

The Teacher:

As Agent



WIN

Lou Holtz, the coach of the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame, was asked how it was that wherever he coached he was able to be a winner. This question was asked just after his team had gone through the entire 1988 football season without a loss and was proclaimed the number one college team in the nation. His answer was as follows:

“I tell my boys that, above all else, you must remember the word WIN.”

He added,

“I don’t mean to WIN a football game, or anything else, but to determine *What’s Important Now.*”

By doing this, the team was able to sift out all the unimportant, or meaningless, things of life. They were able to put them on hold, or get rid of them altogether, and concentrate on the most important thing of life, whatever it was at that moment.

Not a bad philosophy, is it?

By the way, what is important now in your life? Perhaps it’s time to sit down and determine the answer. It’s almost impossible to tell young people what’s important now in their lives if you don’t know what’s important now in your own life. Maybe this is an indication that the things which are important to you are not only leading you away from the Lord, but are also causing the young people under your care to drift away from their Savior.

Then again, let’s hope that you have it all together, and that both you and your students have discovered what’s important now. Jesus was trying to teach the rich young ruler how to determine importance. You remember the story...

“...so when He was gone forth into the way there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Mark 10:17. KJV

He was rich, and occupied a position of importance. He linked what he saw in Jesus, and he really desired it. He told Jesus that he was a commandment keeper. Jesus told him there was one thing he still needed. He (Jesus) gave the young man a test: choose between Heavenly treasures or worldly greatness. Unfortunately, he failed the test because what was important now to him was too costly to lose. He realized what the Savior was talking about, but his future in this was bright, and the NOW was something he wanted that NOW was separating him from the love of Jesus.



Ellen White says in the Desire of Ages, p. 519--

“Jesus saw in this ruler just the help He needed if the young man would become a colaborer with Him in the work of salvation. If he would place himself under Christ’s guidance, he would be a power for good. In a marked degree the ruler could have represented Christ; for he possessed qualifications, which, if he were united with the Savior, would enable him to become a divine force among men. Christ, seeing into his character, loved him. Love for Christ was awakening in the ruler’s heart; for love begets love. Jesus longed to see him a co-worker with Him. He longed to make him like Himself, a mirror in which the likeness of God would be reflected. He longed to develop the excellence of his character, and sanctify it to the Master’s use. If the ruler had then given himself to Christ, he would have grown in the atmosphere of His presence. If he had made this choice, how different would have been his future!”

You and I must ponder this question and search our own hearts to see if we, like the young man who talked with Jesus, love the gifts of God more than we love God.

So, what’s important now? To love God supremely, to use the gifts He has entrusted to us for a blessing for those in need, to be agents to help the poor and the suffering. These are ways we become co-workers with our Savior.



IF ONLY...

How many times have you spoken those words - hundreds of times, a thousand times? In my life they have been uttered innumerable times.

If only we had not been afraid of buying that nice home we looked at when we first came to Lancaster.

If only some of the words that escaped my mouth could be reeled back and never spoken.

If only I had been more helpful to that senior girl back in my first years of teaching. Maybe she could have passed American History and been allowed to go on the senior trip.

If only I paid more attention to the signs, I wouldn't have taken the wrong turn.

There were many things that bothered me - especially in my early years of teaching. It just seemed like my decisions were always causing problems. This really weighed heavy on my shoulders, for like most of you, there was no question in my mind that God had called me to the ministry of teaching. Why couldn't I be perfect? Why so many mistakes?

Nehemiah probably expressed those words too when he led a group to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

If only Sanballat would go away.

If only I had more men to work.

If only I had more material.

If only I had soldiers to guard my workers.

Nehemiah finally came to the conclusion that the Lord would see them through. He expressed confidence in the Lord. He told his workers not to worry, they were going to rebuild the walls and the Lord would protect them.

Relief did not come to me, however, until many years had passed. The *Acts of the Apostles*, p.36, contains for me the most precious promise of the Spirit of Prophecy. See if you agree with me.



“As the disciples waited for the fulfilment of the promise, they humbled their hearts in true repentance and confessed their unbelief. As they called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning. Truths which had passed from their memory were again brought to their minds, and these they repeated to one another. They reproached themselves for their misapprehension of the Saviour. Like a procession, scene after scene of His wonderful life passed before them. As they meditated upon His pure, holy life they felt that no trial would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ’s character. If they could but have the past three years to live over, they thought, how differently they would act! If they could only see the Master again, how earnestly they would strive to show Him how deeply they loved Him, and how sincerely they sorrowed for having ever grieved Him by a word or an act of unbelief! But they were comforted by the thought that they were forgiven. And they determined that, so far as possible, they would atone for their unbelief by bravely confessing Him before the world.

After reading this, the burden dropped from my shoulders. It taught me that the Lord can take inexperience and lack of judgment, and make something good out of them.

We have a Lord of the present and the future who says “I’ll take you where you are today. Follow me, and I’ll cover your mistakes, I can make you a blessing to those around you.” Praise the Lord!



COINCIDENCE OR PROVIDENCE?

At one North American Division Union Directors' meeting, our division director, Elder Gil Plubell, presented a devotional entitled, "Coincidence or Providence?" Many events have happened in my lifetime when that question could be asked. The answer to the question is not easily determined with our limited ability to see the future.

We know that our Lord will go "all out" for us. Some things we just shrug off and say "that's just a coincidence" and that may be so, but then again it may be providence. We can make the answer very simplistic or very complicated, but one thing is certain — we won't always know which is the correct answer.

The following is an experience my wife had while at our first job straight out of college. My appointment was to be dean of boys at Union Springs Academy. The town where we did our shopping was Auburn, New York, approximately 12 miles from the school. This particular day my wife took our little two-year-old daughter, put her in our new Volkswagen, and started for town. It was a beautiful day, and both mother and daughter were singing happy Sabbath School songs appropriate to the little girl's age. About half way to town, while going up an extended incline, a voice said to my wife, "Pull off the road and turn off the engine." You can imagine the thoughts that went through her mind. There was nothing coming from ahead, there was nothing coming from behind, and there was just farmland on either side to the road, so she ignored the voice. The voice came again a second time "Pull off the road and turn off the engine." Again she looked all around, but decided not to heed the voice. A third time the same command came. This time even more forceful "*Pull off the road and turn off the engine.*" This time she followed the instructions. She pulled off the road, reached down and turned off the key. The engine stopped. She looked forward - nothing. She looked behind - nothing. On either side there was only farmland. She thought to herself "this is crazy." She leaned forward to turn the key to start the engine, when suddenly, at that very instant, two cars some over the top of the incline racing side-by-side. Had my wife not pulled off the road when she did, my family would most certainly have been in a serious accident. Don't tell me that was a coincidence! The Lord showed me in a very definite way that he loved my family.

My wife and I have many times gone over the progression of events that day. Suppose she had pulled off the road either the first or second time she heard the voice. She might have just pulled back on the highway right in the way of the oncoming cars. Suppose the voice had not said to turn off the engine. She might have just pulled right back on the highway to a certain accident, and perhaps death. You see, the Lord knows how we are going to react, and how much time it's going to take. Don't tell me that was a coincidence.



When we put our lives in the hand of God, His will, will definitely be done. I can't answer all the questions that can arise from a topic such as this. Some events are hard to understand, they don't all turn out as nice as did this one.

The Master is interested in each one of you and the young people in your charge. That too, is no coincidence. In His love, He desires all of us to be saved, and He will do His utmost to see that accomplished and that's providential. Let's make sure our youth understand this.



WHAT IF OR NEVERTHELESS?

How many times have you come to the end of a week or a day, and then asked yourself the question, "What if?" How many times have you come upon flashing lights, flares, policemen, ambulances, several wrecked cars and covered bodies beside the road, and then asked yourself the question, "What if?" Or your child is having to make some serious decisions and you ask yourself the question, "What if?"

If you think it through carefully, the question "What if", comes from fear; therefore, does not originate with our God but with our adversary. Try it.

What if my mate doesn't love me anymore?
What if my medical examination shows there is cancer?
What if my son has a wreck?
And so it goes . . .
What if?
What if?

