wife Martina, and their daughter, Patricia, attended the recent Advent Christian General Conference Triennial Convention. The Advent Christian Witness seized this opportunity to learn more about this extraordinary man and his ministry.*



What has impressed you most during this recent visit to the United States?

This was my first visit to Charlotte, North Carolina and seeing the work that is carried on at the denominational office truly impressed me. I thought you had larger buildings, more people, and service facilities, but it's not like that. I've seen that people are really giving themselves working for God, making the maximum out of the minimum that they have. So we can always make the maximum of ourselves with the minimum that we have.

Many Christians in other countries have the impression that anyone in the United States is wealthy and has all types of equipment and money. You're finding out that's not true.

**When I went down to your printing room, I was surprised to see the equipment is very small. This is the smallest printing hole I have ever seen. And to see all of the things which are printed from that small office is a wonderful thing.**

What are some differences between the Christians you've met here in the U.S.A., and the Christians you minister to in Croatia?

**Most of our people do not have Christian backgrounds. In the United States the people are much more "traditional Christians." Many of them have come to faith through their parents, and have not passed through the experience of what the world as non-believing society offers. Someone who hasn't passed through it sometimes thinks the world will offer something bigger than what they have. They will not value what they already have in Christ.**

Could you share one example of the Lord's work in your ministry over the past year?

**One thing I can say is that we serve a living God who is able to do great things. I will give you a short testimony, which happened two months ago, approximately. I started the International Fellowship in Zagreb, and we had some young guys in our meetings from African and Arab countries. There were mainly foreigners. And some people who wanted to stop our ministry tried to use these young men who were not yet converted. They say they are believers but act like unbelievers. For example, one who was addicted to drugs came in sometimes smoking them where we have our meetings. I kept on praying to God for all these people, and I know that many people around the world are praying for my ministry. And God heard the prayers.**

**I knew who was behind the one using drugs, providing him all these drugs. I knew that using these things were destroying that young**

**man and will destroy many others. So I tried to make him to stop. I was questioned about this young man by the authorities and I had to tell them plainly who was behind all that he was doing.**

**The ones providing the drugs came to me and said I had destroyed their business, and that they are going to destroy me. Later they invited me to have a talk with them as if every thing was cool now, but the Spirit of God didn't allow me to go. I later learned that they wanted to kidnap me and destroy me completely.**

**One day, a friend who is a policeman said, "I'm not leaving you today. I will be with you." He was with me almost the whole day. That evening the drug sellers started chasing me through the whole city of Zagreb. I was in my car, and I turned on a road that was blocked, and couldn't go any farther. I stopped and a guy came out of the other car with his gun aimed at me. But the policeman with me pointed his gun at this man. The man didn't expect to see someone with a gun in the car with me! So he ran away.**

**When we keep on carrying what is right, God will always find a way to take us to a safety place. God will always find a way. My only trouble will be that day when I stop believing in Christ. That will be my serious problem.**

A couple of years ago we heard that you'd been arrested, and beaten by policeman and hospitalized.

*(Desire pointed to scars by his left eye and explained...)*  
**Yes, these are some of the marks. Those policemen who arrested me that time are no long on the police force. Last year they were dismissed.**

What were you thinking when you were being beaten? Did you think you'd die?

**I was just looking at my life. I thought maybe I would die, because they were talking about**



putting cement on my legs and throwing me in the waters. I was praying, "God, if I have done something bad in my life, please forgive me. If I have not carried on anything in your work as I should, please forgive me." Because I thought I was passing through the last time of my life. That's what I was praying.

Then, later, they made a speech, saying, "Okay, we are going to let you free, but don't go to a hospital. You don't have to report anywhere. You go home." When I was released I saw that God had another plan again for me. **There was something else I had to do.**

There's a verse in Scripture that says "whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin" [1 Peter 4:1]. Is that your experience? Do you find that you are somehow closer to the Lord now?

**Yeah. Oh yeah. But it's not the right criteria to say that someone who is passing through hardship physically has done something wrong. It's not that. All over the Bible we see how people really suffered. And in the early church they really suffered.**

How about your family? How did your wife Martina feel about seeing you taken away?

**They did not know what had happened. They only knew when I was released and when I came back with a swelling head and broken ribs. My tenth and fifth rib were broken. I spent 10 days in hospital.**

Did Martina ever say, "Why don't you get another job?"

There are a few times when she says, "Why can't we stop and do something else and live like others and support each other in the simplest way?" I feel if I don't do God's work, that's when I will be much more in trouble.

Who can blame her feeling that way sometimes!

**These are our feelings as humans. But we always have to ask God to give us the strength to endure.**

What would you say is the greatest need that your people have right now?

**The greatest need is praying. Praying that there will be leaders to carry on the job.**



*Desire Ahola with wife Martina and daughter Patricia*

What would a person need to qualify as a good trainer? To speak Croatian or French?

**It's not necessary to speak Croatian. You can speak English. There are people who can**

translate. I think the great part is the commitment of the person who is training for Christ.

What kind of lessons do potential leaders need?

**We need discipleship to follow up those who are interested in the word of God. And most of them need more theological training. Sometimes it makes it hard if a leader has not been involved in all the studies. In many communities, some general issues are being discussed which are relevant issues that the church needs to deal with. A leader must be theologically grounded to be able to speak to the community. If he has no theological background to know how to present his ideas, the people won't understand what the leader is trying to show them. And he won't have strong Biblical evidences to present.**

There is something else that is needed where I am serving: special community service. It's a society where war has destroyed many things. The society has been broken and people are carrying hurts and wounds so full of that war. They have hatred toward their neighbors.

A few years ago we were helping with clothing, feeding, doing physical labor to construct houses, and digging wells. Most of the money for that came from other organizations. Now organizations like the Red Cross and Salvation Army have left, because war is no more there. Now the townspeople have to do these things. After war is over, no one seems to care. And that's where you see the people really suffering.

If you could do one thing to change it, what would you do?

I would like to make all the companies start working again. There is a lot of unemployment. A company in the town where I'm living used to employ more than 4,000 people. Today they

have less than 70 people working. Where are the other workers? Most are unemployed. So if that company could start working again and get back the market that it had, then there would not be such unemployment.

Tell me what has the Lord been teaching you lately?

The very first lesson is that I have to keep on relying on him. I once thought I can do something special to get people saved, but there is nothing I can do for that. It is only God who can do that. At the beginning of my ministry there were so many people who were rushing into the church, but during the last time it's as if they are almost standing still. So, I wonder, "Have I done something wrong? Why is it that things are not moving forward as fast as they used to be?" And what I understand is that I'm not the one that can make things move. It's not left to man; it's not left to me. God can do everything. It's just by grace that he has called me to be a part of the work. It's just by grace. I deserve nothing out of it.

Do you have a favorite person in the Bible that you relate to?

Yeah, I like Paul. He has been a great motivator for me. I used to say, "I'm carrying a ministry something like what he had, but less important than his own."

Is there a Bible verse that you've taken as a life verse?

The first is John 3:16 — "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The second one is Psalm 1. I always like it. And Philippians 4:19 — "My God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." †



*(editorial cont.)*

Only that, theologically, the school does not share our beliefs. Tecate provides an ideal example of why, to qualify for ACGC funding, spreading the Gospel is not enough. Here are some reasons:

First, (ironically) our support may hurt Tecate. In the city of Charlotte there are individual churches that could provide more support to the Mexican school than our entire denomination. However, Central Church of God or Hickory Grove Baptist Church is unlikely to support any ministry with an Advent Christian association. If they don't share our theology, Tecate ought to be tapping the vastly richer support base available only to non-Advent Christians.

Meanwhile, theologically committed AC ministries are eking out substandard existences on the limited resources our diminutive body provides. Since our theology is unacceptable to many other organizations, true Advent Christians have few options for service. (Remember, we were kicked out of every other denomination in the country for our beliefs—that's why we exist today!) Collectively, AC ministries all share the same limited resource-pool—all are on a "fixed income." Giving to non-AC ministries seems a lot like taxing social security to fund tax cuts for the wealthy.

A third reason for ACGC supporting only AC ministries is the many Advent Christian individuals who give sacrificially to support Advent Christian ministries. It's humbling for us at ACGC to see the many people with limited funds who give generously to their denomination. They could give to Samaritan's Purse, or World Vision, or any number of other worthwhile ministries. We can only assume they choose to give to ACGC because of their commitment to AC beliefs. That being the case, it would be unethical to divert their gifts to non-AC ministries.

Finally, Christians should support the truth. There's no shame in claiming to know and believe the truth. The truth is Jesus is coming back—maybe today. The truth is eternal life is only available for those who love him—man is not an immortal being with

an endless future of either Heaven or Hell. The truth is the Christian hope is found on a future day of resurrection, rather than the popular heresy that death releases our soul to be in Heaven with departed loved ones. Advent Christians have long been shunned due to our belief in these truths. We have faced persecution and discrimination because of them. But the truth remains unchanged and so should our commitment to it. Previous generations supported the unpopular truth and our faith is the fruit of their labor. Now it is our turn to support this truth, that we too may see the fruit of another generation committed to Advent Christian doctrine.

Tecate Bible Institute is one example of many non-AC ministries that Advent Christians support. World Missions Director Rev. Harold Patterson regularly receives appeals from worthy ministries around the world. Good, committed Christian ministries want and need our aid as they labor to spread the Gospel—there will always be plenty of needy ministries. But ACGC should support only AC ministries. For ACGC, spreading the Gospel is not enough. †

*(back cover cont.)*

Could it give anyone peace looking down from heaven, seeing what is happening in the world and in their family? Wouldn't they feel sorrow, seeing a car accident, a loved one loosing a job, or another suicide bomber in Israel?

When Jesus comes again, Christians who've died won't even know how much time has passed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). They'll be awakened and meet the Lord together with all others who've been saved (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). Then the earth will be made new for us, so we can dwell there with God eternally (Revelation 21:1-4).

We all need to be comforted when someone we love dies, but let's consider what the Bible really says about the subject and take real comfort from the truth rather than a fairy tale or false teachings. And remember: Jesus left the Holy Spirit to be with us everyday to comfort us (John 14: 15-20, 25-27).

As for the destruction of the wicked: a fire is a traumatic and tragic event, but when the fire is out, whatever was on fire is destroyed and no longer exists. The idea that something, or someone, could burn and still exist forever—well, it just doesn't make sense. †

*Pam Gardner lives with her husband Mike in Wildwood, MO, where they minister at the Hilltop Advent Christian Church.*

**“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14).**

# Word Search

Find these back-to-school words:

apple  
books  
glue  
lunch money  
new clothes

notebook  
paper  
pencil  
scissors  
teacher

GLREPAPAPEN  
CMOLAESFNBO  
LUNCHMONEYP  
KYTDGUNBWTE  
ONHLOCRICES  
OAUBOOKSLAI  
BEGPKTNPOCS  
ELICNEPYTHY  
TSUEDARLHEB  
OCYFPRKTERI  
NSCISSORSPE

## Fill in the books of the Bible

**4 letters**

Joel  
John  
Mark

**5 letters**

Hosea  
Kings  
Micah  
Nahum  
Peter  
Titus

**6 letters**

Esther  
Isaiah  
Romans

**7 letters**

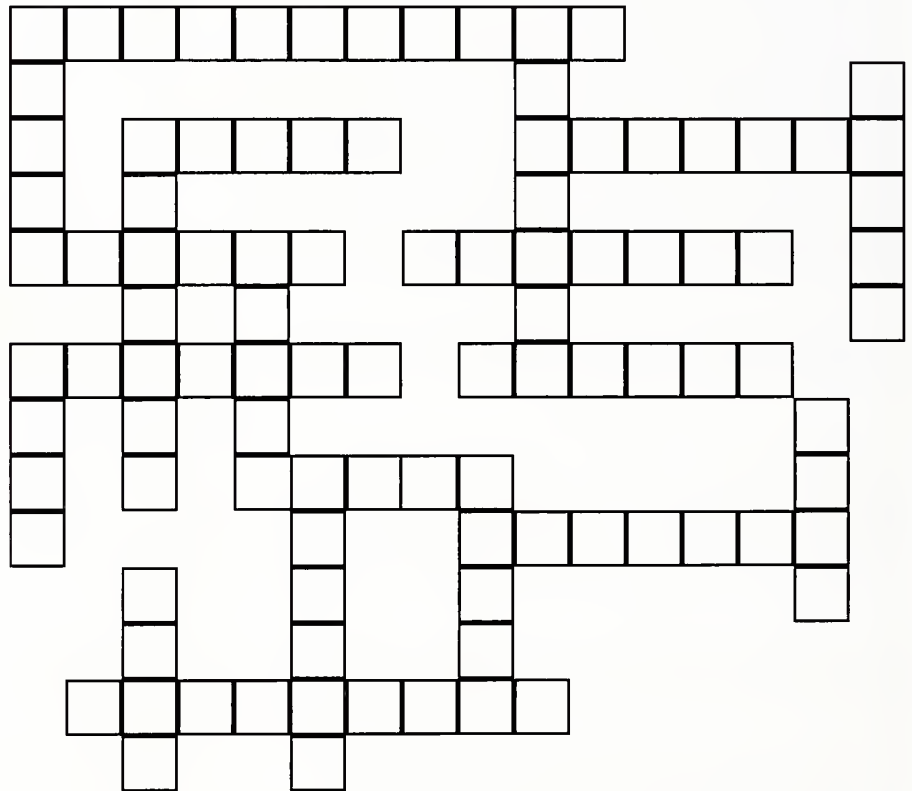
Ezekiel  
Malachi  
Matthew  
Numbers  
Obadiah  
Timothy

**9 letters**

Zephaniah

**11 letters**

Philippians







# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

Find which one does not belong in the group:

1. a. Moses b. Elijah c. Daniel d. David (hint: prophets)
2. a. Solomon b. Mark c. Saul d. Ahaz (hint: kings)
3. a. Stephen b. Matthew c. Peter d. Judas (hint: apostles)
4. a. Mary b. Ruth c. Rahab d. Esther (hint: Jesus's ancestors)
5. a. II Corinthians b. Ephesians c. Revelation d. I Timothy (hint: books written by Paul)
6. a. raised the dead b. turned water to wine c. called down fire from heaven d. healed the sick (hint: miracles of Jesus)
7. a. brought down the walls of Jericho b. parted the Red Sea c. brought water from a rock d. changed the Nile to blood (hint: miracles of Moses)



Answers: 1-d, 2-b, 3-a, 4-d, 5-c, 6-c, 7-a

Adult cryptographers:

Find the letters these letters represent. Once a letter is decoded, it remains the same throughout the list. Each list is crypted differently. Look for recurring combinations of letters, repeated letters. (Hint: List 1 P=A; List 2 C=S)

Books of the Bible

Jacob's Sons (10 of them)

ESGSOTO  
EPBPKTNGO  
YARESO  
LAKX  
PWKO

XSVLSCO  
RPGTSB  
RSAKSLNGNIQ  
YPI SO  
XNOSP

DLUKS  
CEYTPA  
FTADKWEA  
HKU  
MTLFTA

KCSTM  
VTOE  
ECCKNSKM  
ITFLVLA  
AKXSRKVE

# A Ray of Hope

by Hazel Blackstone



Upon opening the heavy grandiose doors, my eyes widened and gaped, as a child's would at a candy buffet. Droplets of light

danced from chandeliers and gorgeous, plush furnishings adorned the reception and hall areas of the four-star Founders Inn. My interior decorating bent quickly surmised that wallpaper border, flooring and window covering coordinated in a careful attempt to captivate arriving guests. But, as exquisite as the accommodations were, they paled in comparison to the excitement of reuniting with longtime acquaintances and renewing friendships—indeed, “a foretaste of glory divine!”

Greeting women in the banquet hall, an elegant cake welcomed all who entered. Artistically and tastefully decorated, it displayed a lighthouse with the conference theme, “A Ray of Hope.” Lining the walls of the room stood dis-

**“Women left the hall not only spiritually blessed, but with newfound friends and bags of goodies in tow.”**

plays from each conference in the host Appalachian Region, chock-full of lighthouse giveaways, unique gifts from individual states, and handouts of tried and true activities used by local societies. I was beckoned to a table where the attendant handed me a fishing pole to “fish” for a bag of goodies. I wasn't disappointed. Browsers to the exhibits came away richly rewarded!

In four-star fashion, the banquet hall soon bore rich smells titillating to the palate.

A scrumptious meal of Roasted Chicken Breast with Shiitake Mushroom Balsamic Gastrique awaited us served by professional uniformed waitstaff. Glancing around one soon noticed an international flavor to those seated at the tables- Filipino, Malay, Croat, African, and Japanese. The Piedmont Music Makers ensemble enriched the program with various musical renditions. Jo Moore and Kathleen Cooke offered special flute and piano musical arrange-



ments. Filipino missionary Penny Vann, fresh off an intercontinental flight, showed no effects of fatigue as she spoke of HOPE for our world using an effective visual by darkening the room and leaving a lone lighthouse to beam its light.

Day one of the Women's Conference ended with a crowd mixer. Women left the hall not only spiritually blessed, but with new-found friends and bags of goodies in tow.

Thursday morning, upon arrival at the banquet room, a remarkable transformation had taken place. Rows of chairs now replaced tables and the stage readied for a

worship and devotional time. Candy Hall and Pam Buchanan focused our hearts, minds, and voices on the One who created us and through a work of grace, granted us a place in His family. Then Rhonda Walsh, who recently with husband, Jeff, returned from a one-year stint in the Philippines, shared from her heart. The Lord blessed their year and continues to lead them one step at a time into a future of service to Him. The morning continued with a variety of workshops that

truly exceeded my expectations.

## “WHFMS Past, Present and Future”

In Peggy Boston's and Palma Neal's workshop, we broke up into think tanks to analyze each word in our organization's name—Woman's Home and Foreign Mission Society. Participants at each table discussed the meaning of the word assigned to them. Table leaders wrote down insights shared onto a section of a lighthouse. When the

workshop hour came to a close, the presenters assembled the pieces of the lighthouse so we could see how each word in our name contributes to our overall mission.



*Palma Neal leads “WHFMS Past, Present, and Future” workshop*

Participants gleaned wonderful ideas in these groups, and Peggy and Palma displayed the lighthouses for all to enjoy. Palma concluded the hour with the following acronym:

Lord help us be  
**W**illing women with a  
**H**ear for those at home and a  
**F**ervor to reach those in foreign lands.

May our  
**M**ission never be left undone by a  
**S**ociety centered in God's will.



## “Auxiliaries - Are We Reaching our Children?”

Randee Davis, Linda Register and Luree

Wotton transformed their workshop room into an African safari. Visual aids galore decorated the walls. Participants marveled at the feast to the eyes, amazed at the suggestions given to incorporate mission education into growing healthy Advent Christian children's ministries. Randee shared ways to effectively use the AC Kid's Club materials, particularly “Go and Tell Africa.” What a wealth of information! Linda Register challenged us to think “outside of the box,” using a box as a visual and inserting typical phrases that represent “inside the box thinking.” Regions would benefit to have this trio of ladies share their presentation on the road. Their enthusiasm, dedication and volunteerism blessed us.

## “Strengthening Our Spiritual Relationship”

Another blessing awaited us in Margaret Helms' workshop. With transparency, Margaret shared rough seasons in her life and how she survived those “pit” times. She challenged us to view scripture in a different light by taking a verse and analyzing it word by word, exploring all the facets and implications of each phrase. She also encouraged us to start over if we've blown it spiritually by

sharing a poem by Woodrow Kroll from Back to the Bible. The poem closes with these words:

When the year's been long and  
successes few,  
When December comes and  
you're feeling blue,  
God gives us a January just so you-  
**Start over.**

Starting over means victories won,  
Starting over means a race well run  
Starting over means the Lord's  
‘Well done,’  
...so don't just sit there, **Start over.**

After a lunch break, delegates once again assembled in the large meeting room, this time to listen to God's goodness to us in the three years since we last met for con-



*Incoming President, Randee Davis, provides visual aids for the Kids Club materials.*





*Workshop participants enjoy a lighthearted moment.*

vention business. Officers shared reports and we took a moment to celebrate the lives of those who departed this life and await the shout of our Lord's return. After convention business and resolutions, an election decided the leadership for the National WHFMS during the next triennium. The new leadership team consists of:

President: Randee Davis

Vice-president: Betty Converse

Clerk: Mary K. Barber

Women's Conference 2002 is a memory now. It challenged us to focus on Christ, the world's only ray of hope. It reminded us to be reflective rays that lead a world to the Lighthouse of Truth. It provided times to interact with friends who shared their journeys through "pit" times and how Christ restored hope in the midst of their circumstances.

The effectiveness of Women's Conference 2002 depends on our response. Our challenge is to live hope-infused faith journeys that point friends and neighbors to a safe harbor and a life anchored in Christ. †



*add punch to "Go and Tell Africa", the latest AC material.*







# WITNESS

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Hitting the  
streets with  
Urban/ethnic  
ministries

# WITNESS

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# From the Editor

Sometimes I envy Muslims. Some days I wish Christianity were a little more militant. Let's face it: Christians don't get much respect. Think of the many ways our Lord and Savior is blasphemed. The entertainment industry regularly attempts to soil his character; the political world ignores his existence; and the retail world is loath to use his name—even as they capitalize on his birthday. Just once, it would be nice to be authorized to unleash our "righteous anger" on these "infidels," as some of the followers of Allah are in the habit of doing. (How many times have you seen Hollywood release a film titled "The Last Temptation of Allah"? Last month, a Nigerian newspaper was foolish enough to suggest Mohammad, if he were alive, might marry one of the Miss World contestants and scores of people died in the ensuing Islamic outrage.)

While my dark side sometimes envies the Muslims' license for violence, the rest of me is sick and tired of the suggestion that there is no real difference between Christianity and Islam. It adds insult to injury when even the U.S. president assures us that they're both "religions of peace." And Secretary of State Powell is quick to criticize any "right-wing fundamentalist" Christian who disagrees.

I know there are many nice Muslim folks who are great supporters of religious tolerance, but I think most of them live in non-Muslim countries. In nations where Islam governs, all bets are off. Muslim governments generally do not tolerate other religions. The two young American women who were in prison in Afghanistan during the war weren't arrested for having overdue library books; they were charged with promoting Christianity.

We who live in North America have a hard time imagining the idea of an entire country having one religion permeating the

*(Continued page 15)*



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# HITTING THE STREETS

TAKING THE GOSPEL TO AMERICAN  
CITIES



An interview with Dr. John Roller,  
North American Area Director for  
Urban/ethnic Ministries



Dr. John Roller works at Advent Christian General Conference as North American Area Director for Urban/Ethnic Ministries. During his five years at ACGC, Dr. Roller organized and developed an increasingly successful national conference focusing on urban and ethnic ministries. Following are his thoughts regarding the unique opportunities afforded urban/ethnic ministries, and photos of the last Urban/Ethnic ministries conference, held September in Santa Cruz, California. (Photos courtesy of Dryver Henderson.)

**Could you describe what Advent Christian Urban/Ethnic Ministries involves?**

[John Roller] By definition, “Urban” refers to any ministries (churches, Bible studies, social services providers, etc.) that Advent Christians are involved in, in the major cities of North America and their “inner” suburbs — for example, Hope Community AC Church, in Chicago, Ill., or Workman Street Church, in Los Angeles, Calif.; “Ethnic” refers to any ministries that include people from racial, national, or cultural backgrounds other than the dominant (“white Anglo-Saxon Protestant”) culture which comprises about 95% of all Advent Christians in the United States and Canada — for example, International Pilgrims’ Christian Center, in Charlotte, N.C., or Parkside Community Church, in San Francisco, Calif. In practice, many other kinds of outreach activities — such as prison ministries, motorcycle ministries, surfing ministries, etc. — are also included in the rubric of “Advent Christian Urban/Ethnic Ministries” even if they are not particularly “targeted” toward major cities or people of specific nationalities.

**Why do you have a personal interest in this type of ministry?**

[JR] First of all, I was born and raised in the largest metropolitan area on this continent: New York City. The people who lived around me when I was a child were from many different racial and cultural backgrounds —

*(continued page 10)*



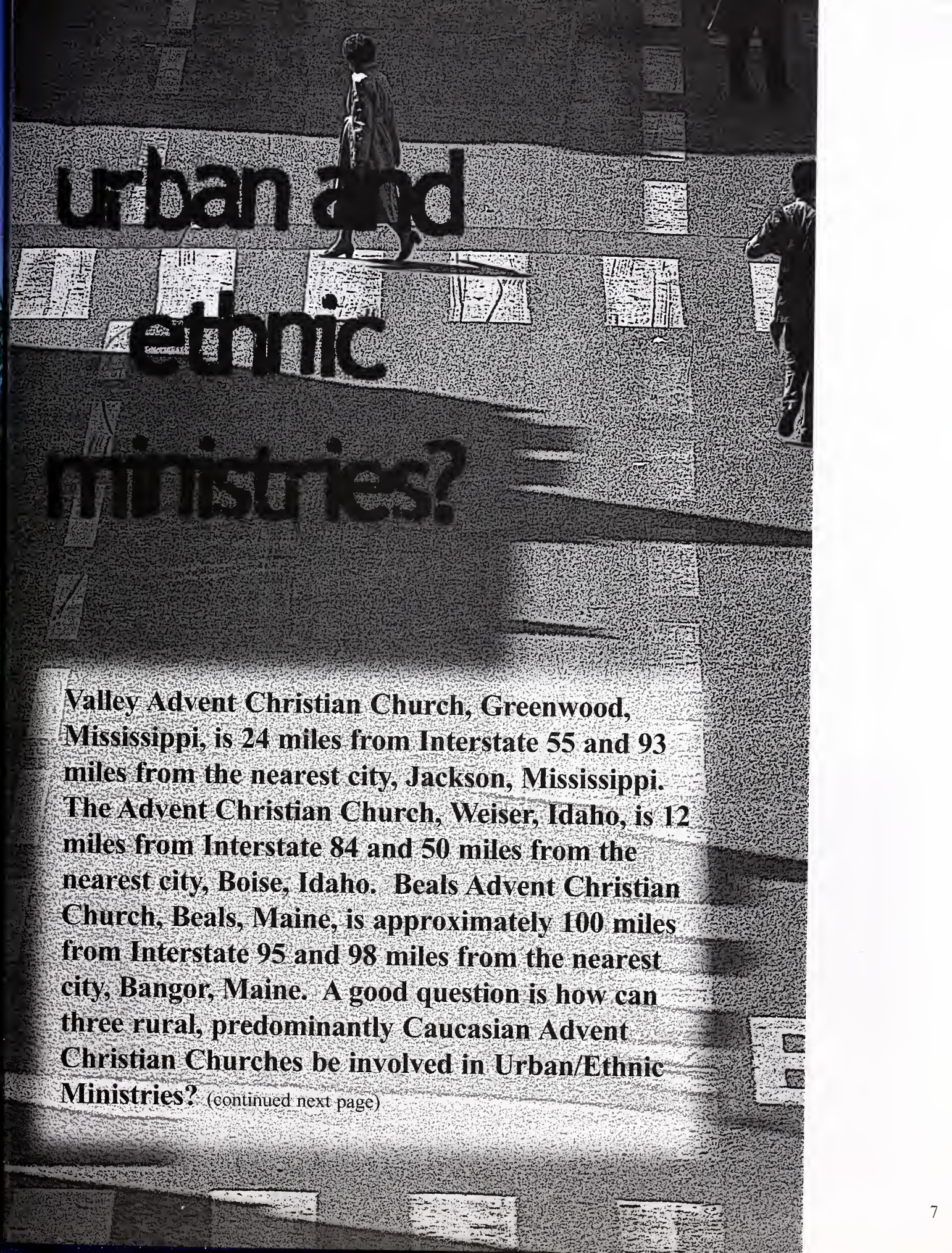
*Jean-Pierre and Betty Tshamala, Rev. Don Clay, and Rev. Melchor Jandayan pictured in front of Parkside Advent Christian Church in San Francisco.*

# Can a rural church be involved in



**Rev. David W. Davis**  
**Deer Isle, Maine**





# urban and ethnic ministries?

**Valley Advent Christian Church, Greenwood, Mississippi, is 24 miles from Interstate 55 and 93 miles from the nearest city, Jackson, Mississippi. The Advent Christian Church, Weiser, Idaho, is 12 miles from Interstate 84 and 50 miles from the nearest city, Boise, Idaho. Beals Advent Christian Church, Beals, Maine, is approximately 100 miles from Interstate 95 and 98 miles from the nearest city, Bangor, Maine. A good question is how can three rural, predominantly Caucasian Advent Christian Churches be involved in Urban/Ethnic Ministries?** (continued next page)



Before we can suggest ways for rural churches to become involved in Urban/Ethnic Ministries, we should define what Urban/Ethnic Ministries are. Urban Ministries take place in non-rural settings, such as a city or a suburb of a densely populated area. Ethnic ministries are outreaches to people of another race, religion, national background or language. According to Dr. John Roller, Director of Urban/Ethnic Ministries for the Advent Christian General Conference, Advent Christian Urban/Ethnic ministries include: any kind of ministry in North America, outside the four walls of an Advent Christian church. This type of ministry can be in the form of prison ministry, outreach to specific language or ethnic groups, or inner-city mission work. According to Dr. Roller's definition, one can easily see the wide range of possibilities for even the most remote congregation to become active in Urban/Ethnic Ministries.

Why does it matter that a church of any size or location become involved in Urban/Ethnic Ministries? We find the answers in Scripture. In Revelation we read, "I saw a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9). Then we find the questions in Romans, "How can they call on the one they have not believed in? How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Rom. 10:14). And finally, in Matthew we are commanded, "Go and make disciples of all nations . . ." (Matt. 28:18). These Scriptures demand action, regardless of a congregation's location or size.

So how can a rural church become involved in Urban/Ethnic ministries? Here are a few ways a rural church can become involved, even in a small way:



# 1. • Commit to intentional, concerted prayer.

The congregation can pray for a specific ministry, such as Providence International Advent Christian Church, Providence, R.I. Or pray for individuals, like Rev. Amos Gbaa and the members of his Liberian congregation.



# 2. • Take a short-term mission trip to an inner-city.

Contact Rev. Francis Ssebikindu in Memphis, Tenn., and offer to repair buildings or help conduct a Vacation Bible School by providing materials and personnel.



# 3. • Look for opportunities in your own rural areas.

All around the country, small towns have become home to people of



other races, religions and languages. For instance, Lewiston, Maine, has a sizeable Somali population. Some Western Maine or Eastern N.H. Advent Christian Churches may choose to reach out to these people with the Good News of Jesus Christ.



## 4. ● Provide financial support.

A rural congregation could pledge to support the building program of Iglesia de la Gracia Divina, Arleta, Calif., where Sunday morning attendance consistently exceeds seating capacity.



## 5. ● Educate your church about Urban/Ethnic Ministries.

Borrow books, videos or audio tapes from the Urban/Ethnic library. Trust that God will show you how he wants your congregation to participate in this ministry. Members of rural churches can also become involved in Urban/Ethnic Ministries by attending the annual Urban/Ethnic Ministries Conference. The next conference will be held September 13-17, 2003, in Charlotte, N.C. at the Advent Christian General Conference Denominational Offices. Attending this conference will allow you to experience the passion and commitment of the men and women involved in Advent Christian Urban/Ethnic Ministries. For more information contact Rev. Dr. John Roller at 1-800-676-0694 or [jroller@acgc.us](mailto:jroller@acgc.us).

Scripture tells us the Good News of Jesus Christ is for all men. Why not start spreading the Good News to those who have not heard who are living in our own back yard? In the words of Rev. Dr. John Roller, "We live in such a global village that the presence of people from other cultures so effects us on a daily basis— whether we realize it or not—that we just can't hide from ministering to them any more."

*Rev. David Davis is pastor is  
Sunshine Advent Christian  
Church, Deer Isle, Maine.*





*Stephanie Waterman ministers among MicMac native Americans.*

Jews, Italians, Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, immigrants from Hungary, and even a few other “white” people! I myself am of mixed ethnicity — part Jewish, part English, part French, part Dutch, and part American Indian. I guess that made me a “natural-born” xenophile (someone who likes being around people who are ethnically different from himself). My father served on a multi-ethnic street evangelism team — he was a Jewish Christian, and his closest co-workers were Italian and Black. But the most important reason is, I believe it is the work that God has prepared me for and called me to.

### **Give a couple of examples of how you see the Lord working in AC urban/ethnic ministries.**

[JR] Our urban/ethnic ministries represent the fastest-growing and most quickly spreading facet of the AC church here in North America. Not only have several new urban/ethnic congregations been planted in the last five years — such as Providence International AC Church, in Providence, R.I., and Iglesia de la Gracia

Divina, in Arleta, Calif. — but many of our “traditional” churches are now engaging in outreach ministries that involve cross-cultural contact. As a result, ethnic faces are beginning to show up on the membership rolls of dozens of our predominantly “white Anglo-Saxon Protestant” churches, such as Attleboro AC Church, in Attleboro, Mass., and AC Church of the Highlands, in LaGrange, Ill. This is happening because God has broken down the barriers that have existed in some AC hearts in the past, making it possible for them to put Christ’s love for “others” into the kinds of concrete actions that attract people to His church.

### **How has this kind of ministry changed over the past decade?**

[JR] The field we call “Urban/Ethnic Ministries” is CONSTANTLY changing. A decade ago, the few such ministries we had were mostly organized and led by dedicated “white” Advent Christians with a burden to see change in the “face” of our denomination. Today, many such ministries are being organized and led by Advent Christians who are themselves members of ethnic minorities and are thus, perhaps, in a better position to reach the peoples of their specific city and cultural background. While the General Conference still maintains the same one and only urban/ethnic ministry it was administering a decade ago—Living Water Community Church, Memphis, Tenn.—the newer urban/ethnic ministries have sprung up under the sponsorship of Regions, Conferences, and local churches and



*Betty and Jean-Pierre Tshamala and Dr. John Roller*



individuals who see a specific need in their own communities. And, again, much of this type of work is now taking place within our “traditional” congregations as well as in outreach ministries specifically geared toward particular people groups.

### **What opportunities do you see for AC Urban/Ethnic Ministries in the next year; five years, decade?**

[JR] To rephrase something Jesus said — the fields are indeed “multi-colored” unto harvest! The 2000 Census reveals that a higher and higher percentage of North America’s people are now living in the forty largest metropolitan areas. Cities are growing while rural areas are stable or declining in population. Furthermore, the

fastest-growing segment of our total population is that of ethnic minorities. People from dozens of other countries are moving to America in large numbers, seeking to improve their economic status while escaping oppressive regimes and civil wars. For example, there are now several hundred refugees from Somalia in the Lewiston/Auburn, Maine, area. These people are mostly Muslims. Who will share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them? There are a number of AC congregations strategically placed near this rapidly growing mission field. The opportunity is there if we can find the vision and the means.



*Top two photos are members of Parkside Community Church in San Francisco. Bottom right is Andrew Wreh, and pictured above is Linus Morris, keynote speaker of the 2002 Urban/Ethnic Ministries Conference.*

## What is the greatest need today in AC Urban/Ethnic Ministries and how can Advent Christians help?

[JR] Probably the greatest need is for an increase in awareness. Advent Christians need to “lift up their eyes” as Jesus said in the same passage I paraphrased in the last paragraph. We need to become educated to the presence of people from differing cultures in our communities and learn methods of evangelism that will be successful in reaching them with the Gospel. Advent Christians who do not live in or near large cities or other



*Dr. John Roller, Andrew Wreh, and ACGC Executive Director Rev. David Ross*



*Ben Waterman in live-action role play clothing, which is part of his ministry.*

For anyone for whom this article is a first exposure to this branch of our denomination and who would like to learn more, a first step might be to subscribe to the FREE “Urban/Ethnic Ministries Network Newsletter” by contacting Urban/Ethnic Ministries Director John Roller at PO Box 23152, Charlotte, NC 28227. You can also call him at 1-800-676-0694, ext. 250, or send email to [jroller@acgc.us](mailto:jroller@acgc.us).



*Participants in the 2002 North American Urban/Ethnic Ministries Conference*

multi-ethnic communities can also help in several ways: by prayer, by financial support of these fledgling churches, by short-term “mission” trips (which don’t even require a passport!), perhaps even by intentionally relocating to such a community in order to become part of it and reach the people from within.





# Iraq: the most spiritually-hungry country in the Middle East

Christians Have Much More Freedom In Iraq Than Saudi Arabia

By Mark Ellis  
Senior Correspondent, ASSIST News Service

ORANGE, CALIFORNIA (ANS) — As President Bush rallies international support for an effort to invade Iraq and disarm its current government, a dwindling minority of Christians in Iraq wonder if the West has forgotten them, while they enjoy freedoms that Christians in many other Middle Eastern countries would envy.

“The evangelical churches in Iraq are as evangelical as any evangelical church in America,” says Norm Nelson, president and host of “Life At Its Best,” after returning from a recent Middle East trip. “They love Jesus Christ and honor him and they worship in freedom,” he says.

*(continued next page)*

“You can walk or drive to church on Sunday and carry your Bible openly.”

In the heart of Baghdad, Nelson found a vibrant church with a worship atmosphere that was “deeply reverent, conducted with decorum and order.” With a membership numbering 400 families, their Sunday evening service “was so packed that some were forced to stand in the back.”

While their worship is free, there are some restrictions imposed by the secular government, largely controlled by Sunni Arabs. “They are not free to proselytize outside their church property,” Nelson notes.

Still, the contrast could not be more striking with Saudi Arabia, one of the United States’ most important allies in the region. “Christians in Saudi Arabia worship in conditions they refer to as ‘the catacombs,’” Nelson says. “They have to be secretive in Saudi Arabia,” he says.

Many would be surprised to learn the Bible is so readily available in Iraq. “I know two Bible organizations that distributed a half million New Testaments to the government schools in Iraq, and the government of Iraq allowed them to be distributed in the schools,” Nelson says. “You can’t do that in the United States,” he says.

“Christians in Iraq said, since the Koran was being distributed free of charge to students, they felt the New Testament should be distributed in schools,” Nelson says. “The government of Iraq acquiesced and allowed it,” he says. The Middle Eastern Bible Society and the Bible League supplied the Bibles to the schools within the last three years.

“We have a colleague in Jordan who takes Arabic copies of the Life Application Bible and distributes them to 18 cities and towns up and down the Tigris River in Iraq,” Nelson says. “When he takes Bibles to the Baghdad book fair, the Bibles are the most popular book he takes,” he says.

Nelson feels moved by the spiritual hunger in Iraq, also evidenced by reports from a Christian radio network operating in Amman, Jordan. “They found the most

spiritually hungry country in the Middle East is Iraq,” he says. “They get more response from their Christian broadcasts in Arabic to Iraq than from all the countries in the Middle East combined.”

“When I go to Iraq the reaction is amazing because the Christians there feel forgotten,” Nelson says. Christians comprise less than two percent of the population of Iraq, which is overwhelmingly Muslim. “They say, ‘We thought you forgot us.’ They hunger for recognition and affirmation that American Christians care about them.”

Unfortunately, geopolitical considerations have blinded the eyes of many believers in the West, Nelson believes. “Evangelical Christians have so politicized their outlook on the Muslim world, that most of the time we don’t see the people of these countries with the eyes of Christ,” he says. “We see them in terms of the political objectives of the United States of America, but not in terms of the priorities of Jesus Christ.”

“We see the world with political eyes, not spiritual eyes,” he adds.

Nelson also visited Afghanistan on his recent trip, and plans to return in December with medical aid and school supplies. “All the schools lack almost anything,” Nelson says, including chalk, pencils, paper, textbooks, desks and chairs. “The U.S. has promised a huge rebuilding effort,” he says. “But the money that’s been promised has not been delivered in a timely fashion.”

“The roads are just horrendous,” Nelson says. “To travel from Kabul, the largest city, to Kandahar, the second largest city, is a 16 hour trip,” he says. “It shouldn’t take more than two or three hours. It’s like driving in a riverbed, because the road was bombed to smithereens.”

Nelson visited a school in Afghanistan with 3000 students. “The building had been totally trashed by the Taliban, but on the wall was a poster showing Osama bin Laden holding an automatic weapon in his left hand and in his right hand holding the world. He’s standing in front of the smoking, flaming World Trade Center.



Underneath was a caption saying, ‘The al-Qaida band took a big forward step.’”

“When I looked at that I realized the Taliban influence is alive,” Nelson says. Because the school had limited building space, students were meeting in 14 tents supplied by UNICEF. “If it wasn’t for the United Nations, they wouldn’t have anyplace to meet in the 100 degree heat,” he says.

“Where is the church in all of this,” Nelson wonders. “Why hasn’t the western church provided the tents?” he asks. “My question is more to the church than President Bush or the State Department.”

Nelson believes our priorities are unbalanced.

“Evangelical Christians spend more dollars on weight reduction products than on missionary efforts,” he notes. “If we really care about that part of the world then we’ll

take the gospel and express the love of Jesus Christ in tangible forms,” he says.

“The children and students and teachers are wide open,” he says. “They are looking to us.”

*Mark Ellis is a Senior Correspondent for ASSIST News Service. He is also an assistant pastor in Laguna Beach, CA. Contact Ellis at [marsalis@fea.net](mailto:marsalis@fea.net)*

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*(Editorial continued)*

culture. Few of us have anything permeating our entire life. Most North Americans have a variety of distinct and segregated components of life: work, school, religion, politics, friendships, recreation, etc. Like food plopped on a cafeteria tray, each segment of our world is neatly divided from the others and, hopefully, nothing will spill over into another compartment. That is how President Bush can be a devout Christian and yet extol the virtues of Islam. He doesn’t allow his religious peas to get mixed up with his political potatoes. Likewise, an employee will work for a company that supports activities he abhors because he doesn’t let his religious peas get mixed with his economic gravy. Or, parents may send their children to schools that teach things contrary to their faith because they don’t let their religious peas get mixed with their educational applesauce.

Most of the Muslim world doesn’t think this way.

For example, we know the Saudi Arabians are adamantly anti-Christian. But we aren’t dealing with them in the religious function of our lives so we don’t mind working with them. The Saudis, on the other hand, have no compartments segregating Islam from politics and economics. They deal with us only on their terms, refusing to allow Americans to wear crosses on their soil, regardless of the political or economic advantage. Generally speaking, this is typical of Muslim governments.

From their perspective, we must look incredibly corrupt and weak, sacrificing our religious beliefs for political or economic gain. Is it any wonder we are despised by Muslims, people whose lives are saturated with religious conviction?

This leads to the Islamic qualities I sometimes envy. In Muslim countries where Islam generally permeates the entire life of its followers, they have no ambivalence about doing the “right thing.” Never mind the political or economic or social consequences. If Allah is blasphemed the offender will pay! Meanwhile, Christians in North America find themselves worrying about telling their co-workers “merry Christmas!”

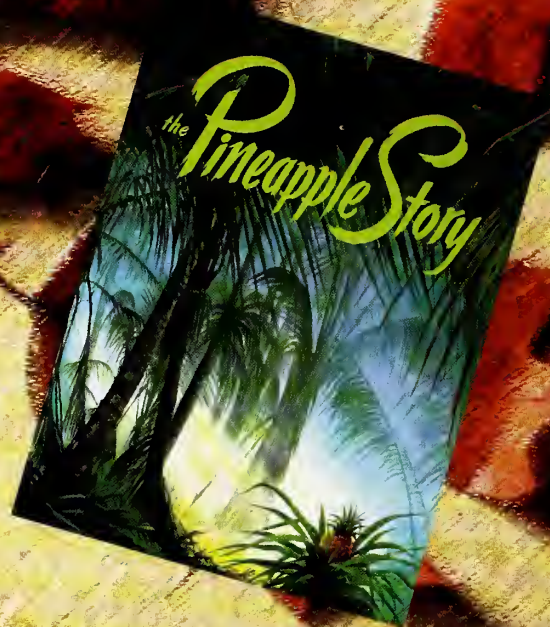
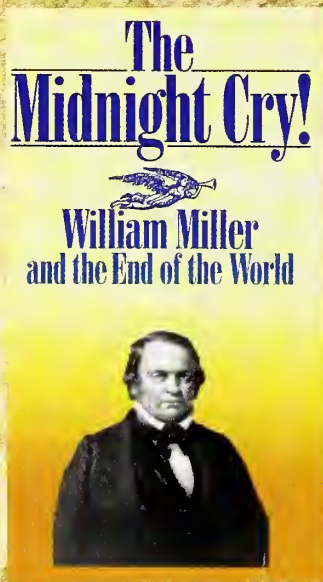
In truth, there are Christians whose lives are saturated by their religious convictions. Certainly not all who attend our churches, or sport WWJD bumper-stickers. But they’re out there, waging their own form of Jihad—a holy war in the Name of Jesus. Instead of chasing glory through a single violent instant of suicide and murder, these saints wage personal wars spanning decades, invisible wars with wounds and pain and horrors and heroics. CNN may never feature a headline announcing the latest Christian martyr who sacrificed herself for the sake of the Gospel. But one day her sacrifice, and those of all her fellow fanatical Christian brothers and sisters, will be broadcast for all creation to see, to the glory of God.



# Editor's Picks

Over the course of time I have found several resources extremely useful for ministry. Here are few of my favorites, with a brief description. The Media Center at ACGC carries all of the videos, and Venture Bookstore has the book. Call 800-676-0694 to order. (You'll have to subscribe to the magazines directly from their publishers.)

Some may find this video too dry, but I used it to teach my church about our heritage with great success. We viewed 20-minute segments of it for several weeks and found it quite interesting and edifying.



The Pineapple Story is probably the best Christian video I can recommend. It is very funny and has a compelling lesson for all believers. Even though it runs an hour, I've never heard a complaint about it being too long.



*Creation* is a magazine the entire family can enjoy. Great pictures and real science Christians can use. Order through [www.answersingenesis.com](http://www.answersingenesis.com)

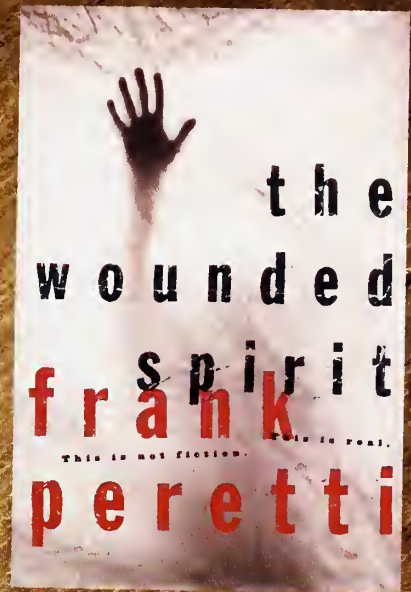




EE-TAOW is the only video I've seen with actual footage of an entire tribe accepting the Lord. It's an inspiring story that might lead you to consider service in foreign missions!

Both *World* and *whistleblower* magazines deal with "secular" issues, from a Christian perspective. *World* is similar to *Newsweek* in frequency and focus, and isn't afraid to print the truth—even when it's not popular with Christians.

*Whistleblower* dedicates each issue to a single topic, with virtually no advertising. If you really are convinced there is a liberal bias in mass-media, you will find both of these magazines to be a breath of fresh air. Subscribe to *World* through [www.worldmag.com](http://www.worldmag.com), and *whistleblower* through [www.worldnetdaily.com](http://www.worldnetdaily.com).



Frank Peretti's autobiographical account of childhood bullies and lifelong scars challenges Christians to see the cause of tragedies like *Colombine*. Unlike his other works, I find this book to be theologically sound as well as exceptionally written.







# WHAT KIND OF A **HOTEL** IS **THIS?**

Ernie Schache

A trip  
in India has our  
missionaries seeing **red!**



# God gave us a beautiful, cool, sunny day as we left Kodaikanal – 6890 feet above sea level on the southern crest of the Palani Hills.

The garden around the Mission bungalow with its bright red poinsettias, the clear blue sky and the scenery of the bush-clad hills around us spoke clearly of His wonderful creative acts.

Kodai is where the Fellowship of Blessed Hope Churches' College of Evangelism is presently located, and we – Earl and Martha Wright and the author – were here for a few days to attend to administrative matters and to attend a number of functions in the Southern Tamil Nadu area.

After the customary prayer committing our travel to the Lord, Sam, our longtime Mission driver based in Kodai, drove us down the 47 kilometers of winding, rather decrepit, mountain road. When we stopped at the foot of the mountain for Sam and Associate Pastor Peter from the Kodai church to have their breakfast and for the rest of us to have a cool drink, the temperature had risen substantially – we were now on the eastern plains of Southern India.

As we travelled toward Madurai and beyond there to Virudhunagar, the air got hotter and hotter. It probably wasn't as hot as the flames which came from the furnace that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego faced in Daniel chapter 3, but I have to confess that the similarity entered my mind on a number of occasions as we travelled. The air conditioning in the jeep was "full on" – that is, all the windows were wide open, and the air that rushed through as we travelled was very hot and very dry. Outside, the countryside showed the effects of several years of drought – it was dry and parched and barren.

We reached Virudhunagar at about 1 p.m. and went to the hotel that the local Pastor had booked for us. It was, we had been told, the only hotel in town with air-conditioning in some of its rooms, and their chef would make western style meals for us. The accommodation reserved for us was absolutely dreadful – dirty, with air-conditioning units installed but no power to run them. The hotel didn't even have a restaurant, let alone a chef who would cook western style food. After trying unsuccessfully to get the Pastor's deposit back, we enquired from passers-by as to where the best hotel in town was. It was the Tamil Nadu Hotel on the outskirts of the town that we were directed to.

Yes, they did have two rooms available but no air-conditioning; yes they did have a restaurant that served Chinese food as well as Indian food; and yes, they could cook eggs for tomorrow's breakfast! The rooms were little better than those we had seen earlier and were still dirty after the "cleaning" that we insisted they were given before we would move in. We finally decided to take VIP Room No 2 for Earl and Martha, and Room 106 for me (we had no other options) and paid an advance fee of double the overnight room rate!

“...the manager shook his head to Earl's request for soap, towels, sheets and pillowcases for our rooms!”

A few minutes later, I met Earl and Martha talking to the hotel manager in the corridor just in time to hear Earl ask the question "what kind of hotel is this?" We thought we knew the answer to that question from what we had seen in the past 20 minutes or so, but these words were uttered as the manager shook his head to Earl's request for soap, towels, sheets and pillowcases for our rooms! The rooms had beds, with bedcovers on each, pillows, chairs and a dresser, and had a very basic washroom/toilet attached – nothing else. The VIP Room had two

beds, so there were two bedcovers that Earl and Martha could use as sheets, and mine had a double bed so that I could wrap the cover right around me - Indian style - as I slept.

We had a short afternoon rest as the ceiling fans moved very hot air around the room at near supersonic speeds. At least the mosquitoes wouldn't be able to get at us because of the wind speed!

As we drove through town on the way to the outer suburb of Annanagar West to the church at Mallanginar, we located a store where we could buy towels - at least we could have a shower when we returned to the "hotel" later that evening. We also bought some soap. The towel shop owner



*Rev. and Mrs. Jebaseelan are prayed for during their ordination service, as fellow believers (shown at right) join in the celebration. Photos by Ernie Schache.*

was very deaf and couldn't hear us when we agreed to buy three towels - he just kept getting more and more out for us to see. He only stopped when a colleague literally shouted at the top of his voice, within inches of his ear.

The little church at Mallanginar was very basic by any standards, but when the service finally got under way, it



was filled with enthusiastic, joyful Christian believers, including visitors from nearby Fellowship churches. We had come to ordain the Pastor – Jebaseelan – into the ministry of the Lord, but were delighted to learn that there were to be baptisms of 13 candidates who were

the Pastor, his wife Eliza and the congregation, and Rev Jebaseelan responded, committing himself to faithfully serve his Lord and His people in that little church.

After the ordination, two of those who had been

baptised – converts from Hinduism – brought their baby daughter for dedication to the Lord, and to be given a “Christian” name.

What a wonderful, moving, joyful time

“...there were tears in the author’s eyes as we witnessed this bold step of public identification with Jesus Christ.”

willing to obey the Lord’s instruction to follow Him through the waters of baptism. What a wonderful time of blessing this was. There were tears in the eyes of some of the candidates as they obeyed their Lord; there were tears in the eyes of some of their family members and friends; and there were tears in the author’s eyes as we witnessed this bold step of public identification with Jesus Christ.

Then Pastor Jebaseelan became Reverend Jebaseelan as he was ordained by the laying on of hands, and with the prayerful seeking of the power of God’s Holy Spirit to be his portion. Earl preached his address, directed to

that service was. The Lord’s presence was obvious in the faces of the congregation, in their singing and in the warmth of their fellowship. This is really what the Lord’s work here in India is all about. God is blessing and bringing a rich harvest from seeds that have been planted and nurtured over many years. Although we – the missionaries – have had little to do directly with the ministry that has brought these particular results, it is a blessing to know that the mission’s presence is at least partly responsible for the very existence of those ministries. Similarly, those who have in the past, and continue to support Advent Christian World Mission’s work, have the privilege of being part of those ministries. Praise



the Lord!

After the service all present had a very Indian meal – eaten off banana leaves with the fingers of the right hand. After the meal we fellowshipped a little with those present and about 9 p.m. we left to go back to the Tamil Nadu Hotel for a much anticipated shower. Driver Sam and Pastor Peter dropped us off at the hotel and left to spend the night at the local Pastor’s house, and took the towels and the soap with them in the jeep! Oh dear! I still had a shower – I used my shirt as a towel, hung it

I still had a shower – I used my shirt as a towel, hung it over a chair and it was dry by morning!

over a chair and it was dry by morning! In the morning I used the bedcover as a towel – it needed a wash anyway.

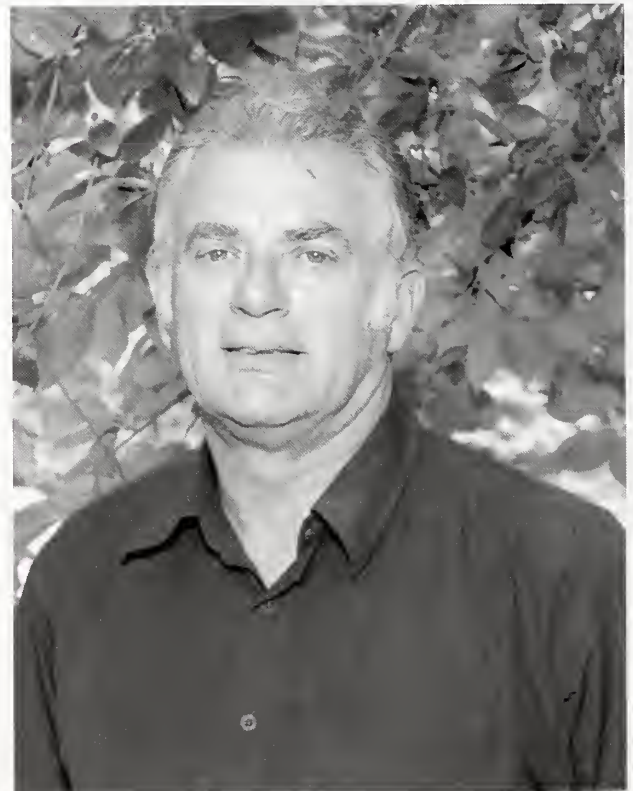
I woke at 4:45 a.m. – it was very hot. I opened the windows a little hoping that internal air pressure from the fan would keep the hordes of mosquitoes out. At 5:30 the power went off, and with it the fan. Close the windows quickly, but that brought instant heat and rivers of perspiration. After half an hour Earl went across to the office to insist that they turn on the generator that they had showed us when they promised 24-hour power, even though there were no soap, no towels, no sheets and no pillowcases. They very reluctantly did as he asked.

That afternoon the “restaurant” had met its obligation to supply Chinese food by serving vegetarian noodles for a late lunch. Next morning we were looking forward to the promised eggs for breakfast. “Sorry, no eggs till 10:00 a.m.!” Apparently the hens are late layers in India. We ordered toast and butter and jam – “Sorry, no butter.” We ordered toast and jam and eventually got a good breakfast of what looked and tasted like French toast,

but no sign of any jam! The coffee was good – the best I had had in my then three weeks in India.

We checked out of the Hotel Tamil Nadu in Virudhunagar, South Tamil Nadu at 8:15 a.m., hopefully for ever, and headed back across the plains to Kodaikanal. Earl had no trouble getting his extra deposit back, but it took 20 minutes to get a receipt for the cost of the rooms.

A stop for breakfast for Driver Sam and Pastor Peter, another for a cool drink at the foot of the Kodai hills and by 1:00 p.m. we were back at “Andivilla” – the mission bungalow at Kodai. The garden around the bungalow, the clear blue sky, the views of the bush-clad hills in the distance reminded us – again – of God’s greatness, his goodness, his faithfulness and his love. What a privilege to be a child of his, and what an honour to serve him.



*Ernie Schache is a native of New Zealand who currently serves as an Advent Christian missionary in India.*



# Unexpected Joy



Victor B. Osborne, Sr.

In my youth, I experienced unexpected joy from giving. It was winter in Wareham, Massachusetts, December 1931, when a stranger knocked at our door. We lived in the country. Nobody ever came to our house. We had no near neighbors, no telephone, no running water and no electricity. We burned wood in the kitchen stove that gave off heat, smoke and smell. It warmed our hands and faces more than our backs.

The man at the door was wearing a heavy coat covered with new-fallen snow. He looked like a snowman. "Come right in!" my dad said. He invited him to come close to the kitchen stove. He adjusted the damper and threw in another stick of wood.

While warming himself, the man said, "My car is stuck in a snow drift a mile or two up the road. Can you help me?"

"Sure" dad said, "We'll harness up the horse and see what we can do."

An hour or two later, the stranger drove his Chevy into our yard. I led our horse (Old Frank) into his stall. Mother had prepared hot coffee and homemade sour-milk cookies topped with cinnamon, sugar and raisins.

After refreshments, our visitor stood with pocketbook in hand and said, "Now, how much do I owe you?"

Dad stood up and said, "Put your pocketbook away! The idea! There's no charge! What are neighbors for?"

I was stunned. I was sure dad would charge him a couple dollars. We were very poor. We could use the money to buy food or pay on the mortgage.

The man said, "Let me pay you. I must give you..."

Immediately, Dad stopped him. "No! We're glad that we could help. It has been our pleasure."

Seeing Dad really meant it, the man backed off and repeatedly thanked him for his help. He thanked me for my part and my mother for the refreshments. On the way out he looked toward the stable and said, "Thanks, Frank, for the pull."

We all felt good. Our new friend was glad to get his car. His repeated "thanks" served to enhance the joy we felt in our hearts. Truly, "It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

*Rev. Osborne is retired and lives with his wife, Louise, in Toccoa, Georgia.*



# Driving Daddy Home

The idea was conceived during a sermon series on the 10 commandments—*“Honor thy Father and thy Mother.”* It wasn’t difficult to figure out a practical application of the commandment. That day the wheels were set in motion to drive Daddy home.

My father wasn’t one to share innermost thoughts. Often you could find him sitting, ruminating with a faraway look in his eyes. Certain “givens” in his life made him easy to read at times, though.

One such “given” was that Georgia was his home. Georgia tugged at his heart. The Lord took him to other places of ministry and he was faithful to those callings. But come every Christmas we packed into the family car to celebrate the First Advent with the extended family at Grandma and Granddaddy’s.

Christmas growing up was sweater weather, swinging on Grandma’s front porch, playing games with cousins, and the smell of woodstoves in the air. Christmas caroling took place hayride-style on the back of a truck. Contrary to popular Christmas carols, it really doesn’t matter what the weather outside is doing. Sharing the First Advent with family is what made the holiday special.

But as life goes on, things change, as was the case with the Georgia Christmas tradition. The cousins grew up and began families of their own. Grandma and Granddaddy passed on. Christmas wasn’t the same. Subsequent Christmases never measured up to the memories of yesteryears. The year Dad’s brother,

Marvin, died Christmas was particularly difficult. As much as we tried to deck the halls in the Bangor parsonage, on Christmas Day we detected the familiar faraway look on Dad’s face. This wasn’t a Georgia Christmas. The family circle was broken and someone dear was missing. Dad cried himself to sleep that night.

*“Honor thy Father and thy Mother.”* Dad needed a trip home. He hadn’t been home in several years since his health made it impossible for him to drive. And, doctors were preparing him for dialysis in his immediate future, a fact he shared with no one. We presented the idea to him on Labor Day. We offered to take two weeks and drive Daddy home. I think the offer took him by surprise. He didn’t say much at first, but by the time we left that day we could sense his excitement. His high school reunion was coming up in October, he told us, and he was the only one in his class who had never attended one.

Plans were finalized. We didn’t realize how timely this trip would be. Dad immensely enjoyed reuniting with his brother, sisters, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Aunt Gloria planned a “this is your life” sort of day and drove us around to familiar scenes from Dad’s childhood. On this walk down memory lane family musings were shared. Although it was unspoken, we all knew this was a final good-bye trip for Dad.

He began to weaken as we departed Pembroke, his



hometown. Fluid collected in sacs on his legs. Infection set in. We drove on to see my brother, Sidney, in Brunswick, GA. How he did it, we all marvel, but in his wobbly condition Dad preached his last sermon at the Brunswick Advent Christian church. The next morning we convinced him to go to the emergency room where a doctor cleaned up his legs, prescribed medication and encouraged us to head home to Dad's family doctor. We pared down the trip, but still gave Dad a chance to see everyone we had planned to visit.

ministries of the Friendship Advent Christian church, its outreach in the community, our missionaries, and asked God's healing blessings upon a parishioner two doors down from him in the Rockport hospital.

During his final moments Dad whispered in a faint voice, "I want to be set free." He lost the faraway look in his eyes that night. As the benediction was pronounced at his home church evening service, the benediction of his life transpired.



*Clarence and Phyllis DuBois at their 50th wedding anniversary.*

Six days after our arrival home Dad was hospitalized. He failed quickly. Dialysis was necessary before his ailing heart could be treated. He refused to sign release papers for the procedure. As much as we tried to talk him into it, it was a lost cause. Dad knew he would never be restored to a quality of life that would allow him to continue in a ministry role. There was no reason to hold onto life in this world if his ministry was complete.

The night before Dad died, he was in and out of reality—suffering the effects of morphine. But surprising everyone in the room, he suddenly broke into a pastoral prayer. In one of his last lucid moments Dad prayed in a strong pulpit voice for the

First Advent celebrations won't be the same without Dad. But Second Advent celebrations await. The carols sung that day won't be about the weather outside. Even streets of gold don't hold much appeal at the moment. Somewhere a Georgia boy will embrace his Savior. Then he'll anxiously call out for his mama and daddy,...and Marvin,...and others who spent First Advent celebrations in a town called Pembroke.

*Even so, come quickly Lord Jesus.*

*A tribute written for the November 13, 2002, memorial service of Rev. Clarence Hazel DuBois, Jr., by his daughter, Hazel Blackstone.*

# DECODE

the message by replacing the numbers with their corresponding letters. Not all letters will be used. A few letters have been done for you.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
		4			9														2						

$\frac{11}{11}$   $\frac{5}{19}$   $\frac{19}{3}$   $\frac{19}{9}$   $\frac{F}{22}$   $\frac{3}{19}$   $\frac{11}{11}$   $\frac{5}{19}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{22}{22}$   $\frac{3}{3}$   $\frac{8}{8}$   $\frac{5}{5}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{16}{16}$   $\frac{S}{2}$   $\frac{19}{19}$   $\frac{F}{17}$   $\frac{9}{9}$   $\frac{7}{7}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{13}{13}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{15}{15}$   $\frac{19}{19}$

$\frac{23}{23}$   $\frac{22}{22}$   $\frac{18}{18}$   $\frac{6}{6}$   $\frac{S}{2}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{13}{13}$   $\frac{25}{25}$   $\frac{11}{11}$   $\frac{5}{5}$   $\frac{19}{19}$   $\frac{15}{15}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{3}{3}$   $\frac{13}{13}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{15}{15}$   $\frac{7}{7}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{14}{14}$   $\frac{19}{19}$   $\frac{7}{7}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{11}{11}$   $\frac{5}{5}$

$\frac{C}{4}$   $\frac{5}{5}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{8}{8}$   $\frac{6}{6}$   $\frac{25}{25}$   $\frac{8}{8}$   $\frac{7}{7}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{13}{13}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{15}{15}$   $\frac{19}{19}$   $\frac{14}{14}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{3}{3}$   $\frac{11}{11}$   $\frac{5}{5}$   $\frac{11}{11}$   $\frac{22}{22}$   $\frac{6}{6}$   $\frac{S}{2}$   $\frac{22}{22}$   $\frac{25}{25}$   $\frac{6}{6}$   $\frac{25}{25}$   $\frac{8}{8}$

$\frac{7}{7}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{C}{4}$   $\frac{6}{6}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{17}{17}$   $\frac{5}{5}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{16}{16}$   $\frac{1}{1}$   $\frac{16}{16}$   $\frac{6}{6}$   $\frac{25}{25}$   $\frac{18}{18}$   $\frac{19}{19}$   $\frac{17}{17}$

*Isaiah 7:14*

# UNSCRAMBLE

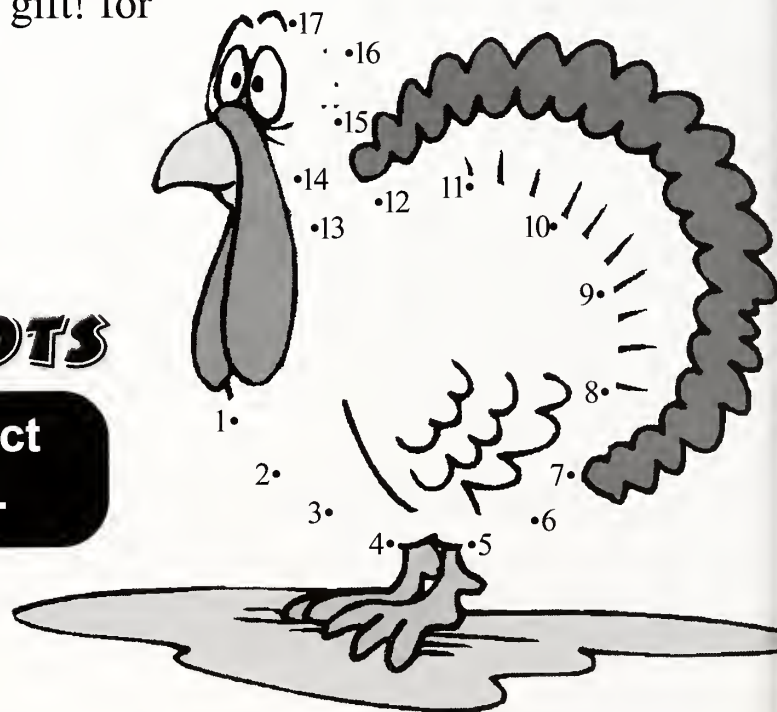
these Bible verses about giving thanks.

(UNSCRAMBLE)

- 1.) to earth. Shout joy Lord, all for the the *Psalm 100:1*
- 2.) he the thanks Lord, for Give good. is to *Psalm 107:1*
- 3.) righteousness. to give his the will I because Lord of thanks  
*Psalm 7:17*
- 4.) Thanks his to God indescribable be gift! for  
*II Corinthians 9:15*
- 5.) in thanks circumstances. all Give  
*I Thessalonians 5:15*

# CONNECT THE DOTS

Using a pen or pencil connect the dots in order from 1-17.







# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

## FILL IN THE BLANKS

Using the words from the list, complete the following Bible verses.

WORD LIST	
angel	glory
angel	joy
appeared	manger
baby	news
born	people
bring	shepherds
Christ	shone
cloths	sign
David	terrified
Don't	Today
fields	you
flocks	

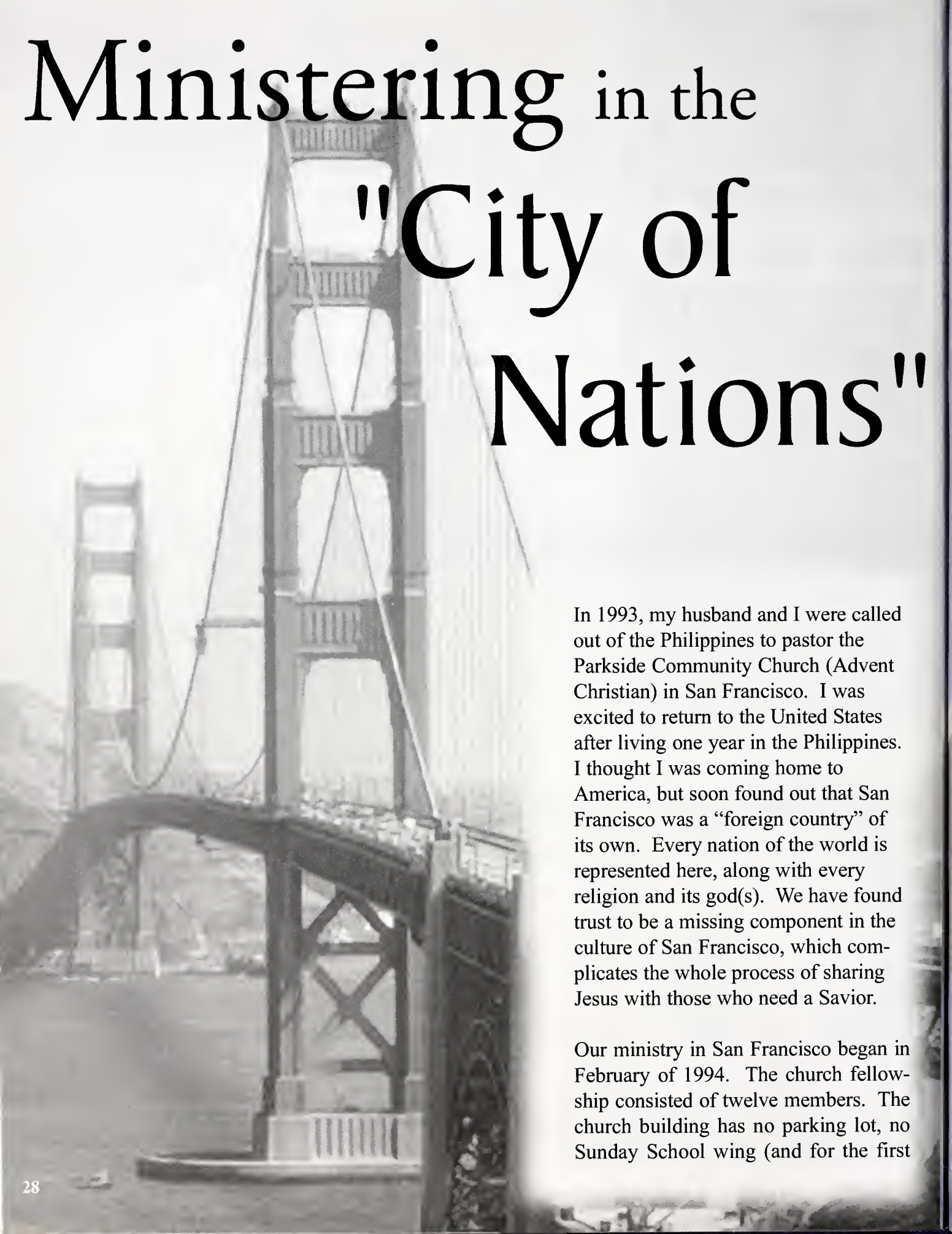
And there were \_\_\_\_\_ living out in the \_\_\_\_\_ nearby, keeping watch over their \_\_\_\_\_ at night. An \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ to them, and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ around them, and they were \_\_\_\_\_. But the \_\_\_\_\_ said to them, "\_\_\_\_\_ be afraid. I \_\_\_\_\_ you good \_\_\_\_\_ of great \_\_\_\_\_ that will be for all the \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ in the town of \_\_\_\_\_ a Savior has been \_\_\_\_\_ to you; he is \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. This will be a \_\_\_\_\_ to you: \_\_\_\_\_ will find a \_\_\_\_\_ wrapped in \_\_\_\_\_ and lying in a \_\_\_\_\_."

*Luke 2:8-12*

## MATCH THE TREE

Two of these trees are exactly alike, find them.





# Ministering in the "City of Nations"

In 1993, my husband and I were called out of the Philippines to pastor the Parkside Community Church (Advent Christian) in San Francisco. I was excited to return to the United States after living one year in the Philippines. I thought I was coming home to America, but soon found out that San Francisco was a "foreign country" of its own. Every nation of the world is represented here, along with every religion and its god(s). We have found trust to be a missing component in the culture of San Francisco, which complicates the whole process of sharing Jesus with those who need a Savior.

Our ministry in San Francisco began in February of 1994. The church fellowship consisted of twelve members. The church building has no parking lot, no Sunday School wing (and for the first



three years, no children), no musicians—nothing that would inspire attendance according to the world's standards. Yet, the one and most important thing that we COULD and do offer is Jesus Christ. It is Jesus that we proclaim. We have learned that when you offer Jesus, you are offering everything, for Jesus meets every need.

We began this ministry with the vision of a multi-racial ministry born out of Acts 1:8, where Jesus said, "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea, in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the world." As San Francisco is a "City of Nations," we envisioned the nations worshipping together with us, using English as a common language. Although we have had a few from other races join us from time to time, those who have responded to the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at this point happen to be Filipinos. We are still praying that our God and Savior will search the city and send others from the nations. How wonderful it would be if you would join us in this prayer.

At Parkside Community Church we function on four basic principles.

**1. Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."**

(Matt. 16:18) We seek to keep in mind that it is Jesus who is building the church, both numerically and spiritu-

ally. What He requires of us is to be faithful to the work He has asked us to do.

**2. Jesus said, "But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."** (Matt. 12:32). While we understand that this statement is in the context of the type of death Jesus would suffer, it has become a key concept in our worship and teaching—to lift up Jesus. We seek to lift up Jesus in our songs of thanksgiving, praise and worship. We seek to proclaim Jesus in our teaching and preaching, for when Jesus is lifted up, He becomes irresistible.

**3. God is faithful and worthy of praise—no matter what. As Scripture says, "Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful."** (Heb. 10:23) We have encountered tremendous difficulties, sorrows, heartbreaks and setbacks in the ministry here, yet time after time God has proved Himself faithful. He has never forsaken us. He has never abandoned us. We have learned through some of the most difficult times that He is worthy of praise, and we praise Him with all of our hearts. He IS faithful!

**4. Our pattern of weekly ministry is based on Acts 2:42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellow-**



***Parkside Community Church***

*ship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*

**To The Apostles' Teaching:** We have a strong teaching and preaching ministry with not only times of preaching and teaching on Sunday mornings, but also teaching and Gospel sharing in home Bible studies throughout the week. And we do not limit ourselves by numbers. For us a home Bible study could have fifteen people in attendance or two. Numbers are not the issue. Rather, it is the heart seeking God and the things of God.

**To The Fellowship:** If you attended our worship service on any Sunday you would find a meal waiting for you in the Fellowship Hall after morning Worship. Yes, every Sunday. This is the time when we draw close and become the “Family of God”. In fact, our motto is, “If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, you are family.” This time of fellowship not only builds relationship and trust, but also gives freedom in our worship, as we know that time is no longer an issue. When we are through we will gather around the table. In addition to this time of fellowship around the table, we have a time of food and fellowship in our home Bible studies.

**To The Breaking of Bread:** The heart of our ministry is the presentation of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church is now numbered at about 35, and most of these are through conversion. (Only two of the original twelve are still with us.) Though this is our current average attendance, many more have passed through our doors and received Jesus as Savior and Lord. The sharing of Communion is the reminder of the saving work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the unifying factor that we are “one family” in the Lord.



**To Prayer:** Jesus said, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) He also said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.” (Luke 18:27) So we pray... pray... and pray, trusting the Lord of the Harvest as we labor for Him.

How can you pray for us here at Parkside Community Church in San Francisco, CA? Join us in praying:

- For musicians, so we might more fully lead the people of Parkside Community Church in songs of praise and worship for the One who died for us.
- For growth, both spiritually and numerically.
- That we would remain faithful to live and serve, uncompromising in our teaching and bold in our testimony.
- That above all, Jesus would be glorified through the lives, testimony and ministry of Parkside Community Church.

It is our desire that the people of San Francisco who encounter the members of Parkside Community Church know by our lives that we are “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God [as we] declare the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His wonderful light.” (I Peter 2:9)

**To God Be the Glory, great things  
HE has done!**

*Jane Jandayan is an ordained Advent Christian minister and is married to Melchor, pastor of the Parkside Community Church in San Francisco, an urban/ethnic congregation. She grew up in southern California and attended Berkshire Christian College in Lenox, MA. Presently she serves as the President of the Western Region WHFMS. Using her God-given musical gifts, Jane loves to lead others into the Father's presence through worship.*



# A Heart of Gold

## *A heart of gold stopped beating today,*

A heart that was pure, and truly devoted to her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She loved Him and knew Him well. It was her desire that all should know Him, especially her family. He was her friend and constant companion.

## *A heart of gold stopped beating,*

A heart so strong and true, full of love for her family. Family was most important, (after God, of course), and it showed on her face whenever anyone came to see her. She would light up and be so happy to have any of her family near. She taught us that “the same blood runs in both your veins!” She taught us that when you were mad (but only dogs get mad) or arguing with a cousin, you had to sit in a chair and look at each other. Well, who could stand it? Before too long you were laughing at the face looking back at you and forgetting what it was you were arguing about. As we got older and married, she loved and accepted many into her family. Always known to her as another son, daughter, or grandchild. She had no “in-laws” in her family they were “by-love”. Each one loved and treated like they were there all along.

## *A heart of gold stopped beating,*

A heart that was true to missions and telling others the good news about Jesus. She traveled around the world and visited different mission fields, those she long prayed for and

worked for in her years of mission work.

## *A heart of gold stopped beating,*

A heart that prayed constantly for many, many people. You always knew that if you asked her to pray she was indeed praying. Many times I saw her sitting on the edge of her bed, hands folded, praying for the needs she knew of. Many of us learned our first prayers at her knees: “Now I Lay Me” (the Advent Christian version – with “if Jesus comes before I wake”), “Jesus, tender shepherd, hear me. Watch thy little lamb tonight”, and “For food and all thy gifts of love”. We learned to love, and to forgive while there at her knees. May we never forget these things.

## *A heart of gold stopped beating,*

A heart that has known sadness and heartache, with her own upbringing, the loss of those near and dear to her – Papa, her son Donald, her best friend Elsie, and many others who were dear to her. Our hearts are now sad, too, and feel this same heartache.

## *A heart of gold stopped beating,*

But the beat must go on! We must continue the legacy that has been left for us. To carry out what she desired of herself and her family. To love the Lord, first and foremost, to love family and cling to each other, to tell others of Jesus, to be prayer warriors. We must carry on what was started more than 95 years ago.

*Written by Cindy Rice, Eastern Regional WHFMS Treasurer, in memory of her grandmother, Dorris Mae Gedney.*



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## Looking at the Pastor's Wife

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# From a Reader

## Dear Mr. Wheaton,

As a long time subscriber of Advent Christian Witness, I want to compliment you on the changes that have taken place in the magazine. It has been interesting to see how certain issues follow through on a theme. Therefore, I have taken the liberty to suggest "Pastors' Wives" as a possible theme. This subject has been much on my mind in the past year and is a concern for me. Please bear with me when I tell you how I became interested in the subject.

At a Mother's Day Prayer Luncheon conducted by the Friendship, Maine Woman's Home & Foreign Mission Society, we honored the Pastors' wives with an attractive plant. Barbara Dean responded that it was not necessary stating, "I am only a pastor's wife." That gave me a twinge of pain. At that time I went home and composed a poem expressing my love, concern and the importance of the "pastor's wife." Since that time the subject has been much on my mind.

Recently we had Pastor Appreciation Sunday and honored Rev. Dwight Dean, Pastor Mike Poli, and Rev. Clarence DuBois. As part of the ceremony, lovely corsages were pinned on each pastor's wife. Somehow to me it did not reveal how important a pastor's wife is or how much we take her for granted.

From my own experience, I (we) make many demands on the pastors that in reality steal time that the pastor might normally have with his wife and family.

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# Hurt, healing and hope...

*...the journey of a  
pastor's wife*



*Did you ever wonder how your pastor's wife may feel about leaving her family, friends and home church to spend her life a modern-day Sarah, following her husband "wherever the Lord leads?" Following is a glimpse into the personal thoughts and struggles of a woman in one of life's most challenging roles.*

It was a cool, sunny, spring afternoon and Camille was deep in thought,

strolling with her little dog along the rugged Oregon coast. Their peaceful walk contrasted sharply with the stress of the past two years: struggles with a troubled teenager, her pastor husband's difficulties in ministry, his stress-related health problems, and finally his resignation from the church. Since then, they'd lived through months of uncertainty and waiting.

Camille had always known, growing up, that God had some kind of ministry for her. When she met Rob, a kindred spirit, he was a new Christian with a deep love for God's Word. By the time he sensed a call to pastoral ministry, they already knew that they wanted to spend their lives together. "So God plans for me to use my gifts as a pastor's wife," Camille had realized.

Now, more than thirty years later, she wondered if God would ever give them another ministry. Thankfully, Rob was healthier now, and he'd sent his resume to several churches that needed a pastor. But none of the contacts had resulted in a new call. So they continued to wait and struggle to make ends meet, with whatever work they could find. Low-paying jobs had forced them to use most of their retirement account to make up the difference. And the "no" votes of search committees hadn't helped their confidence.

## Feelings of Inferiority

As she watched the waves along the rocky shore, she thought back over her own spiritual

journey and their years of ministry. She remembered their first, a church-planting work in the early 1970s. She visualized herself sitting in the "underground chapel" in the house God had provided for them. For only \$50 closing costs and \$127 a month, it gave them plenty of room to live, plus a full basement that was just the right size for a worship center for their small fellowship.

Camille recalled Rob, with guitar in hand, leading worship. When it was time for his sermon, she led five or six children upstairs for a lesson. She longed to have a child of her own, and hoped it would happen soon.

When parents came upstairs after worship to gather their children, she smiled but felt strangely alone. Not only were she and Rob the only childless couple, but they were also just scraping by, while most others in the church seemed to be doing well financially.

Their ministry was growing. Camille taught a weekday Bible Club for neighborhood children. Rob regularly visited homes in the area, sharing the gospel in a non-threatening way. God used them and others in the congregation to reach new people for Christ, and Camille remembered the joy of seeing several new converts baptized.

They enjoyed the ministry, but Camille was troubled by a growing sense of alienation from the two couples who'd been in leadership with them since the church started. She'd felt close to them in the early weeks, but things had changed. One evening,

*(Continued on page 13)*

**LEFT BEHIND**

**or**



**Dr. Gordon Isaac**

**LEFT**

**BEFUDDLED?**

Part one of a three part series





Christians and non-Christians are talking about a best-selling book, *Left Behind*, which is about Bible prophecy, the rise of the Antichrist and the end of the world. It all began in 1995 when *Left Behind* first hit Christian Bookstores nationwide. The authors, pastor Tim LaHaye and writer Jerry Jenkins, scarcely dreamed that Barnes & Noble would eventually call *Left Behind* “one of the top ten best-selling books of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.” Because of soaring sales and blockbuster success, the authors decided to expand their project into a sequence of twelve books.

Amazingly, these books rocketed onto the best-seller lists of the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*, resulting in interviews of LaHaye and Jenkins on “Larry King Live” and other talk shows around the country. The novels have been labeled “the most successful Christian fiction series ever” according to *Publisher’s Weekly*. On February 2, 2001, in the wake of a massive advertising campaign, *Left Behind: The Movie* opened in theaters all over the United States.

It is no surprise to find that there is plenty of information concerning these books on the World Wide Web. When you log-on to the website at [www.leftbehind.com](http://www.leftbehind.com) you will find a vast array of options to explore. There is, of course, a complete listing of the books in the series. There are e-cards that you can send to your friends, wallpaper that you can use on your computer and a flashy screensaver that can be yours for the downloading. There is information on the kids’ series, product listings that includes audio books, music, videos, and you name it! There is a message-board where you can discuss with other *Left Behind* readers the frightful truths revealed in various books. There is also a link that will give you end-times resources, a listing of books for further research.

The *Left Behind* series is nothing short of a phenomenon. At last count ten books in the adult series and no less than 22 in the kids’ series have been released with a total of more than 50 million copies in print. It is hard to put into words how huge this publishing and multimedia event has become. Millions of Christians and non-Christians alike have read or seen some product of the *Left Behind* series.

So what is it all about? Buck and Rayford are the protagonists of the first book in the series. As the jacket cover of the movie says, “On an overseas flight to London, Rayford and Buck are caught in the middle of the most incredible event in history. Suddenly, without warning, dozens of passengers simply vanish into thin air. But it doesn’t stop there. It soon becomes clear that millions of people are missing from around the world. As chaos and anarchy engulf the world, both men set out on vastly different paths in a desperate search for answers.” The back cover of the book informs us that the series is more gripping than John Grisham’s or Tom Clancy’s.

The *Left Behind* series depicts the events including the rapture of the church, the rise of the Antichrist and the struggle of humanity leading up to the last battle—Armageddon. Christians have always discussed end-times issues. But what is one to think of the *Left Behind* phenomenon? Where is the series coming from, theologically speaking? And are the foundations of this approach solid, or does this series leave certain biblical truths behind? “Left Behind” or “left befuddled?” This is the question that quite naturally arises in the wake of the media hype.

The kind of end-times scenario that is set forward by *Left Behind* is characterized by a very specific set of theological allegiances. The school of thought is known as Dispensationalism. Without going into great detail, it is a system of thought that is characterized (among other things) by a commitment to a sudden vanishing of Christians worldwide (the secret rapture of the church), the idea of a seven-year period of tribulation that true Christians will not face (the Tribulation of unbelievers), and the idea of a single, devil-indwelt, one-man Antichrist who appears only during the end-time Tribulation (the personal Antichrist). All this supposedly takes place before the Second and visible Coming of Christ. These are some of the theological factors that form the substructure of the *Left Behind* series. Even if we focus only on the question of the secret rapture of the church, it is enough to leave one scratching one’s head.

The Rapture teaching is based on the idea that the Second Coming of Christ is in two stages. The first



stage is characterized by Christ coming secretly near the earth (the parousia), at which time all true believers will be caught up in the air with him and taken away to heaven, while those whose Christianity was false, pagans and Jews who have not received Jesus as Messiah, will undergo a period of intense suffering called the Tribulation. Or, to put it in other words, Christ returns twice; first, for his church, which will be spared the Great Tribulation; then later in power and glory to conquer his enemies.

An official *Left Behind* site on the Internet declares: "In one chaotic moment, millions of people around the world suddenly disappear leaving their clothes, wedding rings, eye glasses and shoes in crumpled piles. Mass confusion hits while vehicles suddenly unmanned veer out of control, fires erupt, and hysteria breaks out as the living stare in disbelief and fear at the empty places where their loved ones were just seconds before. This is the rapture that God has planned as the first sign to begin the unraveling of the end of time."

Is this what the Bible teaches? There are several reasons to dispute *Left Behind's* teaching regarding the secret rapture. In the first instance, when one turns to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, which gives an account of the coming of the Lord, it is not at all secret but seems to depict a very public and open event. The Scripture says,

*"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with loud command, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet call of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thessalonians 4:16 &17).*

Rather than depicting a secret and hidden event, it seems that the Apostle Paul is describing a public and very noisy appearing of the Lord on the Last Day. To interpret this account as a secret rapture requires one to close one's ears to the loud command and the sound of the trumpet. It means that, contrary to the text, one has to presuppose a secret coming of Christ and then read Scripture in light of that prior belief.

What many people don't realize is that the doctrine of the secret rapture of the church was first developed in the 1800's. There is no evidence of this teaching in the writings of the church fathers up until the time of the great prophecy conferences of the nineteenth century. J.N. Darby, an Irishman who traveled to the United States, helped popularize the new teaching. The rule in theology, however, is faithfulness not originality. For a new doctrine to become the rule it must be amply taught in Scripture. The pretribulational rapture is not.



The popularized view of the rapture depends on a misunderstanding of the Scripture that refers to the Last Day as coming “like a thief in the night.” *Left Behind* asserts that this reference is to the manner in which Christ will come: secret or furtive. The text however, is referring to the sudden or unexpected character of Christ’s bursting into this world of ours. The point of the passage is to urge the hearers to ready themselves for his coming. Matthew 24:27 likens the coming of Christ to the flash of lightening that fills the sky. In contrast to mistaken ideas about a secret coming, his coming is just as visible as fireworks in the heavens.

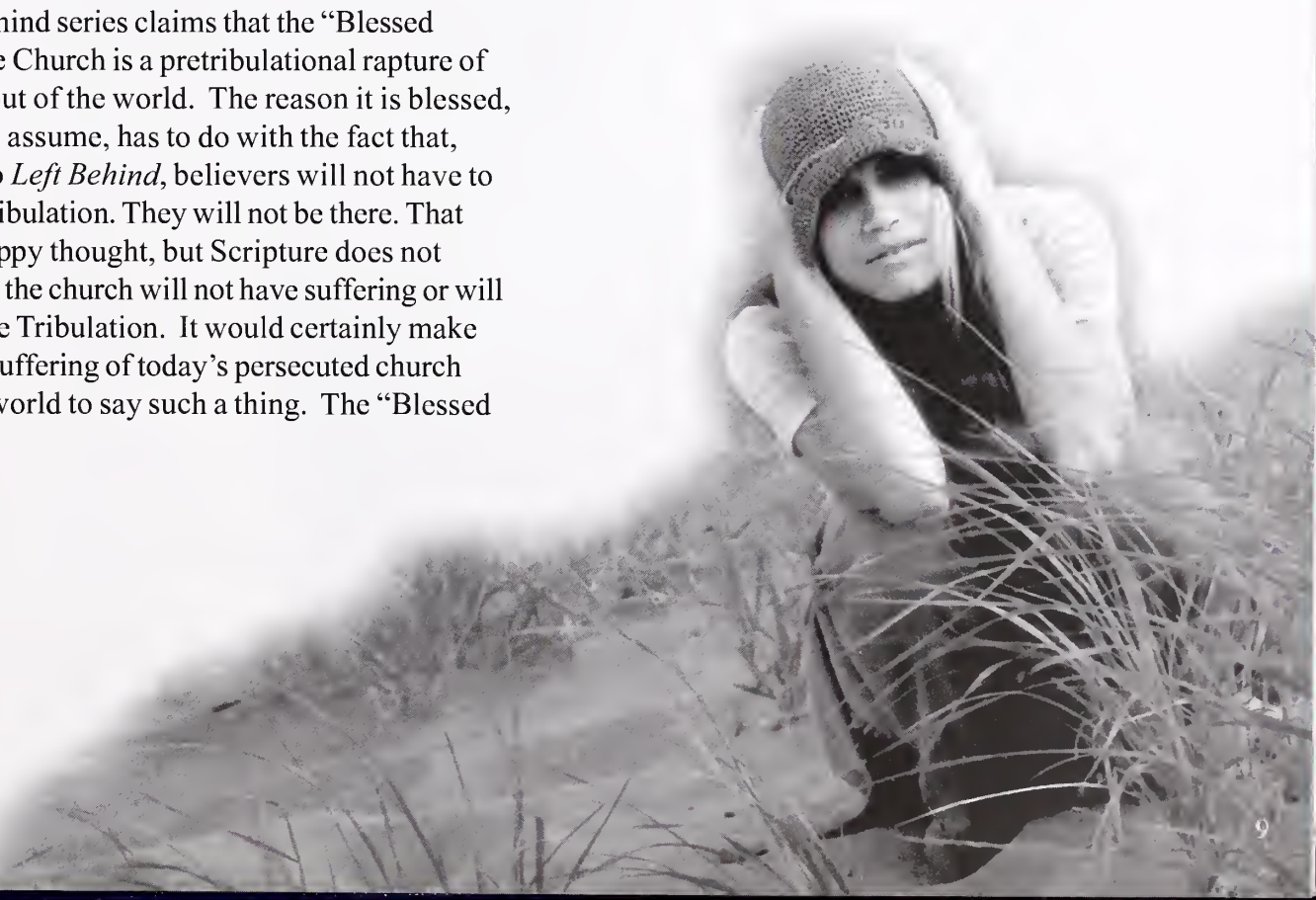
In the Rapture, *Left Behind* depicts mothers looking for their vanished babies, and unbelieving spouses are left behind without their lifelong partners. This is a bizarre picture of things that makes God out to be capricious and vindictive in the way that he carries out his aims. The view of God shown in this series is strangely altered from the view of the just and merciful God of the Bible. In place of the view of God as faithful and dependable, it sets out God’s actions as preemptory and willfully inconsistent. It is highly speculative to imagine that God would deal with his world in this way.

The *Left Behind* series claims that the “Blessed Hope” of the Church is a pretribulational rapture of the church out of the world. The reason it is blessed, one is left to assume, has to do with the fact that, according to *Left Behind*, believers will not have to suffer the Tribulation. They will not be there. That may be a happy thought, but Scripture does not promise that the church will not have suffering or will be spared the Tribulation. It would certainly make light of the suffering of today’s persecuted church around the world to say such a thing. The “Blessed

Hope” is not the avoidance of difficulty but precisely the overcoming of all opposition in the victory of Jesus that finds its fulfillment at his return. His work of judgment and redemption will be fulfilled at that time. We will all be present for that ultimate reality. The blessed hope is not a secret rapture but the return of the Lord of heaven and earth.

The *Left Behind* series may be a best-seller and may have captured the American imagination regarding end-times events, but it is leaving many befuddled and many confused about what the Bible really says. †

*Dr. Gordon Isaac is director of the Center for Advent Christian Studies and teaches at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts.*









# A Date with the Pastor

She was excited and a little surprised that such a small thing would affect her so. Tonight was going to be wonderful! Mark, her pastor husband, had promised the evening to her and she was delighted that they would have some special time together.

Things were all set. The babysitter was arranged and the reservations made. She had already selected her outfit. At last, after scrimping and saving for so long, they were going to treat themselves to a fabulous dinner at that fancy new restaurant downtown.

Martha hoped and prayed that nothing would come up to spoil the evening. After all, it was Mark's day off. But that hadn't stopped a lot of other "important" calls in the past. Martha never ceased to be amazed by the things church people thought were so urgent that they couldn't wait for even a day. Did Mark really need to know this very minute about Aunt Jolene's surgery scheduled for next week? Wouldn't the next day have done just as well? Martha reminded herself once again that she really did love her church family. She just wished they were a bit more understanding.

At last, Mark arrived home, only delayed by one quick stop at the hospital. Two phone calls later, with kisses for the kids and instructions for the babysitter, they were off!

The restaurant was every bit as elegant as she had heard. The wait-staff were so attentive. She felt like a queen! At least for about 30 minutes. Then it happened. Elder Brown came in with his wife.

"Oh no!" Martha thought. She could tell by the expression on Mrs. Brown's face just what she was thinking: "How could they afford to come here? Maybe we're paying them too much."

Martha struggled to hold down the feelings that welled up inside her. Why shouldn't they be able to treat themselves once in awhile? Besides, they never would have been able to afford to come here if she weren't working. Her job made it difficult to care for her children properly and still be involved in the church as she would have liked. She realized that there were some in the church who felt she wasn't doing as much as she should. As Mark returned to the table, she sent up a quick but heart-felt prayer for grace to enjoy the rest of the evening. †



We asked pastors to draw from their own experiences and write a caption to this photo describing a church “emergency” that interrupted their family time. Here are some of their submissions:

### **Sorry, Honey...**

... it's the head trustee. He drove by and saw a light on at the church, and asks if I could go over and turn it off.”

... apparently I forgot to let the board know I was going to be more than 20 miles from the church.

... but Mr. Payne's cousin's friend's neighbor has an infected big toe and wondered if we would mind stopping by if our anniversary dinner doesn't take too long.

... it's the WH&FMS calling. They want you to be in charge of King's Jewels/Junior Action again this year. They found some unused materials in Sister Elouise's attic.

...Like I was saying, dear... You've got my complete attention.



*(Hurt... continued)*

she was alone with Jan after a Bible study, and she ventured a tentative question: "Do you think I'm doing all right as a pastor's wife?"

"Well," Jan responded, "one thing bothers Rose and me..."

Camille stared back, realizing, "They've been discussing me behind my back!" She waited for Jan to continue.

"...we would like it if you wore dresses to church," Jan finished.

"That's it?" Camille thought. "I just wanted to know if they think I'm effective in ministry. And their concern is that I should look more churchy when I attend services in my own home!"

## Discovering God's Grace

As Camille continued her ocean-side stroll, she fast-forwarded to their next ministry. Rob's father had died and they'd moved back to Cheyenne, Wyoming, Rob's hometown, to help his widowed mother and younger siblings. Eventually, Rob was invited to serve as an assistant pastor in the church they had joined. The senior pastor was warm and supportive, as were most people in the congregation. Rob enjoyed his work, and Camille felt loved and accepted—by everyone, that is, except God.

"Father, I'm really confused," she prayed. "I keep doing more and more for you, but it's never enough. I love teaching my Sunday School class and helping Rob in the youth ministry. But if I take much time for myself or a hobby, I feel guilty."

Eventually, God helped her learn that she didn't need to earn his acceptance. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). And, it was okay for her to decline ministry opportunities that weren't suited for her, if she trusted the Lord to put a desire in her heart for what he wanted her to do. The Bible said, "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). She began to experience the freedom of serving God from the heart, out of gratitude for his gracious acceptance, rather than being driven by guilt or people's expectations.

## Trials, Troubles, and Trusting

The next church was out in the country, with a roomy but run-down parsonage in a lovely wooded area. Camille loved the surroundings, despite the fact that some influential members exhibited a fearful reluctance to follow pastoral leadership—even in small matters.

Even so, the church's attendance doubled in their first three years there. New converts and hurting Christians were drawn into their fellowship. It seemed that a true spiritual renewal was beginning. Then the church suffered a spiritual attack. One of their long-time members was exposed as an adulterer. Rob attempted to provide Biblical guidance in responding to the situation, but encountered strong opposition from board members who accused him of "trying to take over the church." Things got ugly, and soon the new growth they'd experienced began disappearing. It was frightening to see attendance and finances dwindle over the next year and a half, as if God's hand of blessing had simply been removed.

Eventually the church could no longer continue Rob's salary. He applied for jobs in the area, but nothing opened up. Finally Camille sensed God encouraging her through the story of the Exodus. "If God could open the Red Sea for the Israelites, he can open it for us!" And indeed, he did, calling them to a wonderful church in a small New England town.

## Learning Assertiveness

Their new ministry paid Rob more generously and Camille became a happy stay-at-home mother of their two adopted children. But she felt some anxiety the first few months: "Will the congregation expect me to give more time to church activities than I feel I should? Will I be expected to volunteer for open positions, even if they aren't suited for me?" She gradually learned to just "be herself" instead of trying to live up to the real or imagined expectations of others. When she did, most people seemed to respect her.

She chuckled, recalling an example of that lesson. Dora, an eccentric elderly lady, had phoned one evening. Rather abruptly she suggested, "Camille,

why don't you get out and visit the women of the church with your husband?"

Camille was surprised. Didn't Dora know she was home-schooling her young son and caring for a baby? She'd never really thought of visiting the women of the church. "I'm very busy with my kids," she answered. "And my ministry involvement is more with teens, since I'm teaching the Youth Sunday School class."

Dora retorted, "Our former pastor's wife taught school and worked in the church, but she still got out to see the women."

Camille wasn't sure what to say, but then blurted out, "Well, I'm not that pastor's wife. I'm the person that God made me to be."

There was an awkward silence and then Dora politely ended the conversation. Camille could hardly believe that she'd answered so boldly, and wondered if she'd offended Dora.

Moments later, the phone rang again. "Camille, you're right," offered Dora. "And I'm glad you stood up for yourself. You wouldn't be worth a twit if you didn't." Camille was very pleasantly surprised. Choosing to respect her own deepest feelings had won the respect of a critic.

## Heartbreak and Uncertainty

Camille gazed at the waves rolling in over large chunks of driftwood. She thought back over the years and how each of their congregations had become like a family to her, Rob and their children. There had been joys and sorrows and always a painful grief when leaving one church and accepting another. But leaving their last one, on the west coast, had been the most painful. They'd been there longer than any other place.

After their arrival she had bonded quickly with people. That bond had grown and God gave her a circle of close female friends who loved and supported her. They prayed together about their kids, and all their concerns. And she found a very satisfying teaching ministry in the church.

God touched many lives through her and Rob's gifts and hospitality, but the last two years



were difficult. The church lost several people. Some moved away, some died, and some who lived at a greater distance had chosen to attend churches closer to home. New people came into the fellowship, but they were not yet giving or doing very much. Some members began to panic. "We need a stronger leader," one voiced. "A pastor needs to be like the CEO of a business." The presence of mega-churches in their city changed some people's view of pastoral ministry.

Rob knew God had gifted him as a shepherd and teacher, but he was no CEO. It was deeply discouraging to hear a few people blame him for the lower attendance, even though he knew God was using his ministry and that there were several factors involved in the church's decline. In addition to the unpleasant relationship with some people, he was emotionally exhausted after a series of crises in their son's life and the suicide of a new attender he'd been trying to encourage. Stress-related health problems finally forced Rob to resign.

## No Doubting God's Love

Still watching the waves, Camille remembered a song she heard on Christian radio before they'd moved. It said, "God will keep you in a difficult situation just long enough that there's *no more doubt* about his love and care for you."

Nine months had passed since their move. Generous Christian friends had provided free housing for them for most of that time, but there were still serious financial struggles and many tears. They'd prayed desperate prayers; some had been answered, most seemed to be "on hold."

Rob and Camille had experienced some spiritual and emotional healing, and they both had a desire to get back into pastoral ministry; but they were still troubled by a lingering fear of destructive critics and unreasonable expectations.

The future seemed so uncertain. Did God want to give them another full-time ministry? If not, how would they earn enough to pay all their bills? And would all the energy and time invested in working leave anything for even part-time service? Or, were they permanently set aside from any pastoral ministry?

Camille recalled a verse a friend shared with her: "The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:20).

Another lady, who knew their situation, had recently handed her a page from a devotional book with a promise: "As you go, step by step, the way shall open before you" (Proverbs 4:12, Hebrew version).

"Lord, you're bringing me to the point where there's *no doubt*—or at least not as much—that you have a plan for us. Thank you for your faithful love, and that you're not through with us after all."†

\*\*\*\*\*

*The author prefers to remain anonymous. Names of people and places have been changed, but the story is essentially true.*

*Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless specified otherwise.*





# 2003 PASTORS-IN-TRAINING



Pastors-in-training Summit participants and regional superintendents are pictured as follows: back row—Sam Walsh, Marshall Tidwell, Mike Gardner, Clint Taber, Rob Musick, Larry Rice and Dave Ross. Middle row, left to right—Heather Duncan, Steve Fenrick, Lin Shannon Lucas, Nate Bickford and Steven Burleson. In Front, Josh Spoelstra and





# TRAINING SUMMIT

A dozen Advent Christian young people met at Advent Christian General Conference in Charlotte, N.C., for the 2003 Pastors-in-training Summit in January.