My wife bought a book by Marion Bond West entitled *The Nevertheless Principle*. The author has all kinds of "what ifs" in her life — she was always in a state of fear until in an almost hopeless condition she discovered in the Bible the word "Nevertheless!" You will see as you read on that this is a very strong word. She decided that God is not God of what ifs, but a God of nevertheless. She did some research and found that it is used more than 90 times in the Bible. Now, I haven't taken time to check her count, but in doing a little checking I've concluded she must be right. Here are a few examples.

" . . . Then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem . . . Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God (Nehemiah 4: 7-9)

"For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee" (Psalm 31:22)

"So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee . . . (Psalm 73:22-23)

"Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." (Psalm 89:33)

Simon's response when Jesus instructs him to launch out into the deep:
"Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net." (Luke 5:5)



Jesus' response when the Pharisees warned Him that Herod was determined to kill Him: "Nevertheless I must walk today and tomorrow . . ." (Luke 13:33)

When Jesus gathered his disciples in the Upper Room: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you . . ." (John 16:7)

When Jesus cried out in anguish to His Father: ". . . take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark 14:36)

After Jesus' resurrection: ". . . we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us . . ." (2 Corinthians 7:5-6)

"For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed . ." (2 Timothy 1:12)

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live . . . by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20)

So, you can see that it is used as a supernatural way to live. Marion Bond West said, "I saw that thoughts beginning with "what-if" **never** came from God, but from the enemy, the fear monster."

Fear is a terrible thing — it leaves a person hopeless. It is my prayer that as Christian educators we can mold the lives of our young people into the power of the God-given word turned into a lifestyle — nevertheless God's will, not mine.



MIRACLE TERRITORY

Today a good friend told me about a sermon preached by Dr. Benjamin Reeves, president of Oakwood College, entitled “Miracle Territory.” What a great title! It has not been my pleasure to hear the content of his sermon, but it stirs all kinds of ideas in my mind. The New Webster’s Dictionary published in 1990 gives the definition of a “miracle” as “a supernatural event regarded as due to divine action.” Then it goes on to say “an unexpected piece of luck.” The first part of the definition is acceptable to me, but the latter part, “unexpected piece of luck,” goes against everything I’ve been taught. If it is only luck, then there is no room for faith. In our eyes there are big miracles and little miracles and all sizes in between. To the maker of miracles, it’s no more difficult to defeat an army than it is to find a lost coin.

The Bible tells us that we have a natural bent to evil doing. Left to ourselves, destruction would not be far away. Every time a child goes down into the baptismal tank, it’s a miracle. Every time you see the light go on, so to speak, in a child’s mind, understanding a truth for the first time, it’s a miracle. When you see a family struggling just to survive, and yet somehow they are still able to round up the tuition to keep their children in church school, it’s a miracle. When you see a small church believe in its youth so much that they support a church school as its first priority, it’s a miracle.

All of you who read this think of many miracles that have happened to you in your life. I can! Some were simple little things, but when they happened, they were **big**. A lot of miracles happen to young people because when they pray, *they believe it will happen*.

Our North American Division Director of Education, Gilbert Plubell, related to the North American Division union directors an incident in his life. It was Christmas time and Gil decided that he was going to give his sister a pair of skates with red on the wheels. He was sure he would get a chance to use them, so there was an ulterior motive to his gift. His sister was thrilled with the skates. They were the kind that clamped on to the shoes. A key was used to tighten the clamp to the soles of the shoes.

In the front of their home was a hill. When he was young, it was a big hill. After growing up and returning to view the home and hill, Dr. Plubell discovered that neither the home or the hill met the expectations of his memory. The kids in the family were taking turns going to the top of the hill and skating as fast as they could to the bottom. To make sure the key did not get lost, Gil’s mother tied it to a string that was supposed to be put around the neck. When it was his turn, Gil made sure the skates were right, then started down the hill, string in hand, swinging the key around. You guessed it! At the bottom of the hill, no key! His mother told him he had to find it and it had to be done before he ate. It was lonely out there after everyone else went inside for supper. His parents had taught him that when he was in trouble he should pray. He wasn’t sure he wanted to be seen kneeling where everyone could see him, so he went into the cornfield, knelt down, and prayed. As soon as he opened his eyes, he saw the key.



Dr. Pluebell says, "Some may think it was just coincidence, but I am convinced it was a miracle." Friends, our schools are territories for miracles occupied by objects to whom miracles can happen. You the teacher must have the faith to believe that our great God can protect the youngsters in your care just as He did when the army surrounded Elisha and his servant in the city of Dothan. The servant was sure the end was near, but Elisha said, "Don't be afraid. Those who are with us are (with us) more than those who are with them." Then he prayed to the Lord to open his eyes, and then he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around him. Don't be afraid to ask the Lord to open your eyes and see His power revealed to you. The day of miracles is not gone; it's ever present. It may be supernatural to us, but it is natural to our Lord. Don't ever forget it. **YOU ARE IN MIRACLE TERRITORY.**



WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND...!

One camp meeting season my wife and I had the privilege of attending the Hispanic camp meeting at Camp Berkshire. The weather was beautiful. The drive down from South Lancaster was absolutely gorgeous. Somehow, when we came close to the camp, a sign was missed and we traveled a good many miles before finally realizing that we were, indeed, on the wrong road. Information was asked and we were on our way again, this time with much assurance as to where we were going. We hadn't traveled far until we came to a sign which said, "Camp Berkshire- A Seventh-day Adventist Camp." We felt good. The directions received at the gas station were obviously correct. A little further down the road we found arrows pointing in the right direction. How good it is to know for sure that you are on the right road. Then we came to the camp entrance and there we found three smiling men to greet, direct, and answer questions. At every turn in the drive to the parking place there was someone to point us in the right direction. At the parking lot more young men directed and put us in just the right place.

We then went to the auditorium for Sabbath School and church. The auditorium was filled to capacity. The only problem was that we couldn't understand anything. The good people all around us were thrilled with the speaker of the hour, but only here and there did we catch a word or two. To be sure, we received a blessing because we were sitting with God's people; but how we longed to be able to understand Spanish or to have someone beside us who could translate for us.

In thinking this experience over I began to wonder how many of our students need some sign posts on the way directing them to a Christian school. How many of them need smiling faces as they enter the schools to show them the way around and just where to go. Some who may be having difficulty in school may find it just like a foreign language and just as difficult to understand as it was for us to understand the Spanish language. How many of them would find their way in the classroom if there were someone who would take time to translate for them . . . to explain to them the things that are so simple and familiar to us, yet so difficult and confusing to them. We are in danger of taking things for granted, feeling that everything is taken care of and that everyone should know as much about the surroundings as we do. Some do a very good job of bluffing, not wanting to look dumb to teacher or peers, when, in fact, they can sit through a whole day and only catch a word or two of true meaning.

By looking at us, no one would have known that we did not understand Spanish. The lady sitting next to my wife was observant, though, and after a while she leaned over and said, "You don't know what is going on, do you." She then proceeded to translate for her some of the happenings. Oh, that we as teachers could be so observant that we are ready and willing to translate and help our students in trouble. Your responsibility is heavy and awesome, but the rewards can make it all worthwhile.



TRUE OR COUNTERFEIT

How many times have you been given a counterfeit bill? Maybe you are like me, you don't know but it does bother you that there are people who will go to any length to defraud you or me for their own profit. My studies indicate that those who are trained to look for counterfeit money study the true. They know everything there is to know about an authentic piece of money. They don't study the false - they study the real.

Of course the devil is the master deceiver. He makes many things appear very close to the genuine-so close we are told that if it were possible, even the elect will be fooled.

While working in Texas, part of my responsibilities for a time was that of youth director along with being superintendent of schools. The youth camp, "Lone Star Camp," was a rustic place. It was a great area to study nature. In nature there are many "almost look-a likes."

Now, snakes are not my favorite creatures to study, but the camp was the home of many varieties of snakes, including the four kinds of poisonous snakes found in North America.