Most of the young pastors, students and prospective Christian workers met ACGC employees, regional superintendents, and each other for the first time. During the summit weekend, the visitors received “crash courses” in Advent Christian history and doctrine, Biblical prophecy, and effective disciple-making for pastors. Eastern Region Superintendent Rev. Clinton Taber shared his Power-Point presentation on our hope and the imminent return of Jesus Christ. In conjunction with the Pastors-in-training Summit, the regional superintendents held their annual meeting at the Charlotte office, enabling them to interact with the summit guests.

The event concluded with the pastors-in-training attending three Sunday worship services at Dulin's Grove Advent Christian Church, International Pilgrim's Christian Church (both of Charlotte, N.C.), and First Advent Christian Church of Concord, N.C. †



red shows: back row, left to  
Larrithrow, John Roller, Josh  
Lin Musick, Nick Foss,  
a an Crouse.





*A  
Valentine For  
Remembrance*

Miriam Snow Priebe





"Sometimes, when we speak of Valentine's Day, it's all about what we remember," said Martha. "Somehow the past seems so much more important than the present when we think about that particular holiday."

"Maybe it's because we're getting older," I answered. "*Perhaps* we just enjoy thinking of the good old romantic days!"

We were sitting in a waiting room at the hospital while a friend of ours was having an operation for removal of cataracts. That operation is supposed to be very routine these days; but our friend certainly thought it was a major one, and so will I when it's my turn! Someone was needed to drive the patient to and from the hospital, so Martha and I volunteered to drive and to wait.

While we sat there drinking coffee we started talking about Valentine's Day. We had stopped at a store en route and had noticed the advertising—the hearts, the red ribbons and the flowers and candy—with New Year's Day scarcely over. After bewailing the commercializing of the holiday, we launched into memories of our own celebrations of the day. We had early school memories, romantic stories of our courtship and marriage and funny accounts of our children's celebration of the day. We certainly had been thinking of the past!

We took a few minutes to discuss the cost of cards. "Three and four dollars for a Birthday or Get-Well card these days!"

A young woman came into the room as we talked. She explained that her father was having eye surgery. As she stirred her coffee she said, "I heard what you were saying about Valentine's Day. I have a story about Valentine's Day that involves memories and the present.

"My Grandmother is suffering from memory loss. At first it was just small things; but gradually it progressed until she was unable to go on living alone. Fortunately there is a very lovely nursing home near here with a special part of it reserved for folks like her. My sister and I go in every day and our father is there as often as he can go. We think it's very important for the family to keep in touch with Grandma."

Martha and I nodded our agreement.

"As time went on it grew harder and harder to fill the time we were there with conversation. Often Grandma didn't

even know who we were and could not remember that we had been there just the day before. At last we accepted that and tried to think of ways to make Grandma happy at least during the time we were there. We brought in little gifts and snapshots. Strangely enough, she often remembered people and events that were in the photos.

"Last July, when we cleaned out my grandmother's home, I found a box of letters and cards she had saved. Among them were several valentines. Some were from Grandpa and others from her children and even a few hand made ones from my sister and me. So when I went to see her I took a few of them along. How delighted she was! She didn't seem to realize that they were from the past, but enjoyed every one as if it had just been sent.

"When I gave her one of the childish ones I had made she seemed to have no idea that it was I who sent it to her. Instead she told me about her little granddaughter who had made that valentine all by herself. It was the same with grandfather's cards and notes, especially a lovely valentine he had sent her fifty years before.

"So we have been having Valentine's Day ever since. Every few days we bring in one or two valentines and enjoy two hours of talking them over. This year, on that special day, we'll have cake and ice cream, a few new valentines and several old ones.

"We know, of course, the time will come when this little game we play will no longer work; but until then, we'll have Valentine's Day over and over and her eyes will shine as she tells us all about the people who sent her those beautiful cards."

Martha and I were in tears as she finished her story. Just about that time a doctor came into the room to talk to the young woman, and she left with a brief goodbye. Shortly afterwards our smiling friend joined us wearing an eye patch. "It must have been terribly boring for you girls," she said, as she thanked us for bringing her there.

Later, as I dropped Martha off at her house, she remarked, "Well, we heard a story today that involved both the memories of the past and love-in-action in the present! It's going to make my Valentine's Days different!"

"Mine, too!" I said. †

Yet the wife graciously makes no complaint. Late one Sunday night I was notified by the doctor at the hospital that my husband had died. Whom did I call? My first call was to my pastor at that time, Rev. Clayton Blackstone. Although it was late and it had been a busy Sunday, he was at my home in minutes. When my children living out of state were concerned about relaying difficult news to me, they called Pastor Dean to be my support during that troubling time.

I called on the youth director, Pastor Mike Poli, to remove a skunk from my garbage pail. He also took time to put up and later take down my Christmas icicle lights. One day, when he was away at a Youth Conference, I noticed his wife on a step ladder removing her icicle lights that he did not have time to remove. When I get confused by the intricacies of my computer, it's the youth pastor to the rescue.

Rev. Clarence DuBois was our Minister of Pastoral Care. We give little thought to how many of our woes he listened to day after day. He knew our every ache and pain, every surgery we have gone through, each concern we have over our children. Our demands upon him were great.

Why do I relate these incidents? Because each one takes the pastor away from his duties to his family. While he is ministering to the congregation, his wife is handling the family concerns, smoothing the way for her husband, easing him from many of the responsibilities in the home. Who is the one who entertains visiting dignitaries? Who is expected to lead Bible studies, teach Sunday school classes, sing in the choir, help with special suppers? Who often takes a job to supplement the pastor's salary? Who's homemaking and parenting skills are watched with a critical eye? I think of the many hours she is alone, caring for the children while the pastor is away at meetings (national, regional, state and community,) listening to the complaints of the parishioners, counseling, consoling, mediating differences. Little do we realize the demands we make on a pastor and the effect it has on his relationship with his wife and family.

We, as a congregation, rarely take time to express our appreciation for the contribution the pastor's wife makes in our lives. This is why I am suggesting "Honoring your pastor's wife" as a possible theme. In the Eastern Regional Conference Kit there was a flyer promoting a "Pastor's Wife's Retreat" April 4-6, 2003. The purpose of the weekend is to give the pastor's wife a place to be supported and appreciated for the very special and unique ministry she lives every day. I hope that you have been made aware of this event. Maybe there could be a tie-in to an article or articles in the *Advent Christian Witness*.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Sylvester  
Friendship, Maine

Dear Mrs. Sylvester:  
Consider it done! *ACW*✝



# The Christian man's battle with his sexuality

Archibald D. Hart

*"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality" (1 Thess. 4:3, NIV).*

The greatest challenge facing the Christian church in this century lies in the area of sexuality. And it is men, especially "good" Christian men, who face the greatest challenge. Almost every letter I have received from men since publishing my book *The Sexual Man* eight years ago confirms this assertion, which for me is a conviction.

## The war within

In the hearts of all good men there is a battle raging, a battle as real as any literal war we might wage. It is a battle for integrity, decency, and purity. It is a struggle to overcome forces that seem uncontrollable—in human terms. And many good men are losing this battle, including pastors.

While recent revelations of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic priests has rocked the confidence and trust of Catholic parishioners in North America, we have known for many years that the Protestant house isn't exactly in order.

I first started researching the incidence of pastoral sexual failures 18 years ago, as did several others. We went public with these findings and soon noticed a gradual decline of reported violations. Raising the consciousness of pastors by reminding them of how vulnerable they were in the sexual arena, coupled with clearer ethical statements from denominational leaders, did much to stem the tide. Now I see a gradual but steady increase in pastoral sexual failures.

My focus here is not on the sexual indiscretions of pastors. Rather, I want to examine the broader issue of male sexuality that, to some extent, underlies pastoral failures. "Pastoral indiscretions" are, in my opinion, the outworking of a distorted male sexuality—a reality all men must face up to.

## A distorted gift

Sex is a joyous gift from God. But of all of the gifts of creation it is probably the most perplexing. There is more potential for sin in the realm of sexuality than in almost any other area of our lives. Paul's admonition to the Thessalonians is as needed today as it was in New Testament times. This Thessalonian text gives indication of

the power sex had in Paul's day and that it has indeed always had.

In more than 30 years of clinical practice, working with many Christian men and pastors, I have not encountered a topic more bewildering to them. Despite the sexual revolution, or perhaps because of it, men seem to be more confused about their sexuality than ever before. They struggle to understand its power, how to control it, and above all how to "sanctify" it according to the admonition of Paul.

Why is it that so many struggle to balance their strong hormonally-driven urges with their desire to be good, devout, and faithful partners and pastors? One reason is that the tensions we feel in our sexual drive seem to fit "the lusts of the flesh" Paul talks about. Another is that we live in an era of sexually supercharged stimuli.

That men engage in such a struggle is indisputable, as every counselor of men knows. Good men have difficulty differentiating between ordinary, healthy sexuality and what is abnormal. Many men fear that just because they have a strong sex drive they are in some way deviant. "I must be something of a freak" a pretty normal pastor told me once. Some even fear that they may be "perverted" or addicted to some sexual aberration.

The bottom line is that *all* men struggle to keep their heads above the turbulent waves of their testosterone. The sex drive is a powerful force in healthy men and clearly some have a harder battle with the fight than others. Men with strong sex drives can easily develop a pervasive sense of shame and self-rejection, even though a strong drive, in and of itself, is *not* abnormal.

That we must learn to control our sexual urges and channel them into appropriate outlets is the challenge we all face. But how do we accomplish this and what is the real problem? It can't be sexuality in and of itself, since this is part of God's creation.

I believe it is that the beautiful gift God has given us has become distorted, and men in particular, have lost their way! What was intended by God to be a joyous, transcendent experience that unites a man and a woman, has become a bewildering, bothersome, and, for most, baffling challenge.

## Major sources of distortion

Several obvious sources for the distortions can be identified. I discuss these in detail in my book *The Sexual Man*, but here we will take up only three major sources.

1. The “*veil of silence*.” “Men are known by the silence they keep” some-one has said. This sums up a major distorting influence in male sexuality. The shrouding of male sexuality is not difficult to discern. While average men think about sex a lot, it’s too personal and intimate to discuss openly. They won’t even admit how often they think about it!

Some men may joke about sex, but they hardly ever talk about it seriously. The result? Most boys grow up struggling to distinguish between what is “normal” and “healthy” from what is “sick, sinful and dysfunctional.” They have no sense of where “normal” lies because they don’t know what others are thinking or feeling deep down.

This “veil of silence” can have devastating consequences. For one thing boys don’t get healthy or even accurate information about sex from their fathers as they grow up. What they learn from friends is full of distortions and embellished with the shame we so easily associate with sex if you grow up in a Christian home.

There is, however, a much more serious penalty for men’s silence: It fails to help fathers *model* a healthy sexuality. Most sons do not see their fathers as sexual beings and this can, for example, keep them from learning how to behave in a healthy way toward women. Without adequate models, boys develop a sexuality that is misguided, and in many cases immoral or even dangerous.

2. *Pornography and cybersex*. There is no greater threat to a healthy, let alone sanctified, male sexuality than pornography. It is devastating our Christian sons and creating an epidemic of addiction to sexually stimulating images.

Through pornography and the related means of communication that it exploits, many men have developed or exacerbated what can only be described as “an obsessive/compulsive sexuality.” That is, men are engrossed in the physical aspects of human sexuality and they have come to obsessively act these out compulsively.

The average male growing up in today’s world is so bombarded by sexual stimulation (mainly through the sex-crazed media who have discovered that everything sexual sells better than anything else), that few men escape its influence.

Pornography also feeds unrealistic expectations for gratification, changes how men view women in that they are only seen as sexual objects, and fosters a nonrelational sexuality. This means that many men who have used pornography for a long time do not know to relate to real

women, and have great difficulty breaking the way they do it.

Pornography is only the tip of iceberg. Cybersex is rapidly becoming the primary source of pornography. There are now literally thousands of Web sites that offer extremely explicit pornography that can be indulged in total privacy without anyone else knowing about it.

This has already become a significant temptation for Christian men—including pastors. Besides this, just around the corner there is an even more frightening prospect that will turn the current level of pornography into “virtual sex,” where computers connected to high-speed Internet sites will be able to offer sex-hungry men a variety of sexual experiences in real time with “virtual” partners. This promises to be so addicting that it is bound to put substance abuse down on the list of social concerns.

3. *Puberty, adolescence, and the long “waiting period.”* The detrimental influence of pornography is particularly severe when it captures young boys. In this context we need to be aware of one significant biological effect that is not going to go away. It is this: *The age of puberty is now lower than it has ever been, and it continues to drop.*

This reality always comes as a surprise whenever I lecture on the topic of male sexuality. For both boys and girls, the more developed a culture, the lower is the age of puberty. Many factors, including healthier living conditions and better nutrition are considered to be the cause.

Two hundred years ago puberty only arrived at 17 or 18, when a young person was almost certainly going to be married by age 20—a very short “waiting-for-sex” period. When I was teenager, the average age of puberty was around 13. My grandchildren now are all going through puberty at about 11 years of age. Who knows when this phenomenon will level out!

Think for a moment about the difference in maturity between 11 and 18. It is frightening to realize that 11-year-old boys, and for some it is younger than this, are physically mature enough to “make babies,” but not mature enough to feed or raise them. But that is the reality of our world today. The ramifications are mind-boggling.

At the other end, the age of adolescence has gone up. No longer can we think about it ending, say, when a boy leaves high school. Many social commentators are saying that today adolescence doesn’t really end until age 28 or 30 because men are not financially able to support a family until they are done with graduate school and begin to work and live independently.

The point is this: The period of “waiting” between puberty



(say 11) and when a young man can legitimately experience sex in marriage (say 28), is already too long and getting longer. And it is this long “waiting” period that is highly influential in providing the opportunity for sexual distortion to develop in young men.

The common, secular-based alternatives facing our young people today are either free sex without any commitment (risking pregnancy and a host of spiritual, psychological, cultural, and social distortions) or masturbation to pornography. Often it is a combination of both. Certainly, a heavy dependence on pornography by men in these early years must inevitably create serious addictive tendencies that will be difficult to break.

### **Creating a healthier sexuality**

Given what I have said so far it is not surprising that I cannot stress strongly enough how important it is that we address these issues in our churches. There is no other social structure that holds out hope!

Whatever else we do, we must give the highest priority to shaping a healthier sexuality in our young people, especially boys. We also need to provide opportunities to bring healing to our men. Judging them because they seem out of control won't help. It only breeds more shame, remorse, and crippling silence. The battle can only be won by helping them to develop a healthier sexuality.

How does one create a healthy sexuality, given the problems mentioned? And what can men do to heal an already distorted sexuality?

The challenges are enormous and I don't want to give the impression that there are quick and easy solutions. However, here are some practical ways we can begin to rebuild the beautiful gift that God has given us through our sexuality:

1. *We need to acknowledge our need for divine intervention.* While there is a lot of therapeutic help we can offer, only the power of God can get a man out of the mess of a distorted sexuality with any degree of permanency.

2. *We must help the church at large to break the veil of silence* that shrouds sexuality. Men's support groups have already begun to spring up around the country. The time has come for frank, open discussions in our churches about the dangers of such practices as sexual fantasies, the damage of the early exposure of boys to pornography, and the importance of building healthy, balanced lives. Believe it or not, when one's life is rich with meaning, sexual temptations lose their power even in men with serious distortion.

3. *Couples need help in addressing sexual problems as early as possible in their marriages.* Churches which

maintain a distance from these matters or which do not offer programs that can help couples in their struggles at reconciling the sexual differences between the spouses are only perpetuating the problem.

4. *Parents need help in educating their children, especially boys, into developing a healthy sexuality.* This has to be done without shaming them or creating severe guilt, which is quite inadvertently the most common form of control that Christian parents resort to. Parents themselves need training in how to educate their children!

Since it takes healthy parents to raise healthy children, parents, *especially fathers*, should be encouraged to confront their own sexual distortions and get help in undoing them.

### **Conclusion**

The problems facing men as they seek to develop a sanctified sexuality aren't going to go away. Instead, the challenges are greater. For our Christian subculture at least, the church is the system that must commit itself to restoring a sanctified sexuality.

The apostle Paul's advice to men has never been more needed than now:

“That each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God” (1 Thess. 4:4 & 5, NIV).

In one sense we need to learn how to control our bodies because the temptation to sin is greater in the realm of sex than in anything else. But we also need to learn control because we have lost our way on the sexual road.

God help us as a society if we don't find the way back to His road before it is too late!✠

*Archibald Hart, Ph.D., is senior professor of psychology and dean emeritus, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary.*

*Reprinted with permission from Ministry magazine, July, 2002.*



Advent Christian  
General Conference President  
Rev. Ron Thomas, Jr.

*“Every once and awhile God brings us to a major turning point - a great cross roads in our life. From that point we either go toward a more and more slow, lazy and useless Christian life, or we become more and more on fire, giving our utmost for His highest, our best for His glory.”*

*My Utmost for  
His Highest,  
by Oswald Chambers*

# *A word from our president*

## **“Put On Your Overalls”**

Every time we assemble as a denomination at our triennial sessions, we are given the opportunity to evaluate our progress, proclaim our purpose, cast our vision and celebrate our hope. We are reminded of both the magnitude and urgency of the work to which we have been called. Our coming together serves to reinforce the commitment we share as a denomination defined by the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. This past triennial convention could very well be “a great cross-roads in our life” as a denomination. The direction we take will either reveal our contentment to be what we are. Or, we will reveal a burning desire to give “our utmost for his highest.”

Consider our coming together this past June as a place where God has brought us. Consider this as an opportunity to labor together, Advent Christian churches united in the work of proclaiming the life-changing, life-saving message of the gospel. It is a work that requires all of us—individuals and congregations alike—not to “become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:9-10, NIV).

Thomas A. Edison once said, “Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” As much might be demanded of us, as hard as the efforts may be, as toilsome and exacting as the work is, let us not miss this opportunity. †

**Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity... (Ephesians 5:15-16a, NIV).**



# Twisted Scriptures

*Rev. Tom Warner*



“May the LORD watch between  
you and me when we are absent one from  
another.” Genesis 31:49

This appears on “mizpah” necklaces, used by sweethearts that are temporarily separated. It was used as a benediction by some youth groups, etc., years ago. It’s normally understood as a warm goodbye, asking for God’s protection of each other while we’re parted. But, does that fit the context?

In the context of the story, Jacob and Laban his uncle were at odds with each other. As you recall, Laban cheated Jacob and, finally, Jacob takes Laban’s daughters, whom he’d married, and flees, with Laban hot on his trail (Genesis 31). Finally, when Laban catches up with Jacob, they make a truce—a non-aggression pact—and set up a heap of stones as a witness or sign of their agreement for peace.

Both of the men still felt a lot of suspicion and animosity; so, in verse 49, Laban says something like, “You’d better be careful, because the LORD is going to be watching to see if you double cross me!” That is the meaning of the mizpah saying! It’s amusing that Christians have used such a threat as a warm goodbye. The misuse of this particular verse probably hasn’t hurt anyone; but, such ignoring of context may set us up for some more serious misunderstanding of Scripture. Don’t ignore the context!

..things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people  
twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16 NKJV).

# ANAGRAMS

Each word on the left will make another word when the letters are rearranged. Use the clues to help you. When you have found the new word, enter the first letter of the new word on the space or spaces that correspond to it's clue. One has been done for you.

crate - _____	<u>g</u>	1.) to make into small pieces by rubbing over a rough surface
shore - _____	___	2.) land units of measure
great - <u>grate</u>	___	3.) a simple tool consisting of a bar and fulcrum.
feels - _____	___	4.) to copy or draw over
solid - _____	___	5.) smells or fragrances
heart - _____	___	6.) our planet
notes - _____	___	7.) an animal used for travel
serve - _____	___	8.) runs away
manor - _____	___	9.) Paul's nationality
scare - _____	___	10.) a stanza or a part of a chapter in the Bible
revel - _____	___	11.) God said not to worship these
doors - _____	___	12.) a small peice of rock

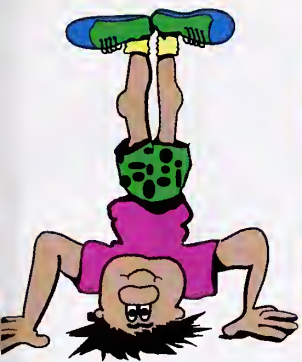


$\overline{4} \overline{7} \overline{6} \quad \overline{g} \overline{9} \overline{6} \overline{2} \overline{4} \overline{6} \overline{12} \overline{4} \quad \overline{5} \overline{8}$   
 $\overline{4} \overline{7} \overline{6} \overline{12} \overline{6} \quad \overline{11} \overline{12} \quad \overline{3} \overline{5} \overline{10} \overline{6}$

## UNSCRAMBLE the "Valentine" words in these Bible verses.

1. Do not let your ethras be troubled. Tsrut in God; uttrs also in me. *John 14:1*
2. Jesus said, "Take acer of my sheep." *John 21:16*
3. Husbands, eolv your wives, just as Christ odlve the church... *Ephesians 5:25*
4. Be dteevod to one another in brotherly leov. noHro one another above yourselves. *Romans 12:10*
5. And do not forget to do ogod and to asehr with others... *Hebrews 13:16*





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

## WORDSEARCH

Find these words:

- BOY
- CANDY
- CARDS
- FLOWERS
- FRIEND
- GIRL
- HEART
- HUG
- KISS
- LOVE
- SWEET
- VALENTINE

F	O	V	E	C	A	N	H	T	E	F	L
R	B	G	T	K	D	H	U	R	L	O	V
F	L	O	W	E	R	S	G	A	V	B	O
L	Y	F	Y	E	S	K	S	E	C	A	K
O	W	K	G	W	D	Y	S	H	A	S	I
B	E	N	I	T	N	E	L	A	V	O	L
S	W	E	R	T	D	N	E	I	R	F	R
D	G	S	L	K	E	W	C	A	N	D	Y
R	Y	O	I	R	E	E	V	R	O	K	W
A	I	K	I	S	S	H	W	D	B	O	N
C	R	G	F	W	F	R	O	S	F	V	E
A	N	H	U	V	A	C	Y	I	C	A	L

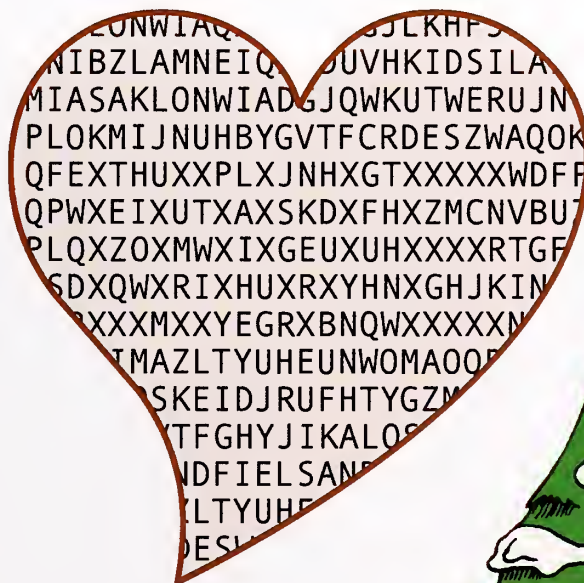


Use the code to replace the vowels in the verse below:

a=u e=a i=e o=i u=o

Yuar beiaty shuald nut cumi frum uatwerd edurnmint, sach es breodid heor end thi wierong uf guld jiwilry end foni cluthis. Onstied, ot shuald bi thet uf yuar onnir silf, thi anfedong beiaty uf e gintli end qaoit sporot, woch os uf griet wurth on Gud's soght. *I Pitir 3:3-4*

Color the X's to find a message.



# TEN

## POWERFUL WAYS TO PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR'S WIFE

*Praying for your pastor's wife will open doors and bring about amazing changes in her life*

### 1 Pray for her prayer life.



Father God, I lift up the pastor's wife you have placed in my life and I pray that she will have a conversant relationship with You. I also pray that she will come to You first with her concerns and will pause to listen to what You have to say. May she enjoy her prayer time and always make it a priority.



## 2 Pray for her daily devotion time.



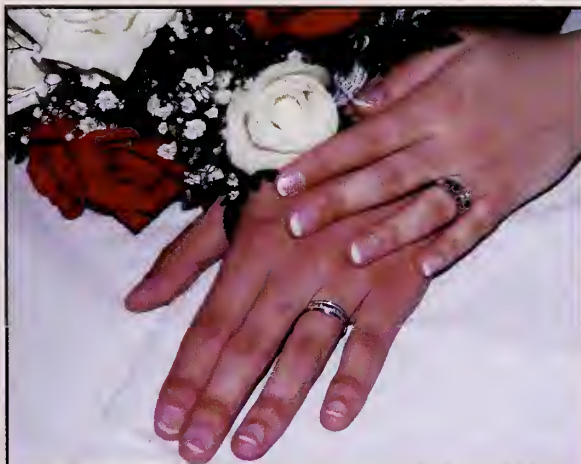
Lord, I pray that my pastor's wife will answer the daily call to spend time with You and Your Word. I pray that she will hunger to know more of You. Direct her footsteps and make Your face to shine upon her. May Your unfailing love be her comfort.

## 3 Pray for her deliverance and inner healing.

Lord, I know that many pastors' wives have been wounded deeply and carry terrible scars that we cannot easily see. Father God, I ask that You will bring healing to my pastor's wife, down to the core of her being, to her very heart. Please touch her with Your love again and again so that she can begin to heal and learn to trust You and others. If she is caught in bondage please set her free by the power of Your name and the blood of Jesus. Lord, may I never be the cause of undue stress for her or place unfair expectations upon her. Help me be supportive and a cheerleader in her corner.



## 4 Pray for her marriage.



Lord, I pray for my pastor's wife to be committed to her husband. May she draw closer to You and find strength to persevere during rough times. I pray for forgiveness and healing in her relationship with her husband. Please help her to be willing to give herself completely to him. Protect both of them from unfaithfulness and conflicts that would tear them apart.

## Pray for her parenting

# 5



Father, help my pastor's wife to have a Kingdom view of her role as a mother. Please give this precious mom a vision for her children's future. Help her to be patient and loving, firm and consistent in discipline, and to nurture her children to know and love You.

# 6

## Pray for her friendships.

Lord, I pray that my pastor's wife would have a wonderful mix of friendships. Give her a good friend to confide in who will lead her into a closer walk with You. I also pray that she find someone that she can mentor in return. May she be able to touch unbelieving friends who cross her path. Help her to identify destructive friendships and break them off. I pray that You will be her Best Friend, the first One she runs to for confidences, the One she puts her trust in for her every need.



# 7

## Pray for her job.

Lord, I lift up my working pastor's wife and pray that You will shower her with Your favor in the workplace. I pray that she will do everything she is asked to do with joy and a spirit of excellence. Please let those around her notice that she is a good worker and pleasant to be around. Open doors for her to share the reason for her good attitude. For the difficult people that she may work with every day, give her determination to bless them and not curse them. I pray for provision and advancement in her life. For the stay-at-home pastor's wife who works just as hard, I also pray. May she feel appreciated, valued and empowered with strength to run and not grow weary, walk and not faint.





# 8

## Pray for her finances.

Father, I pray that my pastor's wife will trust You with complete abandonment with her family's finances. I pray that You would bless her obedience to ministry. Help her to wisely use the provisions You give her. And Lord, give me sensitivity to her various needs. Show me ways I can help relieve financial pressures in her life.



# 9

## Pray for her ministries.



Lord, I know that You have a plan and a purpose for my pastor's wife. I know that You have equipped her to do something for You. I pray that she will seek out and give her heart to the mission and ministry for which You have gifted her. I pray that those spiritual gifts be developed more fully in her life. I pray also that obedience and submission to You will be a priority in her life.

# 10

## Pray for her sense of worth.



Father, I pray for my pastor's wife to know that she is deeply loved and highly valued by You. Use me as a blessing and an encourager in her life. May she learn that her value is not found in what she does, to whom she is married or how well she has raised her children. Instead I pray that she will find out early and never forget that her value is hidden in Christ. Amen.



# GOD IS IN CONTROL

**SPECIAL STUDY** for this **SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL!**  
Subscribers to the Advent Christian-edited version of Cook Communications Ministries' *Comprehensive Bible Study* (the "Blessed Hope Quarterly") will *automatically* receive a special General Conference product titled *God Is In Control* for use during June, July, and August of 2003. It is a chapter-by-chapter study of the Book of Daniel, with a focus on the Historicist interpretation of prophecy. If your class is *not* currently using the Blessed Hope materials, please contact Cari Carpenter at 1-800-676-0694 to order this special study. After finishing it, you can return to whatever material you were using before, or you may want to try the Blessed Hope Quarterly itself for a change!

**Edited By Dr. John Roller**



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# Compassion



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# From the Editor

*Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it fully" (Proverbs 28:5).*

"Don't you think people can change? Doesn't everyone deserve a second chance? I mean, isn't that what Christianity is all about?"

The comment came from a German exchange student who attends classes with me at UNC Charlotte. He came to my house for dinner, and we were having a friendly but impassioned disagreement about the death penalty, war, and justice. He was convinced the United States should have given Saddam Hussein more time. I pointed out that Saddam had been given twelve years. Then I asked if there was *ever* a point when a person's time should be up.

My friend shares a popular notion regarding justice: Enlightened people should pity social deviants rather than holding them responsible for their actions. We must, instead, see them as unfortunate victims of poor upbringing, chemical imbalances, or a lack of education. Since there is always a chance that deviants might be rehabilitated, they deserve all the time in the world. To demand retribution within some reasonable time after their crimes is uncivilized. Courts should mete out no worse punishment than merely separating criminals from society—at least until they have seen the error of their ways.

The Biblical concept of justice is quite different. Justice is an attribute of God, which human justice systems ought to mirror. It should not be ignored, compromised or too-long delayed.

Israel, in its national infancy, was given graphic, first-hand experience with Divine justice. Sometimes God's justice required the immediate execution of a transgressor and his family. At other times God's justice demanded that an entire tribe of people be wiped out. Once, God's justice even brought fire and brimstone raining from the sky. And, on a regular basis, the

*(Continued page 11)*

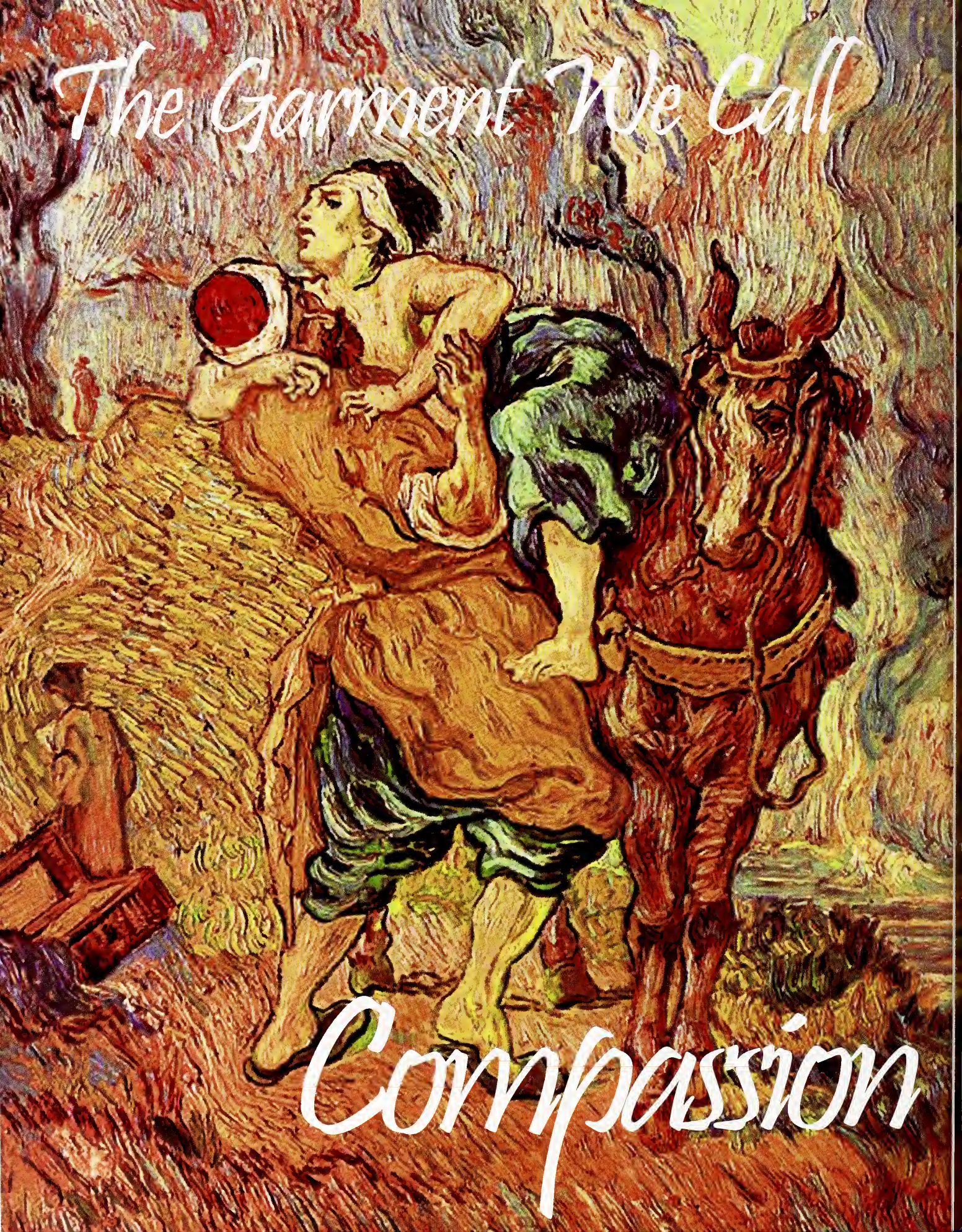
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*The Garment We Call*



*Compassion*



by David S. McCarthy

“You remind me so much of your father!”

Do you use one of his signature expressions, or is it a distinctive mannerism that betrays your family ties? There’s growing evidence that “like-father-like-son” is not just a cliché, and that we display our parents’ traits more often than we realize. Therefore, it shouldn’t come as a surprise when someone notices a resemblance to the heavenly Father in one of his children. In fact, the Bible sets forth a number of the Father’s characteristics that ought to be visible in his sons and daughters. One of those family traits is compassion.

To the writers of Scripture, compassion was a key characteristic of God. To the Psalmist God was “full of compassion” (Psalm 116:5), while Jeremiah declared that “His compassions never fail” (Lamentations 3:22). Paul thought of God as “The Father of compassion” (2 Corinthians 1:3). But Scripture is also clear that this attribute of God is to be reflected in members of his family. Christians are to be “Kind and compassionate to one another” (Ephesians 4:32) and “compassionate and humble” (1 Peter 3:8).

The New Testament is clear that compassion is not just an elective in the “school of Christian living.” By all accounts, the ancient world had slapped an embargo on compassion. Slavery was found all over, women and children were treated with less dignity than animals, and the public turned crucifixions into standing-room-only events. God’s people were to shine as beams of compassion into this moral midnight.

Thankfully, crucifixion is no longer the punishment of choice, but signs are few that the compassion index is rising. Stories of brutality play regularly on the

newscasts, and churches seem to be in short supply of compassion. I’ll never forget a man I once interviewed whose life was in ruins after a bitter divorce. What hurt him most was the way he was treated at church. People he considered friends suddenly distanced themselves, and nobody stepped forward to hear his pain or pray with him. He asked, “Why do Christians shoot their wounded?” I had no answer, but had the apostle Paul preached to that congregation, he might have said, “Clothe yourselves with compassion” (Colossians 3:12). As serious followers of Christ, what do we need to know about this important garment?

Let’s begin by noting the traits that are included with compassion. My dictionary defines “compassion” as “deep feelings of sympathy.” But I wonder if that’s all it is. Millions of television viewers stare at pictures of refugees with their faces painted with despair. They feel wrenching emotions, yet moments later the same viewers are caught up in the latest episode of “Jeopardy.” Biblical compassion is different. Terms such as “brotherly love,” “kindness,” and “burden-bearing” come closer to expressing what the writers of Scripture

*(Continued on page 10)*

**LEFT BEHIND**

**or**



**Dr. Gordon Isaac**

**LEFT**

**BEFUDDLED?**

Part two of a three part series



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I've just come back from a trip to the Internet and I want to report that the "Left Behind" series is still hugely popular. I have it on good account that Tim LaHaye is making his way to major cities across the country giving conferences based on the "Left Behind" series of books, videos, and even calendars. For those of you who may not know, or just plain forgot, his fictional works about the end of the world have sold more than 50 million copies. There are two full-length movies, 18 "Left Behind" books for kids, survival kits, screen-savers, audio-books and tons more stuff to buy as gifts for friends or unsuspecting neighbors.

Why are these books so popular? No doubt there are a number of reasons. In the first instance people have always had their fears, and fear over world events is no small thing in our time. What about terrorist attacks? Will the world end in a great, armed conflict precipitated by some foul deed coming out of the Middle East? It seems more than just a little likely. I've heard some people say they love the books because they are real "page-turners." The plot leads one through political twists and turns of the most compelling and shocking kinds. One woman told me she likes the books because in them she reads about Christians who really love, sticking by one another through thick and thin. She wishes she could experience that same self-sacrificing fellowship in her home church.

Perhaps the biggest reason for the popularity of the books is the built-in audience that is already disposed to the end time sequence taught by LaHaye. After all, Hal Lindsay's book, "The Late Great Planet Earth," first published in 1975, sold 30 million copies and was translated into 30 languages. Lindsay's book taught essentially the same futurist reading of the book of Revelation as LaHaye. And when one considers the fact that almost all Baptists and Pentecostals buy into futurism, this is a numerically formidable audience, capable of launching the right book into circulation success.

What is futurism and how did it develop? Futurism views the book of Revelation as consisting of prophecies to be fulfilled almost entirely in the future. It should be pointed out that futurism was developed to counter the views of the Protestant Reformers. The historicist approach of the Reformers saw the dangerous struggle

of their time reflected in the prophecies of Scripture. The papacy, overgrown with greed and avarice, no longer cared for the people in its care but actually hindered the laity from a saving knowledge of Christ. Martin Luther (1483-1546) brought this to voice as he called the Pope the Antichrist. He does this in a rollicking section of the Schmalkald Articles of 1537 among other places:

*"It is most diabolical for the pope to promote his lies about Masses, purgatory, monastic life, and human works and services (which are the essence of the papacy) in contradiction to God, and to damn, slay and plague all Christians who do not exalt and honor these abominations of his above all things. Accordingly, just as we cannot adore the devil himself as our lord or God, so we cannot suffer his apostle, the Pope or Antichrist, to govern us as our head or lord, for deception, murder, and the eternal destruction of body and soul are characteristic of his papal government, as I have demonstrated in many books."*

Clearly, Luther was not happy with Leo the Tenth. Leo was much more interested in his mistress and hunting boars than he was in things of the Spirit or the church. It comes as no surprise, really, that Luther saw in the Pope the personification of the apocalyptic images of the book of Revelation chapter 13 and the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thess. 2. In essence, what Luther had done was to see that the prophecies of the Revelation were ongoing throughout the life of the church.

Historicism, as an approach to biblical prophecy, allows that such matters as the little horn, the man of sin, the Antichrist, the Beast, and the Babylonian Harlot of Revelation 17 all apply to the developing history of Christianity and to the ongoing struggle between Jesus Christ and Satan within the Christian Church, culminating at the end of time. Historicism sees these prophecies as having direct application to the apostasy that took place in the Roman Catholic Church as an earthly institution, especially during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In direct opposition to the view of the Protestant Reformers, the futurist approach to the book of Revelation was developed to protect the pope's reputation. Sev-



eral Jesuit scholars who were sworn to protect and uphold the papacy sought ways to rehabilitate the image of the pope. It just wouldn't do to have people identifying the pope as the Antichrist, so the Spanish Jesuit Francesco Ribera (1537-1591) projected the antichrist into the future (futurism). Ribera applied the antichrist prophecies to a future personal antichrist who would appear in the time of the end and continue in power for three and a half years. In essence, Ribera said, "Antichrist prophecies have nothing to do with the history of Papal Rome, rather they apply to only one sinister man who comes at the end." For nearly three centuries futurism was largely confined to the Roman Catholic Church. But in 1826 Samuel R. Maitland (1792-1866), librarian to the Archbishop of Canterbury, published a pamphlet promoting Ribera's ideas. Ribera's futurism laid the foundation for dispensationalism. It is no small irony to think that a majority of conservative Protestant Christians, who in all other ways have significant differences with Rome, would quite blindly take over the Roman Catholic approach to the Book of Revelation!

You would never learn of the development of this peculiar view of prophecy by listening to the major voices within dispensationalism. For example, Charles Ryrie fails to mention the historical background we just covered in three paragraphs, even though he writes an entire chapter on the origins of dispensationalism. When he defends against the charge that Dispensationalism is

of recent origin and therefore is suspect, he proceeds to show instances in the early church where a theologian might speak of different dispensations, but he never answers the charge regarding the secret rapture of the church (see last issue of *Advent Christian Witness*). On that point there can be no denying that the doctrine of the secret rapture was unknown in the church prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is very recent indeed. The origins of futurism are not mentioned at all.

As troubling as the naïve appropriation of futurism may be, there is another issue that raises even more serious questions that have to do with the essence of dispensationalism itself. According to Charles Ryrie, a revered spokesman for the movement, the essence is the distinction between Israel and the Church. This is an important tenet of the "Left Behind" series because it is integral to LaHaye's teaching of the rapture and the subsequent millennium. According to dispensational doctrine, the church consists only of those believers saved between Pentecost and the rapture. John Walvoord, a noted dispensationalist and previous president of Dallas Theological Seminary writes, "The church as the body of Christ is therefore a new entity, and the term *ecclesia* when used in this sense is used only of saints of the present dispensation." Charles Ryrie asserts, "The church did not begin until the day Pentecost and will be removed from this world at the rapture which precedes the Second Coming of Christ."



It follows from what these men say that the church, or body of Christ, does not include Old Testament believers. Dispensationalists assert that God has two distinct programs in history, one for Israel and one for the church. Is it true that the body of Christ will be dealt with separately from Israel?

In Romans 11 the apostle Paul teaches the unity of believers of all ages. The image he uses is that of an olive tree. The tree is Israel (Jer. 11:16; Isa. 17:4-6). The natural branches that are broken off are unbelieving Israelites (Rom 11:17, 20). The good branches that remain are believing Israelites (vs. 17-18). The wild branches that are grafted into the good olive tree are believing Gentiles (vs. 17, 19). In this teaching the apostle is clearly working with an understanding that the promises of God apply to Old and New Testament believers. There is only one tree consisting of those who believe. The true Israel of God, believing Jews, are joined by believing Gentiles into the one tree. There is no evidence here of there being two people of God. There is one body of Christ - the church - made up of believers from Old and New Testament.

The unity of believers taught here and elsewhere in Scripture calls into question the very foundations upon which the "Left Behind" series is based. To posit two different ways of dealing with true believers before the time of Christ and after the time of Christ is outside the framework of Scripture. When one begins to see that the promises of God are for the whole people of God, it makes the confused and fragmented system of rapture (and separate dealing with natural Israel replete with renewed Old Testament sacrifices) seem like a bad

dream. Clarence Hewitt, an Advent Christian teacher says, "Futurism is discredited by its arbitrary and extremely fanciful scheme of events in connection with the second coming." Indeed.

The "Left Behind" series is a juggernaut it seems, sweeping up all in its path. But there are a few of us who think that some important Scriptures and some good theology is being "left behind" as well. I think Mark Twain said it well when he quipped, "A lie can travel half-way around the world while truth is putting on its shoes."†

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*(McCarthy continued)*

had in mind. Compassion is pity pulling on its overcoat and venturing into the storm to offer practical help. Sometimes it involves sharing money or material possessions with a person in need. Perhaps it is taking time to listen when someone needs a non-judgmental ear, exercising restraint when the urge to retaliate is strong, or simply treating someone with consideration. Compassion looks a lot like the Good Samaritan, offering aid to a fellow traveler who lies bloody and broken on the highway of life.

Consider, too, the intruding foes of compassion. As gardeners constantly battle weeds in their efforts to grow beautiful plants, Christians who want to grow a healthy crop of compassionate acts must be prepared to do battle with noxious spiritual obstacles. Paul recognized this principle when he wrote to the Ephesians. He writes about bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and every form of malice (Ephesians 4:31-32). More foes include rudeness, arrogance, cruelty, and insensitivity. These terms share an ugly self-centeredness that growls, "My way will prevail, no matter how many others suffer."

Actually, Christians seldom set out with the intention of doing harm to others.

Most inter-personal problems probably occur when we aren't sensitive to how others

perceive our words

and actions. When you become aware that someone has been hurt, showing compassion means expressing sincere sorrow for whatever pain you have caused and trying to restore the relationship. Don't let the foes of compassion grow unhindered in the garden of your church.

Finally, Paul instructs us to "Clothe yourselves with compassion." What we are wearing is usually the first thing others notice about us, so Paul is insisting that our acts of kindness are to be visible. People should be able to observe compassion in us in our daily lives.



**"Clothe" is an active verb, suggesting that Christians are not to be passive spectators, but are to take an active role in developing compassion.**

"Clothe" is an active verb, suggesting that Christians are not to be passive spectators, but are to take an active role in developing compassion. Compassion, like all Christlike graces, is produced by the Holy Spirit. Without his power, our efforts to produce the virtues described in Scripture will fail. Yet by using the verb, "clothe," Paul makes it clear that we can make a contribution to developing compassion. Your part may involve taking a risk, reaching out to someone despite the real possibility of being rejected. The Spirit's prompting to show compassion may lead to some inner struggles, but the rewards can be substantial.



A couple had been driving for hours when they pulled into an all-night diner at 2 a.m. Inside they encountered the most angry waitress they had ever met. Her voice was hostile as she slammed down their water glasses and jerked the menus from their hands. At the end of the meal she flung the check at them. The wife touched her hand and said softly, "You're having a hard time tonight aren't you? Is there anything we can do?" For a moment, the waitress stared at the couple. Then she burst into tears.

"Today they served the divorce papers. I didn't want my marriage to end, but the papers came and I don't know what I'm going to do. I've got four kids and this is my second job. My mother works, my grandmother is sick, the rent is due, and I'm just having a hard, hard time."

There weren't any other customers in the diner so they talked for a while and even prayed together. The couple got her phone number and promised to keep in touch. Back on the road, the husband murmured, "I think God gave us an opportunity tonight, and I'm sure glad we took it." That's what happens when Christians "clothe themselves with compassion." It's one way to display the Father's likeness. †

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*(editorial continued)*

Israelites were reminded of God's justice through their system of animal sacrifices. The underlying message was clear: wicked deeds demand punishment.

Like my young German friend, many people don't care for this kind of justice. For them, one man's wickedness is another man's mistake... is another man's coping mechanism... is another man's genetic predisposition. In their minds, the nature of God has nothing to do with it. If they attempt to think Biblically at all, they suppose that the Old Testament God of justice has been replaced by a warm, fuzzy, "gentle Jesus, meek and mild..." Justice is outmoded, in their view, and should evolve into never-ending mercy, or at least pity.

But God has not changed. He has not been educated at diversity seminars and he has not recently discovered the virtues of "tolerance" (as it is commonly defined today). Justice is the air he breathes and that will never change. Some may be unclear about the definition of wickedness, but he is not; and ignorance of his law is no excuse.

To answer my friend's question: no, sinners do not *deserve* a second chance. Their sin is not overlooked. Justice must be done—one way or another. And sinners are not entitled to all the time in the world to change. Every single sin a man commits deserves a quick response from a just God.

Christians unwittingly undermine the Gospel when they minimize God's just nature. Jesus' death on the Cross makes no sense apart from God's demand for justice. When you and I sin, justice demands death.

We'd better not ignore this truth. Rather, we should humbly accept the fact that we deserved to die, but Jesus died in our place. God didn't look the other way and pretend our sins never happened. He didn't give us all the time in the world to see the error of our ways. He didn't stop being a just God. We received the death penalty of justice, in the person of Christ our substitute. Jesus' death on the Cross was God's ultimate act of justice. "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25 & 26). †





# *Preparing for Life Care in the Latter Years*

Written by Marcy Alves  
as shared by Dorothy Worth



One spring day I awoke from a coma that resulted from a severe stroke. I found myself in the skilled care unit of a lifecare retirement center, confined to a wheelchair. My house had been sold, my two miniature poodles given away, my 25-year radio broadcast and speaking/teaching ministry virtually over. While I was barely functional during the two to three months following the stroke, my husband underwent triple by-pass surgery. Then, with the help of our adult daughters, he auctioned most of our household goods and moved the remainder of our belongings into a condominium in a pricey *retirement resort*.

There's a line in an old song that says, "What a difference a day makes . . ." and in my case the day of my stroke literally catapulted me into a different world.

Though my husband's heart had been troubling him for some time, I, at age 69, had never been hospitalized before and seldom visited a doctor. We had been casually investigating various retirement communities in the Lancaster County area of Pennsylvania over the course of a few years. Though we were on a waiting list at the facility in which I now found myself a resident, I had resisted a move into any lifecare retirement community. I am an intensely private person and prefer my own home to condo living. I had never pictured really retiring, let alone having to adjust to the strictures of a wheelchair, nor the myriad rules and regimentation of this particular lifecare facility.

I know that hindsight is 20-20, but if I had it to do all over again, I would plan more carefully and investigate more thoroughly all the "what-ifs." It is with the unforeseen now clearly in mind that I offer this article—with the writing help of my daughter—in the hope that it will benefit you, the reader.

Many retirement communities offer a menu of enticements, especially the upscale condo or apartment versions. No more lawn care. No more dealing with plumbers, electricians, septic system engineers, painters, newsboys who throw your paper into the hedge, or fifteen neighborhood kids selling Girl Scout cookies. Social opportunities abound with other nice people (and some not so nice) who have lots of time on their hands. Your calendar can be filled with concerts, lectures, exercise classes, swimming at the indoor heated pool, Scrabble clubs, shopping sprees, and leisure time trips.

Elegant dining rooms offer meals which may be selected from a daily menu and served at your private table. No more shopping and meal preparation, unless you really want to do it. Everybody smiles in the promotional videos. But there is so much more than first meets the eye.

### **Take out a pen and paper and as you read, make a latter life-care check list.**

In your search for the retirement home that is right for you, I first caution you to look past the lobby. A retirement center may present a beautifully decorated reception area and Hiltonesque guest lounge, but you may not be spending much time there when you become a resident. If you end up on the skilled care unit as my husband and I did, the lobby will not be part of your daily routine.

Visit current residents of the facility you have in mind, people who have lived in the retirement center for more than a year. Ply them with questions about such things as resident and facility administration relationships. For private apartment dwellers, are things fixed quickly when they get broken? What if you were to have a problem with administrative or facility personnel? Is there a resident's advocate on staff?

Eat a meal or two in the dining room. Is the food well prepared, tasty, healthy? Look at a weekly menu. Check out the residents who eat there, the environment around you. Is the dining area clean, attractive, pleasant, comfortable? Do you have to share a table with others or do you have the choice to dine alone? Pay attention to what is going on around you. Are the workers and serving staff polite, thoughtful, careful, considerate, clean and healthy? Listen to the conversations you may hear between staff personnel, attitudes you may pick up, especially in regard to the residents.

When interviewing with an admissions director, consider whether you feel like a person or just a potential client? Do you sense that everything is up front, or do you have to probe for information? What happens if you become incapacitated? Does the retirement facility provide health care in your apartment? Are you permitted to hire outside home health aids to assist in your condo or apartment, or must you give up your apartment and move into the skilled-care unit?

Do not enter a life-care center assuming you will never be sick enough to go into skilled-nursing care. Do not assume that your spouse will always be able to take care of you. When my husband developed Parkinson's disease and then succumbed to a stroke, we had to give up our apartment and move to a single room on the skilled care floor. The move was devastating. A lifetime was given away or moved into storage.

Visit the assisted-living and the skilled-nursing care units. Notice the treatment of residents in those units. Is the handling of physically or mentally challenged residents demeaning or neglectful? Are they treated with dignity or brushed off as non-persons? Meet the nursing staff. Find out what the resident/staff ratio is. Some of the most upscale facilities are understaffed or inadequately manned on certain shifts. Imagine yourself, your spouse or your parent as a permanent resident of the skilled care or assisted living unit that you are visiting.

Ask about available rehabilitation programs. Is rehab offered only on demand and as sparingly as possible, or is it aggressively promoted with the intent of restoring patients to full physical potential?

Often a resident who is assigned to a skilled care unit is physically handicapped in some way, as I am, but mentally very alert. Are the mentally astute residents housed in units with those suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease? If so, are there opportunities and places for solitude, temporary reprieve, and socialization with others who are mentally competent and stimulating? When I first entered the facility as a stroke victim and began to regain my mental capacities, I was disheartened at being kept on a floor with people who were constantly ranting and raving, mentally out of touch with reality. I feared if I stayed there I might lose my mind.

If at all possible, look for a place that is within reasonable travel distance of family and friends. Don't isolate yourself in the years when you may well need all the emotional support you can get. It's one thing to be a private person when you can be out and about whenever you choose; it's quite another when you are no longer mobile.

Finally, it is very important that you have financial and legal things in place *before* you enter a retirement home. You may suddenly find yourself unable to do the things you were so capable of doing before you had your stroke or your heart attack or your bout with cancer. Finances can get messy when you become ill. Nursing care is very expensive. The bills pile up. Your life-savings can be depleted in a very short time. You may not have the time or energy or mental clarity to keep up with payments. You may lose your ability to physically write a check.

Entrust your power of attorney to a reliable friend or family member. Appoint someone with the power of medical attorney, in case you become temporarily or permanently mentally incapacitated.





Find a stockbroker or other financial advisor to handle your investments and stock portfolio. It is never too early to make a will. You should review it from time to time as your situation changes. Secure the services of a reliable lawyer you may call as various needs evolve.

Seek God's guidance as to "if" and "when" you or your aging parents should enter a nursing home. Research what nursing care help is available if you stay in your own home, and compare the cost of such service with that of a skilled care facility. If you are married, talk with your spouse about the issues and come to agreement before committing to nursing care. If you are considering a nursing care facility for a parent who is becoming incapacitated by the aging process, include him/her as much as possible in the decision making process. Do everything you can to honor and maintain his/her dignity as a child of God.

When you decide to enter a lifecare retirement facility, make sure you understand fully the contents, regulations, commitments, and legally binding items involved in the contract before you sign your name to it. What are you agreeing to give up? What are the guarantees? What if the situation does not work out? What provisions are offered to make a smooth transition from apartment to medical units? What do you stand to lose if you find the facility is not right for you or your spouse or your parent? When you sign the contract, secure a signed copy for your files. Make other copies of the contract for your lawyer and your family members. Someone besides you should be aware of the terms of the contract in case you become unable to be your own advocate, or in the event that the establishment oversteps its legal rights as stated in the contract or as stipulated by state or federal law.

I wish finding a pleasant and comfortable retirement facility were not so complicated. I wish it could be just like home, but it seldom is. Lifecare retirement facilities are wonderful for some people and hell on earth for others. Use an ounce of prevention now, for a pound of cure may be difficult to find later on. Do not put off planning for your future, thinking, "I really don't like thinking about this," or "I have plenty of time to think about that." A single day can make all the difference in how you spend the rest of your life. †

#### About the authors:

**Dot Worth** is a former radio personality and popular speaker and Bible teacher in the Philadelphia-Delaware Valley area of Pa. and Southern N.J. Her radio program, *Woman Alive*, was heard on some 27 stations nationwide and in the Philippines. She and her husband, Phil, served in the pastorate for 50 years.

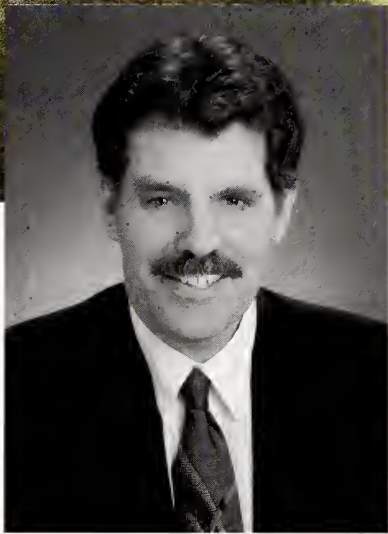
**Marcy Alves** is a freelance writer and speaks for Women's retreats, mother-daughter events and at leadership, Christian living, and marriage retreats and conferences. She is also a recording artist whose music has been heard on Christian radio and TV internationally. Her husband is the senior pastor of New Life Fellowship, the Advent Christian church in Concord, NH. She can be contacted at [FLMins@aol.com](mailto:FLMins@aol.com) or at *Frontline Ministries, 17 Green Street, Concord, NH 03301*.





# A view from the Inside

## VERNON GREEN NURSING HOME



*Larry Knowles*

Entering a nursing care facility is a momentous life event, and usually an unwelcome one. Despite the prospect of support and care that it offers, what looms larger in the mind of a new resident is their loss of independence and self-direction – as well as fears about diminished dignity and declining health.

It's difficult to alleviate all the anxiety attending such a move. It would be wrong, however, to automatically assume that it must be an unhappy affair. Certainly an unplanned move, as in the case of Mrs. Worth, can be overwhelming at first. But by applying the kind of preparations she suggests, much of the mystery and anxiety that might accompany moving to a care facility can be eliminated.

For those going through this process, you should know that there are public agencies that can help to evaluate a nursing home or senior care community. The local or state Office on Aging (the names vary) is very useful, and Medicare provides a website with information about individual facilities.

In fairness, it should be noted that nursing home providers operate under extraordinary pressures. They depend largely on an inadequate government funding system

(although not-for-profit providers have the blessed advantage of donor gifts to help enhance quality.) Staff wages are not robust, which can be especially discouraging for direct caregivers whose duties are extremely difficult. Further, providers face a regulatory system estimated as second only to those governing the nuclear power industry!

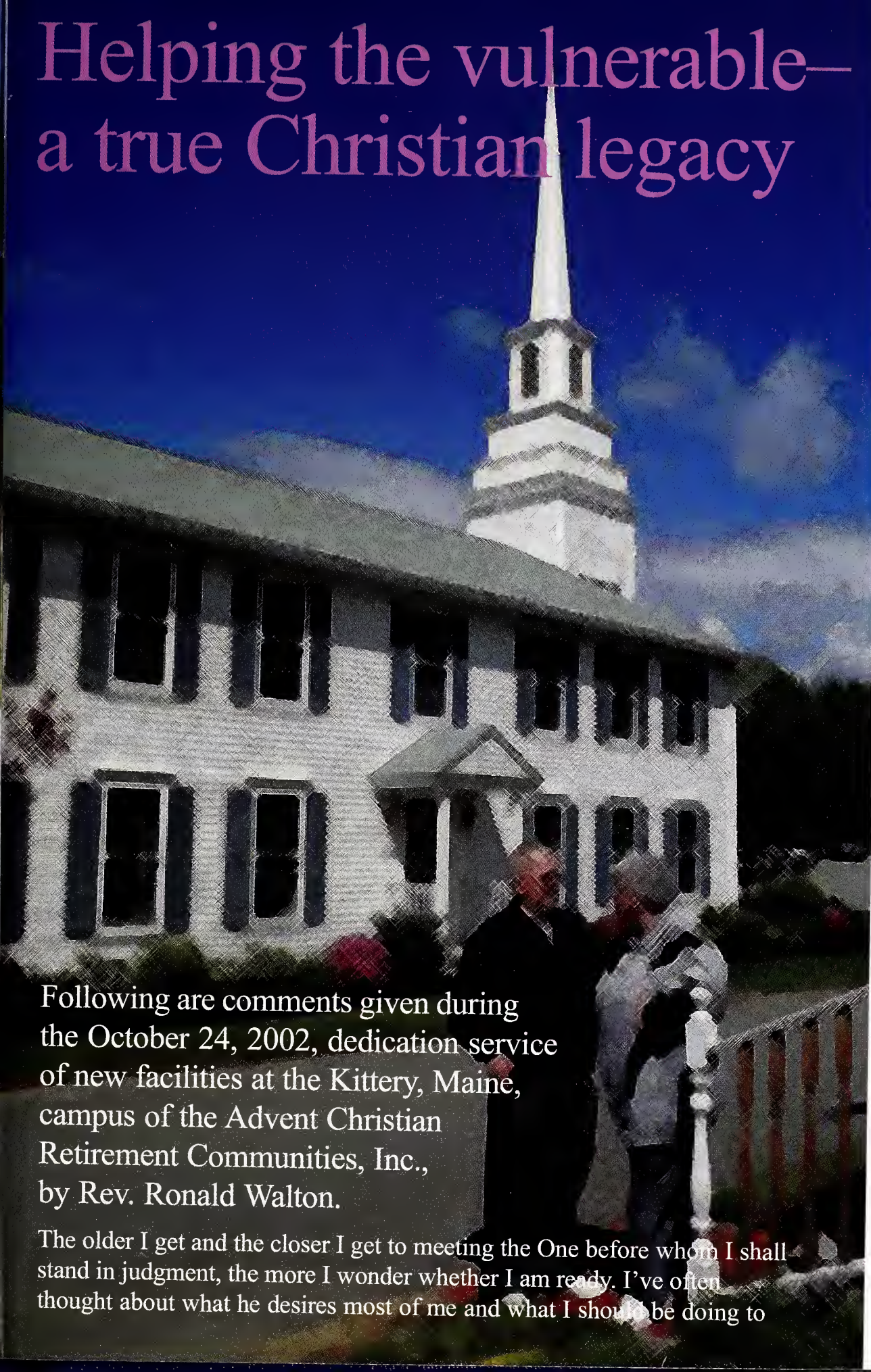
Add to this the public perception of their being a “necessary evil” (an inaccurate depiction, by the way), and it's a credit to conscientious nursing home providers that they render the amount of compassion and care that they do. These hidden strains of the caring profession should be kept in mind when scrutinizing any facility.

For Christians there are other preparations for such a momentous life event – one of the deepest kind. Can we, when life and health are good, learn Paul's “secret of contentment” (Phil. 4:12) in such a way that it will carry through when life naturally declines? Can we prepare for loss in such a way that, when God brings it, not only does our faith persevere, but we can also remain a light and witness in a place we would not choose to be?†

*Larry Knowles is chief administrator for Advent Christian Retirement Communities, Inc. For more information you may contact him at 802-257-2389.*



# Helping the vulnerable— a true Christian legacy



Following are comments given during the October 24, 2002, dedication service of new facilities at the Kittery, Maine, campus of the Advent Christian Retirement Communities, Inc., by Rev. Ronald Walton.

The older I get and the closer I get to meeting the One before whom I shall stand in judgment, the more I wonder whether I am ready. I've often thought about what he desires most of me and what I should be doing to

*Photo taken at Meetinghouse Village, Kittery, Me, part of Advent Christian Retirement Communities Inc.*



please him. In looking through the New Testament, especially at Jesus' own words, I came to his statements in Matthew 25. I was startled to find that Jesus didn't mention any of the things I had been doing for the past 48 years; things that I thought would surely be pleasing to the Lord, like building churches, preaching great sermons, pioneering new programs of outreach, giving money, serving on committees and living the Christian life style weren't even mentioned. What I did find were questions Jesus asked: "When I was hungry, did you feed me? When I was thirsty, did you give me a drink? When I came to your door as a stranger and was poorly clothed, cold and in need of shelter, did you take me in? When I was sick and needed care, did you provide a room for me?" It was then that I realized that all I do to build churches, inspire church planting and relocation, create meaningful worship services and try to be an example for others of the Christian faith, are not the things that matter to Jesus. He is concerned about whether or not I help the sick, the needy, and the vulnerable.

When the Savior was dying on the cross, in the midst of great pain and shame, he showed no sympathy for his own grief. He was concerned about what would happen to his mother. Where would she live and who would look after her? Who would take care of her when she could no longer take care of

**While I am working hard to do all the good things I do for the church, they have little to do with what Jesus said he is going to ask me when he comes.**

herself? Who would care for her if she became ill? Mary was his mother and she had other children, but it was to his friend John he said, "John, behold your mother". Mary wasn't John's responsibility. It was James and Christ's other brothers who should be looking after their mother. But Jesus asked John to care for this vulnerable woman. Couldn't John rightly say, "Lord, let her family take care of her? Isn't it their responsibility? I've got much to do, and, anyway, I expect to carry on your work after you are gone." Can I not say the same? Can I not also say, "Lord, I have other interests? You know how much good I do, and you know that I am very busy doing other religious things." But he seems to persist in saying, "What I will ask you when we meet is, did you feed the hungry, provide a bed for the sick, minister to the beaten down?"

Sometimes the vulnerable don't have families who care. Some families are unable to do so and we are the closest to those in need. Sometimes God asks us to do for the needy what may legally be the responsibility of others. But if I am to meet the Lord with a clear conscience when I stand in judgment, I can only do so when I have obeyed his instructions to feed the hungry, clothe the shivering and provide a room for the sick.

Today we happily assemble to dedicate the addition of new facilities by the Advent Christian Retirement Communities. Somehow, I feel good about what is being done here as well as what is being done at the Nursing Home Facilities in Vermont. Efforts are being made in these facilities to provide a safe and comfortable home for the elderly, beds and nursing care for the sick, counsel and encouragement to the depressed and a path to the Savior for those who long to know him. Surely the Lord is well pleased with this.

I remember the time when a woman appeared at our door late in the day at the time of year when cold sets in and leaves are falling. It was near supper time and we invited her to stay and eat with us. Later, when it appeared that she was delaying her departure, we asked where she was staying for the night. With head bowed she said, "I have no place to stay". We invited her to spend the night, and that one night turned into the entire winter. We treated her as family and did not charge her rent. During that time we helped her get a car so that she could find work. In the spring we helped her move into her own apartment. After that we never saw her again. No "thank you" was forthcoming, and we didn't benefit from our generosity. We don't know what she did with Jesus after we had introduced her to him. Our friends said we had been "had," and that may be true. But it is not our friends whom we will stand before in judgment. Our friends won't be asking if we had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the prisoner and cared for the sick.





Read the story in which Jesus tells about the man who was traveling to Jericho and was beaten and robbed of his possessions by thieves. When I read it, I see the good and religious people could not find the time or be bothered to help the man in his distress. It was a dirty and uncomfortable job. It was a stranger who finally helped the man. This is another hard lesson I had to learn. While I am working hard to do all the good things I do for the church, they have little to do with what Jesus said he is going to ask me when he comes. It was in this story that I felt he was telling me that there are a lot of people in my world who are beaten down and given up by the crowds. I feel that he is speaking to me about taking this man in, giving him a bed and caring for him until he is well. Could it be that the Advent Christian Retirement Communities are doing God's work and may need my assistance in providing funds and encouragement for those whom it has taken in, and is caring for in the name of Jesus?

Jesus has little to say about my ability to administer the ecclesiastical programs of the church, foster a church planting movement, leave a legacy of being a good speaker and be remembered for my Christian convictions. He has a lot to say about helping the vulnerable and caring for the less fortunate. The following story reminds me of this every time I read it:

It was a cold winter's day that Sunday. The parking lot to the church was filling up quickly. I noticed as I got out of my car that church members were whispering among themselves as they walked to the church. As I got closer I saw a man leaned up against the wall outside the church.

He was almost lying down as if he was asleep. He had on a long trench coat that was almost in shreds and a hat topped his head, pulled down so that you could not see his face. He wore shoes that looked thirty years old, too small for his feet with holes all over them, his toes stuck out. I assumed this man was homeless, and asleep, so I walked on by through the doors of the church.

We all fellowshiped for a few minutes, and someone mentioned the man lying outside. People snickered and gossiped, but no one bothered to ask him to come in, including me. A few minutes later church began. We all waited for the preacher to take his place and to give us the Word. Then the doors of the church opened.

In came the homeless man walking down the aisle with his head down. People gasped and whispered and made faces. He made his way down the aisle and up on the platform to the pulpit and took off his hat and coat .

My heart sank. There stood our preacher. He was that "homeless man". No one said a word. The preacher took his Bible and laid it on the stand. "Folks, I don't think I have to tell you what I am preaching about today."

Then he started singing the words to this song: "If I can help somebody as I pass along; if I can cheer somebody with a word or song; if I can show somebody that he's traveling wrong, then my living shall not be in vain."

— unknown †



*Rev. Ronald Walton has pastored several Advent Christian Churches, served as regional superintendent for the Eastern Regional Association, and worked in development for Wheaton College and Berkshire Christian College. He currently serves as interim pastor of Hope Christian Fellowship, Wells Maine.*



# THE REAL FACE OF COMPASSION

*Editor's note: The following is a true story about real compassion. Due to the nature of this story, some readers may find it objectionable. Advent Christian Witness chose to publish this piece because it features an Advent Christian pastor going "beyond the call of duty" to bring compassion to one of his flock. His story shows true compassion patterned after the example of our Lord, who touched lepers and mingled with beggars. It also helps us to appreciate the compassionate role of the many men and women who labor daily in the field of healthcare.*



**A**s I started my day, I was heading to the Post Office to take care of some church mailings. It's a little after 9:00 a.m. and I get a call on my cell phone. An older member of my congregation is being discharged from the hospital. He had just had a procedure to reconnect his prostate to his bladder. He has no family nearby and needs a ride. It's an hour drive round-trip, but I can probably swing it and still get to my other projects today. I call the hospital to confirm that I'm on my way, assured that he is waiting on me.

Arriving just before 10:00 a.m., I should have immediately recognized that this would not turn out well. Three steps into the room I slip and nearly fall because of something on the floor. I look down to find that I have nearly wiped out on human excrement.

The patient tells me, "I couldn't make it to the toilet, but they came in and cleaned it up."

"Not very well," I offer with a weak grin. I really liked those brown suede saddle bucs.

After waiting more than an hour for the nurse to finish discharge preparations, I am given an exceedingly graphic description of the patient's procedure. During the entire time, the man is suffering from spasms due, in part, to the surgery and partly because of the necessary catheter he is going home with. They are screamingly painful and come intermittently and with some frequency, serving well to punctuate some of the most grotesque descriptions of surgery I have heard in my nearly 20 years of (colorful) professional ministry.

Finally, we're on the way home. I notice as he stands up to leave that he had apparently had a loose stool while sitting there. I remark that he may want to clean up, to which he says he will do that at home! Leaving his room,

I grab two hospital pillowcases. (I know it's stealing, but I'm covering my car seat with something!) The ride is peppered with the cries of a screaming and praying elderly man who doesn't smell a great deal like roses.

After I park in front of his apartment building and help him from the front seat, I make sure he is steady and ask him to stand still while I retrieve the many belongings we had brought back from the hospital. No sooner do I open the back door and step behind it to get his stuff than he decides to "make a run for it" and head to his apartment on his own. His second step sent him sprawling—with me trapped behind the car door yelling for him to wait a sec.

## **After washing my hands for the third time since I entered the apartment, we wrestle a pair of pajama bottoms onto the patient...**

He appears to be relatively uninjured but for a small scrape, and, unbeknownst to me, a cut on the drain tube of his catheter bag. I pick up this man who goes an easy 6' 2" and 225 pounds of dead weight. Only after ushering him into his apartment and directly to his bathroom (because he has to go again) do I discover a puddle on the bathroom floor, and quickly realize that the bag had been leaking bloody urine all the way into his apartment with a generous portion distributed over my beloved suede bucs and the lower part of my pants. After quickly getting the bag into the nearby trashcan to catch the leak, the man proceeds to take off his pants, telling me I have to push the bag up through the pants leg so he can get them off. I will not bore you with the full description of this procedure. Suffice it to say more bloody urine was spilled. Much of it on me.

After washing my hands for the third time since I entered the apartment, we wrestle a pair of pajama bottoms onto the patient and proceed to the living room couch



with the leaking bag in tow, now carried within the trashcan. It is now after noon. I was more than a little frustrated trying to locate a medical supply place closer than 45 minutes away with a replacement bag (partly because the bags were uncommon, partly because the patient began calling and finally told me he was hanging up if a "computer" answered.) Only after I told him that every pharmacy used an automated phone system did I get the phone, re-calling all the pharmacies he had just called.

Finally, I leave to drop off and retrieve prescriptions and claim the Holy Grail that was a new catheter bag. During this brief trip, I am harassed by a driver who cuts me off, then tailgates me, ending with him "saluting" me. Great. I pulled over and got out of my vehicle, imploring him to discuss his unmerited grievances. Unfortunately (actually fortunately in my current state of mind) he thinks better of his actions and speeds away. I'm somewhat disappointed that he didn't want to discuss it - I was looking forward to getting him in close contact with my

doubly assaulted suede buc. But I am a minister, and I am on a mission of mercy.

I return to the apartment to find that an elderly woman who has been interested in this twice-widowed man has arrived to "help." She scurries from the room with a (I'm not kidding) giggle as we begin trying to replace this bag. Where the catheter "exits" is strapped to his leg, making it virtually impossible for him to make this exchange. He needs.... help. Now with all of my hospital visitation experience, I had thus far been able to avoid the close inspection of a catheter and its proper set up. This is a failing for which I will forever curse myself because of what the next few moments would bring.

With the patient holding the upper end of the catheter to immobilize it for obvious reasons, he instructs me to take it apart. (I am not exactly sure how to do this. For some unknown reason, my Bible College training never included replacing a catheter for a man leaking vast amounts of bloody urine.) Where the patient instructs me to separate the catheter is not working—no way. It is



worth noting here that pulling on a catheter can, for obvious reasons, be a bad idea. We trigger a spasm. When he pulls his hands away, somehow the catheter has separated (not where he had instructed me) and the end falls free—spraying bloody urine from both separated ends. I'll make a deal with you: I'm not saying where it ended up. But if you never ask me how bloody urine tastes, I will never ask you.

After I wrestle away the leaky bag, I call my sick and sleeping (RN) wife at home for assistance. Despite being groggy and feeling bad, she betrays no irritation, due, no doubt, to the tenor and urgency of my voice. In her sleepy state she is not grasping my descriptions of this catheter, nor is she able to picture mentally my dilemma. My frustration has reached levels I didn't realize possible... and I must remain in control because here is this pitiful fellow that is a member of my congregation that I am trying desperately to help. At this point, the man decides to assist.

Believing he is grabbing the *new* tube and bag, he pulls on the plastic tubing. This is, however, the tubing to the damaged and discarded bag. "You know what" goes "you know where" as I'm on the phone with my wife. I think I scared her.

In the fracas, the man retrieves a gray cone-shaped plug from the front of his pajama bottoms. He says adamantly that the tube inserts into that piece, then that piece goes into the tube. I tell him it doesn't appear to have a hole in it. To demonstrate his belief that it does, he puts it in his mouth and blows into it! (We find out it was a plug used to close off the third of the three prongs of the tube that is "exiting.") Dude put it in his mouth... twice.

Finally with some coaching, and the clarity that comes eventually after all shock has gone, we got it connected. I left the man in the capable hands of his eager assistant.

Is it too late for me to enter truck-driving school and begin a new career? †

*The author prefers to remain anonymous... and who can blame him?*



# A word from our president



Advent Christian  
General Conference President  
Rev. Ron Thomas, Jr.

There are some very important dates you may want to circle on your wall calendar or highlight in your Daytimer®. National holidays, school calendars and the greeting card industry are all very faithful to keep those special days, weeks or months we are to observe before us. Many of these special observances have found their way into our annual observances. For instance, many businesses recognize secretaries, office managers and executive assistants during Administrative Professionals Week. It is a time to acknowledge their dependable and often overlooked commitment to the organization. Perhaps your family takes part in National TV-Turnoff Week. In doing so, you probably appreciate the benefits. While some observances are for only a day, a week or a month, we would agree that the practice should be extended beyond the designated time of emphasis. For example, Crime Prevention Month and Keep America Beautiful Month should be year round (as should Grandparents' Day).

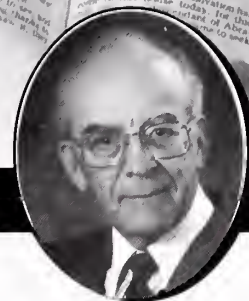
Our own denominational calendar contributes to the list of special days, weeks and months as well. As important as each special Sunday, week or month may be to understand and appreciate many of the ministries and services of the Advent Christian church, there are several *specific* observances worthy of being incorporated into our annual church calendar and personal schedules. We were encouraged to begin this year by making January "Prayer Emphasis Month." Although January has come and gone, I hope the emphasis on prayer continues. We are instructed in the Scriptures to "**pray continually**" or as it reads in the New Living Translation, "**keep on praying**" (1 Thess. 5:17). Prayer is an invitation to spend time with the One who loves us. In his book *Prayer*, Richard Foster put it this way: "Real prayer comes from not gritting our teeth, but from falling in love". What would happen if we would commit ourselves to prayer for more than a month? God would surely be pleased. And we would surely be blessed by doing so.

Be careful not to fill up your calendar with insignificant observances like, Take Your Dog to Work Day (June 21<sup>st</sup>). Instead of scheduling time for special themes, allow the emphasis on prayer to determine how you will spend your time year round. ☩



# Twisted Scriptures

Dr. Oral Collins



“Truly, I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:42-43 NASV).

## PARADISE TODAY?

Paradise is from an ancient Persian word meaning “garden.” It has its biblical foundation in Gen 2:8, “the LORD God planted a garden [Greek, *paradeison*] . . . in Eden.” Thus, the Garden, Paradise, became a type of the future kingdom of God (see Isa. 51:3). The popular concept of paradise at death derives from Jesus’ reply to the “thief” crucified with him (Luke 23:42-43). As commonly translated, the passage reads,

“Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom! And He said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise” (NASV).

The comma before “today” is not in the original text. The idea that “today” modifies what follows rather than what precedes is a clear instance of theological translation. The Platonic idea that one goes to heaven at death to be with Jesus has wrongly influenced centuries of Bible interpretation.

The translation is wrong on several counts: 1. Jesus, Himself, did not go to heaven at death. He descended to Hades and ascended to heaven after forty days (Acts 1:3). 2. Jesus is the only one who ascended to heaven (John 3:13). 3. The criminal asked to be remembered when Jesus comes in His kingdom. This kingdom will come when Jesus returns (Matt 25:31-24, 1 Thess. 4:13-18). 4. The Greek word, *semeron*, translated “this day” and “today,” usually modifies the verb which precedes it rather than what follows. 5. Following verbs of speaking, *semeron* emphasizes the authority of the speaker, as illustrated frequently by Moses, the type of Christ. Note for example these texts from Deuteronomy (NASV):

Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances, which I am speaking today . . . (5:1).

. . . I testify against you today that you shall surely perish (8:19).

. . . You shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today . . . (27:4).

I declare to you today that you shall surely perish (30:18).

Actually, paradise is a precious promise, not only to the believing “thief,” but to all who await in faith the resurrection! Christ emphatically promised, “Truly I say to you today, you shall be with me in paradise!” †

..things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16 NKJV).

Fill in the missing words to these verses about the Good Samaritan.

Use the words in the gray.

- |         |           |
|---------|-----------|
| care    | road      |
| donkey  | robbers   |
| priest  | Samaritan |
| donkey  | saw       |
| inn     | side      |
| Jericho | passed    |
| man     | pity      |
| man     | place     |

- 1.) A \_\_\_\_\_ was going down from Jerusalem to \_\_\_\_\_, when he fell into the hands of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2.) A \_\_\_\_\_ happened to be going down the same \_\_\_\_\_, and when he saw the \_\_\_\_\_, he passed by on the other \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3.) So, too, a Levite, when he came to the \_\_\_\_\_ and saw him, \_\_\_\_\_ by on the other side.
- 4.) But a \_\_\_\_\_, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he \_\_\_\_\_ him, he took \_\_\_\_\_ on him.
- 5.) ... Then he put the man on his own \_\_\_\_\_, took him to an \_\_\_\_\_ and took \_\_\_\_\_ of him!

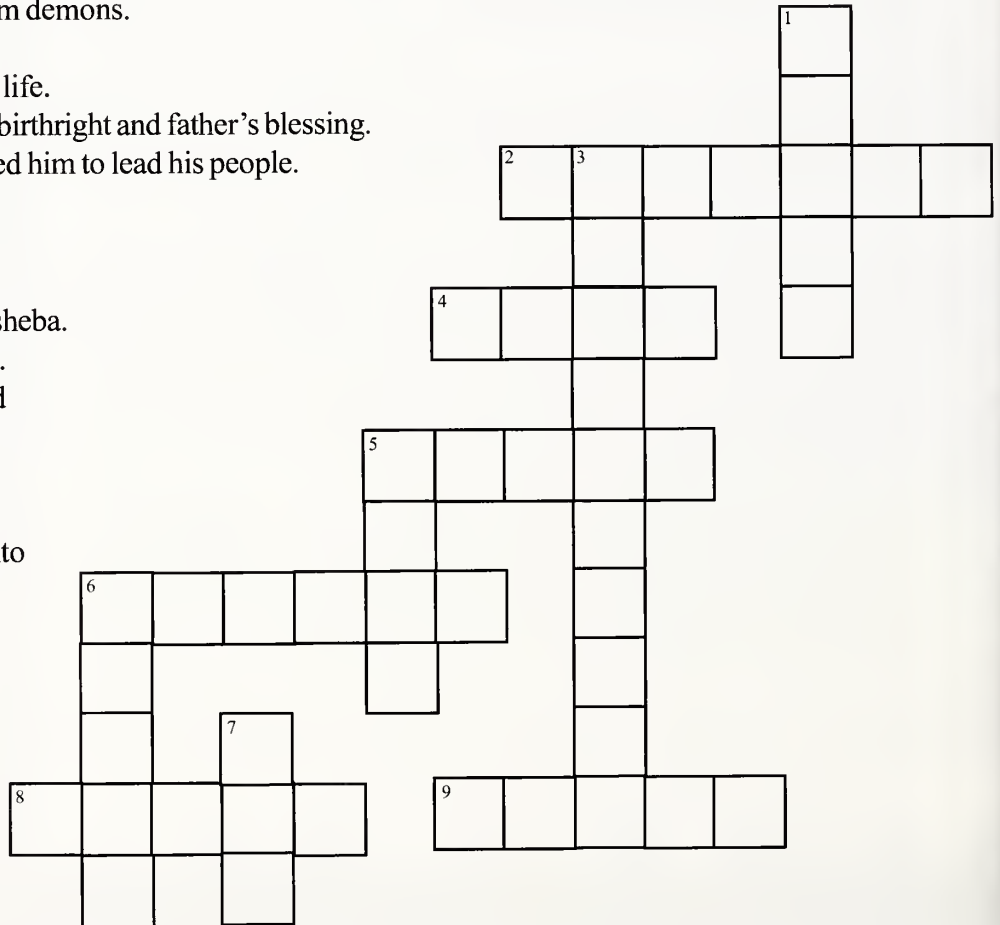
Fill in the crossword puzzle with people to whom God showed compassion.

**ACROSS**

- 2.) The people of \_\_\_\_\_ repented after Jonah spoke to them.
- 4.) \_\_\_\_\_ Magdalene was healed from demons.
- 5.) He denied Jesus.
- 6.) His daughter was brought back to life.
- 8.) He tricked his twin brother for his birthright and father's blessing.
- 9.) He killed an Egyptian but God used him to lead his people.

**DOWN**

- 1.) He committed adultery with Bathsheba.
- 3.) These were God's chosen people.
- 5.) He used to be called Saul & killed many Christians.
- 6.) He was swallowed by a big fish.
- 7.) He was rescued from Sodom & Gomorrah (His wife was turned into pillar of salt.)







# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

When the letters are dropped into the columns below in the right order, you will be able to read the Bible verse.

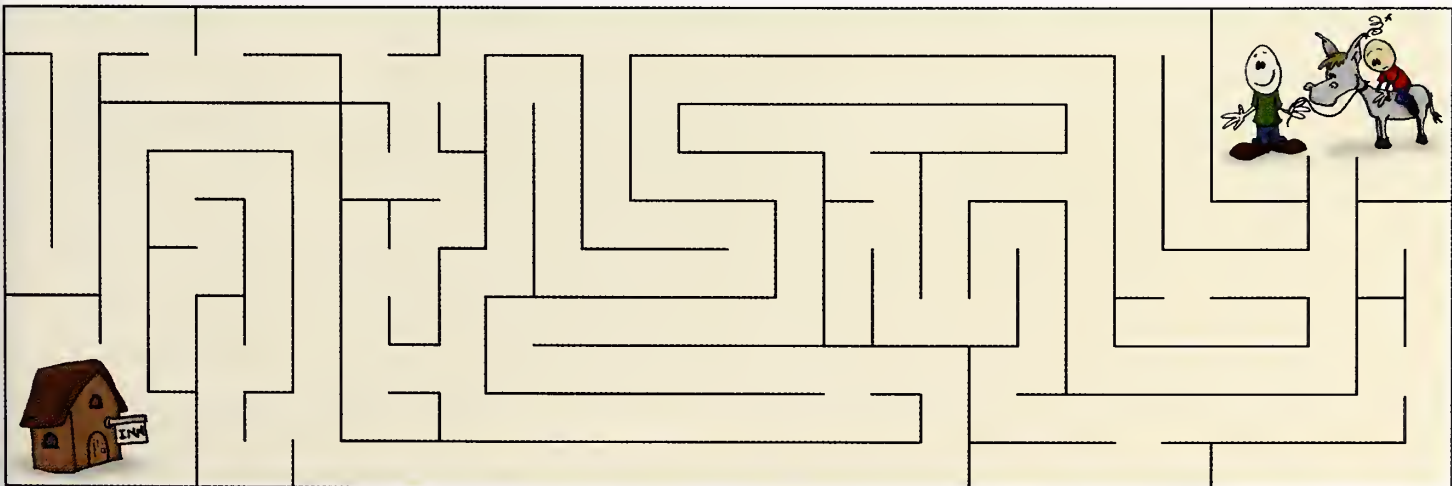
E	E	N	F	G	J	G	S	T	I	N	N	A	E	M	P	H	T	H
T	S	E	A	I	R	D	T	A	N	O	S	E	O	N	N	O	S	
B	O	T	K	O	O	D	I	V	O	N	G	C	V	A	C	A	H	R
I	R		R	T	E	U		O		D	G		I	A	Y	S	U	

Ephesians 4:32

Unscramble the words in these verses about compassion.

- 1.) As a atfehr has compassion on his cdnihler, so the dLro has compassion on those who raef him. *Psalm 103:13*
- 2.) ..."I will have compassion on oyu.," says the Lord your remeeRde. *Isaiah 54:8*
- 3.) When he saw the cdroww, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and shleespl like sheep without a pedserhh. *Matthew 9:36*
- 4.) Therefore, as God's chosen ppleoe, holy and dearly velod, clothe yourselves with compassion, seskndin, gentleness, and pnctieeat. *Colossians 3:12*

Maze: Get the Samaritan and the man to the inn.







LOVE  
INVADES  
THE WALLS

By Betty Converse





Many have passed the walls of a prison— cold, foreboding, encompassed by barbed wire, highly protected. Some have entered the doors of a facility when a family member, neighbor, or someone they know ended up in confinement. In this horrible world, the fittest survive. Evil and hatred reign. Trust is absent.

I never will forget the CLANG of the door slamming, indicating a world set apart — a world of hopelessness, hurt, anger, bitterness and rejection. A CLANG that shouts, “This person is such a detriment to society he can’t intermingle or function in it.” Can love make a world of difference to those who have become hardened by life’s circumstance? Can love invade, not only those solid steel walls around the perimeter, but walls just as hard and cold in the hearts of men and women?

My first exposure to prison life was when I was a teenager. I attended a jail service with my husband, his sister and her pastor husband who led the service. We were allowed to go right down

into the block. I couldn’t wait to get out of there! Seeing human beings in cages, seeing them stare at me with blank expressions.... My thoughts were, “I will never come to a place like this again!” Little did I know what God had in mind for my life.

Years later I visited jails, prison, and detention centers because of a son who was loved very much but made some wrong choices. I came to realize that the men and women behind those walls were someone’s son or daughter who had also made bad choices. Some because they were hurt deeply and survived by turning to “things” that would make them forget their pain for a time. Some followed the wrong crowd. Some were unhappy with themselves. The list goes on.... Many of their stories made me want to cry that a child could be so mistreated. The one who really committed a crime was a parent or adult who so abused the child that to survive, he or she resorted



*Rudy Converse stands with Frank, a guest speaker, outside Berlin Prison*

to extreme measures to deaden emotion. Perhaps the wrong one is in prison.

When one of our former pastors began a study in jail with our son, we knew how much it meant to have someone care and take time regularly to visit and bring the hope of the Word of God.

When he was released we began attending the studies. Doors began to open and now we lead nine studies a week, traveling 82 miles one way for two of them. Why am I going where I thought I never wanted to go? Because I have seen God change lives. Love makes a world of difference. In fact only love, God's love, expressed through human vehicles can make that difference. An inmate doesn't need to be told that he has sinned. He needs someone to tell him about hope, help and forgiveness. That change is possible. That there is victory over addictions. That they can make it through the power of the Risen Lord.

Perry served time for dealing drugs. I used to think such people were the worst and the lowest, but God filled me with love for this young man. He accepted the Lord and was as intense to know the Word as he formerly

was to sell drugs. Perry served his time and was eventually released. He found a church that encouraged him and in time, we got a call. Perry was on his way to Bible School. He wanted to be in ministry. His greatest desire – to go back to the prison where he

served time to share how Christ makes a difference in life. He realized his desire. On the night Perry shared his testimony with inmates at his old prison, a man he sold drugs to was sitting in the audience. The inmate could hardly believe the man he knew as a drug dealer now appeared before him clean-shaven in a suit and tie, and looking pretty sharp. But the outside appearance did not compare to the inward change that had taken place in

Perry's heart. A change because we had told Perry what a rotten sinner he was? We didn't have to. We told him how much God loved him. Perry is no longer a detriment to society but a trophy of God's grace. Two

## GOD LOVES ME

Although I've walked a crooked mile,  
The Lord allows me still a smile.  
I've spent a lot of nights and days,  
Fighting against our Father's ways.  
The time has come for me to see,  
What's hurting deep inside of me.  
I always had this thought you see,  
That I was strong as I could be.  
What most of you can't really see,  
I'm just a hurt and lonely me.  
In spite of what I used to say,  
I had to struggle everyday,  
To keep my head up off the ground,  
In hopes of a life I've never found.  
Most of you won't care to say,  
This is not how you had to spend your days.  
So I am here to learn the way,  
To live life "caring" everyday.  
Minute by minute, if that's what it takes,  
Because God doesn't make mistakes.  
So myself, I have to try,  
I won't let life just pass me by.  
God has looked at all my sins,  
He's cleaned my slate, To start again.

*Written by Beverly Perry, one of Betty's Bible study attendees*



weeks after Perry shared his testimony he was involved in an accident that took his life. Still he lived to be the testimony he hungered to be.

Malcolm loved the Lord but experienced several setbacks resulting in additional time. He struggled with several issues, even after becoming a Christian (Don't we all?). But the day arrived when Malcolm was released. He had difficulties on the outside and even got caught up in the things of the world for a time. But today Malcolm is married and is a Dad to a stepson and a son of his own. He also is on his way to Bible School. He doesn't know yet where the Lord will lead him, but anticipates some type of ministry.

Jill was given a New Testament by my husband while she was in the county jail. After returning to her cell that evening, she couldn't put it down and gave her life to the Lord. She had to pay for her crime and ended up in the women's facility where she faithfully attended my study for over a year. Today she lives a drug-free Christian life on the outside, working as a secretary in a church. She had known the world of abuse, but now knows the world of love because God's love invaded the hardness of her heart through human vehicles.

There is another woman. She looked so tough when she started coming to my study. Later I learned her mother had tried to abort both her and her brother, but the procedures failed. She called them the "throw-away babies". There is no greater joy than to see a life under construction. It took months for her to begin to trust, but she came to the point of giving herself to

the Lord. Her face began to soften and her heart began healing. There is such joy to see a precious soul set free from damages of the past and find hope and a future that the Lord offers.

These stories of transformation because of Jesus represent the tip of the iceberg. The list is long. Bill and Gloria Gaither wrote, "Heartaches, broken pieces, ruined lives are why He died on Calvary. Your touch is what I long for, you have given life to me."

Remember the story of Humpty Dumpty? What the King's horses and men couldn't do, our God Almighty King can do! God continues to heal, rebuild and give hope and purpose in life to Humpty Dumpty and all those who have been broken beyond repair. Love has invaded the walls and is changing the lives of men and women today! I am so thankful he has allowed me to be a part of what He is doing! †

*Betty Converse, with her husband Rudy of 44 years, has raised seven children. Betty works full time as Office Manager at Calvary Bible Church, Meredith, NH. Her heart for missions and love for the lost are reflected in her involvement in the local prison leading two Bible studies a week at the Women's facility. Betty is the National Vice President of the WHFMS. She also holds credentials with the Eastern Region as a Commissioned Minister.*





# GOD IS IN CONTROL

**SPECIAL STUDY for this SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL!**  
Subscribers to the Advent Christian-edited version of Cook Communications Ministries' *Comprehensive Bible Study* (the "Blessed Hope Quarterly") will *automatically* receive a special General Conference product titled *God Is In Control* for use during June, July, and August of 2003. It is a chapter-by-chapter study of the Book of Daniel, with a focus on the Historicist interpretation of prophecy. If your class is *not* currently using the Blessed Hope materials, please contact Cari Carpenter at 1-800-676-0694 to order this special study. After finishing it, you can return to whatever material you were using before, or you may want to try the Blessed Hope Quarterly itself for a change!

**Edited By Dr. John Roller**

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# WITNESS

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Thank  
God for  
**Fathers**

# WITNESS

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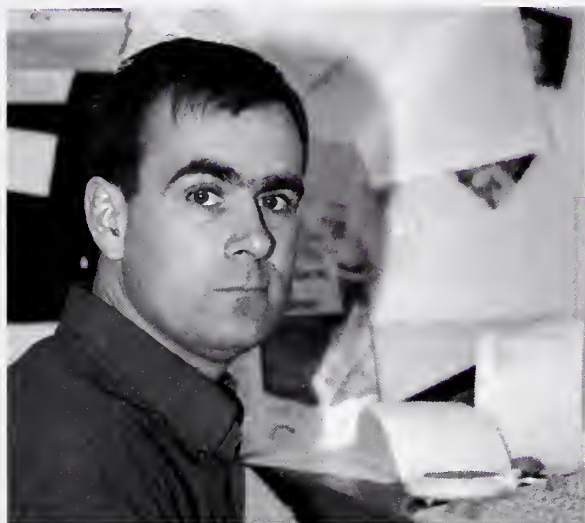
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# From the Editor



“You mean you don’t have a uniform statement of faith?” The caller was incredulous. He visited our website and was troubled by the lack of specifics regarding our particular beliefs and practices. I explained that every Advent Christian Church is autonomous, only associating with Advent Christian General Conference out of shared interests rather than by compulsion. This was unacceptable to the caller, who had considered visiting one of our churches and went to the ACGC website to make sure it was legit. Since I know the pastor of this particular church, I assured the man that it was completely orthodox and he would find nothing amiss in the worship or theology there.

“But can’t you say that about every Advent Christian Church?” he asked. Not exactly. There are more than 300 Advent Christian Churches in North America. None are required to sign any guarantee regarding what they do or teach. That’s what it means to be autonomous.

Some, like the caller, see this as a bad thing. What he really is looking for is an ecclesiastical franchise, sort of like MacDonald’s. No matter where you go on our continent, a Big Mac is going to taste pretty much the same. People, especially travelers, like franchises because there are no unpleasant surprises. You know what to expect and that’s usually what you get. A Starbucks junkie can get his or her favorite coffee made

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Only a pane of thick glass came between her and  
the violent stranger:

# Her father <sup>the</sup> **R**

**A  
P  
S  
T**

By Rev. Rex Hutto



# Rape.

Experts say it is not about sex, but about anger and control. It is by no stretch of the imagination “making love,” but rather epitomizes every crude and vulgar word used to describe it. As a result of this violent act, 15-year-old Carol\* became a mother. And, in a biological sense at least, Blake, her attacker, became a father.

Carol could have exercised her “right of reproductive freedom” so prized by our society and “terminated the pregnancy.” Her “choice,” instead, was to refuse to play judge and jury, to not declare rape a capital crime and pronounce a death sentence for the offense of another on the fragile little one growing within her. She chose life.

Less than a year later a beautiful baby girl was born. Nothing about Kristen even hinted at the brutality that led to her conception. Just like a child resulting from the love of a husband and wife, she was “a gift of the LORD” (Psalm 127:3, NASB).

Fast-forward seventeen years. Carol is a Christian married to a man who has raised Kristen as his own. Kristen is a lovely college-bound young woman who loves the Lord. Blake is in jail, wanted in multiple jurisdictions. Influenced by a team of Christians ministering in the jail, Blake professes faith in Jesus Christ.

For years Blake believed that his daughter had died in a traffic accident. To his shock, he learned from another inmate, a distant relative of Carol’s, that Kristen was alive. The inmate, however, did not know Carol’s married name and had no contact information.

\* Names and other identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of those whose story is being told.



*(continued on page 22)*

**LEFT BEHIND**

**or**



**Dr. Gordon Isaac**

**LEFT**

**BEFUDDLED?**

Part three of a three part series





Since our last installment, the 11<sup>th</sup> book in the incredibly popular “Left Behind” series has appeared in bookstores. “Armageddon” debuts at the number one spot on the best-seller lists for USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Publisher’s Weekly and the New York Times. According to the press releases, this could be “the best cliff-hanger of them all!” Jerry Jenkins, one of the authors of the book, says he continues to be amazed and grateful for the excited readership that his work has found. He loves to see the letters and e-mail pour in and is proud to be associated with the books that not only entertain but also change lives.

The story line of “Armageddon” is set near the end of the tribulation, just one year before the great appearing. Tribulation Force, those individuals “left behind” at the secret rapture who have since become believers, are drawn to the Middle East as the dark clouds of battle gather. As the story unfolds, the various armies blanket the Valley of Jezreel and the plains in the shadow of Mount Meggido in the buildup to the siege of Jerusalem and the last battle: Armageddon. Their large numbers are as a swarm of locust blotting out the sun.

While Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins claim this is fiction, many are reading the work as though this is the sequence of events that all Christians expect at the end of time. Indeed, the authors themselves maintain that the events depicted in the “Left Behind” series, such as the secret rapture of the church, a personal Antichrist, the threat of a one-world order, separate fates for ethnic Israel and the church, and “the great appearing” as separate from the secret rapture of the church, are an accurate theological account of what must happen. In other words, the authors would say that the theological backbone of the “Left Behind” books is non-fiction; it just happens to be dressed up in the garb of the fictional lives chosen by the authors.

**Like it or not, the *Left Behind* series has captured the Christian imagination with respect to the endtimes events.**

Like it or not, the “Left Behind” series has captured the Christian imagination with respect to the endtimes events. People are reading it and talking about it. Their expectations have been conditioned by it. The vocabulary of dispensational theology, with its emphasis on (secret) rapture, is deeply imbedded in the minds of many. Various movie-going experiences have confirmed this perspective. But the dominance of this way of viewing the endtimes is not particularly biblical. At the very least, it is distracting to a clear view of the biblical vision of the end time. At its worst, it is positively destructive.

“The “Left Behind” series destructive? How?” you might ask. In the first instance, the character of God is brought into disrepute. In the movie based on the first book, I was struck by the scene just after the rapture, as unmanned cars wreck havoc and smash with deadly force in the midst of general pandemonium. It depicts mothers looking for their vanished babies, and unbelieving spouses are left behind without their lifelong partners. This is a bizarre picture of things and makes God out to be capricious and vindictive in the way that he carries out his aims. In place of the view of God as faithful and dependable, it portrays his actions as preemptory and willfully inconsistent. How do the authors of “Left Behind” know that God will take infants in the “rapture” anyway? And what is the cut-off age for those he will not take? This end time scenario is highly speculative and strains credulity to the breaking point.

Secondly, “Left Behind” promotes an unbiblical dualism that separates heaven and earth. In the rapture scene as depicted in “Left Behind,” those taken up to “heaven” apparently go without eyeglasses, rings, clothes or shoes! What are we to make of that? God made us of flesh and blood with two feet on the ground. We are embodied and are meant to be the glad creatures of God. When he created our physical bodies he pronounced his blessing and said, “It is good!” The



promise of God is that we shall reign with the Messiah on an earth made new (Rev. 5:10). “Left Behind” asks us to believe that we were meant to leave this earth. But how shall made-for-earth humans exist in a non-spatial heaven located somewhere above the earth? Are the raptured to sit on clouds playing harps? This vision leads us away from, rather than toward, the promise that God will redeem all of creation (Rom. 8) and us in the midst of it in a mighty act of redemption.

Third, “Left Behind” breaks apart what the Bible keeps together. In the popular book series, 1 Thessalonians 4 (with its speaking of “meeting the Lord in the air”), 1 Corinthians 15 (and its language of being transformed, or putting on immortality), and Revelation 21 and 22 (with the vision of the New Jerusalem coming down on earth), are all thought of as happening at different times. “Left Behind” charts a fanciful endtimes calendar that makes one’s head spin. In doing so, the series does radical harm to the vision of the prophets and the apostles as they spoke, sometimes metaphorically, of the Last Day. But notice that the witness of Scripture is to the “Last Day” and the ultimate victory of God in Christ. The Bible is not to be read as though it is a grand puzzle

to be solved, or a blueprint for the future. That makes a shambles of Scripture and what it is that God is accomplishing and wants to accomplish through his people. The point here is that 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, and Revelation 21 & 22 all speak about the very same event. These accounts need to remain intact rather than broken up according to a scheme that

**The Bible is not to be read as though it is a grand puzzle to be solved, or a blueprint for the future. That makes a shambles of Scripture and what it is that God is accomplishing and wants to accomplish through his people.**

is more Christian “science fiction” than faithful interpretation of the text.

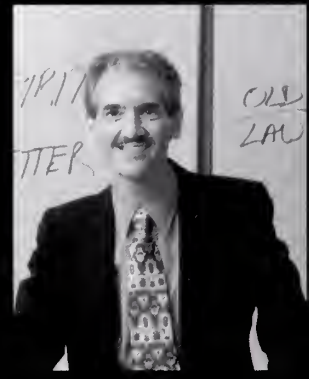
There are at least three things that will help us as we pursue new ways to exercise our Christian imagination. First, we need to get the big picture. We would do well to begin with seeing that 1 Thessalonians 4, Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 15, and Revelation 21 & 22 all have to do with the same event. We need to see the big picture of



God's promise to establish a new heavens and a new earth and work back from that biblical vision. If we do not proceed in this way we are more likely to get hung up in conflicting details. It is better to start where we can agree and build from there.