1. The Rattlesnake — which is very rare. In 17 years my eyes only saw one, and that was a baby.
2. The Coral Snake — which is also quite scarce. They were seen only on rare occasions.
3. The Cotton Mouth, or Water Moccasin — was very plentiful all around the lake.
4. The Copperhead — also very plentiful. They were everywhere in the camp.

There were also many non-poisonous varieties. One that everyone liked was the Hognose Snake which was not dangerous, in fact, it was rather fun to have around. It liked to play dead when bothered. It would just turn on its back and try to make you think it had just died.

Another non-poisonous snake was the Diamond-back Water Snake. This rather ferocious snake could give a good bite.



Then there was the King Snake — a very good snake to have around. There were two kinds of King Snakes at the camp: the Spotted King Snake and the more familiar one, yellow and black rings — really a beautiful snake.

We would tell the campers never to pick up a snake unless there was someone with them who knew what kind of snake it was. You see, most young people have not studied enough to tell the difference. Because they did not know the difference they were constantly making wrong identifications.

The King Snake and the Coral Snake are interesting in that they both have red, yellow, and black rings. The rings of the two snakes are, however, arranged differently. The King Snake's rings are yellow, black, red, black, yellow. The Coral Snake's rings are red, yellow, black, yellow, red. To help remember the difference, we had this saying : "Red and yellow will kill a fellow." Unless you know the *true*, you could be bitten and severely injured, or even death could result.

Those who knew the different kinds of snakes at Lone Star Camp did not have to pick them up and study every detail to tell what kind they were. They knew instantly, without question, whether it was dangerous or not.

This simple illustration is used to impress on your mind the importance of your job - to teach and to lead your students to the truth so they can, without hesitation, know the difference between right and wrong; so that they won't be fooled by every little whim that comes along, so that they won't need you to tell them what is counterfeit. They will know, because they know the Author of truth as a personal friend. They know His actions, they know His character. A mighty big job, yes, but oh, so rewarding.



JACOB'S TROUBLE OUR TROUBLE

Was Jacob's trouble real? Is there going to be a time that we will call "The Time of Jacob's Trouble?" The answer to both questions is "Yes." Jacob's trouble began with deception to obtain the treasured birthright that God had already promised to him and he would have been awarded it in God's own time. Because he and his mother failed to believe God and/or were too impatient to wait, they decided to help God out by deceiving Jacob's father.

Isn't it strange that they thought they could make something right by doing something wrong. There is a saying, "The end justifies the means," Not so! A falsehood to obtain something good, no matter how religious, can only end up dirty and unacceptable. The experience of Jacob is one that we must acquaint our young people with - not just the story of the deception, the fleeing, the wrestling with the angel but what this means to their lives.

When I was growing up, the time of Jacob's trouble was depicted as a most awful time, something to be feared. I don't know about you, but I had bad dreams about it and frankly was not looking forward to it. Now don't get me wrong, because the time is going to be awful, it is not going to be a joyous time.

Jacob's trouble began with a little act of deception, but it cost him years of dread and fear. Not until he had confessed completely and had fervently pressed for forgiveness did he receive contentment. It apparently took Jacob many years before he could bring himself to confess and ask for forgiveness. Those must have been terrible years, years of distress, years of fear for his life and fear of eternal separation from his God. Jacob's trouble was not so much physical trouble as it was anguish.

Somehow we must show our young people the true meaning of the "Time of Jacob's Trouble." The only way for them to successfully go through this time, is to be true to the Lord, to confess their sins and have complete trust in their Savior. They must realize that they may have to suffer as Jacob did after the angel touched him but they must remember the assurance that God will be with them just as he was with Jacob.

The chapter entitled "Jacob's Trouble" in The Great Controversy is a great comfort to me. Look at the following statement:

"In that time of trial, every soul must stand for himself before God."

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ . . . Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foot hold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of their world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30 This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. GC 623



While I was growing up, the terrible results of the time of trouble seemed to be more emphasized than God's care for His people, at least that's what came through to my mind. But if you are right with God, then look at the words of encouragement that follow:

"Could men see with heavenly vision, they would behold companies of angels that excel in strength stationed about those who have kept the word of Christ's patience. With sympathizing tenderness, angels have witnessed their distress and have heard their prayers. They are waiting the word of their Commander to snatch them from their peril As they endeavor to wait trustingly for the Lord to work they are led to exercised faith, hope and patience, which have been too little exercised during their religious experience. Yet for the elect's sake the time of trouble will be shortened . . ."

. . .

"The heavenly sentinels, faithful to their trust, continue their watch. Though a general decree has fixed the time when commandment keepers may be put to death, their enemies will in some cases anticipate the decree, and before the time specified, will endeavor to take their lives. But none can pass the mighty guardians stationed about every faithful soul. Some are assailed in their flight from the cities and villages; but the swords raised against them break and fall powerless as a straw. Others are defended by angels in the form of men or war." GC 603, 631

My prayer is that you will teach your students that the "Time of Jacob's Trouble" is not to be feared. Those who are prepared will be cared for. "Preparation" is the watch word.



HOW SOON IS SOON?

In Roxhwearwe, New York, about forty years ago there was an evangelistic campaign, or “Effort” as they called it in those days. It was a wonderful time for the church because they drew together and really worked for the success of the meetings.

This wasn’t just a two-or three-week meeting; no, it was a six-month meeting! In my way of thinking as a young lad, the opening meeting was about the greatest thing in my life. Never had my eyes seen so many people come to an Adventist-sponsored meeting! The great hall was packed to overflowing.

Up front was a drawing of a huge clock. The hour hand pointed to twelve. The minute hand was placed just two minutes to twelve. An angel held the minute hand and banner over the top of the clock read, “Minutes to Midnight.” Of course the theme of the meeting was “Jesus is coming soon.” It never occurred to me then that forty years later this old earth would still be rampant with sin, that Jesus would still be delaying His return.

Just how soon is soon? When we think of eternity, forty years is not long. However, when we think of our lives, forty years is a long time, half or more of our lifetime. It seems that it would be impossible for this world to last another forty years. Things we talked about in those meetings in Rochester as happening in the future have already happened. Knowledge has increased far beyond our expectations. Man now has the ability to annihilate the whole earth just by the push of a few buttons. E.G. White states that Jesus would have been here long ere this if we had all done our part.

How soon is soon? The answer is still unknown. It is certain, however, that Jesus is coming again and it must be soon. We as Christian ministers of education must not become complacent with the times in which we live and with our surroundings. We must continually, daily, show our young people that the coming of our Lord is a sure event and that even though we don’t know the day or the hour, it must be soon.

It is my prayer that you never let a day go by without making personal preparations for that great day. It is my prayer that you never let a day go by without making a special effort in your lesson plans to point your students to the soon-coming of Jesus.



ARE YOU WILLING TO STOOP DOWN?

“Carol, every human being has a divine spark, . . . God breathes something of himself into each of us. If you look hard enough, you’ll find it.”

This statement was made by a father to his young daughter who learned a lesson of caring and respect from her thoughtful and wise father. In the April 1990, issue of the Guidepost, there is an article entitled “The Goat Woman.” I just finished reading it. My mind immediately thought of the examples we, as leaders of youth, are giving. I couldn’t help but wonder if we are able to give the same kind of view of human nature as did Carol’s father. Here, in short form, is the story. You be the judge.

The goat woman, as she was called, lived in just a shack on the edge of a swamp. She dressed in shabby clothes and almost always carried two large brown bags. Her hair was long and greasy. Her shoes were rubber inner tubes tied together with string. She was always muttering to herself, had a hollow stare, and the stench was awful. Even though almost everyone would stay clear of the goat woman, Carol’s father always treated her with respect.

One Easter morning, Carol’s family went to church. They sat close to the front because her mother was playing the organ. The flowers in the church smelled wonderful. The music was beautiful. Suddenly the church became quiet as there was a rustling sound. Carol turned and was horrified to see the goat woman squeezing into their row, she sat right next to her - greasy hair, dirty shopping bags, shabby coat, awful smell - all next to Carol. For her, the meaning of the service had ended. When the last song ended, and everyone was getting up to leave, one of the bags accidentally fell over and out fell “rotting apples, gnawed-over chicken bone, disgusting garbage” all over the clean church floor. There was disgust on the faces of the parishioners as they gave plenty of room between them and the unfortunate woman. First the goat woman bent down, then Carol’s father, well-dressed as he was, bent down and scooped up the potato peelings and egg shells, putting them back into the bag, all the while talking quietly to the woman.

Because Carol’s father acted like it was the most normal thing to do, and to him it was, tension was broken. Others began talking and helping to pick up the mess. When things were cleaned up, the woman turned back and thanked Carol’s father and said it was for her goats. To Carol’s amazement, her father offered her a ride home. That meant there would be seven in the car, and we would have to be even closer to her than she was in church. Things were different now, though. The woman Carol thought was so repulsive really wasn’t. She didn’t seem to notice the smell anymore. The family later learned she used to be a teacher, and when her fiancée left her, something snapped inside her and she retreated to her own little world.

There is a happy ending to this story, though. Through Carol’s father’s help, tests were given and a chemical imbalance was discovered for which proper medication was given, and the goat woman was able to live a new life.



This story struck me. How unkind we can be most of the time because of our own pride! Our God stooped down and picked up all the garbage of our lives, found the imbalance in our make-up, and now we can live a new life for Him. We, too, can stoop down and help pick up the lives of those placed in our care everyday.

Let's not forget the words of Carol's father: "Every human being has a divine spark, . . . God breathes something of himself into each of us. If you look hard enough, you'll find it."



THROW-AWAY “KIDS?”

Our society is schooled in the throw-away ethic. Everything we buy, well, almost everything, is packed and then put in a bag to carry home. As soon as we reach our destination, the package is taken out of the bag, and the bag promptly thrown away into the wastebasket. Next, the item is taken out of its covering whether it's a box, stretch paper, or whatever and promptly thrown into the wastebasket. There is so much waste! Just look at the tons and tons of garbage that go into our landfills each day. It is increasingly difficult to find places to dump our waste material. Just think of some of the things we now throw away. Such as, diapers which previously were all cloth. Now they are used only once and thrown away. How about the baby bottle? Most of them used to be all glass. Now many of them are plastic bags which are used once and then thrown away. It seems that manufacturers make things to last only for a short period then thrown away and a new item bought to take its place. It's just good business.

There has always been some interest in recycling, but in recent months it is becoming big business. My father and mother live in Port Orange, Florida and are given special containers to separate their trash for recycling purposes. Isn't it strange we humans don't react until a crisis comes. Landfills are full and we can't dump in the ocean. Remember the barges full of garbage that traveled around our country? It seemed like months before they found a final resting place. The outer space also is becoming like a landfill full of junk. Now we are forced to find ways of using our own trash. It's about time!

Sometimes we treat out “kids” as trash. If they don't fit into the mold we have fixed for them, we want to throw them away (you noticed I said “want to throw them away”). Unfortunately, too many are actually thrown away with no thought of recycling. Just look at the thousands and thousands of runaway “kids.” Oh, what a pity!

Let's look at recycling again. Some of the best writing paper is made from old rags. The list of items that are reused is endless, many of which become better looking, more useful and stronger than they were when first used and thrown away. Think of Christ on the cross. He promised one of His crossmates a new life. That man was recycled, if you please. He's going to be more handsome, he's going to be stronger, he's going to have a reason to live, and he's going to have a definite love for his Saviour.

Each of us knows of many “kids” who have already been thrown away. Each of us can see others who are on the way to being thrown away. But what can we do, you ask. I'm not God. I can't make a person into a different person. That's true, but neither did Christ. He gave the man on the cross an opportunity. You, too, can be the recycling instrument to work with these kids. Sometimes the parents really have done all they can do. They need you to be that agent who sees something good in young people, and encourages them by showing faith in them.

Let's not throw away our kids. They're too precious. They are worth recycling.



THE MINIMUM MOTIVE

Going the second mile is the opposite of what we prefer naturally to do. We usually attempt to justify our refusals in the name of common sense and we approach each task with minimum motivation.

Many of your students are interested in knowing only the requirements for a passing grade, rather than what constitutes the most adequate education of their minds and talents. Many respond to an assignment with the questions, "How many pages?" and "May they be double-spaced?"

There is here no quest for the joy of knowledge. This attitude reveals that the questioner intends to accept only the minimum assignments. Real joy comes in doing more than is expected, more than is asked of us, more than is demanded by law.

The story of how Booker T. Washington passed his entrance exam for college illustrates this point of view very well. One day while at work in the coal mine, he happened to overhear two miners talking about a school. It seemed to him that it must be the greatest place on earth and not even heaven presented more attractions for him at that time than did the Hampton Normal and Agricultural School in Virginia.

Hampton was about 500 miles from his home. He had no means of conveyance, so he begged rides and walked the entire distance. As soon as possible after reaching the grounds of the Hampton Institute, Booker presented himself before the head teacher for assignment to a class.

Because he was so long without proper food or a bath and change of clothing, she had doubts in her mind about the wisdom of admitting this young lad as a student. After some hours had passed, the head teacher said, "The adjoining recitation room needs sweeping. Take the broom and sweep it."

Booker realized here was his chance. He swept the recitation room three times and then dusted four times. He had the feeling that in a large measure, his future depended on the impression he made on the teacher in the cleaning of that room.

Upon completion, he reported to the head teacher. When she was unable to find one bit of dirt on the floor or a particle of dust on any of the furniture, she quietly remarked, "I guess you will do to enter this institution."

Booker was one of the happiest souls on earth. The sweeping of that room was his college entrance examination, and never did any youth pass an examination for entrance into Harvard or Yale that had more genuine satisfaction. Booker stated he had passed several examinations since then, but he always felt that was the best one he had ever passed.



In life, the minimum is always the enemy of the maximum. The rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked, "What lack I yet? I obeyed the rules, I have kept the laws from a youth up?" All this, yet done from a sense of duty, and not from a sense of joy. Christ challenged this young mind to rise above that. He offered him a second mile experience which is the mile of opportunity and power.

When we travel the first mile, conscription is in charge; when we voluntarily continue on the second mile, our choice is in charge. The first mile is law, the second is love within you.

"For the love of Christ constrains us," we can say with the apostle Paul, "even to go the second mile."



CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS

It seems as if I spend most of my life traveling from place to place in the seat of a car behind a steering wheel. Don't misunderstand me, it's not all bad. There are so many good things about travel that, at least in my case, they far outweigh the negatives. To watch the seasonal changes, to see the creatures of nature, to see the great expanse of the oceans or the lofty heights of the mountains brings me in greater awe of the Creator of the Universe. So, my lot in life is not a burden, but a blessing of inestimable value.

One sign that always makes my heart skip a beat or two is, "Construction in Progress." This usually means a slowdown, which comes during those times when schedules don't permit the unexpected. "Construction in Progress" means that ahead the road, bridge or whatever is in need of repair and will be better in the future. But until then, traffic jams and snarls are going to be a part of the daily routine.

When you think about it, every one of our schools can have a sign in front of it which reads, "Construction in Progress." Construction of a mind, that is. This takes time, and we, as adults, must remember that there will be slowdowns, sometimes congestions, sometimes snarls, but always realizing that after proper construction has been completed, things will be moving efficiently.

All teachers want to be the best, they want their students to excel. There is an old Chinese proverb that goes like this:

"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand."

This old proverb is true. Psychologists tell us that we have a potential of remembering only up to ten percent of what we hear. If that doesn't blow your mind it should! They say that when you add seeing to hearing the potential for remembering goes up to fifty percent. They also tell us that when doing is added, then the potential of remembering goes up to ninety percent. So, the construction process, or teaching method, is of utmost importance.

The real question then is, "What is going to be done after hearing?" Dr. Howard Hendricks, in his book *The Seven Laws of the Teacher*, states:

"When you read the word 'hear' in the New Testament, you can also read it 'do'. Because the Lord Jesus welded those words together when He said, 'He that heareth my words and doeth them, he it is who loves me . . . Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things I tell you?' His implications? 'Either stop calling me 'Lord,' or start doing what I ask you.'"



The name of the game in Christian education is not knowledge, it's active obedience.