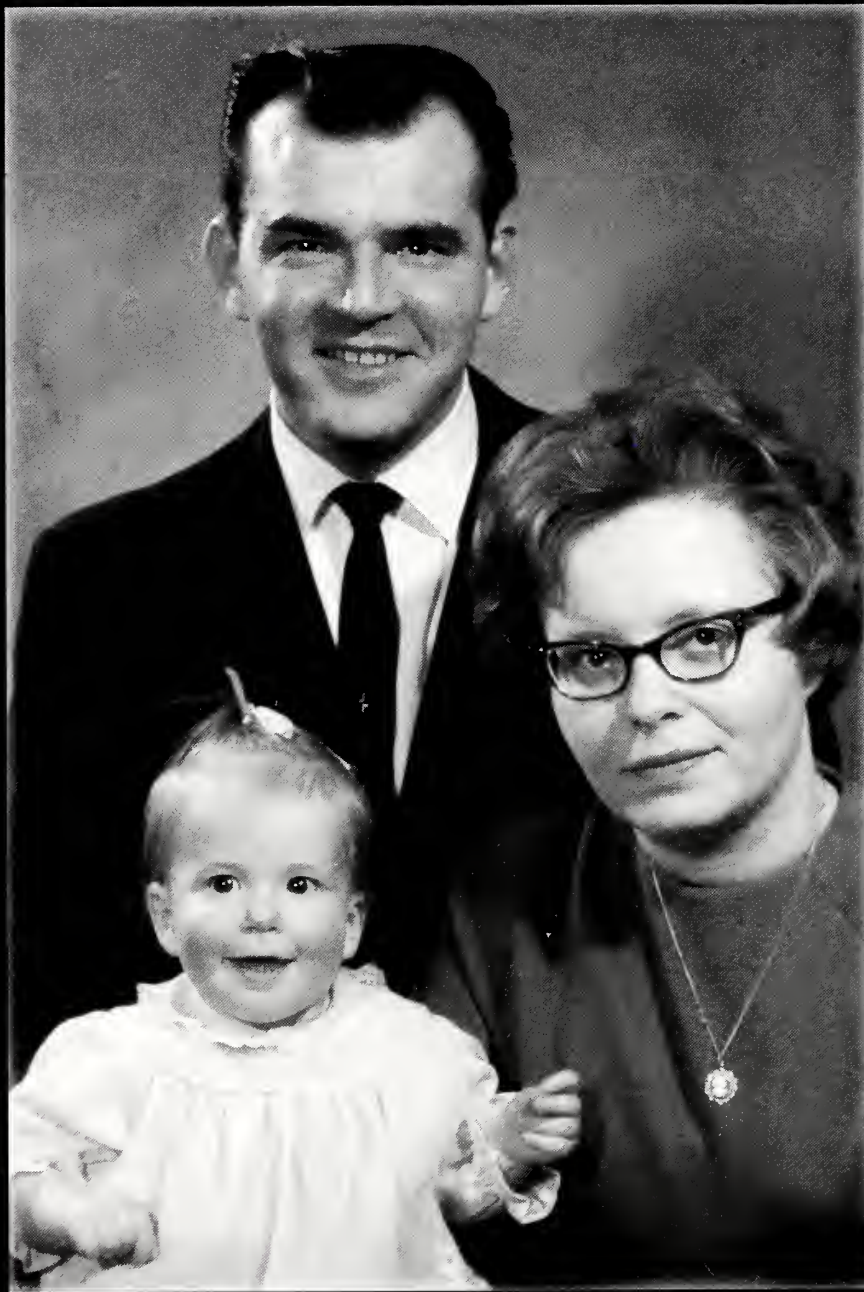
Second, we should note well the flexibility of the language that Scripture employs. Notice that the apostle Paul can speak of the Second Coming of Christ using the language of "going out to meet the Lord." This has reference to first century practice regarding visiting dignitaries. When an emperor or someone of note was coming, the leaders of that city would go out to meet them. They would then, in deference to the rank of that individual, escort him back to the city. The point of 1 Thessalonians is not that we should stay outside, but that we should come back to the city with the Lord. The language of Revelation 21 & 22 is not that of our going anywhere, but of God's New Jerusalem coming down to earth from above. The direction is the opposite of the 1 Thessalonians passage but with the same event in mind! Again, in Philippians 3 the text tells us that Jesus is in heaven and it is *from there* that we await our salvation. In other words, salvation is not a matter of our going, but of his coming! The language may vary, but the one constant is the victory of God accomplished in Jesus the Christ. We can avoid a great deal of trouble if we don't allow ourselves to be sidetracked by these simple variations in language.

Third, in the final analysis, the Second Coming of Christ is not something that we are moving toward under our motive power, but an action that is moving toward us out of God's future because of what he has accomplished in the Christ who rose from the dead. We live in time between resurrection past and resurrection future. We live in our uncertain times out of the certainty of God's future. Since that is the case, we will not be left behind, or left befuddled; but, living confidently as Christ's own family, we will work so that his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. †



*Dr. Gordon Isaac is director of the Center for Advent Christian Studies and teaches at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts.*





*Father  
knows  
best*

*By Rev. Raymond Brown*

*Dad always seemed to know the answers that would solve his family's problems.*



When I was a child, there was a program on TV, seen now in reruns, called “Father Knows Best.” It was the idealistic example of the perfect family, which consisted of the businessman dad, Jim Anderson, his wife, Margaret, and their three children, Betty, Bud and Kathy. It was the family life everyone seemed to dream about but, somehow, never seemed to realize themselves. Dad always seemed to know the answers that would solve his family’s problems. There was nothing too hard for him. He was always in a suit, his wife was always dressed perfectly, the house was always spotless, and the children were all well-behaved, with none of the problems we see in modern renditions of family living. As time went by, some of the more modern sitcoms gave quite a contrasting picture, with families like the Archie Bunkers, The

Jeffersons and Roseanne.

If the truth were known, the modern day family is quite a contrast to the Andersons of old. There are the ever-increasing pictures of the one-parent family, where the father is usually absent a good part of the time, if not completely. As I was thinking of the wide variety of family situations today, including even those who have no parents at all and are living under foster care, I am reminded of what the Psalmist tells us in chapter 27, verse ten: “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”

One father we can always depend upon, whether we have the perfect “Anderson”-style family (surely the minority today), adoptive parents, the single-parent home, or even





the foster care home, is the heavenly Father! He will never leave us, nor will he ever forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). We have a heavenly Father who cares for us, when it seems like no one else cares. He is there when we call upon him. We know this is true when Jesus speaks of his heavenly Father in the following two passages:

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?” (Matthew 6:26).

“...your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matthew 6:32).

Whether we have the so called “perfect family,” which I have yet to see in real life, or any one of the varieties of families I have mentioned already, there is one father we can always count on. Furthermore, He is with us at all times, which is something no earthly father can ever boast of.

The best of earthly fathers try to give and do for us what is best, even though at the time, we may not always agree. Our heavenly





Father, on the other hand, does what we know is best for us, because he is God. Listen to what Jesus tells us in Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" The Holy Spirit living in us, that is how we know God gives us what is best for us.

Does "Father Know Best?" Maybe not always: but we know our Heavenly Father does! So, whether we are one month old, 15 years old, 50 or even 100, the same heavenly Father is available to us. He loves and cares for us and always knows best. He is a father who never leaves, never dies, never abandons, but one who will be there. He is one we can always count on!✝



*Rev. Raymond Brown is pastor of Mintons Chapel Advent Christian Church, Kite, Georgia.*



# Truth That Works

a book review by Dr. David A. Dean

Vincent Taber, *Powerful Truths for Personal Living (Stories Lived and Told)*. N.p.: Xlibris Corporation, 2002. 110 pages. ISBN Soft cover, 1-4010-7605-X. (Order from Venture Bookstore at 1-800-676-0694.)

Dr. Vincent Taber, former president of Berkshire Christian College and now director of the Southern Connecticut Christian Counseling Center in Fairfield, CT, shares practical insights on the relevance of the Bible for everyday life in his delightful new volume, "Powerful Truths for Personal Living." In sixteen manageable chapters, he distills from his years of helping people find God's sufficiency and offers guidance to his readers. They will not only recognize themselves on its pages, but will also find assistance for a more satisfying Christian life.

The author writes out of a remarkable understanding and acceptance of people like you and me with whatever strengths and weaknesses we may have. At the same time, he is ready to hold us to the standards of God's Word and to offer us the hope of God's promises. His aim is to demonstrate that Holy Scripture presents powerful truths that can mean the difference between success and failure in our daily lives.

For me, its insightful use of Scripture is what sets this book apart from popular self-help writing. The author shows uncommon wisdom in discovering how our experiences and emotions and perplexities have analogies in the lives of those who people the Bible.

He helps us to discover ourselves on the biblical pages, both in their narratives and teaching passages. In the author's hands, this "seeing ourselves in the Scripture" then becomes a prelude for our discovering guidance and grace for our particular situations.

In a manner reminiscent of Dr. James Albert Nichols, Jr. (one of the author's own college professors), he believes in the power of the very words of Scripture. Scarcely a page of this book lacks a significant quotation from the Bible, and the relevant passages are printed out in full. The aim is to offer the reader God's very words, not to show how much research the writer may have done. This book holds up Scripture like a mirror in which we may see our own pain, doubts, fears and also our available resources in God's grace.

I found reading "Powerful Truths for Personal Living" to be an engaging, interactive experience. I groaned as I identified with certain illustrations. I saw anew how God's grace has covered the multitude of my sins. I felt a fresh conviction for my present failures. My long-time friend, Vincent Taber, told me many things in this book, but through it God has told me many more. Get this volume, and enjoy an exciting spiritual adventure. †



# Powerful Truths for Personal Living

(STORIES LIVED AND TOLD)



VINCENT TABER



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aft  
ing



Carle family moved to New Zealand to start one of Advent  
an General Conference's most promising works, but,  
an extraordinary first term, they knew the Lord was lead-  
em to...

# a change of plans

by Rev. Russell Carle

**T**he stories folk often like to read are those about people heroically overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals. This is not that kind of story. I have been asked to tell my story about discerning God's will that we not go back to New Zealand. It's a story of learning to deal with God's goals when they differ from ours.

(Continued next page)



I am Russell Carle, former Advent Christian missionary to New Zealand. In 1995, my wife, Noelle, our children and I went to New Zealand to work with a Church of Christ, Life and Advent Church in a suburb of Auckland, Takanini. Our commission was to work on reviving the Takanini Church, plant new Advent Christian Churches, and found a denomination based on the fellowship between these churches and whatever other churches from the former Church of Christ, Life and Advent denomination that desired affiliation. It was a big job. New Zealand is as secular a country as you could find, so many of the Christians we worked with despaired of making a difference. Some of the leadership there were opposed to our coming from the outset and remained so for the duration.

We also had some personal difficulties adjusting to New Zealand. Noelle had allergic reactions to the mildew that is part-and-parcel of Auckland's climate. There is so much mildew because it rains up to 300 days a year. Our daughter—and to a lesser degree our youngest son—didn't want to be in New Zealand. Everyone hates to say, "No," to their children's tears. Noelle and I said it time and again for four years.

I need to say how important the prayers of people at home were to us during this time. I was keenly aware that I was not able to do the job in my own strength. We had to rely on God's grace often because it often looked very much like we were going to fail and I

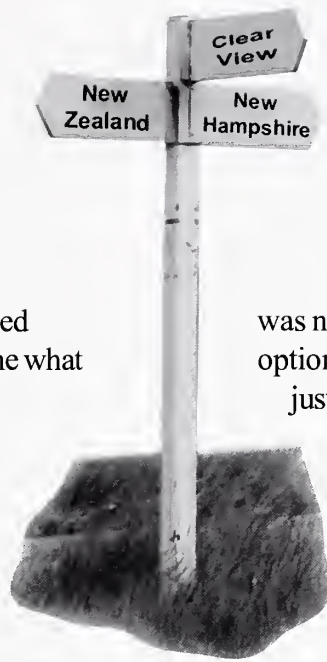
hate to fail, just on the level of my own pride as well as for the sake of the lost.

But God answers prayer. After a couple of really rough years things began to turn around. There was a good old confrontation with my resident passive-aggressive in the church. Then a New Zealand pastor, David Burge, was hired to help me, and it made all the difference in the world. We saw advances in all the goals we had set. We saw people being saved and we knew that the Lord was making a difference. Things began to turn around early enough for Noelle and me to plan on returning to New Zealand after furlough. Noelle had decided to consider feeling sick with allergies her sacrifice to the Lord for the lost of New Zealand. That was no small decision and took about three years in coming. Even our daughter, Emily, was happier that last year before furlough than she had been up to that point and said she would begin considering going back to New Zealand after furlough. It looked to me like God was

**In retrospect, I am reminded of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."**

working everything toward a happy ending. We made arrangements for all our responsibilities to be covered while we were on furlough and even began planning where we would work on church planting when we returned.





Furlough began April 1999. I really enjoyed meeting all the people and telling everyone what the Lord was doing. It was exciting to have plans to go back. Everyone was full of praise and encouragement. But in a month or so Emily experienced some serious depression. She had begun to dread going back to New Zealand. The blackness didn't lift. Then, early in the summer, Noelle and I told her that her mental health was more important to us than going back to New Zealand, and that if she couldn't handle it we wouldn't go. After a couple of weeks she came back to us and said that, since she was given some choice in the matter, it hadn't seemed so bad and she thought she could go, even needed to go back and deal with it. It was full steam ahead for me as I went from church to church telling about all the plans.

Then, just before it was time to go back, the door closed. I had no trouble seeing that the Lord closed the door, that we couldn't go back to New Zealand. If you have ever run into a closed door then you know you don't have to be a spiritual mystic to figure out that you've been stopped dead in your tracks.

We had had our interview with Dr. Sid Bradley in early January regarding our fitness to return to the field. He gave the all clear. A couple days later, Emily went all to pieces. I have asked her if I could share this with you so this is partly her story and more her gift of vulnerability before you, the reader. I was at my brother's house in eastern Maine when I got the call from Noelle. She said that Emily and she had been talking all day and that Emily couldn't go back to New Zealand. There

was nothing to do but accept it. I rehearsed all the options again and again, but there was no way I could justify—or even want to justify—sacrificing my daughter's well-being for all the plans, even though they were good plans. I didn't see how I could set an example as a Christian father if I sacrificed my daughter for the cause.

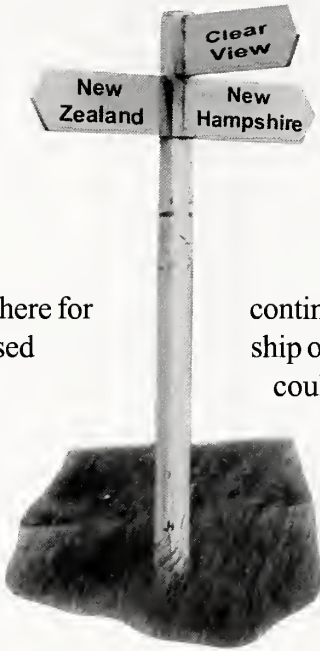
I had told so many people all the wonderful things I was going to do. I had asked so many New Zealanders to step out in faith in service to Christ. And I couldn't, just couldn't, carry through with the plans.

In retrospect, I am reminded of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

At the time I think I felt like the Jews in captivity getting the hard word from Jeremiah, which is what

## **The plans that the Lord has had for us since leaving the mission-field have been "for good."**

the above text really is. The Jews were in captivity with the false prophets prophesying what everyone wanted to hear: "Don't unpack, you'll be going back to Jerusalem in a couple years." Jeremiah said in effect, "The Lord says, 'You'd better unpack. You're going to be here 70 years.'" Then we get verse 11: "You may feel like this isn't going to work, but I am telling you it's a good plan." And the Lord was right.



They prospered during captivity, were there for 70 years, and upon return to the Promised Land were permanently cured of idolatry for the first time in their thousand-year history.

We informed Hal Patterson, Director of Advent Christian World Missions, of our decision. He and ACGC Executive Director David Ross were very understanding and gracious to us. That was a wonderful blessing. They used the *Advent Christian News* to let everyone know the change in plans.

That left Noelle and me without plans. But we still had a call from the Lord to minister. I contacted Clint Taber, our Eastern Regional superintendent, and he recommended we candidate at the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Advent Christian Church. We sensed God's leading in our meetings there. The Sunday I candidated the Lord blessed with many going to the altar, including a lady making a first-time decision. She and many others have become our new church family.

We know the Lord isn't through with us yet. The plans that the Lord has had for us since leaving the mission field have been "for good." The church in Portsmouth has grown and we have made wonderful friends. Emily was recently married to Tim Workman, a wonderful Christian man. We are blessed, and even grateful, for the bitter disappointment of God closing a door.

What about all the folk we felt we left high and dry in New Zealand? The church in New Zealand

continues to progress with God blessing the leadership of David Burge (though I am sure he feels he could use a lot of help.) In fact, there is still a need for American missionaries to go there and help. Pray to the Lord of the Harvest. The conference that was founded continues to reach out to New Zealanders with the gospel. Lives continue to be transformed by the blood of Jesus. To him belongs the glory!

God doesn't just call us to have a good time. He calls us to make a difference and leave the blessing to him. He is well able to meet our every need, no matter where that may be. †

*Rev. and Mrs. Russel and Noelle Carle  
minister at the Advent Christian Church in  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire.*





(Hutto cont.)

precisely the way they like it (bitter taste and all) just about anywhere in the world.

But consistency isn't always best. Some of my favorite places to eat couldn't be franchises. There could never be more than one Joe's Diner in Lee, Massachusetts. You couldn't duplicate Joe's atmosphere (water-stained ceilings, pictures of Joe with Frank Sinatra and that inimitable aroma of stale cigarette smoke and grease), the employees or the poor location. Many nights my curfew-breaking college buddies and I found ourselves heading there for an after-midnight snack. And we weren't the only ones. There's a special place in many hearts for Joe's Diner, more hearts than Joe's Diner could serve in a day. But I don't know anyone who thinks every restaurant should have Joe's menu or aroma.

Most of the Advent Christian churches I know are more like Joe's Diner than MacDonal'd's. They are unique, quirky and some even have the water-stained ceilings. Joe's had a hand-written list of the daily specials, and, if you weren't from the area, you might have wondered what a "grinder" was. Likewise, many Advent Christian churches have a personal (if not always professional) way of serving their people and each church has its own dictionary of local jargon.

Since I work for General Conference, I'm inclined to prefer a franchise-type of church administration. Franchises are efficient, replicable and profitable—at least the successful ones. From the denominational perspective, what more could we want than efficient, replicable and profitable churches? Also, it's much easier to advertise and entice potential "customers" with a franchise-type of religion. Imagine how easy (and impressive) it would have been for me to say to that inquiring caller, "Yes, every one of our churches must pass a stringent list of requirements before they can display the Advent Christian logo. They must agree to teach exactly these doctrines, and worship using only the denominationally-approved hymnbook. No matter where you go in North America, I can guarantee you there will be no surprises in your worship experience." (Since I couldn't make such claims, the caller decided to keep looking for the perfect church.)

Someday, I may not work for General Conference. I may find myself living in a little community that no franchise would target. My last pastorate was in such a place: rural, remote and reverent. Not the kind of place MacDonal'd's would target, but a typical location for an Advent Christian church and the preferred location for this Advent Christian. When that day comes, if I find myself near an Advent Christian church, I'm pretty sure of one thing: it won't be exactly like any other Advent Christian church. And I'll bet it will have a special place in many hearts, and that's something you just can't franchise. †



(Editorial cont.)

A pastor on the ministry team located Carol, made contact and told her Blake's story. He would like to meet his daughter, the pastor said. Reluctantly, Carol tentatively agreed, but she

**With the most grace-filled smile, she said, "When you're forgiven, you have to forgive."**

wanted to talk with Blake first to determine if such a meeting was in Kristen's best interest.

I learned of these remarkable events when, as chaplain of the jail in which Blake was incarcerated, I was contacted by the pastor and asked if such a meeting was possible. Arrangements were made and, to prevent any possibility of Carol or Kristen being endangered by an information leak, even the sheriff and his staff did not know their identities. They entered the facility as "Jane Doe 1" and "Jane Doe 2."

Standing in the jail lobby with the apprehensive pair and the pastor, I said, "I wouldn't be surprised if he was every bit as nervous as you are."

They looked at me with total disbelief. The pastor and I stayed with Kristen as her mother took a deep breath and disappeared through the gray steel door to face her rapist for the first time in 18 years.

Kristen was understandably anxious. What kind of monster would her father be? Had he really been in some bizarre cult? Blake had made more than a few bad choices in his life, the pastor said, but many of the rumors circulating about him were not true. She waited tensely.

Several minutes later Carol emerged and, without a word, motioned for us to come. It was Kristen's turn to take a deep breath and steel herself.

Visitation is conducted through thick security glass via a telephone handset. Walking through the door into the visitation area, I saw Blake's almost-violent trembling. He could hardly hold the phone to his ear without hitting himself in the head. He seemed nearly overwhelmed by 18 years of guilt as it confronted him face-to-face. Tears were streaming down his

face. They cried, they talked, they laughed. Then they cried and talked and laughed some more. He never stopped shaking.

While we watched I said to the mother, "I find it remarkable that you were willing to do this...that you would have anything to do with him besides strangling him."

Her reply? With the most grace-filled smile, she said, "When you're forgiven, you have to forgive." This about the man who RAPED her!

Kristen wanted to get to know her biological father better. It was decided that, until trust was established, they would maintain the security that anonymity provides. Blake would not know their true identities. Carol would get a post office box through which Blake could correspond with Kristen, who would use an assumed name.

Was Blake's conversion genuine? "Jailhouse religion" is not uncommon, and only time will tell. But that emotional first-time meeting of father and daughter will not be soon forgotten by any of us who were present.

**...one aspect of the ministry of Christ is to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers."**

All too soon jail officers told us our time was up. In the lobby, with a look of amazement and awe on her face, Kristen said in a soft, childlike voice, "I...liked him. I actually liked him." She paused, slowly adding with deep, deep feeling, "He told me he loved me," as she collapsed sobbing in her mother's arms.

There are some interpretive difficulties with Malachi 4:5-6, but no reader can miss the wonderful promise that one aspect of the ministry of Christ is to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." I believe it. I've seen it.

***It's nice when "they all live happily ever after," but grace in the real world is often much more complicated than that. For a follow-up on this story, please see the next page.***



## *Grace in the real world— eight months later...*

Things are not always as they appear.

Before we published this story, I asked about the status of Kristen's and Blake's new-found relationship. They corresponded briefly, then Kristen began to visit Blake regularly in jail. He was told Kristen's real name. Father and daughter began to bond rapidly and deeply.

At this point Carol dropped a bomb: Blake had not, in fact, raped her. Their sexual relationship was consensual. Ashamed of the promiscuity of her youth, Carol had invented the rape.

One would expect this to enhance Kristen's relationship with Blake. Her biological father was not the violent man she had always believed him to be, and she was not the product of rape. But there was more to Carol's confession... Not only had Blake not raped her, he was not the only man with whom she had been intimate. And he was not Kristen's biological father at all.

Kristen suddenly found that she was building a relationship based on a very complex series of lies. The man she had

recently come to believe to be her father, to whom she had opened her heart to a remarkable degree, she now learned was not her father at all.

This young woman, pummeled by so many conflicting and contradictory stories, misled by this lie and that from her very mother, clung to one thing she believed to be true: "He told me he loved me." And Kristen was coming to love him. Biological revelations changed none of that.

Blake has been transferred to another correctional facility and Kristen continues to visit him. There is much that they still do not know and perhaps never will, but a remarkable relationship is being forged between a new Christian and the young lady he loves like his own daughter.

There is more than one way to become a father. Most men become fathers the way God originally intended. Others become fathers by adoption. Blake has become a father in a way perhaps unlike any other man. True indeed is the promise of Psalm 68:6: "God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing."

And the grace of God is sufficient to overcome life in the real world! †



*Rev. Rex Hutto is pastor of the Advent  
Christian Church in New Albany, Indiana.*

# *A word from our president*



Advent Christian  
General Conference President  
Rev. Ron Thomas, Jr.

“If you think  
you are too  
small to be  
effective,  
you have  
never been  
in bed with a  
mosquito” –  
Betty Reese

Church growth is often characterized by such descriptive words as “large” or “big”. The term “megachurch” is often associated with the end results of promising programs that have been developed for the sake of church growth. Is “big” or “large” the same thing as “great?” What makes a church a great church?

A few months ago, I attended the dedication service for a newly completed multipurpose facility, which was an addition to a small rural church in the Florida Conference. What was more impressive than the brightness and openness of the well-designed building was the enthusiasm of the congregation as they celebrated the completion of a project and the potential they were already realizing as they were reaching out to individuals and families in their community. The church plant, even with their new addition, is not one of the larger churches in the area. When compared to the gymnasiums and family-life centers that big churches have added to their complexes, the new building would appear small. But the evidence was convincing. By comparison, they may look like a small country church. However, the fact is they are also a “great” church. They are strong and healthy. The congregation has its sights on the homes around them, on families who need Christ, and on one another as they have grown in the process of praying, planning and producing.

What is the goal of your church as you choose to experience church growth? Consider this: “Your purpose...has nothing to do with grandiose goals, lofty achievements, or universal fame. It is the quiet confidence that, even if you never leave your neighborhood, you will have lived fully” (Sybil Stanton). To live our lives fully as individuals and as congregations means to represent Christ in all that we do. Church growth should be measured in how we are growing in our likeness to Christ. Our greatness is seen in our likeness of him. The Apostle Peter has also addressed our goal:

“Be careful how you live among your unbelieving neighbors. Even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will believe and give honor to God when he comes to judge the world” 1 Peter 2:12 (NLT).

We are a small denomination in comparison to others. But we are a great denomination. Our greatness and our growth, however, are dependent solely upon our growth in our likeness to Christ Jesus, the Head of the church. As we live out our lives fully for Him, then, and only then, will we experience real growth. Only then can we reach our neighbor, our community and our world. Think of this the next time you climb into bed, turned off the lights and hear the hum of mosquito wings. †



# Twisted Scriptures

Rev. David Burge



“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”  
(Proverbs 22:6, NIV).

## A Promise or a Warning?

We love certainty. It brings security. Perhaps that's why this verse has traditionally been taken for a promise, a guarantee from God of the life-long faithfulness of our children if we train them right. This interpretation, though, has occasioned much agonizing self-doubt when faithful parents do see children go astray. Has God not kept his promise?

First, proverbs are sayings, not universal laws. Many proverbs teach that a righteous parent may raise a fool (10:1,5; 13:1; 17:21, 25). Children of wicked parents may choose righteousness (Ezk. 18). This is no justification for lazy parenting. But ultimately, God holds everyone responsible for his or her own destiny.

Second, Proverbs 22:6 is likely not a promise at all. The Hebrew speaks not of God's way but of "his way", or "the way he should go" (words not in the Hebrew are added to produce the traditional translation). The "way" here is the natural, self-centered way of the child. The text actually sounds a note of warning. Children left to follow their own inclinations, without structure, discipline and instruction, remain self-centered and self-serving as adults.

The traditional translation is more application than exegesis. This verse still does challenge us to set our children on the right path early in life. Our children are born fools (Prov. 22:15). They need our discipline and instruction. Wisdom doesn't come naturally. We must actively impart it in the parenting process or our children will always be fools.

Hed the warning. Rise to the challenge. Trust God for the results! †

Rev. David Burge is president of the Advent Christian Conference of New Zealand.

..things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16 NKJV).

# Break the code.

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 1 9 9    19 12 17 14    6 4 1 14 16    1 11 3  
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 6 7 10    1 11 3    6 4    18 7 9 9    10 1 8 4  
 19 12 17 14    13 1 16 6 15    15 16 14 1 7 5 6 16

A=1	N=11
C=2	O=12
D=3	P=13
E=4	R=14
G=5	S=15
H=6	T=16
I=7	U=17
K=8	W=18
L=9	Y=19
M=10	

**There is a 4-letter word from the Bible hidden in each row of letters in Column 1. Match each row in Column 1 with its correct window box in Column 2 so that the hidden word appears in the open windows.**

Example:

A L O B U K E

L U K E

L I O V K E M

P R E A D M Y

C H O W P E L

A S H E T E K

K P N U O A W

T E B L L S K

J C G O E H N

B N F I D S H

G A D J A C M

M P A H O R K

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## Put vowels in the blanks to read Isaiah 55:8

"F\_r my th\_ghs \_r\_n\_t y\_r th\_ghs n\_th\_r \_r\_y\_r w\_ys  
 my w\_ys," d\_cl\_r\_s th\_ L\_rd.



"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

# As Children

by Dawn Russell



**Connect the dots and find out who is eating ice cream on a hot summer's day!**

**(Hint: It's not your uncle)**

**Match the Bible character with the event in which God told him/her what to do.**



BALAAM



PAUL



JOSEPH



MOSES



MARY



DREAM



BURNING BUSH



DONKEY



ANGEL



LIGHT

**Answers:** Balaam-Donkey, Paul-Light, Joseph-Dream, Moses-Burning Bush, Mary-Angel

# THE BOOK REPORT



***Granny Han's Breakfast*** by Sheila Groves  
(Overseas Missionary Fellowship) © 1985. ISBN: 192-912-2152

It was time for breakfast—but there was no food in the house, and no money to buy any. Would Granny Han have to go hungry that day or would her God supply her every need? Read this exciting true story to find out what happened.

***Broto*** by Aldèle Ellis

(Overseas Missionary Fellowship), © 1987. ISBN: 997-197-2611

Broto takes his lunch and goes out with his friend for the day. Looking after one hundred ducks is fun! Unexpected circumstances call Broto's friend away and he is left alone to tend the ducks. Enticed to go for a swim, Broto leaves for a few minutes. When he returns he's in big trouble!

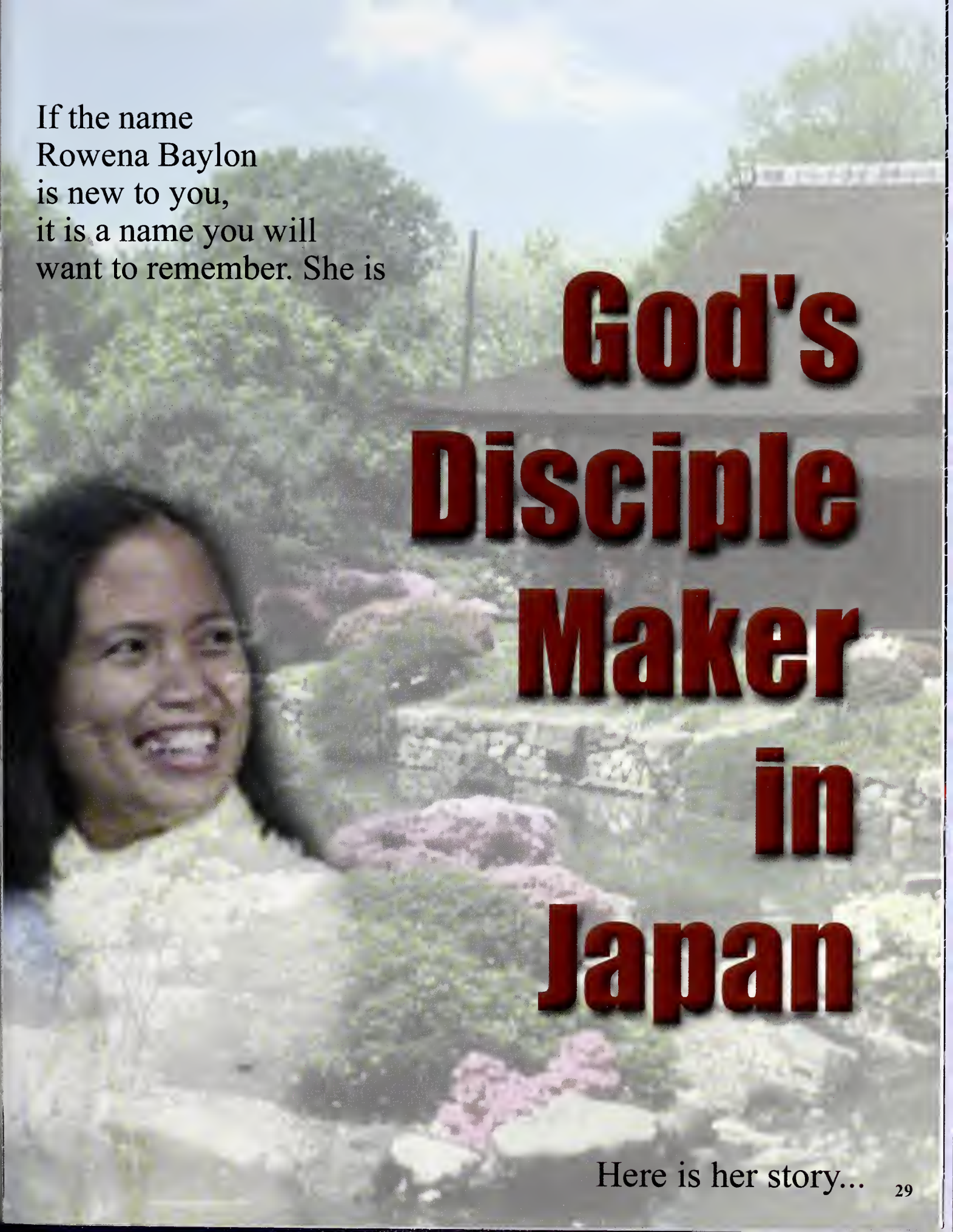


**TRAILBLAZER**  
**BOOKS**

(ages 8-12), by Dave and Neta Jackson (Bethany House)  
These books are biographical fictional stories of Christian heroes such as D. L. Moody, Amy Carmichael, Mary Slessor and Hudson Taylor. Thirty books make up this excellent series.

To order these books, call Venture Bookstore (800-676-0694)  
or email [Venture@adventchristian.org](mailto:Venture@adventchristian.org).



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling broadly, wearing a white textured sweater. She is in a garden with various plants, including purple flowers. In the background, there is a grey building and trees under a blue sky with light clouds.

If the name  
Rowena Baylon  
is new to you,  
it is a name you will  
want to remember. She is

# God's Disciple Maker in Japan

Here is her story...



**W**hen I first came to Japan in April of 1999, I believed deep in my heart that God wanted me to join Him in His work here in Japan. At first it was really hard. I had no friends, didn't know any Christian fellowship to attend, and the language was an immediate barrier. (I didn't learn Japanese until after I arrived.) But I kept on communing with God, and each day made the most of every opportunity He gave me to glorify Him, such as: offering help to those in need, befriending people, and giving out warm smiles. I church-hopped at first, but later started a Bible study group among Filipino students here.

Then, in June of 1999, I received a letter from Rev. Floyd Powers introducing me to an Advent Christian church in our locality. I first attended this church with four other Filipinos who were a part of our Bible study group. I went alone the following Sundays. Still I found it hard doing Sundays there because Nihonggo is so far away and I was still unsure of the task God wanted me to do.

In October new foreign students arrived who wanted to study at Kyushu University in Fukuoka. During this time I met new friends from other countries. This was a tremendous opportunity because I stayed in an international house. Praise God that some of these new friends committed to having a Bible study, so we started one for foreign students. We met once a week in my room and I encouraged them to go to worship with me on Sundays.

In February of 2000 we started our first English service. God used our Japanese pastor, Rev. Toshiro Yano, to



**Rev. George Teshera with Rowena and Erwin Baylon.**

encourage us in this new ministry. Five people attended the first service. But then God added to our number a lot of people from different countries. He continued to bless this ministry.

The following year God provided us a new place for worship and gave us the name, "Agape House." The first worship service here was on July 15, 2001, with the Rev. George Teshera preaching the sermon. As we acknowledge that God is the author of this ministry, we know that we are just joining Him in what He is doing. He continually shows His Awesome Greatness and blesses this ministry. Some of His blessings include:

- A team of talented musicians
- Six ongoing cell groups with one in Chinese and one for couples
- A new worship center near the international house

The average attendance is now over thirty. People from over twenty-three countries have been part of our fellowship at one time or another. Many from different countries as well as Japan have come to know the Lord through this ministry. Some have now returned to their respective home countries to serve Him there. In the meantime God raises up new people for ministry and leadership here. In addition to our cell groups, Sunday worship and fellowship meals, we have a once-a-month ministry feeding the homeless and hungry.



**Rev. & Mrs. Toshiro Yano**





**Clio and Kathleen Thomas, George Teshera and Floyd Powers with attendees of the Agape House.**

Our hope and desires for this ministry are:

1. To reach out to the Japanese people for Christ and to equip them so that the ministry in Japan will go on when the rest of us go back to our respective countries.
2. To reach out to foreigners and equip them so that they will start ministries as the Lord leads in their own respective countries.
3. To spread God's love, not just in words, but also in action. We hope to open orphanages and homes for the aged in different countries, especially Third World ones.

Our hopes and desires are quite lofty and perhaps seem hard to accomplish. We share these things because God has placed them on our hearts. We don't see ourselves accomplishing these things, but rather, our GREAT BIG GOD! Lastly, I share with you a favorite verse that has encouraged me in my walk with God through these years.

"He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could ever ask or think; according to his power that is at work in us" Ephesians 3:20. †

"Rowena Baylon. Remember that name. You are going to hear it a lot! As a Filipino graduate student at Kyushu University, this little firebrand is being used of God to spread the flame of the Gospel through the lives of scores of international students studying at the University. In addition, she leads these same students in outreach ministries among the poor and homeless. Her story is like the 29<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts."

*—Clio Thomas, Asia/Pacific Area Director of Advent Christian World Missions*



## *In His Memory*

*I often think about him, That man I knew as dad;  
Time has helped to ease the pain, My heart's no longer sad.*

*I'm learning there's a difference, Between God's will and mine;  
Though I might not understand it, To His will I resign.*

*And with that resignation, My burden slips away;  
And in its place I'm given grace, To face another day.*

*Though dad's no longer with me, I'm grateful for those years;  
He'd hold my little hand in his, And banish all my fears.*

*The love Christian parents, Is a gift worth more than gold;  
It only grows more precious, As we turn from young to old.*

*Catherine Welch Barnard*

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# WITNESS

Advent Christian

July/August 2003



AT HOME!!!

AT WORK!!!



# THE ADVENTURES OF... STEADYMAN!



# Real Heroes



# WITNESS

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# From the Editor



Today, “heroes” are made in an instant. Consider the basketball player who happens to sink the game-winning shot at the buzzer. It may be his only two points of the game, but he stands a good chance of being voted “most valuable player.” Likewise, any individual who is at the right place at the right time can be elevated to hero status with a single right action.

Unfortunately, most of us will never find ourselves at that heroic intersection of time and opportunity. Furthermore, we rarely see our friends or family there. So, we may overestimate the value of those other “heroes” and fail to appreciate the value of the life well-lived by the people nearer to us.

I cannot recall a single news story dedicated to the extraordinary feat of living a life consistently faithful to one’s mate, family and vocation. But which is really more heroic: performing the Heimlich maneuver on a choking diner or performing a thirty-year routine of mostly-thankless work and thinking of others?

I think Hollywood and professional sports have convinced us that heroism happens quickly. It takes less than two hours for Indiana Jones or Rocky to complete his movie role. Then he needs only to bask in the perpetual glow of his heroic past. And, he doesn’t get any older. Meanwhile, you and I face daily grinds of mundane activities that are, quite literally, rife with peril. The woman who chooses not to run away with her boss because of her family makes a heroic choice, but no one knows. The husband whose retirement is filled with caring for his elderly mother-in-law sacrifices more than the most disciplined athlete, yet no medal or lucrative endorsements await his day’s end.

Ultimately, the heart of heroism is sacrifice and most real sacrifice doesn’t occur in an instant, but over a lifetime. This issue of the *Advent Christian Witness* features stories of heroes who may never be appreciated by today’s world. Yet, by consistently sacrificing their own interests for the good of others, their lives are a testimony to the heroic power that is a by-product of serving Jesus Christ. †

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<b>On the cover: The <i>Advent Christian Witness</i> mimics today’s comic books, with artwork from Rev. Scott Carpenter (also found on pages 16 &amp; 17.)</b>	

Pastor  
Fireman  
Family-  
man

Sam Hill:  
Some  
Kind of

HERO





It's amazing what some people do. Take Sam Hill, for instance. He's the pastor of First Advent Christian Church in Wilmington, North Carolina. For many years, he's skillfully juggled some very important responsibilities and rarely "dropped a ball." He's been a pastor, fireman, husband and father – and a caregiver for his wife during a serious illness.

Editor Keith Wheaton interviewed Pastor Sam to provide our readers with a glimpse of a man who models Christian faithfulness under pressure. May God give us grace to follow his example.

## the Pastor

**Keith:** How long ago did you come to know the Lord, Sam?

**Sam:** I accepted the Lord and was baptized when I was twelve. And I'm now sixty-eight years old.

**Keith:** How did God lead you into preaching and pastoral work?

**Sam:** When I was in my twenties or early thirties, the Lord placed upon my heart that I needed to be in the ministry. I sort of drifted away from that and decided to make my own career choice. When they asked me to run for Deacon at the old Fourth Street Advent Christian Church, I really had no desire for that. But I did it anyway and became a Deacon. Later I became an Elder.

**Keith:** What were your duties as an Elder?

**Sam:** I assisted the pastor at the Communion table, visited the sick, and at times I was called on to fill the pulpit. Those things came along gradually. I never will forget what Brother Bradshaw told me when I said, "I don't know that I can get up there and talk for twenty minutes." He said, "Sam, if a person can't stand up and give a testimony of what the Lord means to him for twenty minutes, he needs to re-look at his commitment to the Lord." That had a lot of truth in it.

**Keith:** What were the next steps in your journey toward pastoral ministry?

*(Continued page 18)*



# FACES

# IN THE FACE



**Clayton  
Blackstone**



*“Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we must be saved by love.”*

Reinhold Neibuhr in

*The Irony of American History*

Hazel slept as we drove south on I-95. Garrison Keilor’s *Prairie Home Companion* had given way to an encounter with nostalgia — a “Come and Dine” tape recorded by the Berkshire Christian College Chorale two decades ago. Without warning, tears flowed. I looked over to make certain Hazel continued to sleep.

The streams of water dripping in steady rhythm confused me because I am not as readily moved to tears as some in the Blackstone line. Most times mine remain locked somewhere deep inside. Yet something in this moment triggered the flow. I sensed the need to pay attention, to discern the possibility of Holy Spirit work.

Nothing on the surface yielded a ready clue. I would have understood the reaction to the first gospel songs in the “Second Coming” medley that provoked the silent stream. “Some Golden Daybreak Jesus will come, some golden daybreak battles will all be won” — one of my Grandfather Barton’s favorites. “Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear. We’re tempted to complain, to murmur and despair. But Christ will soon appear to catch his bride away, all tears forever over in God’s eternal day. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus...” The words of hope penned by Esther Kerr Rusthoi trigger in my imagination a memory of my Grampie Blackstone. He closes the book. Tears trickle down his cheek. He raises the hymnal and waves it as an exclamation point of hope as he sings “...so bravely run the race ‘till we see Christ.”

### ***INSTEAD OF AN ADRENALINE SURGE, A STEADY DRIP***

As I listened a second time, I felt a slight flutter but no tears. Then the instruments transitioned the chorale into the stirring climax — “Do you hear them coming,

**I sensed  
the need  
to pay attention.**

brother, thronging up the steeps of light....” There I expected exhilaration. Excitement. An adrenaline surge of hope. Instead, the steady drip off the chin began again.

“Keep listening,” the Spirit seemed to urge. “Listen deep. Below the surface. Past the obvious.”

collage taking form in my imagination, I sensed the spiritual reality of his words. “It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature, which, if you saw it now, you would strongly be tempted to worship.... It is in the light of these

# Faces of people I've Known. Faces of people I've **loved.**

So I listened deep into my soul. I searched behind the expected to the less apparent. “Clad in glorious, shining garments, bloodwashed garments pure and white. ‘Tis a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle....” Hidden behind the obvious “glorious church without spot or wrinkle” —faces. Faces of people I’ve known. Faces of people I’ve loved. Faces of people I’ve served. Faces of people I’ve done battle with. Faces scarred with the sufferings of life, were, in my imagination, stunning in resurrection glory. They were the faces of faith’s unheralded foot soldiers. Years ago, I filed away a C.S. Lewis quote from *Weight of Glory* as one worthy of remembering. With the chorale providing the musical setting for the

overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people.”

## RETHINKING GATES OF PEARL AND STREETS OF GOLD

A few years ago, I took a fresh look at a familiar section of the final book in the Scriptures. I remember blinking twice at the text. I had turned there to remember ahead to the City of pearl gates and gold streets. I blinked because this time I didn’t see what I thought I had always seen.

*“One of the Seven Angels who had carried the bowls filled with the seven*



*final disasters spoke to me,” the apostle John wrote in Revelation. “ ‘Come here. I will show you the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb.’ He took me away in the Spirit to an enormous, high mountain and*

## FACES IN THE FACE OF THE WIFE OF THE LAMB

I saw Samantha’s face in the “faces of the face” of the wife of the Lamb. Sam grew

# ... hoping, praying, for a miracle...

*showed me Holy Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God, resplendent in the bright glory of God.*

*“The City shimmered like a precious gem, light filled, pulsing light. She had a wall majestic and high with twelve gates.... The City was laid out in a perfect square... the wall was jasper, the color of Glory, and the city was pure gold, translucent as glass.” (from Revelation 21 The Message)*

“‘Tis a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, washed in the blood of the Lamb.”

The glory of the New Jerusalem — the Bride, the wife of the Lamb — isn’t walls with dimensions beyond our ability to fathom. It isn’t gates of pearl and streets of gold. It’s people redeemed and glorified. Faith’s unheralded foot soldiers transformed into breathtaking and spectacular creatures.

up in church. She cut her spiritual teeth listening to some of the best preachers and Bible teachers in America, but she fell in love — a love that led her away from the Lord who laid claim to her life in childhood. But the “hound of heaven” proved relentless in His pursuit of her. She returned to her spiritual roots and renewed her covenant of faith, recaptured by Jesus her heavenly groom. Her earthly husband refuses to join her as a spiritual traveling companion. In fact, he does what he can to make her spiritual development difficult. She remains in the marriage hoping, praying, for a miracle, intent on being an example of godliness and quiet submission. Still, she wonders why the prayers of others get answered ahead of hers. Why things grow more difficult. Why God asks her to remain in a marriage that holds little promise of happiness. For a moment, I saw my discouraged friend in her “glorious, shining garment.” I wept in hope.

I saw Bert and Martha's faces in the "faces of the face" of the wife of the Lamb. They never shared and I was too absorbed in pastoral visions of success to notice the warning signs of marital Civil War. Bert fell in love with another woman. To his credit, he never left and Martha found the grace to forgive. A solid marriage has taken shape over the wound of broken promises. Today they walk with a limp, but, through my tears, I saw my friends in their "glorious, shining garments." I wept with thanksgiving.

I saw Harold's face in the "faces of the face" of the wife of the Lamb. Harold served as an elder under Jim Jones in Indianapolis, Indiana. "In the beginning, he preached the Gospel," he told me. "Then something clicked. Something went horribly wrong with a great ministry and I got out." My friend escaped but several of his family did not. When we

spoke of Jonestown, his face clouded with regret. He felt guilty that he hadn't done more to warn them. He wondered why God spared his life and not theirs. Harold never recovered from Jonestown. But in that moment, I saw him in his "glorious, shining garment." I wept because grace will conquer guilt and regret.

"Do you hear the stirring anthem filling all the earth and sky?" The Wess Ross arrangement breaks from the gospel song to a musical setting of hymn titles.

### **BLESSED ASSURANCE...**

Jack's face in the "faces of the face" of the wife of the Lamb came into focus. Jack never felt loved. I can only guess the possible causes. A childhood deprived of emotional support. A physical handicap. A lifelong struggle with learning. Each

**... I wept  
for the sheer  
thrill  
of witnessing  
his joy.**



# ... I thrilled at our family's **brush** with "amazing grace".

left him incomplete, always trying to prove himself to me, to others, to God. He could sing "Blessed Assurance" with gusto yet he seldom experienced real freedom from his fear of rejection. But in that moment, I saw Jack's radiant face. I sensed his first taste of acceptance in the Beloved and I wept for the sheer thrill of witnessing his joy.

## AMAZING GRACE...

At the declaration of the simple line, Cameo's face appeared. Cameo, her husband Toby, our grandchildren. (Cameo's story was told in an earlier edition of the *Advent Christian Witness*.) No wonder the tears turned from babbling brook to raging river. At fifteen, she told us she was pregnant. We feared for her spiritual survival. Hazel and I wondered about the genuineness of her youthful confession of faith. God has redeemed much since then. And in that moment, I reveled in the sheer delight of grace that

stuns me with its ability to wash away "stains that we cannot hide." I wept as I thrilled at our family's brush with "amazing grace."

## A MIGHTY FORTRESS...

Joe never displayed a single sign of wavering in his faith as long as I knew him. Sometimes I wanted to grab him by the collar, set him against the wall and demand that he be honest with his feelings. I've always struggled to believe that God "works things out in the end." I assumed that everyone did. But to Joe, trust came as second nature even when a reputation for integrity built over a lifetime of faithfulness came under attack. Especially as his reputation came under attack. For those who knew him, the accusation bordered on the ridiculous. While I worried, struggled with feelings of anger and bitterness towards the accusing party, and entertained thoughts of revenge, Joe trusted. I seldom

remember hearing a “discouraging word” because of his conviction that “a mighty fortress is our God.” In that flash I saw an “I told you so” smile on the face of my friend. I laughed through my tears.

### **ALL HAIL THE POWER...**

I have never witnessed the power of Jesus’ name in its raw form. The kind of power I wished I could have called upon to restore life to a beautiful young woman who died months after she had

leads. He walks with a shuffle, usually assisted by a cane or walker. He feeds himself but can’t talk much —cruel punishment for a former pastor and educator. He goes only where others take him. But in the valley of stroke-induced dependency, this hellfire and brimstone fundamentalist preacher encountered the power of Jesus’ name. Sometime during recovery, he discovered an inner Sabbath rest. As the choir declared “Hallelujah!

# **... unheralded foot soldiers of faith...**

discovered the joy of married life. Power to breathe health back into the body of a ten-year old boy that shut down after a lingering illness. Power to halt the effects of aging so that my ninety-year old friend could continue to drive.