In the spiritual realm, the opposite of ignorance is not knowledge, it's obedience. In New Testament understanding to know and not to do is not to know at all.

So you see, our work as construction engineers, teachers, is far greater than the work of the public school teacher. Not only are we cultivating a good mind for this earth, we are cultivating a child for eternal life, that is our greater aim.

Construction in Progress — completion comes with doing, not only with the road worker, but with the teacher and student as well.



OPEN MY EYES

Are you a problem solver — the one that wants to solve every problem - the one who worries about everyone's difficulties- the one who believes that every dilemma has an answer? It truly would be nice if there were such a person on this earth that could untangle all disagreements. Alas, there is no such person. If there were such a person he would be a millionaire a thousand times over.

One of my colleagues, Fred Stephan, who is Director of Education for the Lake Union, was giving a worship talk recently on five different types of problems which, if identified, would help in determining a solution to difficulties.

- Problems that can't be fixed.
- Problems that will fix themselves, if left alone.
- Problems that are none of my business.
- Problems that I should not worry about - God can take care of them.
- Problems that I can fix.

Now, this list makes a lot of sense to me. It seems that most people-persons who are successful know when to draw back and when to step in and help. Let's look at these five types of problems from an educational viewpoint.

1. All of us have children from broken homes in our classrooms or schools - homes that have gone beyond human fixing. We must learn to work around the problems, work with and for the children, leaving the rest alone.
2. Sometimes we jump in too fast. When two young people are having a disagreement, we try to be helpful, but end up causing more trouble. So many times problems will get straightened out if only time is allowed for cooler heads to work.
3. Often, there are situations that are really none of my business, getting in the middle of it would cause more anxiety. Someone else is systematically going about helping to make things right. My entrance will only bring about more trouble.
4. This is the best one. God is the best answer to any problem. Think about Elisha's situation in II Kings 6. The King of Syria was very upset because Elisha was giving away his secrets. He decided the only way to stop this from happening was to take Elisha as a captive. So, he sent a whole army to Dothan, where the prophet was. When his poor servant looked out of the door and saw that they were surrounded by a great army, he was scared almost out of his wits. But Elisha calmly said in verse 16 —



“Fear not for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Then he asked the Lord to open the eyes of his servant, and he saw the host of the Lord’s army.

Oh, my friends, we worry too much. We don’t depend on the Lord enough. The days of miracles are not over. Perhaps we should pray for our eyes to be opened. Maybe He could open our eyes by showing us a way to solve the problem.

5. There is a reason for Number 5 being last. The last problem that I can fix really now becomes a partnership between God and me. When He opens my eyes the problems are easily solved.

Let our prayer be — “Lord, I pray Thee, open my eyes, that I may see.”



IS LOVE ENOUGH?

In the latter part of October 1987, the administrators and departmental leaders of the Atlantic Union Conference met for their annual planning session. One of the presenters was Dr. Winton Beaven. The title of this presentation was the title chosen for this article. The question "Is Love Enough?" does not at all indicate that there should not be love, but that there must be something more to support love.

David loved his God and his country, and he knew that God loved him. But was that enough to go out and battle with a giant? He also had practiced with the slingshot and was a very accurate marksman. He was not only competent in this art, but he was confident that he could do the job, and he had trust in the Lord that these abilities would not leave him in the time of need.

A man may sincerely love the Lord, but if he intends to build a skyscraper, he must become competent in the skyscraper-building business. Those who finance the enterprise must have confidence and trust in him in that he can properly do the job.

In dealing with young people, love is infinitely important and can make up for a multitude of errors. But, it's not enough to say to a student, "God loves you, and so do I" then go about our regular business deciding that somehow the student will automatically find out that what you say is in fact true. It's easy to say, "I love you" and the students not feel that love. In fact, they may even feel the very opposite. They must have confidence in you - then the word "love" will mean much more to them. If they can be given help to become competent in prayer and in spiritual things, then there will be a willingness to accept your counsel. You will have to earn their respect, confidence, and trust by showing them that you truly care for them.

Dr. Larry Geraty, the president of our college, has made it very clear to the students of AUC that he loves them. To illustrate this, I would like to pass along this happening: The parents of one of AUC's students went away for a weekend and forgot to tell their daughter what motel they would be staying in. They always left a number just in case an emergency might arise. Before retiring, the mother realized their mistake. Since it was late, they decided not to call home, if there was any trouble, the daughter would surely call on one of their good friends.

When they returned from the trip, the daughter was asked, "Had there been an emergency, who would you have called?"

Without hesitating, the answer was, "Dr. Geraty."

The father and mother were indeed surprised, for even though they respected their college presidents when they were students, they never really thought of calling on them in time of emergency. They asked the question, "Why would you call Dr. Geraty?"



The answer was, "Because I know he cares and I know he would help me." That kind of respect, confidence and trust cannot be bought, it has to be earned quietly and sincerely.

In my opinion, that's the spirit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And, if we are His ambassadors, and I believe we are, our students must know that we love them, not just by our words, but by the way we treat them.



GOBLET OR FINGER BOWL

On August 2, 1990, our under-treasurer of the Atlantic Union gave a worship talk that impressed me greatly. The next few lines will be an attempt to capture some of the thoughts and ideas of his presentation.

Many of you have watched the potter busy at work taking a clump of clay, non-descript clay and carefully working it into something beautiful. Sometimes the intended work of art cannot be achieved because of a flaw in the clay. The potter must change his mind and form a different object. It can still be beautiful, but not as large or as pretty as first intended. All the time, the potter's wheel is spinning, he is continually dipping his hands in water (this is to keep the clay moldable). When the work of art is completed, it must be removed from the potter's wheel. To do this the potter takes a wet string and while the wheel is spinning pulls the string across the bottom part, separating it from the non-desirable and non-essential parts of the object. The art object is set aside to dry. The potter then puts a glaze over it, making sure to cover every part, and then places it on a shelf to dry before it is fired, that is put in a kiln with intense heat for many hours, after which it emerges as a most splendid work of art.

While traveling in Mexico, it has been my privilege to watch many potters at work. Their hands are so skillful, they can make vases or bowls one right after another. They all look alike, but upon close examination they are all a little different, each one with a personality of its own. Occasionally, the potter would stop, mash down the object he'd be working with, take out a portion of the clay, throw it to the floor, and then start over, making something smaller.

Jeremiah 18:2-4 says --

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. (NIV Version)

As teachers, our students are like lumps of clay - all with such potential of becoming a beautiful end product. We are like the potter; we take these rough lumps of clay (our students), and with loving hands try to mold them into true children of God. We moisten our hands with water (the Word of God) and fondly and carefully begin to mold our students. Every student will not become the lovely specimen that the potter (you, the teacher) desires because of flaws in his character. But, as the potter in the story did not give up, neither can we give up. We must help to push out undesirable characteristics by taking the water of God's Word and begin to re-mold flawed pieces of clay. Maybe it won't become what the Master Potter, (Jesus Christ) once desired, but it can still be useful to the Lord once the undesirable traits have been removed.



As the potter completes the molding he then separates the beautiful object from the wheel with a wet string, on using the Word of God to separate from worldly things. Before the piece of art is put in the fire, a glaze is put all over it - to seal it, to make it beautiful. Perhaps this glaze could be likened to faith that comes from reading, understanding, and accepting the Word of God. Faith, tried by fire, brought on by our adversary, the devil, always makes the piece of art, our students, more attractive.

That's our job, friends, not to be sad because every one of our students isn't perfect, but to be happy that we can be the agent the Master Potter uses to develop the will or mold boys and girls to be useful men and women. Goblets or finger bowls — both are beautiful to the Lord when all the flaws have been removed.



DOES GOD WANT YOU THERE?

As we begin a new school year, many of you may be asking yourselves, “What am I doing here? Lord, is this where you really want me?”

You may have just moved at your own initiative, not really knowing why. Or perhaps the superintendent asked you to move and you didn’t agree with his or her reasoning. Most of you feel very good about where you are; however, there are some of you who may have the opinion that you have been mistreated by parents, board or conference. Since prophetic power is not one of my gifts, the answer to these questions cannot be found in this article.

In my mind, however, there is no question that the Lord works in mysterious ways that is, mysterious to man! This past summer, Lorna Lawrence, teacher of grades 5-8 at the Bay Knoll School, Rochester, New York, gave a worship in the union office that shows how the Lord leads. The story goes something like this.

Some years ago Lorna felt she had teacher burnout and needed a change. Through friends, she was invited to go to the Far East for the express purpose of teaching six very good students, spiritually and scholastically. This was a great idea, she thought, “I need a change, I need a rest. I’m going for me.”

When she arrived in the Far East things had changed. There were more than six students. In fact, one of the students, a fifth grader, was not able to read.

To make a long story short, Lorna had been trained to work with children who had this boy’s problem. She was able to help this young man conquer his problem and see him make giant steps of improvement. Lorna’s plan was to go to the mission field for her own self, to have an easier assignment and to get herself back together. As time went on she realized that the Lord had worked out all the details of her preparations to go to the Far East and to be in that very place so that she could help this special child. At the same time, he helped her to get a new perspective on life. Lorna was happy, the boy was happy, and the parents were happy. What a great God we have!

Does God want you where you are? You may not get the answer to that question right away. It may not be obvious now, in fact, it may take years for the true reason to surface. The Lord, however, is able to work through adversity. One thing is for certain, the Lord does have a plan for you. He does not promise that there will be sunshine everyday. He does, however, promise a reward if we are faithful.



This is not to say that every decision we make concerning our careers is going to be the Lord's will. Sometimes we run ahead of him. But even when we make hasty or wrong decisions because of our humanism, the Lord has mercy on us, uses our frail selves, and turns adversity into glory for Him.

It is my prayer that the Lord will use you right where you are in ways you haven't even dreamed possible, and that at the end of this school year you will be able to say truly, "The Lord needed me in this place."



I ALMOST MISSED IT!

It is better to say “I almost missed it” than to have to say “I almost made it.” The first statement shows that one has taken stock, has realized what a wonderful opportunity he has, and what a terrible thing it would be not to have made it.

Several times in my life (probably in yours too) that first statement has been so true. For instance, the airplane you reached just as the door was closing, just made the boat that was leaving the island and there wasn't another one for 24 hours, the beautiful musical that you almost decided not to attend, or the joy of doing something in life that you nearly decided against.

“Almost made it” isn't much help when the plane leaves and you are standing at the gate. It doesn't help you perform your duties at the destination of the flight. “Almost made it” is not very comforting when you watch the boat leave the dock, and you know that the motels are all full, the eating establishments are all closed, and the waiting room at the boat dock will be closed in five minutes. It's terrible to have someone tell you about the wonderful concert you missed, when you could have been there, or to look back at one of your decision points realizing that you took the easiest road to your life's work. You almost decided to go for the work you really wanted to do, but it seemed too hard at the time, so you settled for less.

In the book, *When The Pieces Don't Fit . . . God Makes The Difference*, Glaphre the author, found herself in an inner-city school with lots of problems. She didn't want to go, but finally accepted. She was “just what the doctor ordered,” or should I say, “she was exactly where the Lord wanted her.” After three years of trial and fun she said this: I almost missed it. I almost missed the opportunity for personal growth — all because I looked at my plans . . . and initially said no to a job I didn't think suited me. Looking back on those years, I have to wonder how much I crippled God's purpose for that time I kept resisting His direction, kept hanging on to my own perception of what was right for me.



WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

Recently, one of my friends presented a worship talk for a North American Division education meeting.

She began by telling the story of three people discussing the topic “When does life begin?” One said, “Oh, that’s easy. Everybody knows it’s at conception. That’s when life begins.”

“No, no!” the second person said, “You are wrong! There is no life until there is breath. Anyone with any sense knows that!”

The third person decided not to take sides in that discussion, but indicated with a twinkle in his eye that life really begins when the dog dies, and all the kids have left home! What he really meant was that the nest was empty. No more worry about caring for dogs and kids. You are now free to go and come as you please. This is when life really begins! To be free you must be empty, empty of all animals, empty of children, nothing to care for, free as a bird to fly off into the blue yonder.

The greatest teacher this world has ever known taught by using paradoxes such as — to receive you must first give to be strong you must be weak — or, to be first you are going to have to be last. Seemingly, these are very contradictory statements, but when used, the chock effect is a sure attention—getter. Our great Teacher, however, didn’t just use them for shock effect, He was teaching great truths.

Now, let us make the story concerning when life begins into a paradox. According to the third man in the story, life begins when the nest is empty. It’s doubtful he had any spiritual implication in mind. Our great Teacher might have put it this way, “Life does not truly begin until the body is empty” — meaning empty of self, pride, envy and all other traits of the master deceiver. “Life begins,” He might continue, “when our Lord is allowed full access to the body when every thought and action is attuned to His will.

Life really begins when others are most important, when service is a natural attitude, when human choices are made with the Lord’s will in mind.”

Doctors, lawyers, and people in general will never cease to argue as to when physical life begins, but that is not even an issue here. The issue is, when does spiritual life begin? Doctors, lawyers, and people in general will continue to debate the question of when physical life begins until the Lord comes, but there need be no debate when spiritual life begins; the only one who really knows when it happens to you is you. You are the only one who can empty your life, the only one who can surrender your will, the only one who can invite the great teacher into your body; and you are one of the most important persons to teach this great truth to those who sit before you each day.



Now, the big question. When did life begin for you, or when will it begin? There must be ownership before it can be taught or caught. My prayer for you, as well as myself, is –

Lord, Fill me with Thy Spirit. Let the young I teach not see a fake – one who says one thing but whose life indicates another. But let them see a true, dedicated Christian teacher. Lord, help them to empty their bodies, filling them with Thy Spirit, and begin life today. Amen



ARE WE COMPLACENT?

Ever since the beginning of our church, preachers have been proclaiming the Second Coming of Christ. They have been pointing to prophecy and calling our attention to the things that have happened in the past or are happening in the present. Some of these things are of nature and some are of political consequence. The preacher would always stress the prophecy already completed, then they would lead into the yet unfulfilled prophecy. There always seems to be so few prophecies to be yet fulfilled that our sojourn on this earth just couldn't be long.

Who can't remember evangelistic meetings with the theme of "Minutes to Midnight," or "Seconds to Midnight." Up front there would be a picture of a giant clock with an angel holding the minute or second hand from crossing the midnight mark.

As a boy these meetings had a profound impression on me. There wasn't any question that Jesus was coming back, and soon. As with many young people, the questions that went through my mind were something like these: Will I ever be old enough to drive a car?, Will I ever have a chance to get married?, etc., etc.

Now many years later we are still here, not because it's what the Lord wanted for us. No, we haven't been as attentive to our work. The world just hasn't been prepared. But it is different now than ever before. Prophecies that we used to look forward to happening someday in the future are now taking place before our eyes and in rapid succession.

No, we are not surprised, but things have always been the same. When something like this is about to happen it catches us off guard.

As Christians, there's not really much to fear in this old world because we really know what the ultimate future is. By accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior we are able to determine our future. But there is one thing that I fear, that's complacency. How about you?



IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

It seems the heart of democracy is compromise; for example follow a bill through Congress. It must be introduced in the House by a Representative and in the Senate by a Senator. If the bill is lucky enough to make it through both branches of Congress, many times its two versions will hardly be recognizable as the same bill that was originally introduced. Therefore, the two versions are sent to a joint committee composed of representatives and senators, whose purpose it is to hammer out the differences and make it into a bill that both the House and the Senate can accept. This doesn't come easy. There has to be a great deal of give and take — compromise if you please — making differences reconcilable.

Does God compromise? Let's put it this way: because of sin, God has allowed man his desire, which was not the original will of God; therefore, His plan changed. Israel cried for a king. God also allowed man to eat clean meats because they wanted to, not because it was His original plan.

The idea of God -centered education is as old as time itself; in fact, the Eden school was to be a model for future generations. The Garden of Eden was the classroom, the book of nature was the first textbook, the Creator himself was the instructor, and the parents and children were the students. The Eden dwellers held conversations with animate and inanimate creation, with leaf, flower, tree, and every living creature. The glory of God, and the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolution, the balancing of the clouds, the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night, all were the objects of study in earth's first school.