### **HALLELUJAH CHORUS...**

But over the years, I’ve witnessed a quieter power. Softer and more subversive but power just the same. Power that prompts a “Hallelujah! Hallelujah!” response. Chet experienced a stroke not long after his fiftieth birthday. My age. He had driven hard. Demanded a great deal from himself, his family and the people who worked with him. His life hung in the balance for weeks before he began his recovery. Recovery. The word seems an unlikely choice given the life he

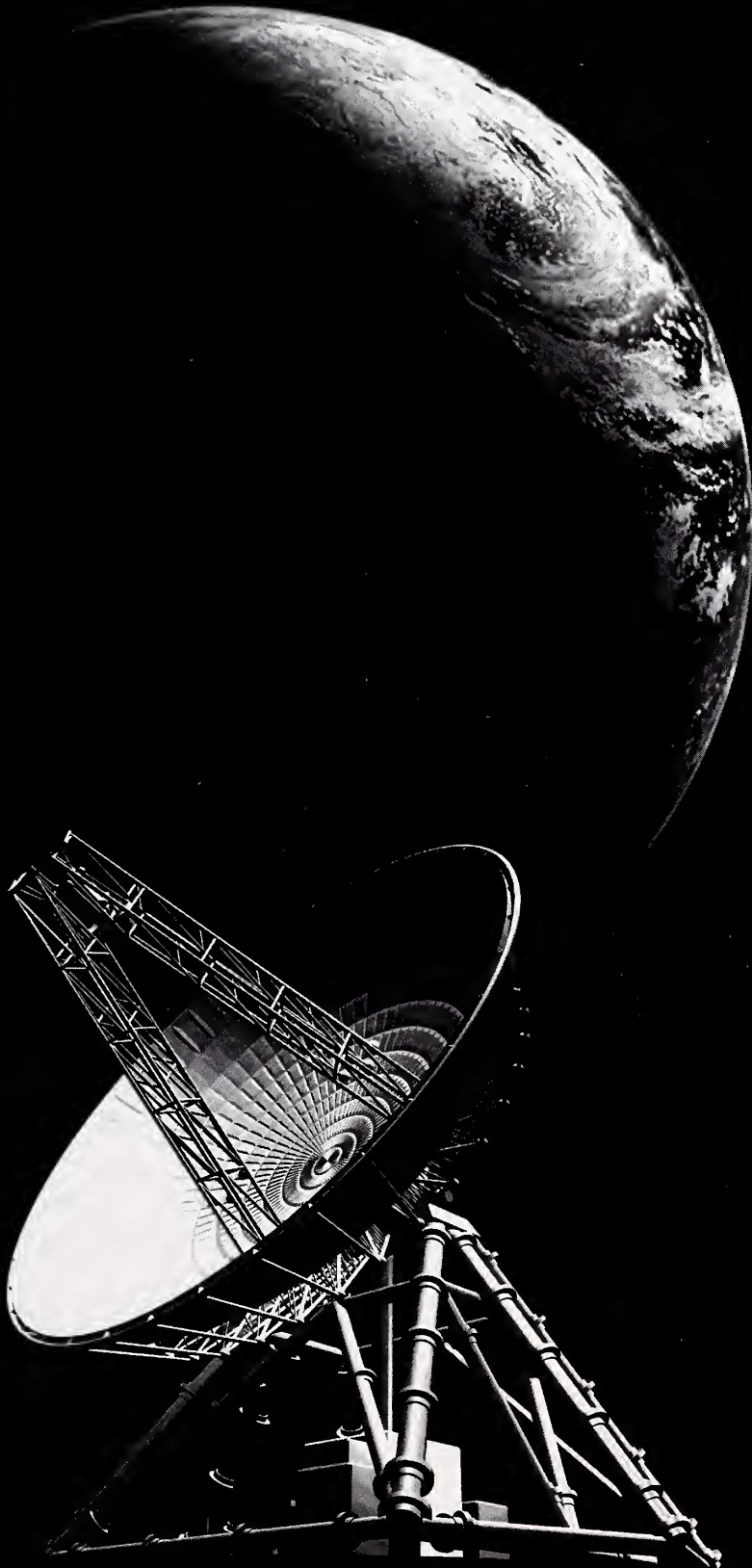
Hallelujah!” I heard Chet join in. I wept when I thought I saw his feet skip.

### **’TIS A GRAND, VICTORIOUS ARMY; LIFT ITS BANNER UP ON HIGH...**

Samantha. Bert and Martha. Harold. Jack. Cameo and her family. Joe. Chet. A handful of the unheralded foot soldiers of faith I’ve done or am doing life with. A few of the faces that flashed before me as we sped south on I-95. Faces bloodied and bruised in life’s battles. Faces wrinkled by the stress of disappointment and rejection. Faces confused by the Father’s silence. But one-day faces in the face of the Bride of the Lamb “clad in grand and glorious garments.” No wonder I wept. †



# CHURCH COMMUNICATION NETWORK: PLANTING SEEDS VIA SATELLITE



**I**t started with a thought. A good thought at that.

“What if,” Bill Dallas asked himself, “we could make world-class training available for churches live via satellite?”

It was a logical question for Bill to ask. As an executive producer for an organization that helped corporations put on live satellite training events, he knew that technology made it conceivable.

*(Continued next page)*

# WATCHING IT GROW

The next question that needed to get answered: Was this an idea worth pursuing? Leaders, creatives, and entrepreneurs know that these types of ideas can lead to something big. Yet, unfortunately, good ideas often get left at the curbside of life, right next to the recyclables on garbage day. Bill, however, decided this was an idea that should be nurtured.

Bill came up with his idea in March 1998. By 2000, it had progressed from thought to reality as Church Communication Network launched its subscriber-based training with monthly programming.

Now, CCN annually provides a network of nearly 2,000 churches with more than 30 live, interactive training seminars and outreach-oriented events via satellite — all at a great value to churches. It's easy to see why the network is growing daily. "It's rather remarkable the progress that's been made," says Ed Carlstone, who's been part of CCN since the beginning.

## PLANTING AN IDEA

One of the first people Bill Dallas talked to about his idea was his boss. Ed Carlstone was the founder and president of Television Associates (TVA) and the executive producer of a Christian video series for kids, Quigley's Village.

"TVA was one of the first video production companies in the San Francisco Bay area, going all the way back to 1970," Ed says. "Bill saw the value of what we were doing with satellite teleconferencing for corporate training and wondered if there was a way to tie this together for churches.

"That was the genesis of the idea."

That genesis soon turned into revelation. With personal phone calls to church leaders, focus groups, research, and relationship building, Bill's idea gained momentum. One of the people Bill connected with early on was Reid Rutherford, an entrepreneur who had also served on the boards of various Christian organizations.

"One of my areas of interest is looking for ways to help churches improve," Reid says. "What impressed me about the CCN idea is that this would help church leaders. It would provide high-quality content to help pastors and others do what God has called them to do."

Reid, like Ed, joined forces with Bill. The team was starting to come together, and so was the concept. By the fall of 1999, CCN was preparing to host its first two test programs, and looking ahead to the following year when it would launch its subscription-based training.

The first subscriber program in 2000 looked at Natural Church Development. Among the speakers featured in the dozen programs offered that inaugural year: John Maxwell, Henry Cloud, Lee Strobel, and George Barna.

"From the beginning, we've offered high-quality content and world-class speakers in a format that is cost-effective for churches," Reid says. "It's very expensive for a pastor to take a team to an out-of-state conference. We wanted to provide valuable training in a cost-effective manner, with the opportunity to involve everyone in the church."

Church leaders soon were hearing about top-level training that they could make available in their churches. And content providers were discovering a new avenue to deliver their messages.

"Communication is different than information," Bill says. "I've always looked at the information as being the content and communication as the conduit for that information.

"We're truly a church communication network."

Lee Strobel has been part of CCN's teaching team from the beginning. A former atheist who became a Christian as an adult, Lee has served as a teaching pastor at both Willow Creek and Saddleback. He is also the award-winning author of a number of books, including "The Case for Christ" and "The Case for Faith."

"I love doing CCN programs because everyone works as a team to provide participants with an optimal learning experience," Lee says. "The satellite format allows us to communicate directly to thousands of people at churches all around North America — and they have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments as we go. That live, interactive element is crucial."

Kevin Miller, a vice president for Christianity Today International, oversees the formal partnership between Christianity Today and CCN. Christianity Today works with CCN to plan certain broadcasts, and christianitytoday.com has a conference channel that lets people know about upcoming CCN seminars.

"Our mission at Christianity Today is to engage, equip, and encourage the church. We tend to work through print and Internet media," Kevin says. "That's similar to what CCN is all about. It's just a different medium; a different way of doing the kind of ministry that we do.

"Their values of quality and service are ones I really resonate with. From the beginning, they've shown a commitment to working with other groups — denominations, agencies, parachurch organizations, associations. They don't feel like they have to do everything by themselves. I like that spirit; it's healthy in the body of Christ."

Another CCN partnering organization is the Willow Creek Association. One WCA member benefit is a discounted subscription rate to CCN. Additionally, Willow Creek teachers are regularly part of CCN's schedule. Steve Bell is the executive vice president in charge of membership and conferences for the WCA. Along with his wife Valerie, he is also a CCN teaching regular.

"It's a really good partnership," Steve says. "CCN and the WCA both bring unique elements to the table."

And that leads to great opportunities, according to Lee.

"When I did the "Case for Christ" outreach event for CCN, it was thrilling to be able to define and defend the Gospel for thousands of seekers who had been brought by their friends to CCN-linked churches around North America."



# NURTURING THE BLOOM

From 12 initial programs in 2000, to 18 the following year, to 24 in 2002, and 33 this year, CCN continues to expand its impact. First time speakers in 2003 include Charles Colson, James Dobson, and Philip Yancey.

Much of Bill Dallas' focus is on building relationships with CCN's partners: teachers, partnering organizations, and churches.

"Ultimately, our success rests on churches renewing their memberships. We are not about one-time relationships — with ministry partners, speakers, denominations, or churches. Our whole team is customer-centered," Bill says. "We spend a lot of time cultivating relationships and listening. We have to spend the time to understand the needs. We don't compromise our statement of faith or our core values, yet we want to ensure that the programs we provide are what people are looking for.

"We never presuppose we know what a church needs. We ask them what they need and provide what they've asked for. And then we follow up to make sure we hit the mark."

That fits perfectly with CCN's mission: to support the local church by providing cross-denominational training and educational programs that help local church staff and lay leaders be more effective in their church roles.

It's a mission that gets Bill Dallas' heart pumping.

"I've always felt this is what I'm supposed to be doing," Bill says.

"I love what I'm doing."

And to think it all started with a thought. ☩

Some of the Advent Christian churches participating in CCN include:

Hope Community Fellowship, Loganville, Ga.  
Hope Community Church, Dover, Fla.  
Dover Advent Christian Church, Dover, N.H.  
Alton Bay Advent Christian Church, Alton Bay, N.H.  
Oak Hill Bible Church, Oxford, Mass.  
Faith Bible Church, Plainville, Conn.  
Oxford Advent Christian Church, Oxford, Maine  
Clovis Advent Christian Church, Clovis, N.M.  
Bixler Memorial Church, Dowling Park, Fla.  
Blessed Hope Church, Waterville, Maine  
Friendship Advent Christian Church, Friendship, Maine  
Jacksonville Advent Christian Church, Jacksonville, Fla.  
State Road Advent Christian Church, Presque Isle, Maine  
Chatsworth Advent Christian Church, Chatsworth, Calif.  
United Advent Christian Church, Wilmington, N.C.  
Grace Advent Christian Church, Walterboro, S.C.  
Emmanuel Advent Christian Church, Rochester, N.H.  
Eastern Regional Association  
Dunntown Advent Christian Church, Wade, Maine  
Aurora Advent Christian Church, Aurora, Ill.

**For more information about CCN or to  
subscribe, call Rev. Richard Russell  
(800) 676-0694, extension 220.**

# THE ADVENTURES OF... STEADYMAN!

His true super-human powers concealed from the world, Steadyman pursues his life-long quest for spiritual victory.

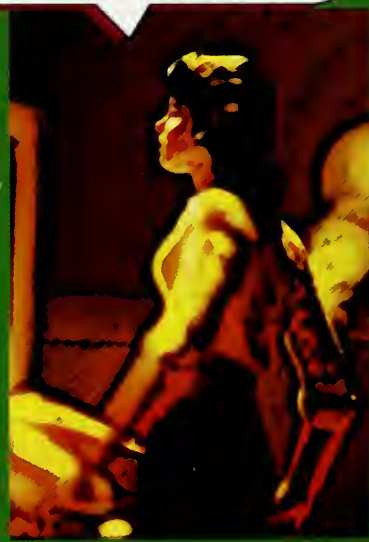
Halfway through his epic struggle, we find Steadyman facing daily assaults from villainous detractors whose only mission is to thwart him. Subtle ploys threaten to drain him of his hard-won integrity, while even more sinister fiends probe for secret weaknesses...



Memo to Chris:  
Chris, unless the entire department meets the quota, none of us will get our bonus. We're all counting on you to be a team player and pad your figures like the rest of us! Thanks!



Hey Chris! Want to see my new tattoo?





Meanwhile, as his soulmate cares for their newest progeny, another earthly foe slithers into Steadyman's domestic sanctuary, with designs to capture and exploit his own son!



Come on, Chloe, eat your strained peas like a big girl!



Welcome to  
***Bikini Casino!***  
Our girls think you're already a winner, now prove it simply by entering your credit card!



The fate of Steadyman's family lies in the hands of a benevolent Lord who is the steadying force in this mortal's life!†

**Sam:** Over a period of time I was filling in preaching at different churches. Someone suggested that I should apply for a license, so I got my Christian worker's license, and then a layman's license. Later, the Fourth Street Church and the old Wilmington Church combined and became what is United Advent Christian Church today. I filled in for them, off and on, for almost a year after Silas Aldridge left. I was given permission to administer the Lord's Supper, and after I'd done that for about a year they asked me to apply for a minister's license. When they called Glennon Balsler to be their pastor, I served as his associate pastor for a couple of years.

**Keith:** While all that was going on, what were your wife and kids thinking about it?

**Sam:** At times it was hard on the kids because I was doing shift work for the fire department for twenty-four hours every other day. I was away from the kids a lot more than I should have been. But I felt like I was going in the direction that the Lord was leading me in, and I think my wife knew that too. But sometimes a pastor can get so involved in the church that it's detrimental to his family.

**Keith:** By the time First Church called you to become their pastor, didn't you also have increasing responsibilities in the fire department?

**Sam:** Yeah, I was a Captain by then. First Church asked if I could fill in for them one Sunday. A couple weeks later they asked me to come again. After the service, Hugh Strickland said, "We want you to come as pastor." I told him, "I'll pray about it. It depends on the leading of the Lord whether I come or not." The next Sunday I learned there had been some conflict and the membership had dropped to about ten people. So I asked Hugh, "Are you interested in just maintaining a church or are you interested in the church growing and prospering?" He said, "We want it to grow and prosper." I agreed to come but said, "The time frame that I'll be here depends on the leading of the Lord." I've been there twenty years.

**Keith:** What did your wife say when they asked you to be their pastor?

**Sam:** (Laughing) I don't remember the exact words, but she was probably not thrilled about it. You know, she was as strong and dedicated a woman in the Lord as there could be. But that meant leaving some family and friends at the United Church. And she wasn't greatly fond of the responsibility of being a pastor's wife. She filled a role and did the things that were expected of her. But, as far as a desire to be a pastor's wife per se, I don't think she had that desire.

**Keith:** It wasn't the most comfortable role for her?

**Sam:** No. She taught a Sunday School class, and was part of the WH&FMS; she'd do anything she could physically do. But she never sought out a leadership role.

**Keith:** How do you see your own role as a pastor?





**Sam:** The biggest responsibility is filling the pulpit, and making sure that the Holy Spirit is giving the message rather than me personally. When a man stands at that pulpit he's God's spokesman and he'd better make sure that he says what God wants those ears out there to hear. That's an awesome responsibility.

**Keith:** What's your assessment after twenty years with First Church?

**Sam:** Well, I look back at all the individuals who've been through the church and I know that people at First Church have ministered to them in the love of the Lord. We've seen people come to us who've later gone other places and become very strong Christians. And there have been a number of people – not major numbers – but a number of people who have accepted the Lord. The church is only about forty people, yet the greater witness is to 95,000 people in the city, where the majority know I'm a pastor.

**“When a man stands at that pulpit he's God's spokesman and he'd better make sure that he says what God wants those ears out there to hear.”**

**Keith:** Do you see any advantages of having another career in addition to being a pastor?

**Sam:** Because my livelihood was not dependent on the church itself, I did not have to tame down any of my messages. If the Spirit led me to say something I had that freedom. Where a minister depends on the church for his total livelihood, he might feel he has to temper some of his messages.

**Keith:** Have you ever felt like there was someone in the church that wanted to see you move on? Or at least wanted you to change your tune?

**Sam:** I'm sure there have been members that left because they were ready for me to go. Occasionally the church has taken a vote and there's never been a single vote against me. I've never been hurt too much by what people say against me because I believe that any accusation against God's man is an accusation against the Lord. They're not accountable to me as much as they are to the Lord.

**Keith:** You're pretty thick-skinned?

**Sam:** Yeah. Things don't upset me much anymore. I used to have a hot temper. I'd hit the wall with my fist and that type thing. Or, if a wrench slipped when I was working on the car, I'd hit a fender. I finally realized the only person I was hurting was Sam. I also realized I couldn't make everybody like me. I guess I'm comfortable with the Lord, in the sense that whatever he wants me to do I'm willing to do; and if someone is against me, it's no big thing because the Lord is going to look out for me. He's done that many times.

# the Fireman

**Keith:** How long have you been a fireman?

**Sam:** I've been here over forty years. I started as a Private on what we call the tailboard axle, when we used to ride the back of the truck, which is in violation of standards now. Now you have to be in a seat and buckled down. We used to hang on to the rail on the back of the truck and ride there.

**Keith:** I'll bet that would get your heart pumping.

**Sam:** Particularly if you hit a big bump! I went from Private to Drive Operator Engineer. Then to Lieutenant, Captain, Assistant Chief. I also served as their Chaplain for about ten years. Finally, I became Chief about fifteen years ago.

**Keith:** Do you ever go on fire calls anymore?

**Sam:** If we have a loss of life, major injury to a citizen or to fire personnel, or if a government building is on fire, then they notify me. Or, if we have a major fire, they notify me and I determine if I need to go or not. There's no mandate that I answer any alarms. My position is almost totally administrative.

**Keith:** Do you miss going out on calls?

**Sam:** I think any fireman develops an instinct over the years for "chasing a fire truck."

**Keith:** Can you remember the first time you went on a fire call and what that was like?

**"A fireman has to have compassion for individuals he's serving."**

**Sam:** The very first day I went to work I knew nothing about fire fighting, but they had me riding a truck from day one.

**Keith:** Without any training?

**Sam:** No training whatsoever. In those days, we learned by doing. Anything they told me to do, I tried to do. We had a large kitchen fire that first day, and had to knock the door down.

**Keith:** Was your wife supportive when you made the job change? Did she worry about you?



**Sam:** She was supportive, but at times she did worry. If the radio news said there was a major fire downtown and she knew it would be the district I responded to, that worried her, particularly if the news said a fireman had been injured.

**Keith:** Were you ever hurt?

**Sam:** A number of times. We were training one day at a tower and a rope broke and I fell about three and a half stories, and landed in a net they had set up and crushed my wrist. I didn't think I'd ever be able to use this wrist again. Sometimes it will pop, or hurt.



**Keith:** Wow! Have you ever had something happen on a fire call?

**Sam:** Yeah, an oil tanker ran into our fire truck down at Third and Chestnut Street, while we were on our way to a fire. The truck was knocked over on its side and three of us who were on the back of it were thrown into the street and knocked out. I woke up lying in gasoline.

**Keith:** Incredible!

**Sam:** I didn't have any major injuries - just a busted head and a few bruises. You often get a hand caught, or get arm and neck burns, and things like that, but I haven't had any major accidents.

**Keith:** Have you ever had a time you feared for your life – that you felt this building is going to collapse on me?

**Sam:** I don't know that I ever had a fear. There was a time that we were in a situation where we could have lost our lives. Another fighter and I were up in an attic, with the house on fire all over, and we were knocking down an attic fire to keep it from going on up, and we ran out of water. We had to knock the louver out to get out of the house.

**Keith:** That sounds scary.

**Sam:** But I never have worried about losing my life. Once we were on a barge that was on fire at Eagle Island. It could have blown up at any time. We walked around tankers and tanks loaded with gasoline where lightning had set the barge on fire, and we put 'em out. Any alarm you go on, you put your life on the line.

**Keith:** What was the toughest call you ever had to make?

**Sam:** The thing that affects me the most is to have a kid lose their life, which we've had a number of times. And to have to go tell the parent who's out there screaming that, you know, their son or their daughter...didn't make it.

**Keith:** You had to do that?

**Sam:** Oh yeah. I've been to fires where all ages have been burned or died due to smoke inhalation. A fireman has

to have compassion for individuals he's serving. Where there have been people injured or hurt, we'd visit them in the hospital. And there have been times where we've tried to impress upon them that, even in their tragedy, the Lord is concerned about them, cares about them, and wants to give his support.

**Keith:** I noticed on the Wilmington city website that in 2001 your community had a substantial drop in property loss – about half of what it was in 2000. But you had a lot more fire calls.

**Sam:** The loss varies mainly because of the property size. If we go on a call to an old storage tank with a million gallons of fuel on fire, you know that's going to be a significant loss. Whether we go to a two-story home, or to a large industrial site, or a shopping center, that will make a big difference in the fire loss.

**Keith:** But those are still pretty good statistics, aren't they?

**Sam:** Yes. And our stats for property loss have gone down since then, and our fire calls have become fewer. Part of that's due to the better enforcement of the building code and better standards for home construction, and educating businesses and industry and citizens about fire prevention.

**Keith:** Prevention efforts must really work. One of the things that's noted on the website that you mentioned is your fire department's national rating. You carry a Class II rating. What's that mean?

**Sam:** Insurance service organizations give fire departments anything from a Class I to a Class X rating. Class I is the very best fire protection; Class X is for areas where there is no fire protection. Our city has a Class II rating, which means we're about as good as we can get. Each classification improvement means less expensive property insurance rates for the major industry, or Mom and Pop store, or any other business. So, businesses come into a community and look at the school system, and at housing, and the cost of food; but many also look at that rating of the fire service, because it tells them the amount of insurance they'll have to pay if they come into that area to do business.

# the Family man



**Keith:** I was sorry to hear that you lost your wife a year or two ago.

**Sam:** Yeah, on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

**Keith:** She had been ill?

**Sam:** Jean was diabetic. She became a dialysis patient and developed heart trouble; all of that was related to her diabetes. She was on dialysis three times a week for a long time, and her body just got very tired.



**Keith:** How long were you married?

**Sam:** All my life! [Smiling] Actually it was forty-eight years.

**Keith:** And how many children do you have?

**Sam:** Two. Sam Jr. also works for the fire department. And Connie, our daughter, is a school teacher in Brunswick County. And both are still involved in church.

**Keith:** Did you take your wife to dialysis most of the time?

**Sam:** Yeah. She would go about 6:30 in the morning, so I usually took her. But if I couldn't, then my son or daughter would pick her up; or my daughter-in-law, Beth, would do that.

**Keith:** What happened, then, at the end of her illness?

**Sam:** One afternoon Jean called and asked if I could come home. When I got there, she told me she'd taken three nitro tablets for her heart. I suggested we go to the hospital, but she said, "No, I'm feeling better." So I said, "I'll go and fix something to eat." I cooked some supper and said, "Are you ready to eat now?" And she said, "I don't think I'll eat right now." And then all of a sudden she gave out a big gasp of air, and that's when ... The doctor later told me she had a heart attack and was gone right then.

**Keith:** You must have been carrying a very heavy load while Jean was ill. The average person would feel he had his share of stress in just administering a fire department, or being a pastor. But you were also bearing quite a burden on the home front.

**“Whatever we face in life, the Lord will take care of us. He'll make things fit in place.”**

**Sam:** If the city hadn't been willing to work with me to meet my schedule, it would have been a heavier load. And, the last year, when Jean was really sick, the Lord enabled the church to hire an associate pastor to help us move ahead. I don't think things just happen; the Lord has a hand in it all. During the eight years Jean was ill, I was able to make all the meetings that I needed to, and fill my roles at church, and carry her to dialysis appointments and to see the doctor when she needed to go. Sometimes she saw three or four doctors a week. I think back and wonder how we did all those things. Whatever we face in life, the Lord will take care of us. He'll make things fit in place.

**Keith:** It's encouraging to know that God gave special grace during such a difficult time in your life. Is there anything more you'd like to say to our readers, Sam?

**Sam:** I think there's one "common thread" that ties together all the responsibilities the Lord gives us: it's the challenge to be a good Christian example to whoever's watching.

**Keith:** From what I hear, it sounds like God has helped you do that very well. †

# A word from our president



Advent Christian  
General Conference President  
Rev. Ron Thomas, Jr.

“Be content to  
live unknown  
for a little  
while...

for by and by  
you shall reign  
with Christ...”

—Charles  
Spurgeon

## “Heroes of the Faith”

As a child, did you ever pin a terrycloth towel to your t-shirt and leap into the air or run through the yard, looking over your shoulder to see the cape trail behind you? Did you ever mount your imaginary white stallion and shout a hearty “Hi-ho Silver, and away?” Did you ever raise your bat and point confidently to the outfield fence as you and your friends played “Home Run Derby”? Our childhood years may have been full of fictitious as well as real life heroes. And we would imitate in costume and behavior that which we admired, desiring the same to be ours to claim. The muscles represented by the letter “S” and flowing red cape, the mystery concealed by a black mask and white hat, or the mastery of the game demonstrated with a bat and glove might have been some of the achievements we wished for and some of the props we employed.

As adults, are we any different now, in that we still have our heroes? We may not be seeking the likenesses of a character from the comic strips or TV adventure series but heroes will always play an important part in the development of who we are and what we might become. As Christians, we are familiar with the list of the heroes of our faith (Hebrews 11). And we see in each of them characteristics we desire as we live out our faith. However, there is one characteristic that is not commonly demonstrated among the heroes we find in the world today: humility. Humility doesn’t seem to fit in the scripts of heroes as portrayed by the entertainment industry. Humility seems to be absent in the heroes of the courts and playing fields. And humility doesn’t appear as a trait needed for those who are climbing the corporate ladder. But look again at the heroes of our faith: **“Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3).**

Paul encourages us in his letter to the Philippians to have the attitude of Christ. He wrote, **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. . .”** That attitude was revealed as Paul continued to write, **“...but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant . . .”** True heroism will be characterized by humble service and sacrifice. Look at the true heroes in your life, particularly the heroes of the faith. They will be humble men and women who are motivated by the desire to first please our Lord and second, to do so as they serve others. There is no striving for recognition, no need to be honored. They want only to give of their best to their Master.

As you recall by name those whom you have recognized as heroes in your life, consider this: you are called to be a hero as well. The heroics will not be measured by any specific feat. No moment of glory or notable achievement will make you the true hero. You need to do only one thing: **“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time” (1 Peter 5:6).** In doing this, you become a hero of the faith. †



# Twisted Scriptures

Rev. Tom Warner



“...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...” (Hebrews 12:1, NKJ).

Are Christians who've died now assembled in some sort of “heavenly grandstands,” looking down upon us, witnessing all that we do on earth? Some people suppose that idea is supported by Heb.12:1.

As a young believer, I knew a woman who had been recently widowed, who was struggling to raise two teenagers alone. One day she confessed, “I hope my husband isn't looking down from heaven and seeing all the problems we're having. That wouldn't make heaven very happy for him.” At the time, I didn't know what to say to her, but it raised a question about that popular understanding of Hebrews 12:1. Eventually, I learned a better interpretation of the verse – one that fits the context.

After Hebrews 11 had listed many Old Testament heroes of faith, the writer refers back to them as a great cloud (i.e., crowd) of witnesses. The NIV Study Bible explains,

“The *witnesses* are not spectators but inspiring examples. The Greek word translated ‘witnesses’ is the origin of the English word ‘martyr’ and means ‘testifiers, witnesses.’ They bear testimony to the power of faith and to God’s faithfulness.” (p.1873).

The New Living Translation speaks of them as “a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith....” They are not sitting in some grandstands in heaven, witnessing what we do; instead, they have *witnessed to us*, through their lives of faith, as recorded in Scripture.

So, read, be inspired, and run your race, looking unto Jesus our crucified/risen Lord, the author and finisher of our faith!✠

*(Tom Warner is currently a chaplain with Ministry to the Aged, serving retirement homes and care centers in Boise, Idaho.)*

...things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16 NKJV).



*Cross out every other letter beginning with the first "C."*

MCYDGSREAF CGEWILSTSHUEFAFDIRCEIHELNOTM  
FAOCRWYEONUTFKOCRUMPYAPSOYWIENRCIGSUM  
KAFDHELPREMROFTEACUTEIONS  
WIELAYKTNAEPSWS.

*II Corinthians 12:9b*

*Unscramble these verses. The word "power" has been started for you in each verse.*

1. are might hand... and in your Power *II Chronicles 20:6b*

P \_\_\_\_\_...

2. Lord with See, comes power... the Sovereign *Isaiah 40:10a*

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ p\_\_\_\_\_...

3. has us His divine power everything need... we given *II Peter 1:3*

\_\_\_\_\_ p\_\_\_\_\_...

4. God... glory belong and and ...Salvation to power our *Revelation 19:1*

...\_\_\_\_\_ p\_\_\_\_\_...

5. For us timidity power... God give did a but not spirit of a of spirit *II Timothy 1:7*

\_\_\_\_\_ p\_\_\_\_\_...

### Heroines in the Bible

*Find the real letters these letters represent. Once a letter is decoded, it remains the same throughout the list. Look for recurring combinations of letters or repeated letters. (Hint: B = S)*

BLILV

PFXTL

VLOOLV

ALIF

ALIEVL

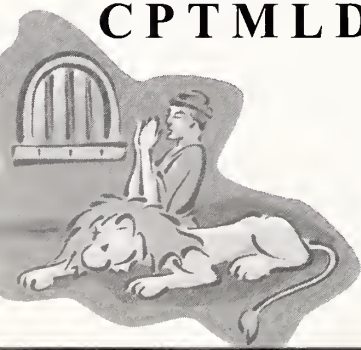
EVC GTXKG

CPTMLDCEV

CBEVCI

ILVLD

IJEV







# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

Match the hero in the Bible to his/her heroic deed or power (through God, of course).

1.J David

6.J Elijah

2.J Sampson

7.J Daniel

3.J Solomon

8.J Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego

4.J Moses

9.J Jesus

5.J Noah

10.J Peter

- a. He called fire from heaven to burn an offering.
- b. They were thrown into the fiery furnace and survived.
- c. He killed Goliath
- d. He came back to life.
- e. He parted the Red Sea.
- f. He had great strength.
- g. He healed a lame man.
- h. He built an ark and saved his family and animals.
- i. He had great wisdom.
- j. He survived the lions' den.

Find the heroes listed above in the Word Search

A N O S P M A S D J S  
 J P N H S D S N O A H  
 E L I J A H H A M O A  
 S L M H D M A B S U S  
 U M O A B E D N E G O  
 S N V J A L R P S H L  
 R I P H E S A D O L O  
 D A S I H A C E M O M  
 N O N P E J H L A H O  
 A A R E T E P D J E N  
 D J L M E S H A C H S



# Greetings from *Malaysia*

Women in the United States recently mailed WHFMS program kits to 75 overseas women's groups. Thanks to those who have generously given to supply materials to these enthusiastic proactive groups! Their response has been tremendous. Here is one example of God at work in the lives of overseas women.

Greetings in Jesus' Name!

I received your letter today together with the materials. Thank you very much. The materials are of great help to us here. Thank you so much for your precious prayer, which has brought wonderful results in the lives of the ladies that I have been ministering to. These are the miracles that have taken place because you prayed:

Ai Lee, a young Chinese lady, accepted the Lord. She called up to say she wanted to come to church. I picked her up last week. She also attends the cell group in my home and has one in her home as well.

Chitra, a young Indian mother of three children, is married to a Chinese gentleman. Chitra has opened her home to have the gospel shared with her and has Sunday School for her children at her home. Pray for Chitra and her husband's spiritual breakthrough. They are Catholic.

Pray for Wina, a Filipino married to a Chinese Buddhist. Wina has accepted the Lord. I have given her a Bible. Pray for us that God will open more opportunity to have cell groups at her home. Wina is hungry for God. She wants cell groups at her home, but because of her work schedule as a clinic nurse we are unable to meet together often. They do not attend a church. Pray that God will open more opportunities for Wina to meet with us in her home. She desires Christian fellowship.

Joanna and Jerusha are counseling Chinese Buddhist mothers facing teenage problems with their children. Pray for God's wisdom.

Keep in touch.

My love and prayers,  
Ruth Devairakkam





# "Unforgettable, that's what she is"

If I were to write a book on, *Women I Can't Forget*, topping my list would be one who Jesus called "unforgettable" hundreds of years before Nat King Cole crooned about his unforgettable woman.

Mary of Bethany is probably best known for the posture of sitting at the feet of Jesus, totally enthralled in His teaching. Like a sponge, she soaked up His words, at times completely losing all track of

By Hazel Blackstone  
*Coordinator of Women's Ministries*

time. I admire Mary for her abandonment to Jesus. Sitting in Jesus presence, devoid of time pressures, doesn't come easily for me. Mary becomes unforgettable in my book for having her priorities straight.

Because she spent time with Him, Mary's love for Jesus grew.

The man who revealed mysteries to her also brought her beloved brother back from the dead. I like to think that though others missed it, she understood the events that were to soon unfold in the life of Christ. The One who restored life to her brother would voluntarily lose His in a most gruesome fashion. And where did Jesus choose to spend his last days for badly needed respite? At the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. In the midst of these events the profundity of Mary's love became evident. She appeared at the door with her alabaster jar.

In their book, *Lady In Waiting*, Debby Jones and Jackie Kendall explain the significance of this possession:

*"In the days Jesus was on earth, when a young woman reached the age of availability for marriage, her family would purchase an alabaster box for her and fill it with precious ointment. The size of the box and the value of the ointment would parallel her family's wealth. This alabaster box would be part of her dowry. When a young man came to ask for her in marriage, she would respond by taking the alabaster box and breaking it at his feet. This gesture of anointing his feet showed him honor."*



It must have created quite a stir to see Mary enter the room with the alabaster jar. I imagine the onlookers questioning, "What's she doing?" "Why does she have her alabaster jar?" But questions gave way to shock when Mary unbound her hair.

Leon Morris writes:

*"The act is all the more striking in that a Jewish lady never unbound her hair in public. That apparently was a mark of loose morals. But Mary did not stop to calculate public reaction. Her heart went out to her Lord and she gave expression to something of her feelings in this beautiful and touching act."*

When Mary boldly entered this house full of men she risked a lot—her reputation, her pride, and her dowry. A. B. Bruce comments:

*"There was so much love in her heart...yet it could not find expression in words. She must do something to relieve her pent-up emotions; she must get her alabaster box and break it, and pour it on the person of Jesus, else her heart will break."*

Mary anointed Jesus with one pound of nard—twelve ounces in today's standards. And not just a cheap version of nard. Mark goes to great lengths to tell us that it was "pure." Nard squeezed from a plant in India was the most expensive perfume in the world. This oil



was exquisite and expensive; thus Mary's demonstration of love was one of extreme extravagance. She abandoned all for Jesus and the Master makes a proclamation about her.

Unforgettable Mary inspires me in several ways:

"She has done a  
**wonderful**  
thing to me..."

"She has done a wonderful thing to me.... When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

- To abandon myself to Jesus by soaking up His instruction
- To risk all to show my love and devotion to Jesus
- To be extravagant in giving my best to honor Him

### **Mary becomes unforgettable.**

Dee Brestin, in her book, *Falling in Love With Jesus*, sums up the aftermath of Mary's action nicely:

*"The perfume's fragrance filled the whole house and lingered, no doubt, on Jesus through the following holy week, through His crucifixion, and on His body in the grave."*

It is never a waste to give your best to Jesus. Like Mary, I long to hear the Savior say, "You have done a wonderful thing to me"...but I must break my alabaster jar.

Years ago a "Windsong" perfume commercial touted its product with the ditty, "I can't seem to forget her. Her 'Windsong' stays on my mind." In similar fashion Mary's life leaves one more lasting impression on my life. It's that **leaving behind the fragrance of Christ is what makes a woman (or a man) truly unforgettable.** †



# Your Children Can Be Won

*By Nathanael Olson*

The following accounts of the fate of two families reveals some shocking contrasts:

Max Jukes lived in the state of New York. He did not believe in Christian training. He married a girl of like character. From this union they have studied 1,026 descendants. Three hundred of them died prematurely. One hundred were sent to the penitentiary for an average of 13 years each. One hundred and ninety were public prostitutes. There were 100 drunkards, and the family cost the state \$1,200,000. They made no contribution to society.

Jonathan Edwards lived in the same state. He believed in Christian training. He married a girl of like character. From this union they have studied 729 descendants. Out of this family have come 300 preachers, 65 college professors, 13 university presidents, 60 authors of good books, three United States congressmen, and one vice-president of the United States; and outside of Aaron Burr, a grandson of Edwards, who married a questionable character, the family has not cost the state a single dollar. The difference in two families: Christian training in youth and heart conversions. †

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# WITNESS

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*Raising  
Girls of  
Grace*



# WITNESS

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# From the Editor



*Keith and Kathy Wheaton*

## **Where have all the pedestals gone?**

I have always placed women on a pedestal. I don't know why, since many of them have found that position useful only for kicking me in the face! Yet, for some reason I persist in the silly notion that men are supposed to look up to women, and look out for them. I suspect that mindset was imprinted upon my psyche when I was a toddler, just before feminism really took hold.

Probably few people can appreciate the angst I regularly experience when a woman and I reach a door simultaneously. Part of me knows I should hold the door open and let the lady enter before me. Part of me knows I should not presume that the lady would appreciate the gesture. And part of me knows I should not even think of her as a "lady," since the word "lady" has a negative and patronizing meaning for some women. Sometimes I just stop and tie my shoe.

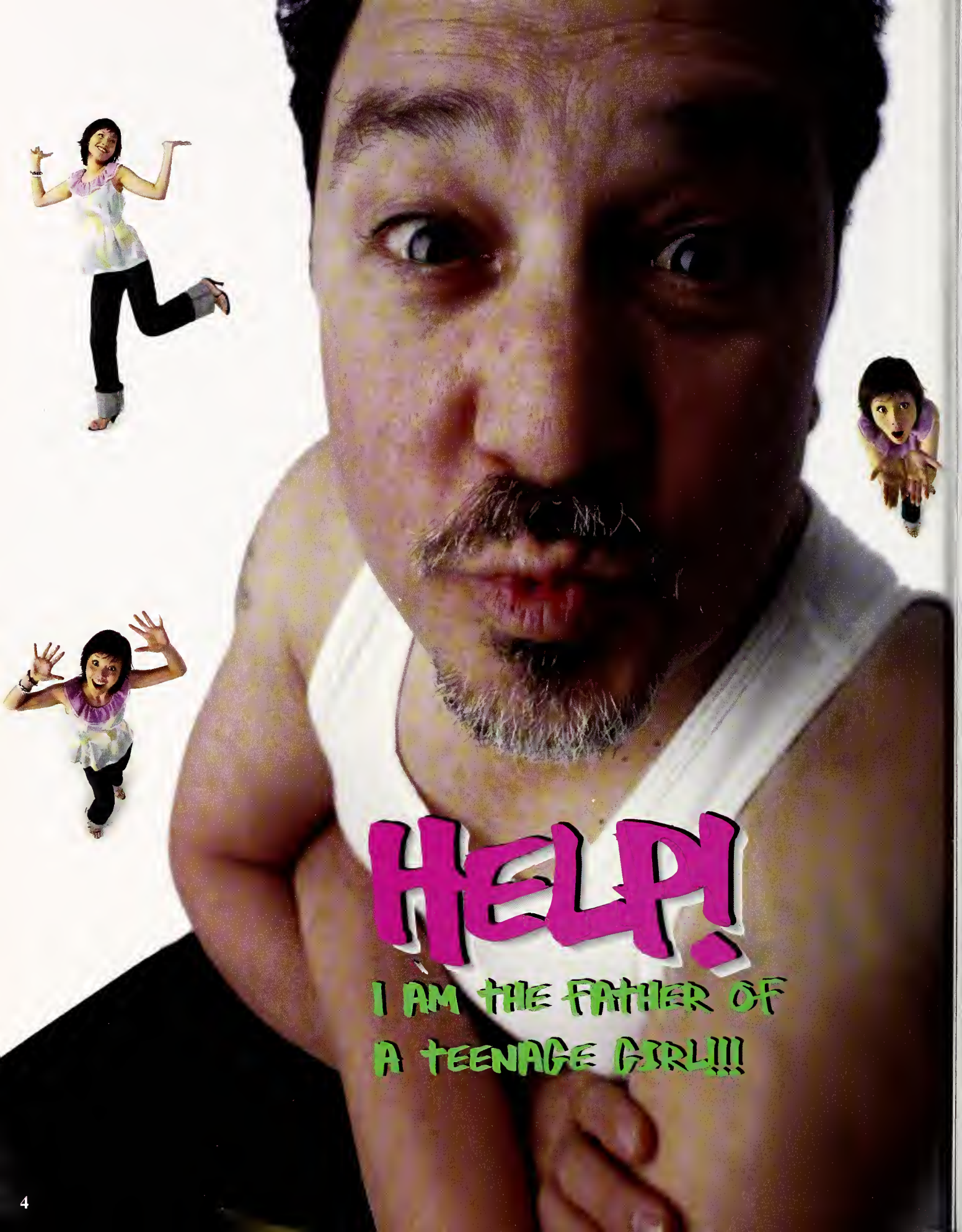
Paula was one of my pedestal's early occupants. She and I had sophomore biology together. I was in love. One look into her soft brown eyes and music played (it was "My eyes adored you," by Fankie Valli and the Four Seasons). Believe it or not, it *is* possible for a 15-year-old boy to experience pure, transcendent passion of a completely non-hormonal nature. Paula was an object of adoration and beauty, who, "like a million miles away couldn't see how I adored her." Any thoughts of a lustful nature were quickly expelled, lest they distort the beauty of that angel in white. For two months I eagerly looked forward to fifth period class, when Paula and I would work side-by-side dissecting dead animals. I was in Heaven!

*(Continued on page 23)*

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**HELP!**

**I AM THE FATHER OF  
A TEENAGE GIRL!!!**



# HELP!

by Rev. Joseph Pritchett

**T**he first thing I remember thinking was how small and helpless she was. When they placed her in my arms after she had been hastily assessed and cleaned up a bit, I was a little surprised at the intensity of the protective feelings that swelled within me. It was the early evening of January 9, 1986, and my world had just changed forever. From this point forward and for the rest of my life I would be known as “Dad.”

Now fast forward nearly 18 years. With my graying hair (prematurely, of course!) and thickening middle, I find myself the father of not one, but two high school students. That precious little bundle I had cradled so clumsily in my arms is a senior in high school with a freshman brother. She is a committed Christian, actively involved in many ministries of the church. She maintains a strong witness at her public high school, where she is recognized as a gifted musician and honor student. She is preparing to enter college to pursue a career as a pediatric nurse practitioner. She is dating a Christian young man who is studying religion with a heart for ministry.

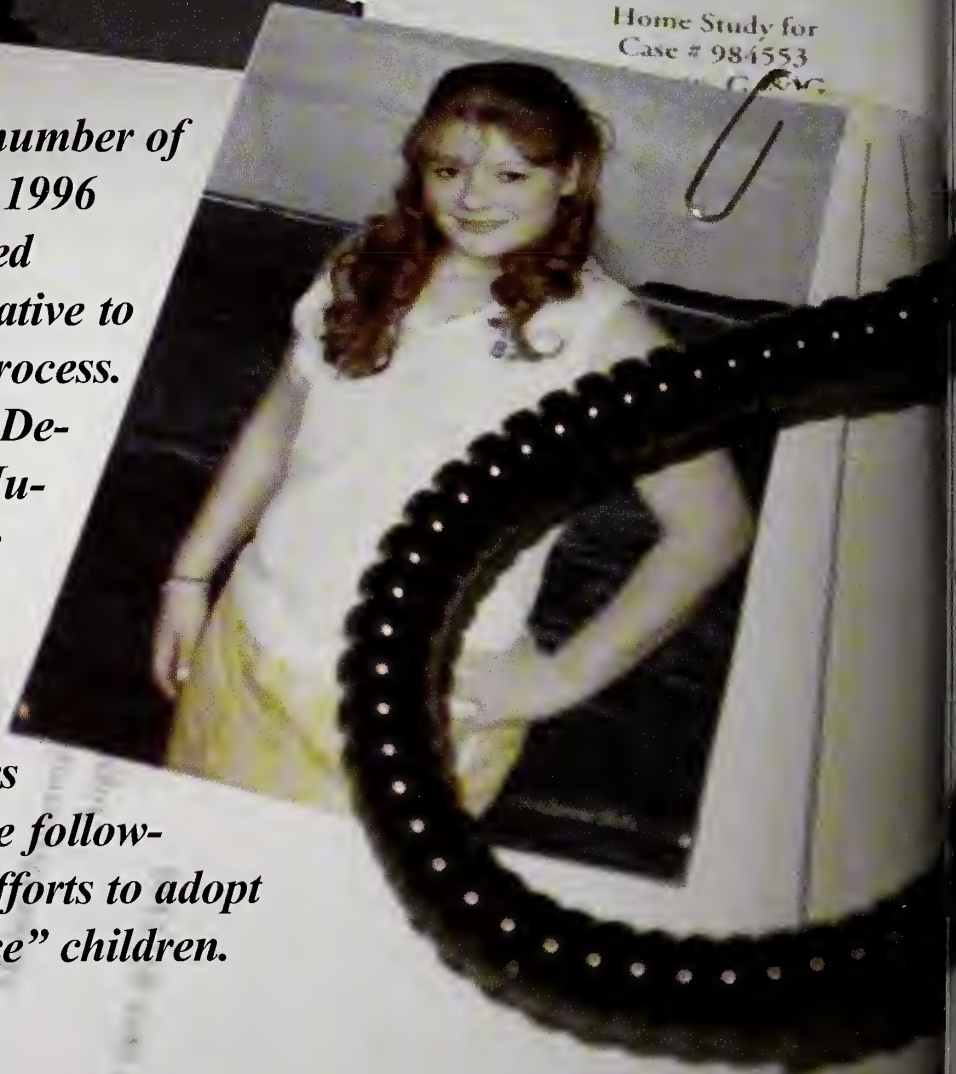
Nothing to it, right? Wrong! Let me say for the record: I am not an expert on raising a daughter. In fact, my present good fortune is a testament to God’s ability to overcome our failures. I have also learned some valuable lessons along the way and some keys to avoiding the pitfalls inherent to growing children into adults.

*(Continued on page 12)*

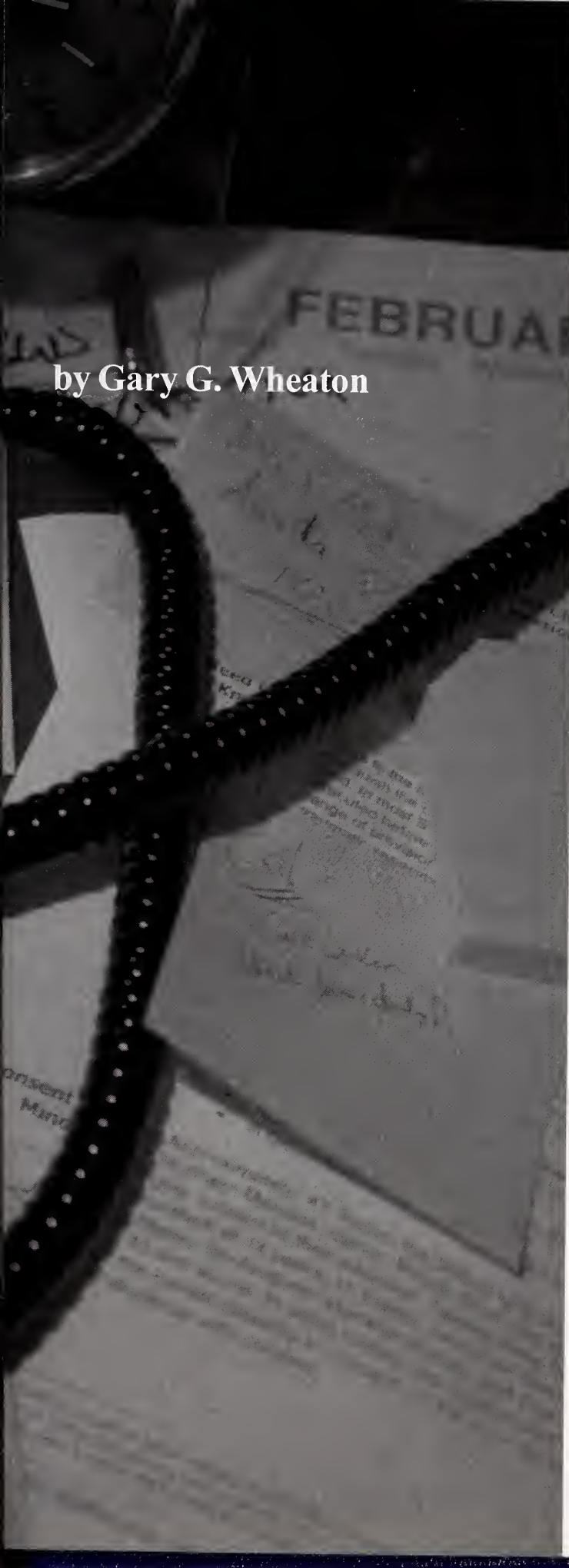
# Adopting

## Karylee

*Troubled by the growing number of children in foster care, in 1996 President Clinton launched "Adoption 2002," an initiative to streamline the adoption process. Four years later, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported the number of foster children at 520,000. More than 25 percent of these children spend more than five years waiting to be adopted. The following reveals one family's efforts to adopt one of these "hard to place" children.*







by Gary G. Wheaton

**G**loria and I married in 1959. She was sixteen and I was twenty. We had an old car, our Christian upbringing and our love for each other. With all that going for us, we should have lived happily ever after, but that's not what happened.

Since we had moved far from home, she was lonesome and wanted kids. I didn't want any kids. Well, ... maybe one or two way off in the future somewhere. She wanted four kids immediately. So, we compromised. We had four kids immediately. Thirty years later we had a fifth for good measure.

Our first, Lowell, was born the day after our first anniversary. He was a cute little boy, and we were very proud of him. Second was an angel born a year and a half later, Angela. Then we had two more boys, Keith and Kevin. Keith was good-natured and fun, and Kevin was so active that we couldn't keep track of him. Most of the time, while our first four were growing up, I was too busy with "important" things to appreciate kids. By the time they were in high school, I started being more involved with them, but soon they were gone.

After we recovered from the shock of losing them, we really enjoyed our new freedom. We had time for ourselves and were selfish. We had a lot of fun. We retired, bought a little camper and went to Alaska. We built a retirement home on a lake. We had lots of visits

from all our kids and grand kids and enjoyed them all very much.

Yet, something was missing. We missed having children living in the house. We also knew that there were lots of kids who didn't have anyone who loved them. We started to think about adoption. For several years we wrestled with these feelings and discussed them with our friends and our family. Our friends all thought that we were totally out to lunch. Our kids weren't so negative, but they did think that we might be getting ourselves into trouble (Their misgivings were confirmed the first time Kaylee pushed me off the wharf into the lake!). We knew that we might be messing up our lives, but after praying about it, we decided to go ahead with an adoption anyway. We browsed the Internet, and read descriptions of some of the children. There are literally thousands, and we wanted to adopt every one. Even though we were older, and had both had bouts with cancer, we felt that we still had something to give.

We had survived three boys with a lot of prayer and some luck, and we only had one daughter. So, we decided we wanted another girl.

We needed someone who wanted to live out in the woods with two old people, someone who would enjoy our lifestyle. Since we are older, we decided that we should get an older child. Kaylee was fifteen when she

came to live with us a year and a half ago. Our daughter, Angela, is funny, smart, athletic, pretty, and willing to try stupid schemes that I come up with. Those were the qualities that we hoped our new daughter would have. Kaylee has them all.

We started the adoption completely ignorant of the process and got discouraged right away. It was only the thought of the kids who needed someone that kept us going.

In March of 2000 we read in the paper that there was going to be an informational meeting on adoption nearby. It sounded like a good idea, so we signed up. By the time we went to the meeting, I had already figured out the best way for us to do it. Since we were going to Alaska that summer, I thought the thing to do was to get a kid and take her with us. By the next fall, we'd all know if we were compatible, and even if the child decided that she didn't like us, she would still have a great summer.

Our hopes of getting a child right away were short-lived. We were told at the meeting that we would be required to complete a course on raising kids, (even though we had raised four with some success). We couldn't even start the course until fall because we were leaving for Alaska in June, and there wasn't time to complete it before the trip.

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First of year 2000 we started thinking about adoption as a possible ministry.

# 2000

March-We attended an adoption information meeting where we were told that it was now much easier and quicker to adopt. We must attend an eight-week parenting class before we can proceed. Since the next class was in April and May, and we were planning a trip in late May, we had to wait until October to take the next available class.