It was God's original purpose that as the human family should increase, they should establish other schools and homes like the one that had been established in Eden. Thus, one day the whole earth would be populated with homes and families whose education reflected the light and glory of a loving creator. However, sin spoiled this. Now outside the garden, father and mother were to be teachers. But as wickedness increased, this too was altered, and by Samuel's time there was so much infiltration of heathenism that it became necessary to establish special schools known as the schools of the prophets.

So, does God compromise? I think not, for Webster states that a compromise is a "settlement made with concessions." God has allowed changes, but they can't be considered as settlements.

There will come a time when an end will come to the changes, a time when it is evident that there is irreconcilable differences between man's desires and God's plan. And the settlement will be God's plan completely, no compromise. Praise the Lord.



WHEN ARE WE GOING TO CHANGE?

For a long time one of my concerns has been the apparent inability of mankind to live with one another. This is not just a national or state problem, it is a church problem and a Seventh-day Adventist problem, but even closer, it is a personal problem.

Yes, I'm talking about the racial situation. How many times have you heard someone say, "I'm not prejudiced, but . . ." That "but" is very big! Some of you have heard me say, "We are all going to live together and get along together someday, but only in Heaven." Of course that is said with tongue-in-cheek. Ellen White states in *Counsels on Education*, p. 43, "The characters formed in this life will determine the future destiny. When Christ shall come, He will not change the character of any individual."

When we go through the proverbial pearly gates, the Lord is not going to wave a magic wand and change the way we have been feeling on earth. Therefore the tongue-in-cheek statement that has been coming from my lips is not at all possible. If we are not able to get along with each other on the earth, it does not seem possible for us to ever reach Heaven. This is very heavy on my heart.

It doesn't make any difference what actions are taken at the North American Division, or at the union or conference level. It does not make any difference what actions are taken in the local church. What does matter is the individual's relation to the actions of not only our Church's position but also our country's position. Laws force issues, but do not necessarily change minds. Church actions try to point our people to moral positions they ought to be taking, but actions taken by the Church do not necessarily change minds.

When are we going to stop being suspicious of each other? When are we going to stop sniping at each other? When are we going to change our characters so they will be acceptable to Christ? When? I don't know. Only you can answer these questions. One thing, however, I feel sure of is that if we cannot get along as races on this earth, we aren't going to have an opportunity to change in Heaven because we will never arrive there.

UNRECOGNIZED CHAMPIONS

Champions are wonderful people. We all like to be around them. We all like to watch them do the thing or things they do best. Champions are easily recognized because they look the part, and they usually act like champions. That's probably why most champions become heroes, to young and old alike.

Despite the popularity, this kind of champion has problems; there can only be one of a kind. There are too many opportunities for the "big head" thinking that nobody could possibly be as good.

This is not about that kind of champion. It is about champions who know not that they are champions; individuals who are going about their business doing the best they can, and not looking for any special recognition.

This summer I had the privilege of paying tribute to two retired teachers who taught me in the first five grades of my school experience. My school was just a little school. In the eyes of the world it wasn't much. The children that went to this school were just ordinary boys and girls. But to these two teachers, their boys and girls were special. They gave their best so that we could become something. To me, these two teachers were for many years unrecognized champions in my life. Finally, at the other end of life, I recognize them for what they really are — true Christian champions. I like to think that some of my classmates in that little school in Rochester, New York were unrecognized champions also. These teachers didn't really know what was in store for the young people they taught. They just taught us as if they knew that we were going to make a mark in this world.

Now, when you look at it that way, you can understand why E.G. White said that teaching is the nicest work. It is very difficult to make a prediction as to who will succeed and who will fail. But one thing is certain, there are unrecognized champions in your class. It behooved us then to teach as if everyone is going to be a champion, so that when their time comes they will be prepared to become that very special person in someone's life. It's not important to be a champion for a lifetime; it can be just for one person.

Blessed be the teachers who look at their students as future unrecognizable champions.

The school year 1991-1992 has just begun — one year closer to the Lord's coming. We at the Union office which we could tell you that your life during this school year will be easy, but we can't. We would like to realize that even though things may sometimes become difficult, we are still living in the best time of the world's history, for we are the ones who hope to see the Lord's return. There has been no other time in the history of mankind that the teaching profession is so important. It is in your hands to help develop all these unrecognizable champions to become true servants for the Lord.

Remember, we are praying for you — our recognized champions.

The Teacher:

As Devotee



ME RETIRE? – NEVER!

Everyday people are retiring. Some voluntarily, some by laws set up by their organization, and others by the will of the people. Both the government and our church have set up age guidelines that are good and upon reaching that magical age, both the individuals and the public they serve are ready for their retirement. Precious little is then heard from this group until the epitaph is written on the tombstone.

When I look at the great people in the history of the world, both present and past, they didn't stop being great when they reached the age of 65. In a sense, the really great people cannot retire because what they say and what they stand for are examples for hundreds to millions of people. It is an interesting fact that many of the men and women who lead the affairs of this world are beyond the customary retirement age. The one who in just a few days will become the President of the United States will be nearly seventy years old. Why all this talk of retirement? Recently I attended a retirement party for one of our fellow workers. He had given forty years of service to this church. His accomplishments were many. I was sorry to see him leave the active duty.

In November of 1980 it was our privilege to bring to the campus of Atlantic Union College as speaker for the Education Day program a retiree from the General Conference Office of Education. She held the students in the palm of her hand. They listened. They appreciated what she had to say because what she said was relevant and important to life. I was glad she had not completely taken herself out of the main stream of educational work and was still willing to come back and share with us her knowledge and inspiration. There are many good reasons for retirement, but that magical age of 62 or 65 is probably the poorest reason. We have all seen a teacher who at 25 should be retired because of his negative influence on his students. Then there are others who, like my director friend, at age 70+ is still wielding a tremendous amount of influence in his denomination in educational circles. I am glad he is anxious to continue in his present position, and I hope that he will for years to come.

You who are reading this are in many different stages of your careers in the organized work. Some have just begun, some are half-way through, and some are almost finished. I submit to you, however, that you should not ever think of retiring from the work of God.

There are many teachers already on retirement pay who are teaching in a small out-of-the-way school because they love children, because they love God, because they want to serve the church, and because if they didn't teach there, there wouldn't be a school for the children of their church. There is no question that this church needs the young for their new ideas, their zeal and spirit, but it also desperately needs the retirees. Won't you think of a total commitment of your life to the church?



MY WAY, YOUR WAY, GOD'S WAY

Moses had been leading the children of Israel through the wilderness for many years. He had heard about every complaint there could be. It must have seemed to him that every time he turned around someone was complaining about something. So, when the children of Israel once more started their murmuring, he was filled with righteous indignation and yelled out, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of the rock?" Then he hit the rock twice, and water come out abundantly enough for the whole congregation and their animals. You might say the end justified the means.

Moses was a good man; but the children of Israel were an unruly and ungrateful group. At least once before, God had commanded Moses to strike a rock to produce water. After drinking their fill of water, the children of Israel were, for the time being, satisfied and as it were, off Moses back; but God came to Moses and said: "You didn't follow my instructions. You hit the rock instead of speaking to it; therefore, you are not going to be privileged to lead the children of Israel into the promised land."

We can all sympathize with Moses, a man under heavy administrative pressure. We might even say, "It certainly seems he was justified in being angry with them. After all, it didn't hurt anyone and God, whether it was conscious or unconscious, decided to do it MY WAY, but he paid dearly for not doing it GOD'S WAY.

Friends, you too may feel you are justified in certain treatment of the young people sitting before you. We sometimes like to call it righteous indignation, because we like to think God would approve.

You, as teachers, will have some very good times; but, then again, sometimes you may feel like Moses, bombarded on all sides by students, parents, board members, etc. These are the times you must do things GOD'S WAY. Remember, there seems to be at least three ways of doing things — MY WAY, YOUR WAY, and GOD'S WAY. Even though MY WAY and YOUR WAY may bring desired results for the moment, if it's not GOD's WAY what price might we pay.