December-We knew we had to have a two-day home study so we pushed to get it done while we were taking our classes, but were told that we were hurrying things too much. We spent two days

with a lady who asked many personal questions about our lives and our relationships with each other and with our children. We also, separately, had to fill out multiple-page questionnaires and write essays about why we thought we should adopt.

# 2001

January-Before our written home study report was

completed, we got a call from our adoption worker saying that we had been denied as adoptive parents. The reasons given were: "You don't know what you are getting yourselves into and Gloria has had cancer and what if it comes back."

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When we got back from Alaska we started the adoption course and learned some things, one of which was to be patient. The social workers also recommended some seminars, which we attended. After we completed all the schooling, the adoption agency conducted a home study to determine our fitness as potential parents. When it was completed they knew more about us than we did. That's probably why they turned us down. They didn't have to give a reason for not accepting us, and there is no appeal or negotiation. We did some heavy questioning however, and were told that, in their opinion, we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into. That was probably true, but it's probably true for everyone who wants to be a parent!

After spending the whole winter going to parenting school, we weren't about to give up our dream of helping some child without a fight. After several phone calls, they suddenly relented. We were legally qualified to be adoptive parents—it had only taken a year! Now we could get information on some of the available children that we thought might be happy in our family. The search began.

We made countless calls to agencies all over North America and we always got voice-mail and no response from most of the messages we left. When we did make human contact, it was only to be told that the child was already in the process of being adopted, or that they had

decided to leave them in foster care, or that they had had a behavioral relapse, etc. We were beginning to think that the system didn't really want these kids to be adopted. We had asked about children in many different states and we were looking for a harder-to-place older child, but we weren't making any progress. All this time we were getting older and the kids were getting older. It was extremely frustrating. We still felt that we were supposed to do it though, so we kept looking.

Then we found a girl in Oklahoma. We got all her information and sent her pictures of us. It appeared that it was really going to happen. Then, because of some new law, there was a problem. Since we weren't Native Americans—and she was—there would be some additional red tape. Things got bogged down waiting for the legal system and we were eventually informed that the problems weren't going to be solved in the immediate future. Since she was already 15, it wasn't going to work. After the terrible life that she already had going from foster home to foster home, I can't imagine what that must have done to that poor girl. We were devastated.

I saw a sheet on Kaylee describing her as an outdoors kid and also very smart. I called immediately. After the typical run-around we were told we were not a good match for her. In her case they said that she was "too

## optiontimelineadoptiontimelineadoptiontimelineadoptiontimelineadoptiontimelineadoptiontimeline

We called an agency that advocates for adoptive parents and were told how to appeal the decision. We called the adoption worker back and stated our intentions to appeal. Strangely, less than a week later, she called to set up an appointment with us and the lady who did the home study. They told us that they had changed their minds.

February—We received our completed home study.

April—We called about Kaylee and by June were told that she was not a good match for us.

June—We called Oklahoma to inquire about Juanita. She was a 15-year-old that sounded like a sweet child. This was really promising with the caseworker immediately setting up a visit for Juanita to come see us. Were we excited—an agency that moves!

Then we got the call telling us that, since we are white and she was part Native American, the tribe had to release her.

August—the caseworker called to say that the courts were not moving very quickly and that we should not wait for Juanita. What a revolting development.

We called North Carolina to inquire about Ashley, a cute 12 year-old. We were encouraged by what the caseworker told us and, since Gloria would be in North Carolina in September, made an appointment with the caseworker. We thought that would help her to make a decision about whether Ashley would be an appropriate match for us. When Gloria got to the meeting she was told that we were competing with 11 other families for Ashley.

September—we were rejected as parents for Ashley.

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social” for us. That was the end of that. They are trained to make those decisions, and we can’t look at it objectively anyway. We had gotten pretty discouraged when, six months later, the phone rang. The call was from Kaylee’s new social worker (what a peach she is), and she had just finished reading our home study (on Saturday no less!) She was all excited. She thought that we would be a good match for Kaylee. Things progressed very slowly from there, but at least we were making progress. We finally got to meet Kaylee, and that first meeting went great. We went to dinner and had fried oysters. I bit into an oyster with a pearl in it. She claimed it, saying that it was a good omen. Soon she was spending weekends with us, and when school ended in the spring of 2002, she came home with us for good.

Kaylee is a great kid, and we love her to pieces. She’s a joy to be around, and still has the enthusiastic fun-loving nature of a kid. I don’t know who has benefited most from this adoption. She keeps us scared to death all the time though. Sometimes, it’s by talking us into going on a rollercoaster with her and sometimes it’s a phone call saying that she’s smashed up another car. When we were fishing from a really high pier, she climbed down the face of it to rescue a fish that had fallen on a beam when I tried to release it. I don’t think she realized how dangerous that was. I could have had a heart attack!

She doesn’t accept advice or criticism without taking a little time to think it over, but that’s understandable because, for 15 years, she had to look out for herself. Teaching her to drive was a real challenge. I didn’t realize that it was possible, but apparently our big pine tree can jump sideways at least two feet! That’s the only possible explanation as to why we didn’t hit it the first time she drove my old truck. Her favorite reply during our driving sessions was “I know dad.”

I really like having her call me “Dad.” It’s been a long time since a teenager called me dad, and it’s nice. Of course I’m not always so enthused about what follows, such as, “Dad, I can’t find my mouth guard and I have to have one for soccer practice this afternoon. Can you bring it to me?” Naturally, I’m at home, thirty miles away!

I don’t have a lot of advice for anyone who is going to have a teenage daughter. If you already have a little girl, she will probably turn into a teenager even if you try to slow her down. She’s going to talk on the phone, push you into the lake, listen to weird music and keep you worried all the time. She’ll probably give you a hug once in a while, and go fishing with you, though. Both of my daughters give me hugs and go fishing with me. They’re really pretty nice to have around.

## adoption timeline adoption timeline adoption timeline adoption timeline adoption timeline

January—Gloria decided that adoptive parents were not needed as much as we thought and felt we should

2002

explore other possible mission projects. Then one Saturday, we received a call from a caseworker who said she had just read our home study and was so excited she couldn’t wait until Monday to call. She had a perfect kid for us—it was our Kaylee, whom we had inquired about the previous spring.

February—we had reservations for the month at a beach in North

Carolina and wanted to take Kaylee there for her winter vacation but a supervisor told us that we were hurrying things too much and that we had to wait until we returned home to meet her.

By the month’s end we finally meet Kaylee.

March—Kaylee came for a weekend visit and was allowed to come for each weekend until she moved in permanently the 13th of June.

August—we received a call from the caseworker in Oklahoma saying that Juanita was finally available. What a heart wrenching call! We wanted to help Juanita but having just been united with Kaylee, we would not be allowed to take her as well. Poor Juanita,

## adoption timeline adoption timeline adoption timeline adoption timeline adoption timeline



Our only regret about the adoption is that it didn't happen sooner. With schoolwork, sports, and her job, we don't get to see Kaylee as much as we would like. And now she has a boyfriend. She is on the go all the time, and next fall, she will be off to college (if her car lasts that long!).

Next summer though, Gloria, Kaylee and I are going to Alaska in our little camper—for ten weeks. We'll be a little crowded, but we're going to have a great time. Kaylee thinks she's going to catch a salmon big enough to beat Gloria's 52-pound record.

Although it may be hard to tell sometimes, teenage girls are a treasure. Our life is more hectic, challenging and fun since we got Kaylee. Of course her life has changed pretty drastically too. If you have been having some thoughts of adopting a teenage girl, but are afraid of car accidents, soccer and basketball injuries, and a house frequently overflowing with kids, you should know that your fears will probably be realized. We've had all those, but, so what? It's worth it!†

*Gary, Kaylee and Gloria Wheaton live in Otis, Maine (when they're not at soccer practice or fishing in Alaska!).*



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we often wonder if she ever got another chance to have a real family.

December—Adoption scheduled to be finalized on the 13<sup>th</sup>, but is delayed.

**2003**

**February 8, 2003—adoption is finalized.**

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*(Help! continued)*

The best advice I can give to a parent of a teenage (or soon to be) teen girl is this: be prepared for anything, and ALWAYS think before reacting. Why do I say that?

Some of my earliest memories of my daughter's initiation into "teendom" involve my coming home to find either my wife or my daughter - or both - somewhere between tears and shouting. I often felt that upon my arrival home, I should go through some type of "Mr. Rogers" transformation. But instead of trading a sport coat for a zip-up sweater and a pair of wingtips for Keds, I needed a black-and-white-striped shirt and a whistle! Forgive some *slight* exaggeration, but ages thirteen and fourteen would have taxed the negotiating abilities of Henry Kissinger, Jimmy Carter and Colin Powell combined. Disagreements were primarily about clothes, make-up, chores, friends, homework, lack of respect, lack of privacy, breathing, etc. How did we weather those tumultuous times?

## ***Our survival kit included three basic values no teenager's parent should be without:***



### ***1. Involvement in church is a non-negotiable.***

My wife and I tried to reinforce early and often that church was as much a part of our lives as eating supper. A relationship with Jesus was something we all needed to work on... even Daddy the preacher. We wanted our kids to realize that our high expectations were not because of our position in the church, but simply because Jesus was the head of our house. Whether preacher, businessman, or circus clown, their dad's vocation did not dictate where we spent our Sundays; our commitment to Christ determined our involvement in the church.

Additionally, I have been extremely careful about placing any pressure on my kids to do anything because I was a pastor. I tried to be clear that the decisions made for our family would have been the same, whatever my vocation. Similarly, I have done all I could to protect them from other people's expectations. Since both of our children made early commitments to Christ, we have tried lovingly to guide them in making God-honoring decisions for themselves.

### ***2. Respect for parents and other adults should be demanded.***

One of the greatest gifts a husband can give his wife is to make absolutely certain that his children always treat their mother with respect and speak to her courteously. I cringe every time I hear children call their mother a disrespectful name and the father just laughs. If it's funny for a four-year-old to call their





mom a “poo-poo head,” why isn’t it funny when a 16-year-old calls their mother a witch, a moron or worse?

For teens to respect their parents and other adults, it’s necessary that they see that behavior modeled by mom and dad. We have had our share of disagreements, even fairly vocal ones, but my wife and I try never to call one another a negative name. One man I know often refers to his wife as an idiot. Would you care to guess the favorite name used by the children for this mother? I have made it clear to our children that they are to respect and obey their mother or certain consequences will follow. The same is true in regard to treating other adults respectfully. Forgive the loose paraphrase of scripture, but if children cannot respect their parents and other adults they have seen, then how can they respect their Father in heaven that they have not seen?

Also, any disagreements with church leaders were not aired at home. How could I expect my children to have love and respect for the people of the church if they heard me disparaging them daily?

### ***3. Tell your children every day that you love them.***

I hug and kiss my teenage children every day and tell them I love them at least once. Do they think it is strange? No, because I have done it every day of their lives unless separated by distance. Their mother has done this as well. Have they ever been embarrassed by it? Maybe. . . But I have tried not to do anything so mortifying as to drop my 14-year-old son off at school and just as he gets close to his group of friends yell out, “I love you, (insert cute family nickname here).” However, before he leaves the vehicle, his dad makes sure to tell him he loves him, and prays with him. Do other kids ridicule them because of this? To the contrary, most of my daughter’s friends refer to my wife and I as “mom and dad P” and tell us they love us!

There is no substitute for a genuinely loving home. How delightful to have children that consider the needs of those around them and who do the little considerate things. What would make them likely to offer to get a soda for each other or take the other one’s turn at the dishes? Simply, we have tried to demonstrate this as a family and show real appreciation to each other. Sure they get on each other’s nerves on occasion, but belittling or cutting remarks are not tolerated.

Of course the toughest parts of having a teenager, particularly a teenage daughter, happen outside the home. Any parent can take steps to control the home environment. It is preparing them for interaction “out there” that can send a cold chill down your spine.

Thank God for Driver’s Ed. That one class may have single-handedly saved my daughter’s relationship with her parents. Having a school faculty member responsible for teaching your child to drive is immensely preferable to struggling through it yourself. It saves some tears and frayed nerves. Besides, why not let a trained professional deal with questions like, “Why should I have to parallel park if I’m only going to park in places where I can pull in?”

A dating daughter, as a whole, has to be the single most anxiety-filled proposition for any father to negotiate. Like most dads, I made sure my daughter heard from an early age how hard I was going to be on any prospective



suitors. Outrageous claims like “not until your 30,” and “only if I go with you,” abounded. My wife tried to calm me by telling me “My dad trusted you.” My response was immediately to ingest a handful of Roloids - extra strength. “That’s what worries me,” I said unintelligibly, knowing she could not possibly understand me with all of the tablets in my mouth. Then my wife throws out the “Nobody is good enough for your baby” line. “At last you understand,” I said triumphantly! Fortunately, we had some realistic guidelines to fall back on.

As parents, we talked and prayed about essentials like: when she could date; what the date could and could not involve; meeting the parents of whom she would be dating; and scare tactics I would use on any prospective boyfriends (My wife vetoed the last one.). Along the way we have had to truthfully, biblically and painfully deal with the challenges of dating such as breakups, broken guidelines, earning of trust and scores of others. By making our expectations clear to our daughter and her young man, we have weathered the storms largely unscathed. Our daughter knew from the beginning that our guidelines were designed to help her stay firm in her commitment to remain a pure and godly woman. She may not have always agreed with us, but she respected our decisions. That did not happen by accident. Only with the life-long groundwork of respect and love we had already established could this kind of respectful obedience exist. It is not, however, always easy. Our relationship with our daughter withstands the strain because it is surrounded and reinforced with those unbreakable cords of love.

Ultimately, it comes down to trust and preparation. Those basic patterns of Christian commitment, self-respect and discipline make fathering a teen more fun than disastrous.

Whether it is a question of whom and how she dates, where she spends her free time or what her life-plan may be, a foundation of faith, respect and love built consistently from infancy is the best insurance policy. Firm but gentle guidance along the way makes the decisions of today much easier. To quote Alexander Pope, “just as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined.”

As we now face college and the likelihood of a wedding someday, it is clear to me that my job as a father (and human ATM machine) is not over—it never will be. But as my responsibilities change and grow, I am thankful to God for his grace that covers a multitude of my mistakes. Prayer has been essential in finding God’s leading and strength in the most difficult moments. God has always been the help we needed for the impossible task of raising our teenage daughter. †

*Rev. Joe Pritchett is pastor of Garner Advent Christian Church, Garner, N.C. His daughter Rebecca is a senior at Broughton High School in Raleigh, N.C., where she is an honor student and the concert master of the orchestra. Rebecca (pictured on the right) also plays first violin in the respected Triangle Youth Philharmonic.*





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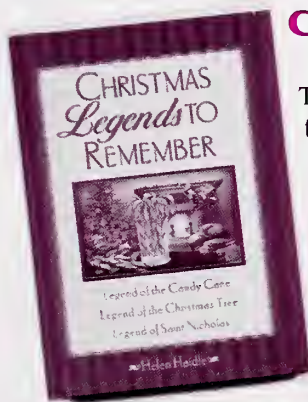
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**Heather Payne**

*Few of today's celebrities  
model." "Look at the  
demand. With 24-hour  
Point of Grace could  
(After all, not even  
number ones hits!)  
embrace the responsibility  
an invaluable opportunity*

*Point  
Gurl  
Gram*

Point Of Grace has been called  
Christian music" (New York  
Breen, Denise Jones  
began singing together in 19  
campus. Now they are Gram



celebrities willingly don the mantle of "role  
 at art, but not my life" is the typical  
 24 consecutive number one singles, members of  
 easily rest on the merits of their art.  
 Elvis or the Beatles had 24 consecutive  
 Instead, the women of Point of Grace  
 sponsibilities of being role models, and see it as  
 opportunity to serve the Lord.



Photo courtesy of Warner Brothers

...nting  
 ...to  
 ...ace



POINT OF GRACE JACI VELASQUEZ JILL PHILLIPS OUT OF EGGEN JOY WILLIAMS  
 RACHAEL LAMPA JENNIFER DEIBLER OF FFR CHRISTY HOCKELS OF WATERMARK

Edited by Rev. Tom Warner

...n called "the hottest group in  
 (The New York Times Magazine). Shelley  
 ...erry Jones, and Heather Payne  
 ...in 1991 on an Arkansas college  
 ...Grammy-nominated singers with

(Continued next page)







*Heather Payne speaks to the capacity crowd during a concert in Charlotte, N.C.*

sell-out concerts and best-selling albums. But they're interested in more than fame and success. They've started "Girls of Grace," a ministry that provides invaluable guidance and spiritual encouragement for teenage girls.

Our editor, Keith Wheaton, interviewed Point of Grace's Heather Payne in September. Heather was born in Abilene, Texas in 1970. She married her husband Brian in 1999 and they reside in Louisville, Kentucky, where he pastors a church and attends seminary. They have a one-year-old daughter, named Ella, and a Shih-Tzu dog, named Darla.

**Keith:** When you were a teenager, what do you think that your parents did right in raising you?

**Heather:** I was very blessed to have wonderful parents who taught me the importance of a daily time with the Lord, and how to have an intimate relationship with him, to strive to be like Christ, and to know him more. And they took us to church. I think the best thing that parents can do for their kids is to show them, by example, the way that they should live.

**Keith:** Can you tell us how you came to Christ?

**Heather:** I was raised in a Christian home. I always knew about Jesus, but when I was nine years old I started asking questions about having a personal relationship with him. My parents explained to me about my sin, and that Jesus died on the cross and took my sin upon himself. I realized that Jesus was the way, the truth, and the life, and that I couldn't be joined to the Father for eternity except through his death on the cross. So, I believed, turned from my sin, and received his gift of eternal life.



**Keith:** Did you ever resent being “forced” to go to church?

**Heather:** There’s a balance, you know. You can make kids go to church so much that they hate it. There were times when my sister and I didn’t want to go but we still went because we were under the rule of our parents. We still love going to church today.

**Keith:** As a teenager, did you ever feel like your parents were unfair or unreasonable in their demands, compared to your friends’ parents?

**Heather:** My friends’ parents sometimes allowed them to do a little more than I could do. My parents wanted to know who I was with, and where I was going; and I wanted them to be more lenient. But now I look back and am thankful because their wisdom saved me from some heartbreaking experiences.

**Keith:** What kind of rules did your mom and dad have for you as you were growing up? Did you date?

**Heather:** I didn’t date a lot. I just hung out with a bunch of guys and girls, and most of my friends at school were from church. My parents didn’t have to say, “You can’t be with this or that person.” But I also had friends who were not from our church, and wanted to invite them to church. So, church was really a big part of my life.

**Keith:** What kind of music did you listen to during your teen years?

**Heather:** I loved Sandi Patti and Amy Grant. I also listened to a lot of pop music. I liked Kenny Rogers. And, on the weird side of pop, I liked Blondie. But I also listened to a lot of Christian music.

**Keith:** Did you ever fight with your parents over music?

**Heather:** We did have a little bit of a music battle. For my birthday one year, some friends got me a record by Sting, or the Police. Mom listened to it and said, “Um, um, you can’t have that.” Since it was a birthday gift, I was like “What?!” We had a few words over it but then, of course, in the end she won out! [Laughter.] And because I saw consistency in my parents, I respected them when they said I couldn’t do some things. They didn’t do those things either.

**Keith:** What do you think are some mistakes today’s Christian parents are making raising their teenage daughters?

**Heather:** Well, I can’t speak from experience because I’m the parent of a one-year old. But we can begin at a young age making sure that our children know that the world doesn’t revolve around them, and that they’re not going to get everything handed to them. Sometimes parents make their kids their whole world and the kids grow up thinking

they rule their parents instead of their parents having authority.

I remember friends that pretty much had the rule of the roost and could do whatever they wanted to. I’d think, “That’s not like it is at my house. In my family, my parents are in authority.” And I’m so thankful that they led by example and didn’t say, “Do as I *say*, not as I *do*.” That causes a lack of respect.

Parents also have a huge responsibility to know what the Bible says. Then, when our kids ask us questions, we’ll have God’s answers for them.

**Keith:** Tell me about someone other than your parents who touched your life during your formative years, someone who really made a difference for you.

**Heather:** My Sunday School teachers had a huge impact. One really precious teacher, Cookie Flora, and her husband had a big influence on where I went to college, and where Terry and Denise went to college. The Floras knew it was a big music school. Also, Denise, Terry, and I had the same youth minister: Steve Bushey. When we see him today at a concert the three of us always cry because he and his wife had such a great influence on us.

**Keith:** Somewhere I read a statement of yours about the importance of mentors or accountability partners.

**Heather:** Yes, we’ve each had special people speak into our lives. Beth Moore is a wonderful, godly woman who writes Bible studies. She’s spoken to us about the importance of keeping the right perspective. When we’ve felt tired and spent, she’s been a voice of encouragement to remind us what we want people to say in the end when this is all over.



*After each concert the ladies meet and sign autographs for hundreds of waiting fans.*

We hope they'll say that we were faithful to the call of God on our lives. To remain faithful, we have to make sure that we put the right things first.

And, now that we're all married, we want to be accountable to our husbands. My husband is in seminary and he helps me keep things theologically correct, you know, and reminds me to get plenty of prayer coverage. Our parents are wonderful accountability partners for us, too. Sometimes my mom will just ask if I'm okay, because she senses something. And there are some friends in our lives who can ask us the hard questions.

**Keith:** In Brio magazine, in 1999, you were quoted as saying, "We all made a commitment when we were younger to remain sexually pure until we were married. God has been faithful in helping us with that, and he is the one who has allowed us the strength to be able to wait." Could you describe what brought about that commitment?

**Heather:** When I was in the eighth or ninth grade our youth group went to a Love Life seminar and they talked about that. It made a huge impact on me. Then, when I was just beginning high school, my parents told my sister and me that if we remained pure sexually and stayed away from alcohol and drugs and all that stuff, then when we graduated they would send us on a trip anywhere we wanted to go. [Laughter.] So when I graduated I got to go to Europe! That was a wonderful treat for me.

It's so wonderful to have the True Love Waits program these days. Sexual pressure is something that girls struggle with and we talk to them about those specific issues in the Girls of Grace Conferences. We are still young enough that they listen to what we say, but we're just old enough that their parents trust us. We feel it's a very important time for us to use the platform we have.

**Keith:** Do you think it's tougher to be a teenager today than it was twenty years ago?

**Heather:** Absolutely. Pop culture is filled with so much unhealthy stuff. I don't necessarily watch the Emmys or the Oscars, but I like to watch the stars walk down the red carpet on TV, to see what people are wearing. So I was watching some of that stuff the other night and I had to turn it off because it was so laced with talk about homosexuality and things that just crossed the line. You know, the lines have been crossed so much, and this is what teenagers are dealing with today. This whole redefinition of "tolerance" is devastating. Teenagers need a firm foundation of Christian beliefs so they can make right decisions. I look at the temptations and the things that are pulling teenagers left and right, and I think it is definitely harder today.

**Keith:** I am really impressed with your Girls of Grace Conferences. I'm hoping to get my daughter to one of them

in 2004. You've got a conference in Los Angeles in two days. How do you prepare yourself for an event like that?

**Heather:** With a lot of prayer. A lot of prayer. We've each written our own little thing that we talk about, but having to speak takes us out of our comfort zone. My husband and I talk a lot about it and he's helped me. But all of us really have to depend on the Lord to fill us with the Spirit and work in us, so it won't be just us doing it. We know we have a platform that won't last forever. And God has been faithful to deliver us from our fears.

**Keith:** Of all the lives that you've touched through the Girls of Grace program, whose story sticks in your mind?

**Heather:** The encouragement that we've gotten from the moms and girls that write in after the conferences has been incredible. There are a lot of stories from girls whose lives have changed for the better. Many of them leave encouraged that they can live a godly life in this age that we live in.

After the Little Rock Girls of Grace Conference, Shelley talked to a man whose daughter went to the conference. He asked, "What did you teach my daughter?" He could see a difference in her. He wondered if we said something about being nice to parents and siblings. [Laughter.] When the daughter came home she was different toward her parents and her siblings and she was talking about the Lord and was reading her Bible. I love to hear stuff like that.

**Keith:** You've said that your conferences are an alternative to the negative influences and negative role models the media often provides. How do you respond to some secular celebrities who say that people shouldn't think of them as role models?

**Heather:** **Well, I disagree. Celebrities, who are out there in front of everybody, are role models. They're setting trends in how people dress and speak. A lot of what young people do is molded by what's going on in pop culture. Whether they like it or not, celebrities make a difference, for good or bad, in the lives of teenagers,** and it scares me to death when I look out and see what's going on.



We realize that becoming well known is something the Lord gave us. It's not something that we earned, it was a grace gift, and we recognize that and see it as a huge responsibility; and, instead of turning away from it, we want to embrace it.

**Keith:** You're recognized by people wherever you go. Thousands of young girls look up to you. How does being a role model impact your life?

**Heather:** Teenagers often put somebody on a pedestal as if they're perfect. **We need to let them**

**know that we're not perfect. We're going to make mistakes, and sometimes we can say, "Here are some mistakes we've made; let us teach you about those so that you can learn from them."** But

if we're talking the talk, we also have to walk the walk. We want to honor God by what we say and we want to live those things. Christians need to really be what we say we are.

**Keith:** That makes me wonder how you feel about what happened to two of your own role models. Amy Grant and Sandy Patti were both ostracized from the Christian community in some ways for things they've done. How do you deal with the fact that you could be publicly "crucified" for your mistakes?

**Heather:** That's always in the forefront of my mind. In our concerts and conferences we really try to be as vulnerable as we possibly can be about our mistakes and about what's going on in our lives. We talk about times when we've struggled with fears and doubts and questions about why the Lord allowed this and didn't allow that. We have struggles just like everybody else.

Through our newsletter we tell about some of our triumphs and failures. It's important to have that grassroots connection with our audience so we can let them know that we aren't perfect.



When I was a teenager, I never dreamed that things would happen to Sandy Patti or Amy Grant like they did. I eventually realized that I'd put them on a pedestal.

**Keith:** You once made the comment that "Christian music is not just entertainment, but a real ministry." How do you balance the entertainment and ministry aspects?

**Heather:** Years ago we had no idea that we were in ministry until somebody called what we did "a ministry," and it completely changed our perspective. Entertainment is a part of it. We sing and do funny things in our concerts, and have fun with the audience. But, the older we get, the more we realize that God has given us a platform to use for more than just entertainment. As we grow in the Lord we have more to say to people. **Ten years ago we were just**

**single girls who hadn't experienced much in life and we couldn't say a lot. Now we're married, we have kids, and we've struggled and lost people we loved. We have more to say because we've experienced more from the Lord, and have a deeper walk with him.**

**Keith:** Where's the line between the business and ministry? Your group has a contract with Warner Brothers, a secular organization. You have to talk with local radio stations, do merchandising, and make recordings that will sell. But a lot of people who go to your concerts go to worship. How you walk that line?

**Heather:** When we first started, we were in a van traveling down the road—the four of us and sometimes a sound person—with our equipment in a trailer behind us. We went from church to church, from state to state, and we did everything. We booked ourselves, managed ourselves, did all the finances, and did all our music. Now we're very grateful to have a record company, a manager, a booking agent, and people who are working on our behalf, so we can focus on the important part, the ministry.

It is a business and in order for us to continue on, we have to make some money to be able to live, you know. But we've been in this industry for thirteen years, and more than ten years with the record company, and we've sold a lot of records for our company; so, we have a little bit of leverage. We're not *owned* by Warner Brothers. They put our albums out and they market

and distribute them, but we have everything to say about everything, as far as our business and our ministry are concerned.

**Keith:** Can you name a biblical character that's been an inspiration for you?

**Heather:** The Apostle Paul, when I think of who he was in the beginning, and then what he became after his conversion – such a godly man and so in love with the people that he led to the Lord and the churches he ministered to. It was not about him; it was all about sharing the gospel and teaching and making disciples. He said, "I am the chief of sinners...the least of all the saints." He recognized where God found him and but for the grace of God, he'd still be there. That inspires me to want to love God's people and disciple them and share his Word and share the gospel like Paul did.

**Keith:** I think you're succeeding.

**Heather:** Well, I pray so. You know the Bible talks about Paul planting a seed, Apollos watering, and God bringing the increase; and that's what we feel like we're doing. We're planting seeds and watering, and hopefully God will bring the increase. ☩

*For more information on Point of Grace, their Girls of Grace conferences, or to receive their newsletter, logon to [www.pointofgrace.net](http://www.pointofgrace.net).*



*Heather Payne*

*Terry Jones*

*Denise Jones*

*Shelley Breen*





(editorial continued)

One day I arrived in biology class and found Paula missing. “Where’s Paula?” I asked, trying not to sound too crushed by her absence (no one else knew how I adored her). “Hadn’t you heard?” was the response. “She’s at the courthouse getting married. Her 20-year-old boyfriend got her pregnant!” I nearly vomited all over my fetal pig. I guess I knew she had an older boyfriend but, in my love-deluded mind, I hoped it would only be a matter of time before she recognized how superficial a car, a job and razor stubble are when compared to real love. Never in my world could I imagine a Paula who was willing to trade her virtue for such things.

Then there was Olivia Newton-John, the foreign beauty whose TV image gazed into my eyes and innocently sang “I love you, I honestly love you.” Sure, I was just one of millions of devoted fans, but she still stood on my pedestal. That is, until she decided that she was “totally hot.” By the time I graduated from high school her innocent words of our unending love were replaced with the vulgar demand, “Let’s get physical, physical, let me hear your body talk...”

During the next twenty years my face continued to bleed from the kicks of a parade of pedestal patrons. Some were personal friends and some were celebrities. All the while, the pedestal seemed to be shrinking. Feminism or modernism continued to chop away at any notion that men should honor women. More recently, I’ve seen network newscasts feature heart-wrenching scenes of mothers in combat fatigues, leaving their crying babies as they are sent overseas. Yet, I’ve never heard Dan Rather or Peter Jennings ask the obvious question: “What kind of people send women—even mothers—into combat?” Am I the only one left who thinks women—especially mothers—deserve a little deference?

I know many people think pedestals are a form of oppression. To them, I’m some kind of nut-case. But I’m not alone. Consider the professionally engineered pedestal recently vacated by Britney Spears. Her very public claims of virginity a few years ago were no accident. Her virtue had commercial appeal, by which both parents and youth were captivated. No matter that her writhing, barely-clad body revealed no sign of modesty or innocence. No matter that she and her boyfriend were shacking up in some foreign hotel for long weekends. She remained adamant about her chaste lifestyle. Only after years of the charade did Britney finally tire and admit to fornication. Rejecting comments made earlier in her career, she stated emphatically, “I am not a role model!” leaping from a pedestal carefully erected to maximize profits. Yet, the fact remains: there was a pedestal.

I’m afraid there’s a shortage of pedestals today. Thanks to Britney Spears, Internet porn, and all the pregnant sailors in the modern Navy, I suspect many 15-year-old boys think of girls simply as boys with different plumbing. For those of us with daughters, the implications are frightening. I want men who will respect and protect my girls; even love them with a passion that transcends hormones. But where are today’s boys learning these values? Furthermore, where are today’s girls learning the values of virtue?

The popularity of Britney Spears is proof that people value virtue—even if it’s artificial. This issue of the *Advent Christian Witness* focuses on efforts to produce real virtue in the lives of young women. And, it highlights the fact that there are women who deserve to remain on pedestals of honor. Of course, I already knew that—I married one! †



# A word from our president

## BE CAREFUL!

Upon asking your children, you might be surprised to discover that they have actually remembered some of the things you tried to teach them. Recently, I asked our two adult daughters what were some of our instructions they had applied in their lives. Expecting that there would be this long list of wise proverbial teachings, they came up with a couple of simple but practical lessons like, “Be careful and look both ways before you cross the street,” and “Be careful in choosing your friends.” Brief disappointment was displaced with the satisfaction of recognizing their understanding and practice of exercising care in making everyday, routine choices.

Perhaps this is one of the important lessons we can teach our children: “Be careful.” As the Lord spoke to the people of Israel through Moses and the Prophets, the caution to “be careful” was a familiar one. In Deuteronomy, there are several references to God’s commands as instruction that would benefit the people if they were careful to obey them.

**“Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God” (Deut. 12:28).**

**“But watch out! Be very careful never to forget what you have seen the LORD do for you. Do not let these things escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren” (Deut. 4:9 NLT).**

If we are concerned about the life’s lessons we want our children to remember then we, with care, must:

- **Be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded... (Deut. 5:32).**
- **Pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away (Hebrews 2:1).**

And our teaching must be ongoing and repetitious. The very lessons we wish to instill in the lives of our children must be lived out daily before them.

**Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors (Deut. 11:19-21 NLT).**†



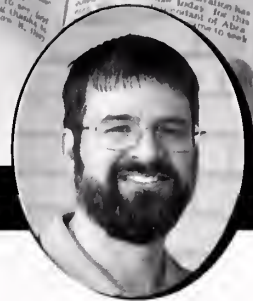
Advent Christian  
General Conference President  
Rev. Ron Thomas, Jr.

**Now this is  
what the LORD  
Almighty says:  
“Give careful  
thought to your  
ways.”  
Haggai 1:5**



# Twisted Scriptures

Rev. Bruce Jones



## “Judge not, that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1 ESV).

I was unhappy that my daughter was hanging around at some parties at college where there was drinking. She put her hands on her hips and angrily said, “‘Judge not lest ye be judged.’ You are judging my friends!”

Just last month I was going through the jury selection process. The prosecutor asked “Do any of you have any religious reason that prevents you from sitting in judgment on another person?” A woman stood up quickly and said “The Bible commands us ‘Judge not lest ye be judged.’ She was excused.

In the original languages the word “judge” in John 7:1 has many flavors of meaning, just as it does in the two examples above in English. Which of these flavors did Jesus intend? The example Jesus gives in the subsequent verses of the chapter makes it clear what he means, especially verse 5.

“You hypocrite” – Don’t be two faced

“First take the log” – Judge yourself first, and see that your own sin is bigger than your brother’s

“Out of your own eye” – find forgiveness and get rid of your own sin

“Then you will see clearly” – only then are you humble enough to correctly judge

“To take the speck out of your brother’s eye” – to speak to your brother so that they can be free of their sin.

Don’t speak out about or judge someone else’s behavior (see it, evaluate it as wrong, and say so) if you can’t do it realizing your own sin is worse (the log in your own eye), and if you can’t do it with their benefit in mind (remove the speck).

Jesus expects us to be able to see the speck. He expects us to judge (decide if someone’s behavior is right or wrong). He is commanding us to keep our mouths shut if we cannot approach the person with the speck humbly and without a “holier than thou” attitude. †

...things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16 NKJV).

# BR3AK TH3 COD3

Each number stands for one letter. Not all letters will be used. Two have been done for you.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	10													19											

20 1 20 5 7 O 9 20 16 18 O 18 3 11 16 8 2 2 B 10 20  
 12 8 1 20 9 13 14 5 20 3 9 15 18 20 16 8 2 2 18 3 1 20  
 3 9 3 B 10 14 9 15 3 9 17 20 16 18 O 19 20 1 20 5 15 O 19 20 11 9 O 19 4  
 18 3 1 20 20 1 20 9 16 18 3 4 18 20 18 3 11 16 8 2 2 B 10 20  
 4 3 21 20 9 6 5 O 19 13 18 8 13

Matthew 25:29

# ONE STEP AHEAD

Change each letter to the letter that comes after it to read the Bible verse

Cn mns rsnqd to enq xntqrdkudr sqdzrtqdr nm dzqsg vgdqd lnsg zmc qtrs  
 cdrsqnx, zmc vgdqd sghdudr aqdzj hm zmc rsdzk. Ats rsnqd to eng  
 xntqrdkudr sqdzrtqdr hm gdzudm, vgdqd lnsg zmc qtrs cn mns cdrsqnx,  
 zmc vgdqd sghdudr cn mns aqdzj hm zmc rsdzk.

Matthew 6:19

# FILL IN THE BLANK

Fill in the blanks with the words at the bottom.

For \_\_\_\_\_ is, \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_  
 will be \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 12:34

treasure / also / heart / where / there / your





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by Dawn Russell

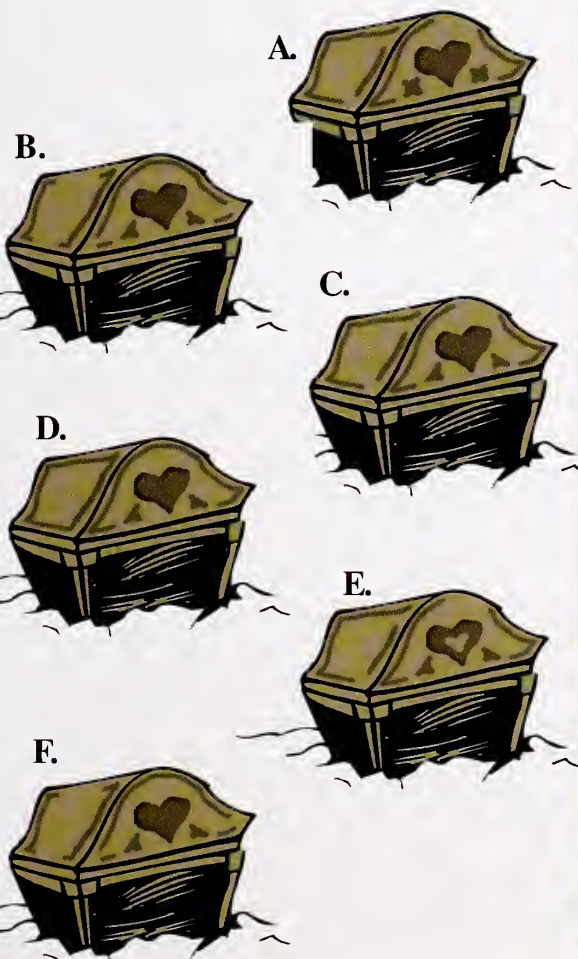
## VOWEL MIX-UP

Replace the vowels according to the code:  
a = o, e = i, i = a, o = u, u = e

Far wu braoght natheng enta thu warld, ind wu cin tiku natheng aot af et. Bot ef wu hivu faad ind clatheng, wu well bu cantunt weth thit.

*1 Timothy 6: 7-8*

Find the two objects that are exactly the same.



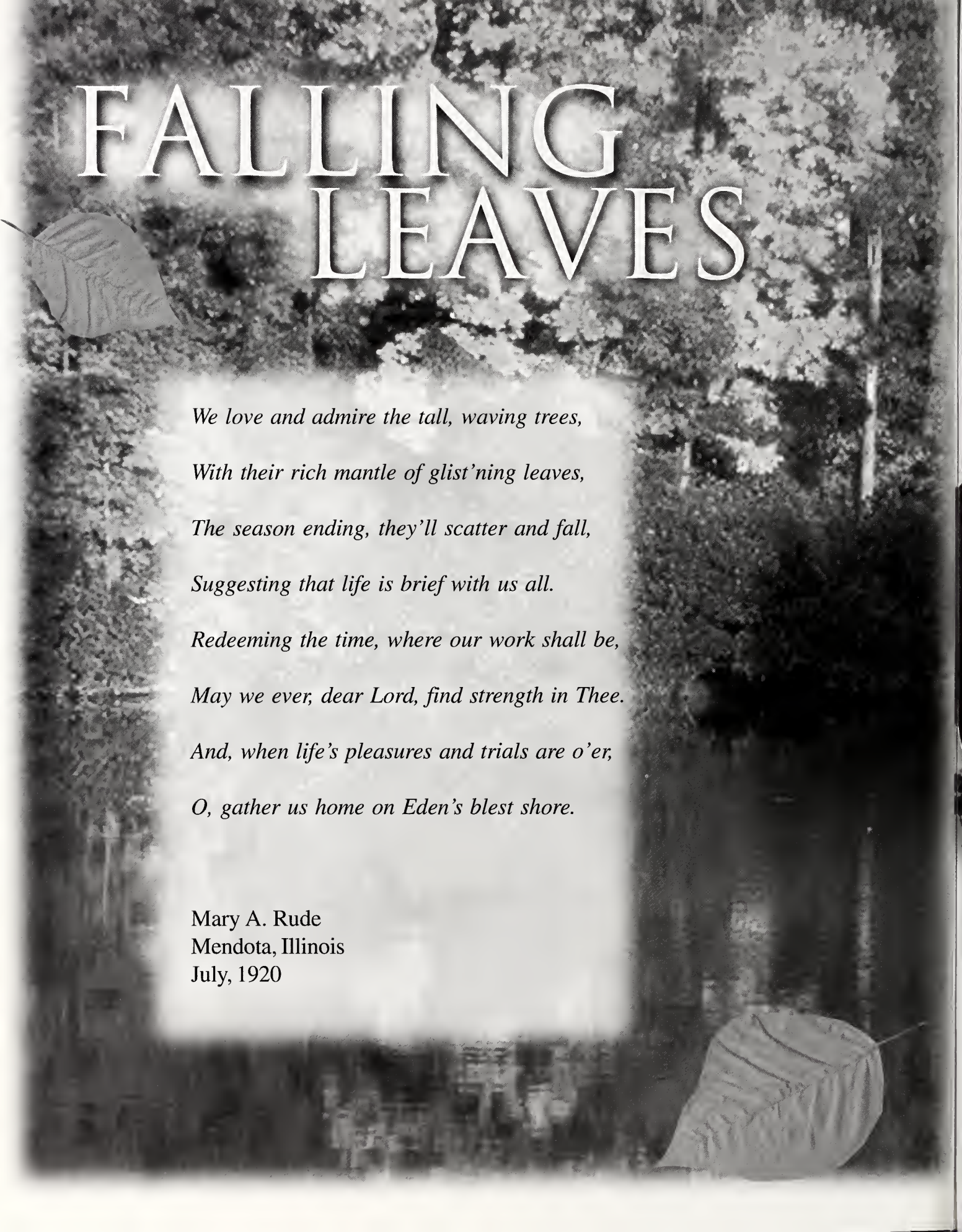
## LAUGHING FLOCK



Finding his treasure map, the Tin Man finally remembered where he could find his heart!

Matthew 6:21





# FALLING LEAVES

*We love and admire the tall, waving trees,  
With their rich mantle of glist'ning leaves,  
The season ending, they'll scatter and fall,  
Suggesting that life is brief with us all.*

*Redeeming the time, where our work shall be,  
May we ever, dear Lord, find strength in Thee.  
And, when life's pleasures and trials are o'er,  
O, gather us home on Eden's blest shore.*

Mary A. Rude  
Mendota, Illinois  
July, 1920



# Stewardship- A Call to Faithfulness

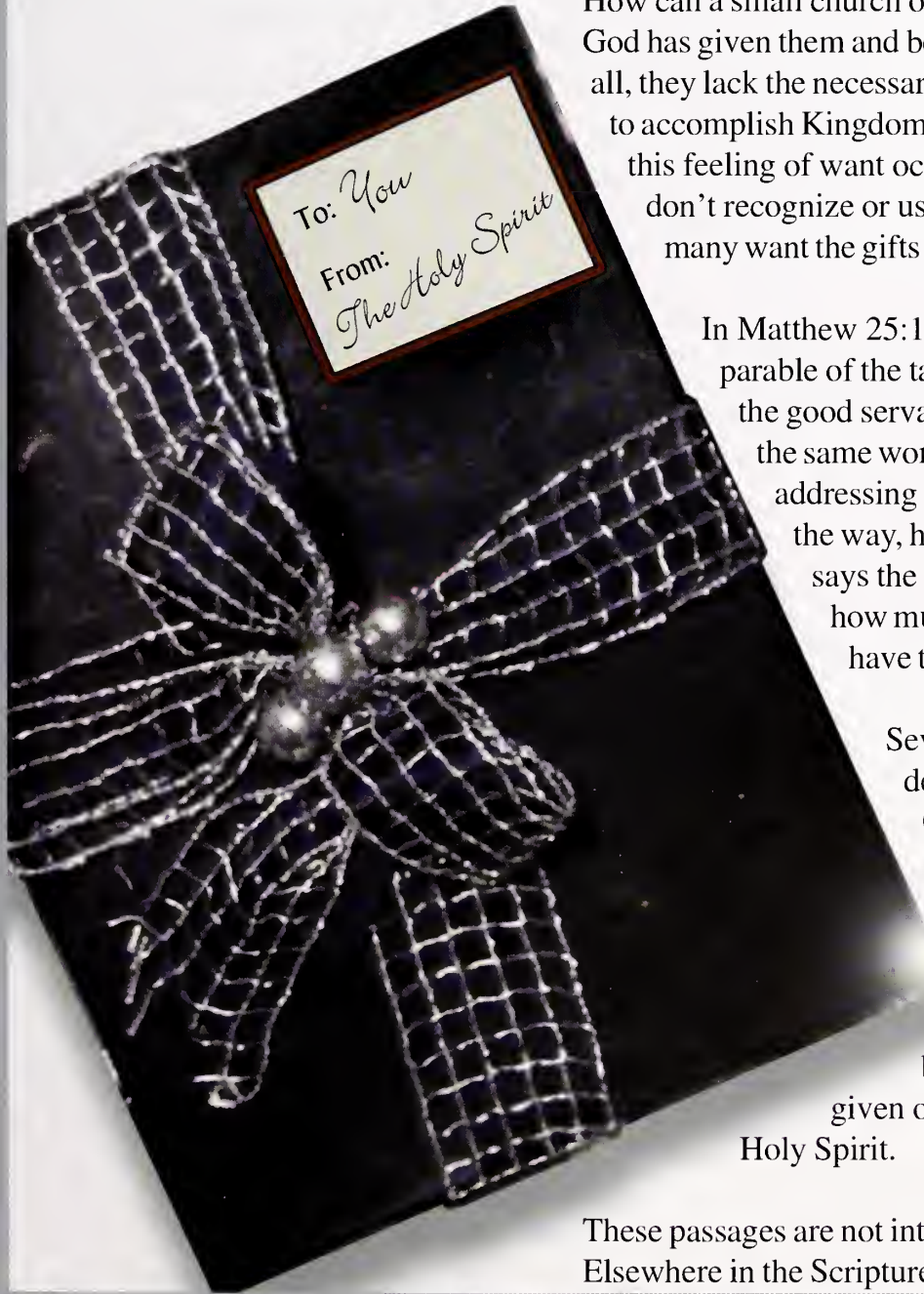
by Noelle Carle

How can a small church of believers take what little God has given them and be faithful stewards? After all, they lack the necessary manpower and giftedness to accomplish Kingdom-great things. In many cases this feeling of want occurs because, (1) many don't recognize or use the gifts they have, or, (2) many want the gifts they don't have.

In Matthew 25:14-23, Jesus relates the parable of the talents. In describing both the good servant and his actions, he uses the same word—faithful. Then, addressing the second servant who, by the way, had less to work with, Jesus says the same thing. It's not what or how much, but how we use what we have that matters.

Several Scriptural passages describe spiritual gifts. (See I Corinthians 12:7-11, 28; Romans 12:6-8; and Ephesians 4:11-13) It's clear from reading I Corinthians 12 that each member of the body of Christ has been given one or more gifts from the Holy Spirit.

These passages are not intended as exhaustive lists. Elsewhere in the Scriptures and through our



experience, we become aware of others. I have talked with people who have been Christians for years, yet are unsure of their gifts. Several good tools for discovering spiritual gifts are available, but you may also ask yourself a few simple questions:

- Do I have a knack for doing certain things?
- Have others pointed out my abilities, affirming and encouraging them in me?
- Are there things I enjoy doing, as part of the church, more than others?
- Don't be afraid to explore and try different things. It took me a few years to figure out that while God has given me

full-time adding significant pressures on families, this church's mission society found themselves floundering. Over the years, attendance had dwindled to five or six women. It seemed to them that no one in the church cared about missions, at home or abroad. So in a radical move, they decided to change the way the church looked at missions. They reactivated the missions committee, tapping into a previously unused resource in the church—its men. Heading this committee, a man gifted with faith and a burden for the lost.

They began slowly with a food cupboard and a small supply of clothing for the needy in



a gift of teaching, I'm not cut out for teaching children. Several migraines and years went by before I found my niche teaching adults. I feel comfortable, enthusiastic and contented using this gift to help the body of Christ.

- If we are willing to use our gifts, I believe the Holy Spirit will confirm our giftedness and show us ways to best use what he's given us.

One small church decided to corporately start using its gifts. They found that when faithful in a few things, God put them in charge of a lot more. In the face of societal changes, with more young women working

the area. The church responded generously, giving their resources and their time. When the floods in the Midwest were wreaking havoc, this committee sensed God's leading to send out supplies from their church. After the news of their plans spread throughout the community, a truck driver stepped forward who was willing to make the trip with his tractor-trailer. The church was then faced with the mammoth task of filling the truck. Their small store of supplies took up a meager ten percent of the space. But trusting God and leaping out on faith, they said, "Give us a week, we'll fill it." After advertising locally, they were inundated. Hours and hours of work followed with



everyone from elderly ladies to young children lending a willing hand, sorting and packing clothing and food. In one week, that truck was on its way, packed to the gills.

Later that summer, two more loads followed the first. After the earthquake in California, a truckload of supplies was delivered there. And they've sent clothing, medical supplies and household items to Romania and Mexico.

Today this small congregation has acquired a warehouse and is looking at the possibility of disbursing weekly truckloads of food not only to those in the surrounding community, but to the far reaches of the world with the aid of Samaritan's Purse, headed by Franklin Graham. Everyone is involved and excited about missions. Why? Because they targeted their gifts, then were faithful in using them.

You may feel that your gift is insignificant compared to others. Don't believe it! Some biblical characters felt that they had little to offer, but were used mightily of God.

At a critical time in Jewish history the farmer Shamgar was probably out plowing in his fields, prodding his oxen along, when over the brow of a hill came howling hordes of

Philistines on a rampage! What could he do? Run for home? Hide under an ox? Shamgar used what he had, an ox goad. With it he killed six hundred Philistines

*You may feel that your gift is insignificant compared to others. Don't believe it!*

and saved Israel. (See Judges 3:31) When God is leading in the use of your gifts, no matter what they are, you will be used mightily.

Later, God used Gideon, who felt he was weak and abandoned by the Lord. But he was given wise counsel. "Go in the strength you have." (See Judges 7:11-14) Don't look at the gifts others have. Don't envy those who seem to have more prominent gifts or are in the spotlight of the Christian arena. Don't try to do something for which you have neither the gifts, nor the strength. But if the Lord is sending or leading you to use your gifts, do it.

Our gifts are for the good of the body, and our stewardship of these gifts must reflect Christ, who is himself "faithful in all he does" (Psalm 33:4).

*While this was written several years ago as a program for the WHFMS program packet, the issues and challenges of identifying, understanding and using your gifts remain ongoing. The church mentioned in the illustration no longer maintains a warehouse, but is reaching out in its community in a variety of ways, faithfully using the gifts God provides them.*

*Noelle Carle lives in Portsmouth, N.H., with her husband, Russell, who pastors the Portsmouth Advent Christian Church.✝*







# WITNESS

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Wise men  
Still  
Seek Him

# WITNESS

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# From the Editor



Cancer is almost an epidemic in my family. So far it has afflicted both of my parents, their parents and siblings and one of my brothers. A few years ago my father, my uncle and their father all had the same form of cancer at the same time. According to the statistics, that virtually assures me at least one dose of cancer in my lifetime—that is, if I don't get hit by a bus first.

Not wanting to delay my misery, Kathy has taken it upon herself to prescribe a diet that is supposed to ward off cancer. Every morning I wake up to a tall glass filled with soy protein. It's not as bad as it sounds, but it's still not a Belgian waffle.

Knowing your family has a history of cancer can play tricks on your mind. Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night with a feeling of discomfort—maybe a backache or an upset stomach—and I start to think, "It's cancer. I've got a tumor slowly wrapping itself around my spine and, before anyone can diagnose it, it will invade my brain, steal my genius and then ruin my rugged good looks, leaving me to die an ugly moron." Needless to say, I don't sleep real well on those nights.

Last week I shared these concerns with my doctor. He smiled and commented that I probably wasn't a likely victim for the breast cancer that attacked Mom and killed my aunt. And the ovarian cancer my grandmother beat was also not a major concern. Since my brother had melanoma, the doctor ordered me to strip, and proceeded to "reassure" me that that was not an immediate threat. He performed some other "cancer screening" exercise and took a blood test for good measure. Somehow, I left his office feeling more embarrassed (and violated!) than reassured. Adding insult to injury, the result of the blood-test indicated my

*(Continued on page 13)*

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**Cover art by Josh Alves**



# *That Incredible*





Rev. David McCarthy

# *Interruption*

The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. (John 1:14).

G.K. Chesterton once spoke of Christ's coming as an "incredible interruption that broke the back of history." No one has offered a better summing up of the meaning behind Bethlehem's manger. In the days surrounding the first Christmas eternity interrupted time, and the natural, predictable order of events was put "on hold." Phenomenal things took place. Angels repeatedly brought messages to humans—unlikely individuals at that—a star appeared, disappeared, then reappeared, and remarkable messages about the newborn child came from a variety of sources.

However, of all the amazing aspects of that incredible event, nothing is more astonishing than the fact that the uncreated, eternal Son of God entered our world of time and space through a real birth, and chose to unite his divine nature with a human nature that was physical, mental and psychical. In that mysterious union was fashioned a single unique personality. Jesus Christ is not God and man, nor God in man, but the one and only God-man. The fact that he was truly God takes its place beside the fact that he was truly man.

*(Continued on page 15)*

# PERVERTED

# Christmas





# stories

*D. Thompson*

Last Christmas was my fourth Christmas in a predominantly Muslim country. Many friends and neighbors have come to expect some kind of celebration event from my coworkers and me around this time of the year. They happily attend these parties just like they expect us to happily visit them during their Muslim holidays. It is a great time for outreach.

Many of our Muslim friends had heard the Christmas story from us before. But some of them reacted to the story a little bit differently last Christmas! For you see, it has taken me a while to become proficient in the local language. In the beginning I would memorize a story and “recite” it to them. I was not able to assess their understanding and whether they accepted the teaching or not. They could see that I had tried hard and were sympathetic enough just to smile and nod. Now that I can speak their language fairly well, when I tell a story, we have a lively discussion afterwards!

At our parties last year, children and young adults listened attentively. They had heard of Jesus before and respected him as a prophet, as they do 365 other prophets. Virgin birth? No problem; they believe in miracles. Angels appearing to shepherds? No problem; angels do that kind of thing. Jesus is called the Son of God? Sure; he had no earthly biological father. Jesus is our Savior? Some of them agreed.

Problems arose with the older audiences. They had heard different stories about the birth of Jesus. When I told them that Mary’s conception of Jesus was the work of the Holy Spirit, one woman said, “We Muslims believe that it happened like this: As you know, Joseph was the most handsome man that ever lived. Half of the world’s beauty was concentrated in him. When Mary saw him, a great

desire rose up inside her and the respected Jesus was conceived.” What perversion! For one thing, they confused Joseph the husband of Mary, with Joseph the son of Jacob who was sold to Egypt. Legends abound in the Muslim world about how handsome Joseph was and how much Potiphar’s wife desired him.

When I told them that Jesus was born in a stable, they said, “We Muslims have heard that Mary gave birth to him underneath a palm tree. She was in such great pain that she ate some dates from the tree and her pain lessened. That’s why we eat dates during childbirth.” One woman asked, “You Christians say he was born in a stable. We heard that he was born under a palm tree. Who is right?” I responded, “The Injil (New Testament) was written 2000 years ago and it hasn’t changed. The stories that you heard, where did they come from? When were they written? As you know, most people long time ago could not read. Stories passed around by word of mouth and, after a while, stories became changed. According to the Injil written 2000 years ago, Jesus was born in a stable.” They were quiet after that. They could not say anything because they had not read any holy books; their entire belief system is based on hearsay—stories they have heard from grandparents, parents, friends, neighbors, and the local mullahs—some dead, some still alive. They could not prove the truthfulness of their stories. At the same time pride and fear stood in the way of them accepting my story as the true version. Their culture is a source of pride for them and the stories they believe are an important part of that culture. Many of them were afraid of being influenced by another religion. Some mullahs have told them that even touching a Bible is a grave sin deserving hell’s fire.



Many years ago it saddened me that there are people in the world who have never heard of Christ. Today it saddenes me even more that many people have heard perverted stories about Christ and will not believe otherwise. When you celebrate Christmas this year, give thanks for the truth you have received and please remember those who have heard only perverted versions. Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable them to believe the true Christmas story. †

*Reprinted with permission from Challenger, October-December 2003. D. Thompson (fictitious name to protect author’s identity) is a vocational charity and educational worker in a predominantly Muslim country.*





# A matter of Perspective

Joy Gallagher

**I**t was a typical, chaotic Sunday Morning. I had scurried across the path to the church. I had one teenager home sick, which left me quickly trying to get all the worship songs ready in a PowerPoint presentation. I was totally absorbed in thought and frustration. My husband, knowing this was NOT how I liked things to be, stopped at the sound booth and gently said, “Don’t get too stressed. It will be OK, God knew this would happen.” As nice as it

was to hear his words, from my perspective I still had to get the presentation ready and practice with the worship team. The team members patiently waited as I finished my task. There would be no colorful slide backgrounds today. The worship team quickly rehearsed the new chorus and touched on highlights from a few others—no time for a complete rehearsal this morning.

I sat in the pew with my daughter, Katie, still lost in thought and running through the worship order in my head. I glanced over at Katie and saw two young girls leaning over the seat in front of us playing with Katie's many bracelets. I found myself smiling as they asked to try different ones on and commented about their colors. Suddenly, one of the girls looked up at Katie and exclaimed, "You have bracelets on your teeth!" Katie just chuckled. I laughed and thought to myself, "I don't think Katie has ever viewed her braces as 'jewelry.'"

As I watched the young girls continue to play with the bracelets I began to think about the difference perspective makes on our lives and attitudes. What was a nuisance to Katie was beautiful jewelry to the girls. I was reminded of an illustration in Tommy Tenney's book, "God's Eye View." He shares about a time when he and his young daughter were in an elevator where all she could see were knees and belt buckles. Her arms reached up to him as if to say "Pick me up, Daddy; I can't see from here." He goes on to share how there are times in our lives when we don't understand what is going on in and around us and we need to ask God, "Pick me up, Daddy, I can't see from here." I've tried to apply that principal in my life; asking God to give me a glimpse at what he is doing when I see only chaos. I am always amazed at how he answers my prayers when I plead to see things from his perspective; just a sneak preview of what he is up to.

In the next moments my thoughts changed; my focus became anticipation for what awaited me in worship because I knew God would pick me up to see things from his perspective. I wasn't disappointed.†

*Joy Gallagher and her family live in West Ossipee, N.H., where her husband, John, pastors the Ossipee Valley Bible Church (Advent Christian).*

*Katie Gallagher*







# *Look familiar?*

*Do you know any of these people?*

*Can you name this committee or board?*

*In what year and at what location was this photo taken?*

*Turn the page for the answers!*

*Taken in 1962 at Aurora College (now Aurora University), Aurora, Ill., this group formed the National Advisory Board of Advent Christian General Conference. These people worked with the Executive Council of Advent Christian General Conference to leave a legacy of ministry that continues to thrive four decades later! Listed below are their names.*

- |                   |                     |                       |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Esther Reed    | 9. Clyde Shepard    | 17. Gerald Richardson |
| 2. Helen Lyman    | 10. Milton Peters   | 18. Clinton Taber     |
| 3. Elsie Towle    | 11. Joseph Baucum   | 19. Joseph Johnson    |
| 4. Edwin Godfrey  | 12. Lorrie Ross     | 20. J. Murray Hanna   |
| 5. J. Howard Shaw | 13. Pomeroy Carter  | 21. Ronald Beanson    |
| 6. Joe Tom Tate   | 14. Weldon Chambers | 22. W.C. Boatwell     |
| 7. Ivan Adams     | 15. Hugh Shepard    | 23. Ariel Ainsworth   |
| 8. Gene Gardes    | 16. Herbert Holland | 24. Raymond Bescroft  |





triglycerides were way too high. Now I get to wake up to a tall glass filled with *low-fat* soy protein!

This season, as I was reading the Christmas passages in the Bible, I found someone who might have shared my concerns. Simeon is usually thought of as an old man, having been promised to live until he saw the Messiah. Since he and Anna are mentioned in the same passage, and Anna's age is clearly stated as 84, we assume Simeon was also an old geezer, shuffling through the Temple with a cane and slippers. But Scripture never tells us Simeon's age. It doesn't tell us how long he had been waiting to see the Messiah. We assume it was years, but it could have been months or even days.

Imagine this as a possible scenario: During campmeeting Simeon's youth pastor and the camp evangelist approach him with remarkable news: "For some reason we think the LORD is going to use you in a powerful way. We think you will be used to reveal the Messiah—the hope of all mankind—to Israel." Simeon has felt the Holy Spirit move in his heart and knows this is true. Yet, for the next 15 years nothing happens. In his mid-thirties, Simeon goes to his doctor because he is losing sleep; he's worried he might have cancer. The doctor looks him over and does all the things that doctors do and declares, "Simeon, you're right, you've got cancer. And it's the fast-growing kind. Even if chemotherapy were an option, which it isn't since it hasn't been invented yet, you still wouldn't have long to live. I don't think you've got more than three or four months. In fact, I hate to say this but I'm afraid you're going to have pay in cash."

Simeon now has a crisis of faith. "LORD, you promised me you'd show me the hope of Israel. I'm not seeing a lot of hope today ... and the chances of seeing any next year are pretty bleak! Is this some kind of sick joke you play on people, promising things just to make us look like idiots? Meanwhile, I couldn't feel any more hopeless. The Temple is run by corrupt usurpers, Israel is governed by pagan tyrants, and your promises seem no closer than the stars you showed Abraham. I'm going to die and my entire life has been a waste, spent looking for better times that I'm never going to see."

At least that would be my reaction if I were Simeon. Now imagine he has spent a month or two spinning through Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's grief cycle: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. His health has already failed and there's no denying the inevitable. There's an uneasy truce between him and God: he's too practical to waste his meager rations of breath fuming resentment, so he avoids thinking about God. He wakes this morning in another cavern of gloom, darkened by the knowledge that he soon will be unable to get himself out of bed. For some reason—he can't explain it and doesn't try—Simeon decides to go to the Temple. Maybe it's to make peace with

God, maybe it's simply a desperate grasp to find comfort before night falls.

As he enters the courtyard those who recognize him barely do. He can tell by their expressions that he already looks dead, pale and sickly. Some of his friends greet him but most are quickly distracted, uncomfortable being close to one "diseased" or even "unclean." Simeon's desperate eyes find no comfort, only cold hearts surrounded by cold stone. The Temple's lavish decorations only remind him of the polluted priesthood bought and paid for by godless thugs.

His disgust feeds his depression and he turns to go home and die, and is nearly knocked over by a young couple with an infant. God speaks. A voice Simeon hasn't heard for 15 years whispers a deafening word: here he is.

A blinding light floods the dungeon that holds Simeon's soul. By three silent words his entire life and hope are vindicated. No matter that no one else heard. No matter that no one else believes. No matter that he might be remembered as a tragic and deluded fool. He saw hope! And he could say with joy in his heart:

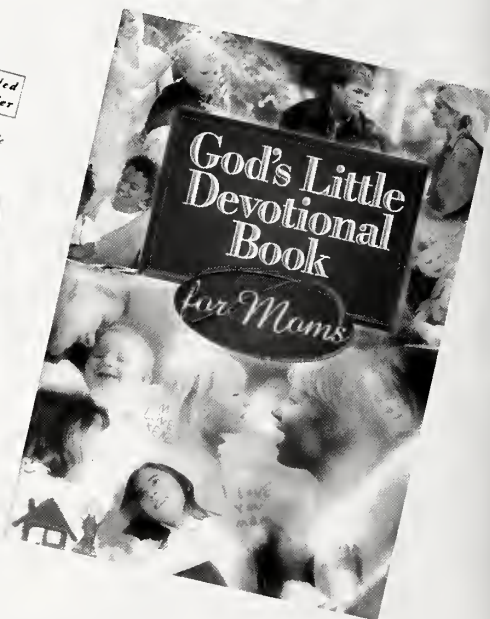
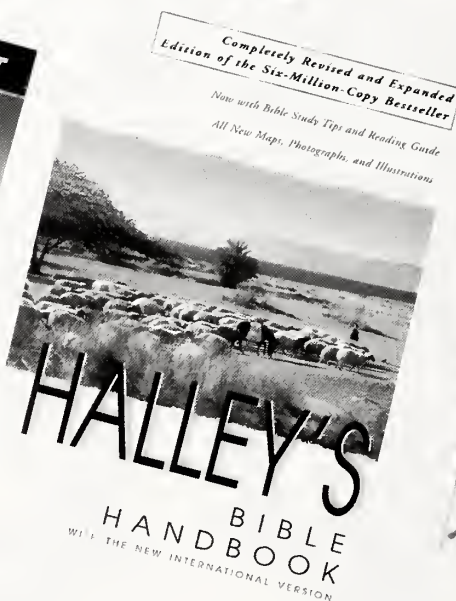
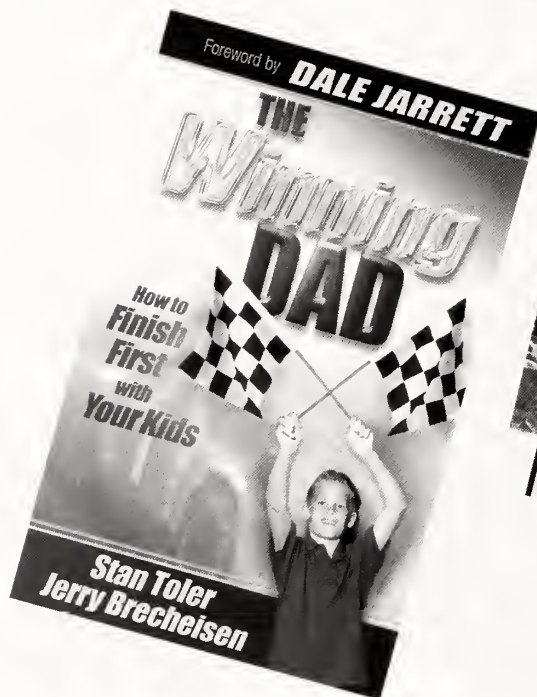
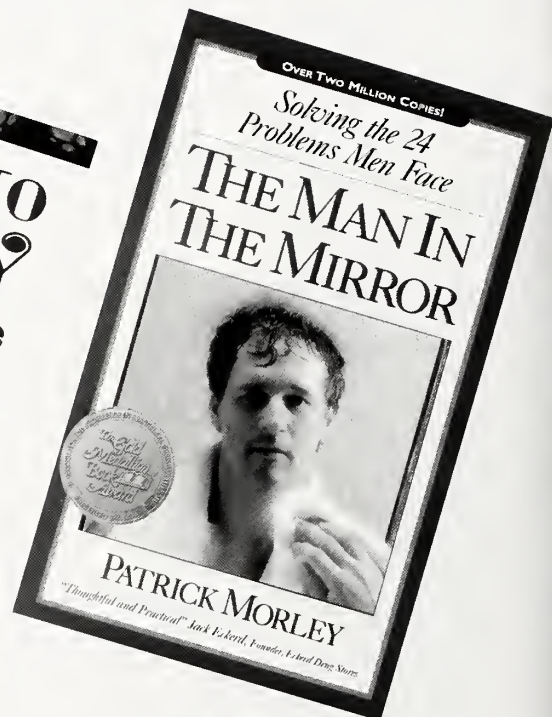
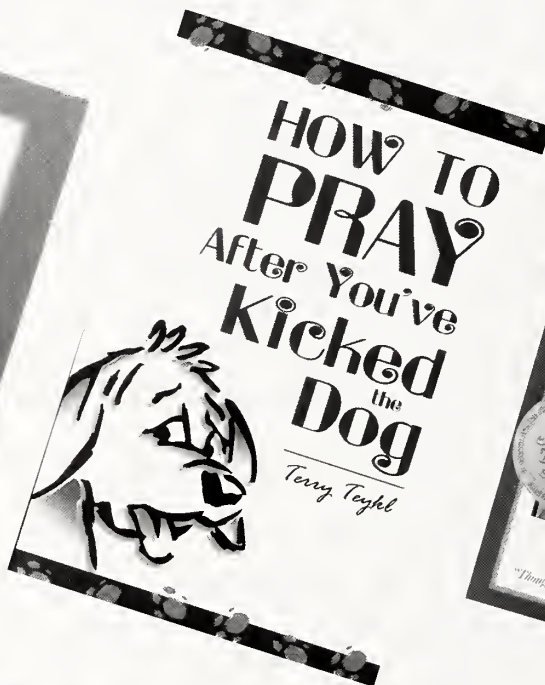
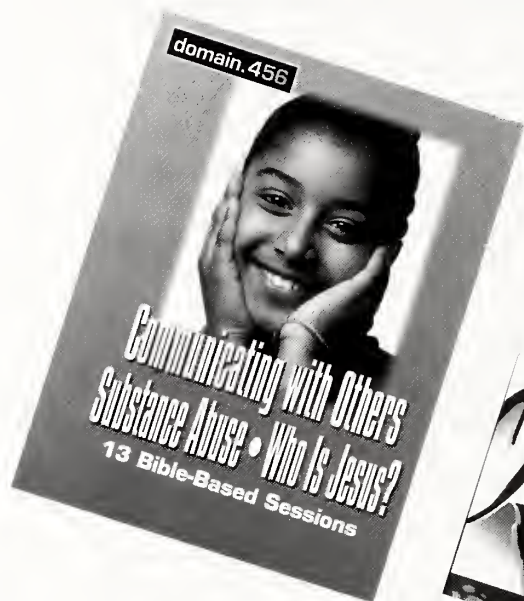
*"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32, NIV variant reading).*

Some may wonder how anyone today can relate to Simeon's experience, since he actually got to hold the Christ-child. What do we have today that could compare with such a tangible and visible sign of hope? I think we also have some tangible evidences of hope. Simeon held a baby, a single seed. We are surrounded by the resultant fields of faithful followers, spreading the Gospel like dandelions blown by the wind. Simeon held the incarnate Son of God, and we who believe are containers of the Spirit of Christ, who produces a harvest of Christ-like character in us. Simeon looked into the face of the infant Savior. We can behold the glory of God shining in the face of Christ as we read the record of his birth, life, teaching, miracles, death, burial, and resurrection, and in the faces of those who serve him today in the hope of his return.

Like Simeon, we may not see the final fulfillment of God's promises during our lifetime. Cancer, a bus, or old age may hit us before Jesus returns. But we have been given great reasons for hope, just like Simeon. Because of this, regardless of our circumstances, we can pray along with Simeon, "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation..." †

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What mystery! Yet the record of his life reflects the dual nature of the Son of God. Jesus was so divine that he could say, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37), yet he was so human that he felt the agony of thirst. He was so divine that he took five loaves and two fish, then spread a banquet for 5,000 men and their famished families, yet he was so human that he himself grew hungry. He was so divine that he could invite listeners to "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), yet so human that he grew weary and dropped on a well-curb to rest. He was so divine that twelve legions of angels waited his bidding to wing to his side, yet so human that he felt pangs of loneliness and craved for human companionship and sympathy.

The Wise Men returned to their native land, the shepherds to their flocks, even as we shall go back to the daily routine at the close of this Advent season. Yet life need never be the same.

Because of that "incredible interruption," the Christ who came at Christmas lives with us. He knows our struggles, understands our weaknesses, and walks by our side on the way. He accepts us and offers joy and peace as we seek to live as his disciples.

Prayer: May your glory light all nations on this Christmas Day, and may the message of the angels—peace on earth—come to pass in our hearts. †

*Rev. David McCarthy is pastor of the Hickory Grove Advent Christian Church, Saluda S.C. He has completed several devotional books featuring postage stamps. The preceding devotional was taken from a yet-to-be-published work that combines holiday stamps with seasonal devotions. Pictured on the left is the stamp featured with the devotion titled "That Incredible Interruption."*









# The 12 rules of Christmas

(Compiled by attorneys for The Rutherford Institute)

Unfortunately, Christmas has become a time of controversy over what can or cannot be done in terms of celebrating the holiday. In order to clear up much of the misunderstanding, the following twelve rules are offered on the next few pages:



Public school students' written or spoken personal expressions concerning the religious significance of Christmas (e.g., T-shirts with the slogan, "Jesus Is the Reason for the Season") may not be censored by school officials absent evidence that the speech would cause a substantial disruption.



So long as teachers are generally permitted to wear clothing or jewelry or have personal items expressing their views about the holidays, Christian teachers may not be prohibited from similarly expressing their views by wearing Christmas-related clothing or jewelry or carrying Christmas-related personal items.



Public schools may teach students about the Christmas holiday, including its religious significance, so long as it is taught objectively for secular purposes such as its historical or cultural importance, and not for the purpose of promoting Christianity.



Public school teachers may send Christmas cards to the families of their students so long as they do so on their own time, outside of school hours.





Public schools may include Christmas music, including those with religious themes, in their choral programs if the songs are included for a secular purpose such as their musical quality or cultural value or if the songs are part of an overall performance including other holiday songs relating to Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or other similar holidays.



Public schools may not require students to sing Christmas songs whose messages conflict with the students' own religious or nonreligious beliefs.



Public school students may not be prohibited from distributing literature to fellow students concerning the Christmas holiday or invitations to church Christmas events on the same terms that they would be allowed to distribute other literature that is not related to schoolwork.



Private citizens or groups may display crèches or other Christmas symbols in public parks subject to the same reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions that would apply to other similar displays.



Government entities may erect and maintain celebrations of the Christmas holiday, such as Christmas trees and Christmas light displays, and may include crèches in their displays at least so long as the purpose for including the crèche is not to promote its religious content and it is placed in context with other symbols of the Holiday season as part of an effort to celebrate the public Christmas holiday through its traditional symbols.



Neither public nor private employers may prevent employees from decorating their offices for Christmas, playing Christmas music, or wearing clothing related to Christmas merely because of their religious content so long as these activities are not used to harass or intimidate others.



Public or private employees whose sincerely held religious beliefs require that they not work on Christmas must be reasonably accommodated by their employers unless granting the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the employer.



Government recognition of Christmas as a public holiday and granting government employees a paid holiday for Christmas does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

For more information, email The Rutherford Institute at [tristaff@rutherford.org](mailto:tristaff@rutherford.org).

To request assistance, complete their online form or contact their legal department at (434)978-3888.



# A “pay-back” to a Christian millionaire

Charles M. Priebe, Jr.

**M**any years ago I received a phone call from the pastor of a nearby church. “Charley,” he said, “I hope you won’t be offended; but I’ve just been given an overcoat to be passed on to a deserving minister. Can you use it?”

Pride made me a bit reluctant to accept such a gift, although I badly needed an overcoat; but I finally agreed to have a look at it. When I saw it I was impressed. I had never seen such a fine coat and it fit me perfectly.

Later I learned through a clothier-friend that it had been tailor-made in New York City for a millionaire who had attended that church. “The only problem I have with this coat,” I told our daughter Lois later, “is that every time I pass a bank the coat tries to force me to turn in to it!” It was lightweight yet so warm—made of wool from a South American vicuna, so I wore it for years.

That gift was given many years ago, but, just recently, our daughter helped me to make a “pay-back” to someone in that very same area. In a recent telephone call to her I happened to ask her how cold it was up north. After her weather report she quickly added, “Oh that reminds me, Dad, that your heavy wool clergy cloak is still in mothballs in our attic. Shouldn’t that be given to some pastor up here in the north who may be freezing to death when he conducts burial services?” I had wanted her to use it herself to keep warm when she and her husband went to their frequent high school and university football games.



Our daughter persisted, however, and finally convinced me that I should make a phone call to a church in her area. She had reminded me of the terribly high cost of those clergy cloaks nowadays. My clergy cloak had originally been given to me when I could not afford to buy one.

Almighty God must have heard what my daughter had said to me because only a moment later I got a return phone call from a lovely lady in a church office who had offered to help me with a problem. After she solved it I suddenly found myself saying, "By the way, are there any of the newly-ordained ministers up there who are very big? I have a very warm clergy cloak to give away."

"Oh yes," she replied, "There's one young man who is well over six feet and must weigh a couple of hundred pounds or more."

That was my height when that cloak was ordered for me and my weight was 230 pounds; so I asked her to call him to see if he'd accept my cloak as a gift.

She didn't call back. He did, and he told me how cold he had been at his last burial service! Later, I learned that he was married, had a little child and was paying off his many "education debts." He was so anxious to get the cloak that he drove 60 miles the next day to pick it up at my daughter's office.

It is my hope that my gift will bless that young man as he ministers to the grieving people and others, just as the millionaire's vicuna coat kept me warm as I ministered to others in it for so many years.

Thank you, Lord, that my daughter encouraged me to make a bit of a "pay-back" to that Christian millionaire whom I hope to meet one day in your Heavenly Kingdom when our Lord returns to claim His own! †

*Charles and Miriam Priebe devoted many years to pastoral ministry before retiring. Frequent contributors to the Advent Christian Witness, they now divide their time between their homes in Florida and Maine.*





# *come* thou long expected Jesus

Miriam Snow Priebe

This last Sunday I went with friends to a church of another denomination. They were celebrating the season of Advent. One of the hymns we sang was “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus.” I don’t think we sing that particular song very often in our Advent Christian Churches, but it is a marvelous hymn. I have found myself humming the tune and thinking about the words all week.

Friends of ours recently adopted a little boy. The announcements they sent out had the following message: “I wasn’t expected. I was selected.”

Jesus was both expected and selected—expected by many generations of faithful Israelites—selected by God. He was selected to free all men from their fears—to deliver men from the bondage of sin. Jesus was selected to reign!

When we sing this beautiful hymn as a prayer we are asking our Lord to come to us; and we are expecting that after he comes things will be different. No fear is too small and foolish to ask him to take from us. No sin is too large and terrible to ask him to forgive.

In this Advent hymn we are also asking him to be ruler of our lives. This means turning over our plans for his inspection. It means obedience to his commands as we understand them in the Gospels. This is not easy!

However, the last two lines of the hymn remind us of our Lord’s own words, “To those who win the victory I will give the right to sit by me on my throne...” (Rev. 3:21).

If anyone should sing and appreciate this hymn it is an Advent Christian who has been brought up to look for Christ’s return and to rejoice in what he did for us in his first coming! I suggest that this hymn would be a good addition to the songs we sing in the period before Easter. Anyway I am singing “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus” with thanksgiving—thanksgiving that he *came* to save me—thanksgiving that he is coming again! †



Advent Christian  
General Conference President  
Rev. Ron Thomas, Jr.

**“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”**

**Matthew 19:29**

# *A word from our president*

## The Three “Great C’s”

Much of who we are as a denomination has been defined by our desire to be faithful to the “Great Commission.” As charged by Christ, we have claimed as our purpose to be disciple-makers. As intentional as we have been in carrying out this global commission, we know that our efforts have little significance if what we do is not motivated by the “Great Commandment.” To love the Lord with all our heart, mind and strength, and to love others are the propelling forces behind discipleship. We are both commissioned and commanded to reveal the love of God—the love we have for him and the love he has for the world.

We are so familiar with the “Great Commission” and the “Great Commandment,” to the point that they are among the precious Scriptures many of us have put to memory. They have been incorporated in many of our churches’ mission statements. They are operative in both the church and the person that is intentional about living as Christ calls us to live. However, there is another mandate for the follower of Christ that may be the one that is the most demanding. It is the “Great Commitment.” It’s the one that is not preached very much. It is the one that creates real discomfort. It is the one that asks of us: “All or Nothing.” In the gospel of Luke, chapter 14, Jesus is quite clear of the cost of discipleship. Beginning with verse 26, he spells out the price to be paid. But look at verse 33. **In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.** We cannot disciple others unless we are his disciple. We cannot fully embrace the “Great Commission” or the “Great Commandment” unless we are willing to exercise the “Great Commitment.”

In the classic work by Thomas à Kempis, “The Imitation of Christ,” this sobering thought is offered. *“Jesus has many who love his Kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his Cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting. All desire to rejoice with him, but few are willing to suffer for his sake. Many follow Jesus to the Breaking of Bread, but few to the drinking of the Cup of his Passion. Many admire his miracles, but few follow him in the humiliation of his Cross. Many love as long as no hardship touches them. Many praise and bless him, as long as they are receiving any comfort from him... Do they not betray themselves as lovers of self rather than of Christ, when they are always thinking of their own advantage and gain?”*

There is a high cost in following Christ. But remember this. There is an infinite worth in doing so. True discipleship is all or nothing. ☩



# Twisted Scriptures

Rev. Bruce Jones



## “Judge not, that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1 ESV).

In the last issue I argued that Jesus’ teaching “Judge not lest ye be judged” does *not* mean we are never to confront another’s sin (see the speck in their eye and remove it). Rather, what Jesus was saying was that when we do confront another’s sin, we must do so humbly, as a fellow sinner also seeking mercy and grace (first see and remove the log in our own eye).

Is this consistent with other Scriptures on judgment? Some seem to tell us not to judge (Rom. 2:1-3, I Cor 4:3, Js 4:11-12). Others seem tell us to judge (I Cor 5:12; 6:2-3; 11:13).

1. **Romans 2:3** “So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment?” This verse means don’t judge yourself as good. If you do your judgment is flawed—everyone is a sinner, everyone needs the Savior!
2. **1 Corinthians 5:12** “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?”  
**1 Corinthians 6:3** “Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!” We *are to judge* fellow church members, angels, and the things of this life (cultural values, moral issues).
3. **James 4:12** “There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?” The book of James is about confronting sin. James includes this warning to make sure that we do not get self-righteous about it. After all, who are you? Not God! We should not twist this to mean we shouldn’t evaluate the behavior and actions of others if they are sinful. Read the whole book of James! What does James choose as his last sentence?  
**James 5:20** “...remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”

We *are* to judge other people’s actions and behaviors if it is part of pointing them to our Savior. But we are *not* to have a holier-than-thou attitude about it. After all, we are not the *Judge*. Our merciful and loving God is.... And we are so thankful that He is *our* Savior!✠

..things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16 NKJV).

# Who Am I?

Use the following clues to find each letter of this person's name

- My first letter is in John and in Joan.
  - My second is in Owen but not Benjamin
  - My third letter is in Samantha and in Charles
  - My fourth is in Rueben but not Frank
  - My fifth is in Pharaoh and Stephanie
  - My last letter is in Alpha but not Omega
- Who am I?
- 

**BONUS:** Within this same puzzle is another name. However, the order of the letters has been changed. Using the same clues, unscramble the other six-letter name.

# Mixed-up Map Maker

Mahalalel the Map Maker was selling his homemade maps to those traveling to Bethlehem. Due to his incorrect calculations, the distances between places were wrong. Figure out how he got his calculations and fill in the missing distances. (If you get stuck, a hint is at the bottom of the page)

## To Bethlehem from:

England = 12,000 miles

North America = \_\_\_\_\_

India = 8,000 miles

Brazil = \_\_\_\_\_

New Zealand = 18,000 miles

The Far East = \_\_\_\_\_

Rome = 6,000 miles

Your House = \_\_\_\_\_





# As Children

"...Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

by JOSH ALVES

## Sound it out!

Can you spell the following words correctly without the use of a dictionary?

In-key-per

Frank-in-cents

Ha-lay-lu-yah

Whyz-men

## Think about it.

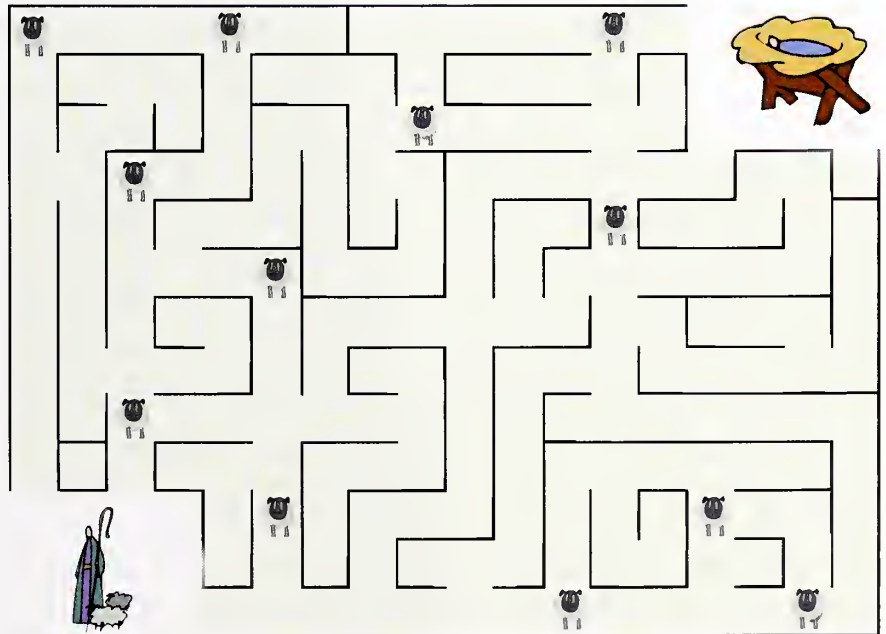
A six-foot rope is tied to Joseph's donkey, and there is hay eight feet away. Without untying the rope or biting through it, how can the donkey get to the hay?

(Answer Below)

## Sheep Crazed Maze

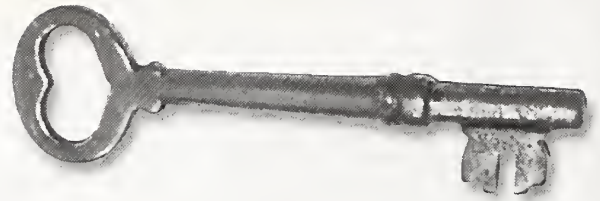
Guide the shepherd to the manger while collecting all his sheep.

For a harder puzzle: Complete the maze while collecting all the sheep without crossing over your own path.



Mixed-up Map Maker Solution: Equation = (# of letters - 1) • 2 • 1,000 = # of miles  
North America = 22,000 : Brazil = 10,000 : The Far East = 18,000 : Your House = 16,000  
Think about it: The donkey can just walk to the hay. The other end of the rope isn't tied to anything.

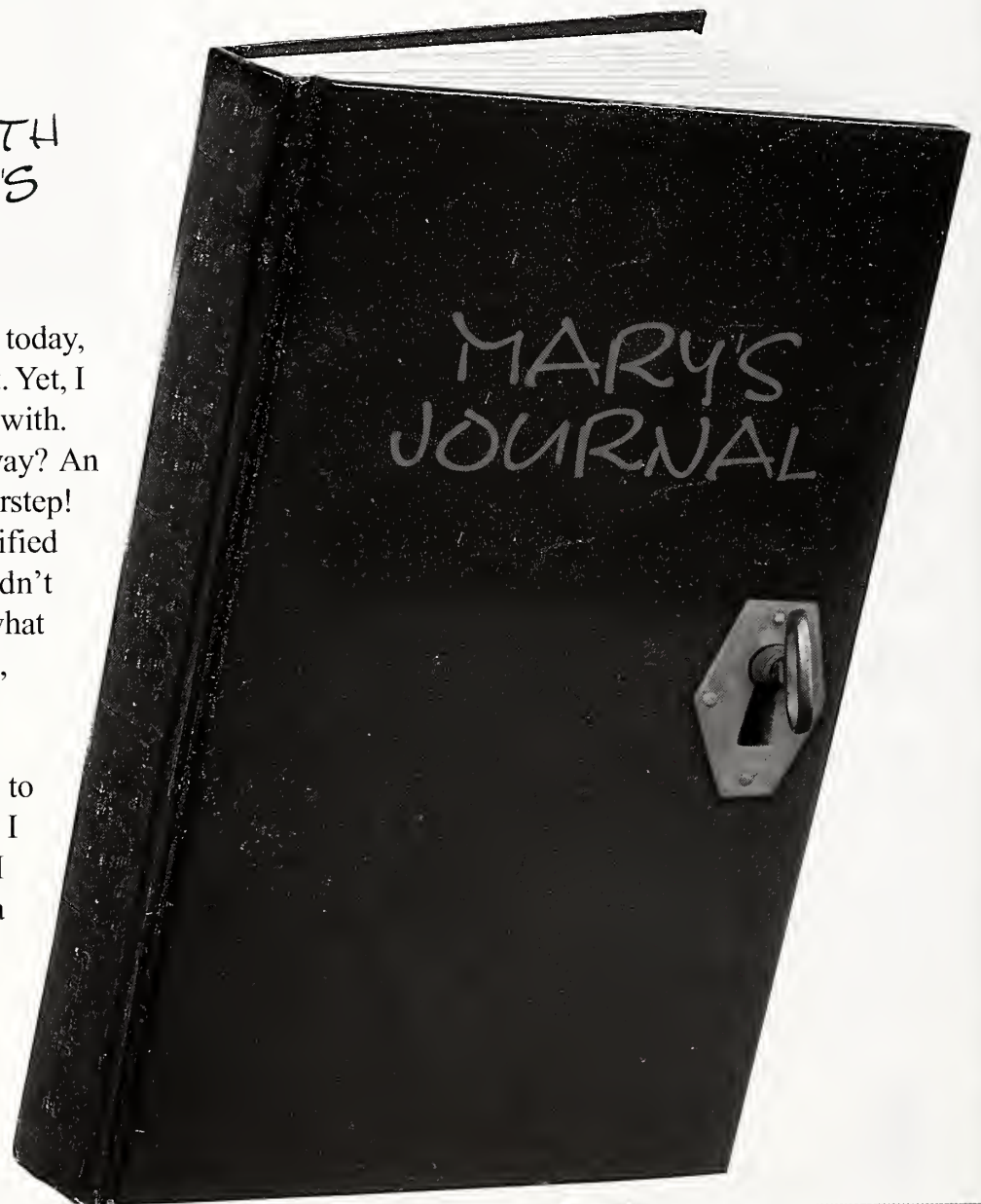
# MARY'S treasured MEMORIES



*“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)*

## THE SIXTH MONTH OF ELIZABETH'S PREGNANCY

The strangest thing happened today, something I will never forget. Yet, I don't have anyone to share it with. Who would believe me, anyway? An ANGEL appeared on my doorstep! At first I was shaken and terrified by this strange visitor. I couldn't understand why he came or what he wanted. He put me at ease, then shared the words every Jewish woman dreams of hearing. God has chosen me to birth the promised Messiah! I was confused by his words. I know the facts of life. I am a young virgin, innocent of most of life's experiences. How will this happen? The angel explained that the baby in me would be Spirit-conceived. Now I





don't know what to do or where to go. I wish I had someone to talk to....

## THE NEXT DAY

Today I'm harried. I got up, took care of a few details, then packed some meager belongings. I felt an urgent need to travel to Judea. The angel revealed that my relative, Elizabeth, is having a baby after being childless into her senior years. Another miracle! Unbelievable! That's why I decided to take this sudden trip. Perhaps she will understand the angel's pronouncement and help me sort out my muddled emotions. The journey has been difficult, but good for me, providing lots of opportunity to think. Fresh air does wonders for the soul and this mountainous terrain has a rugged beauty reminiscent of God's majesty and strength. But my thoughts keep rambling back to yesterday's news. Joseph.... How do I tell him?

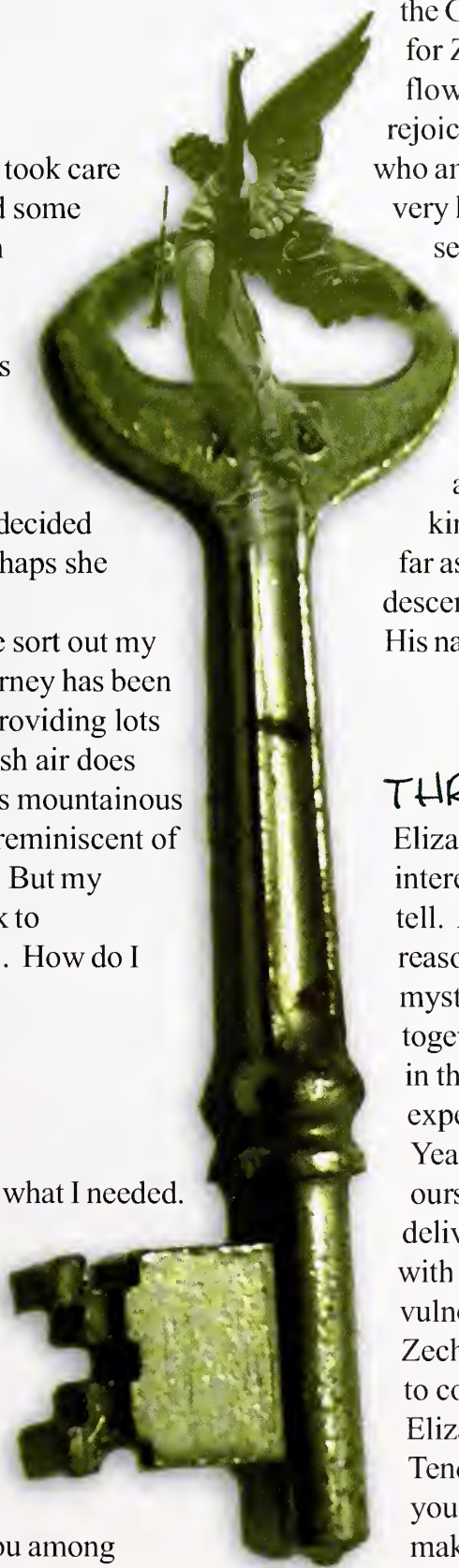
## DAYS LATER

A visit with Elizabeth is just what I needed. I puzzled about a curious thing that happened when I entered her house and greeted her. I didn't have to share my news with her after all! The baby in her womb leaped and Elizabeth was overcome with the Holy Spirit. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will

bear!" My spine tingled as she spoke. Elizabeth's joy overflowed. We both burst with the God-news! (That's more than I can say for Zechariah. He was speechless!) Praise flowed from my lips in the psalm form. "I rejoice in the One who sought me out—I, who am nothing more than a maiden girl of very humble means. Future generations will see how the Lord has blessed me. He is so holy and merciful. With one hand He has scattered the proud, dethroned rulers and sent the rich away empty. With the other hand He lifts up the humble and fills the poor and hungry with good things. His kindness and mercy have reached back as far as Abraham and will continue on to His descendants, just as He promised. Glory to His name!"

## THREE MONTHS LATER

Elizabeth is due to deliver any day. It's interesting. She has her own God story to tell. And poor Zechariah can't talk for a reason. The Lord works in some pretty mysterious ways. He has blessed our time together. I know God had Elizabeth waiting in the wings to share her wisdom, experience and spiritual journey with me. Years separate our ages, but we find ourselves in similar stories. We will both deliver miracle babies. I feel safe enough with Elizabeth to allow her to see my vulnerabilities and fears. (And with Zechariah's silence we've had quality time to converse!) I'm going to miss her, but Elizabeth will soon have her hands full. Tending to a baby is difficult enough for a young woman. I need to return home and make preparations myself. I'm glad God is intricately involved in this birth. I'm going

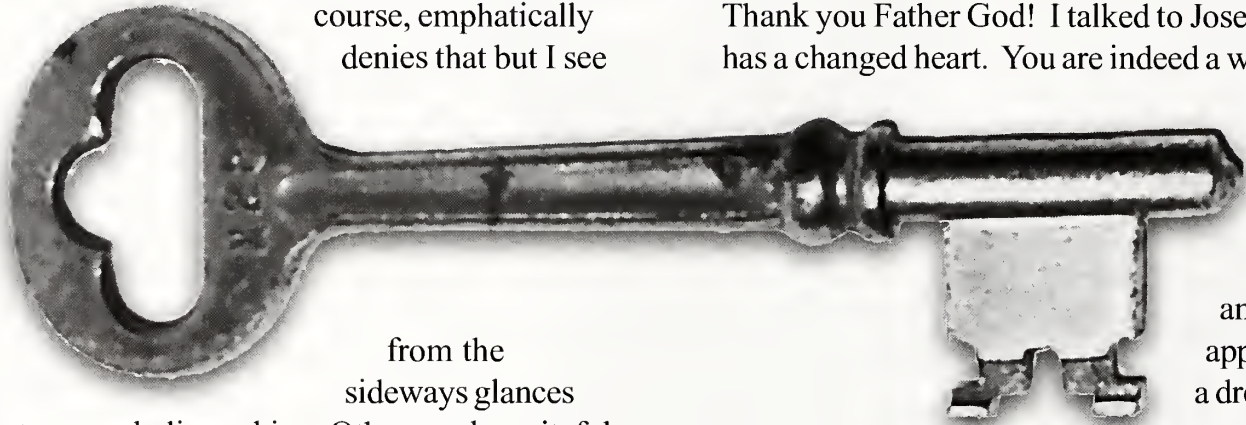


to need supernatural support when tongues begin to wag in Nazareth.

## BACK HOME

The news is out. Even my loose fitting robe betrays my condition. Gossips and rumormongers are having a hay day! The rumors and innuendoes wound my spirit. Some accuse Joseph and me of having trysts in the stable hay. He, of

course, emphatically denies that but I see



from the sideways glances that no one believes him. Others make spiteful remarks about me hanging around the Roman barracks. My family even has trouble standing up for me. They keep demanding answers that make sense. They think I'm delusional. I can't talk my way out of this mess. I'm learning that privilege walks hand in hand with sacrifice. Messiah is in my womb. God will have to provide necessary protection. I'm counting on Him. He's all I have.

## MY TALK WITH JOSEPH

There are serious consequences to breaking a betrothal contract. Joseph is dumbfounded about my situation and quietly looking at his options. When I try to talk to him he only sees the swelling in my belly and demands honesty. He's such a righteous man. At our betrothal feast I felt honored to stand by his side and

toast our impending union. I don't want to lose him, but I'm a disgrace to him. He is entertaining the notion of divorce. By law he can do that because of my perceived unfaithfulness. What is your plan, God? Surely not that I should raise Messiah alone as a single mother!

## HALLELUJAH! JOSEPH RELIEVES!

Thank you Father God! I talked to Joseph. He has a changed heart. You are indeed a watchful

and attentive Lord. He told me how

an angel appeared in a dream encouraging

him to keep our betrothal oaths. He understands that this child is Spirit-conceived and will save His people from their sins. Joseph disclosed that we are to name the baby, Jesus, "the Anointed One." Jesus... what a wonder you are!

## OUR WEDDING

Things happened so quickly after Joseph's dream encounter with the angel. He took me home. We are husband and wife. Well, almost. All except for consummating the marriage. We understand that there must be no doubt in anyone's mind that I'm carrying God's Son, and we are willing to make the necessary adjustments. We still have our whole future ahead of us. I wonder what it will be like to raise the Messiah? Those are pretty big shoes to fill.

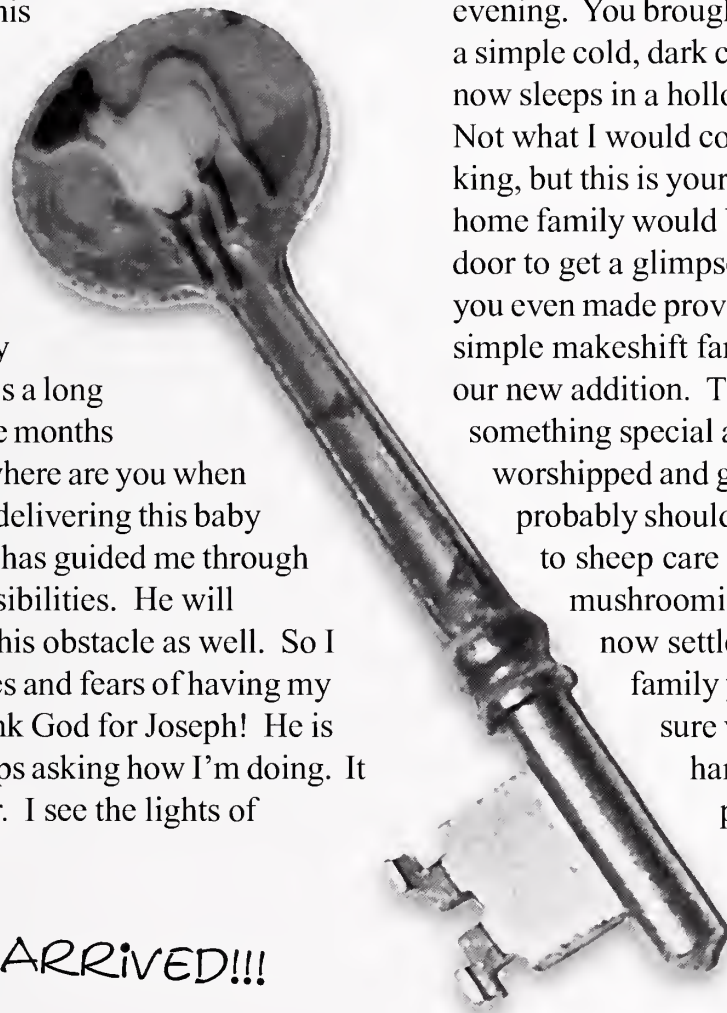


## ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Caesar Augustus has issued a decree that a census be taken of the whole Roman world. It couldn't come at a worse time for me. I'm feeling all the extra pounds that I've gained with this baby. According to law Joseph must register in his own town. Since he is from the line of David we must make a trip to Bethlehem, even if my delivery is at hand. It's a long walk when you're nine months pregnant. Elizabeth, where are you when I need you? I may be delivering this baby on the road! But God has guided me through many seeming impossibilities. He will shepherd us through this obstacle as well. So I will submit my worries and fears of having my first baby alone. Thank God for Joseph! He is very attentive and keeps asking how I'm doing. It won't be much longer. I see the lights of Bethlehem ahead....

## JESUS HAS ARRIVED!!!

What a whirlwind of events since I last penned in my journal! We trudged around Bethlehem trying to find a bed, but nothing. Mobs of people were everywhere, every one of them needing accommodations! Fatigue consumed me. I was ready to settle for anything just to get off my feet, and settle is what we did. An innkeeper took one look at me and offered us shelter in his stable in an uncharacteristic display of compassion. Not exactly the conditions I would have chosen for the Anointed One's birth. And, I



can't lament that I delivered this baby alone. All creatures great and small were here joining in chorus as Jesus descended the birth canal! God, you've done it again. When all looked bleak and in disarray, you orchestrated the events of this evening. You brought beauty into the depths of a simple cold, dark cave. The King of kings now sleeps in a hollowed-out feeding trough. Not what I would consider conditions fit for a king, but this is your plan being fulfilled. Back home family would be eagerly waiting at the door to get a glimpse of this new little one. But you even made provision for that by sending a simple makeshift family of shepherds to adore our new addition. They seemed to sense something special about our son. They worshipped and glorified God on a night they probably should have been more attentive to sheep care because of the mushrooming crowd in town. A peace now settles over this new little family you've put together. I'm sure we'll learn parenting the hard way. But I trust your plan, Almighty God, for Joseph, Jesus and me. You've carried us through many trying situations these last nine months. I can't comprehend all that you are doing in the life of this newborn, but I release him to you. For now the bundle sleeping next to me brings indescribable joy as I reflect and write. I will treasure this moment in time. The smell of hay will never quite be the same for me. Even the animals seem to be at peace....✠

*By Hazel Blackstone,  
Coordinator of Women's  
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