It is my prayer that MY WAY, YOUR WAY, and GOD'S WAY will become the SAME WAY.



WHAT WILL YOUR TOMBSTONE SAY?

One of the intriguing things about living in New England is its cemeteries. It's interesting to see the very old ones with the thin, leaning tombstones; to look and see how old the person was when death took place. What interests me more than anything else is what is written on the tombstone. Some just give bare facts; however, on many tombstones very nice inscriptions are written about the persons who are buried beneath them.

It makes me wonder what kind of mark was made on the world by the individual when the stone merely says that he was born September 21, 1709 and died October 13, 1745. Perhaps an interesting experiment for each of us would be to take time to write several epitaphs that we would enjoy seeing on our own tombstone, then sit back and decide if those who know us best will agree with what is written or if they would say, "No way! That's not true!"

It's good to hear nice things said about our friends. My oldest daughter spent two years under a wonderful older teacher. She was really a master teacher who seemed to know how to handle any situation, and always have just the right answer. After finishing the first and second grades, my daughter was talking with my wife about Mrs. Nelson whom she dearly loved. She told her mother she could never remember Mrs. Nelson raising her voice to any of her students. Yet, this teacher had a perfect classroom.

Then there comes to mind another friend, a colleague, a person to whom you could pour out your soul. Time and time again we would talk about others, but in the nine years of my acquaintance with this person, not one derogatory word has come from his lips about anyone.

You have all had experiences such as these. There's the individual who's always smiling. There's the person you love to be with because he is never negative, but always has a positive outlook on life. When people like that pass away, it is easy to know what to write on their tombstone because they made a difference to almost everyone with whom they came in contact.

Now, back to you and me. What kind of words will people write on our tombstone? If you're like me, sometimes we can feel good about our lives, our accomplishments, the way we treat people, and the way we are perceived. But, then again, there are times when it seems we have really blown it. It's not hard to imagine what might be put on our tombstone then. Whether the words are right or wrong, we probably won't be deciding the composition of our epitaph. Some people do their job in a very acceptable way and never really receive recognition for their performance. In the final analysis, it doesn't make much difference what man has to say about us. It's what God thinks that counts.



Look at Hebrews 11. Read it through. Now there's a chapter full of good things to be put on tombstones. How about Hebrews 11:31? The epitaph of this person might read, "By faith, Rahab believed the true God, and was saved." It's doubtful that many humans of her time would see her in that light. But God did.

Yes, we care about what men think of us. But it's what God thinks that is important. It's the epitaph He writes that we should be concerned about.



SITTING STILL

Does December 1, 1955 mean anything to you? Does the name Rosa Parks bring back to your memory an event of the past? To some, there is immediate recognition; to the rest, you will remember as you read on.

Rosa Parks was not a radical. She was not an activist. But she had taken all she could take, and she decided on this day, December 1, 1955, to sit still. She boarded a public bus and took the first vacant seat. She was a good woman, a church-going woman, who attempted to make a living by being a seamstress. Little did she realize that when she decided to sit still she would be lighting the fuse to social dynamite. The driver turned and told her to move to the rear of the bus. She sat still. She was pushed. She sat still. She was cursed. She sat still. Finally, she was hauled off to jail. It is doubtful that Rosa Parks simply was not going to be a second-class citizen for anybody anymore and all she knew to do was to sit still.

Now, 34 years later, men and women, no matter what race they are, can sit side-by-side on any bus and go anywhere they want. The sitting still is not as easy as it sounds. How many times did your mother tell you to sit still? How many times have you told your students to sit still, or even more, shut up and sit still?

Many religious leaders made a practice of sitting still as part of their daily routine. Buddha, Mohammed, Gandhi, and of course, the greatest of Leaders, our Lord loved to sit still in the garden, in a boat on the lake, in a home, in any quiet place, for that's where He communed with His Father. But how, you may ask, is it possible to get a room of hyperactive students to sit still for even a moment? In my experience of visiting classrooms for more than 30 years, it's not the teacher that is shouting, who is able to lead their flock to meaningful, quiet time. It does work, though. Some teachers have demonstrated to me by quietly sitting still themselves. It seems to be contagious, and students follow their teacher into silent meditation.

According to Robert Fulghum, a teacher's silent stillness is sometimes taken for great wisdom.

Yes, friends, sitting still is a powerful tool, for it is by sitting still that there can be a connection with the greatest power source. Let me point you to 1Kings 19:11, where the Lord told Elijah to "Go forth and stand upon the Mount before the Lord." He told him that the Lord would pass by. There was a great strong wind which rent the mountains, but the Lord was not in the winds. After the wind came the earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. Then after the earthquake came the fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire, there came a still, small voice. It was then that Elijah heard the Lord.



Communion with the Lord was not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. But by sitting still and listening to the still, small voice we can all be a Rosa Parks or an Elijah, receiving and giving power by sitting still.

* Taken from the book entitled, It Was on Fire When I Laid Down On It, by Robert Fulghum.



HERE WE GO AGAIN!

The title is rather intriguing, don't you think? It could be "Here We Go Again to Some Wonderful Challenging Event" or "Here we Go Again to Some Daredevilish, Exciting Event," or "Here We Go Again to Some Awful Experience We've Been Through Before." I suppose there may be some teachers in all three categories. Most of you can't wait to get back in the classroom because you know you have very challenging students. You have been planning ways to break through their intellectual barriers and you can't wait to see if these new ideas will work. Some of you may have gone to school this summer to learn some new and exciting methods on your students. Unfortunately, some of you may have had an unusually hard year, so you're not looking forward to this year with enthusiasm. It's this last group that I especially want to focus on now. It's usually not some big thing that brings success out of almost-failure. No, it's usually the little things that can turn around an attitude, a program, or a situation.

Robert Fulghum, in his book, It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It, tells the story of his little seven-year-old girl, Molly, who loved to pack lunches for herself, her brothers, and her father. He said she would hurry around very meticulously putting sandwich, fruit, cookies, and other goodies, to make the lunches extra special. What he enjoyed most, though, were the notes she would include. They were just little notes, but they were special.

One morning she gave him two bags — one with the regular lunch, and one that was ruffled with duct tape on the top and many staples throughout. Robert Fulghum asked his little daughter what was in the extra bag. She said, "Just some stuff. Take it with you." So, he took the bags and drove to work. Lunch time found him scarfing down his sandwich, when he thought of that little extra bag. He took it from his drawer, opened it, and poured the contents on the table. He smiled at what was before him: two hair ribbons, three small stones, a plastic dinosaur, a pencil stub, a used lipstick, a small doll, two chocolate Kisses, and 13 pennies. There was nothing of value, so with one sweep of the hand, the bag and its contents went into the trash basket. He thought no more of it until that night when he was sitting in his chair reading the newspaper. His little girl tapped him on the shoulder and asked, "Where's my bag?" He said, "What bag?" "You know, the bag I gave you this morning. I forgot to put this note in it. You didn't lose it, did you? It's mine and I want it back." He could see the little puddles forming in her eyes, and he said, "No, no." He lied, "I left it in the office. I'll bring it home tomorrow." She accepted that, and was off. He read the note. It said, "I love you, Daddy." You see, Molly had given her daddy her treasures - love in a paper sack - and he had missed it. Fulghum said he felt that his "Daddy Permit" was about to run out.

Well, it was a long trip back to the office, but there was nothing else to do. He got to the waste basket just before the janitor arrived. He poured out the contents on his desk, picked through and found each precious article, wiped off the mustard from the dinosaur, sprayed mouthwash on everything to take the onion smell away, carefully pressed the bag, put the articles back inside, and sealed it up. He drove home, and the following evening gave the bag to his daughter. He asked Molly to tell him about the contents of the bag, so she took each piece out, laid it on the counter and told a story about each one. This took



quite a long time, but it was important. To his surprise, he said that Molly gave the bag back to him again the next day. He felt forgiven and little more comfortable about wearing the title “Father.”

Yes, it’s the little things that are important in life. I think sometimes we are so intent on doing everything by the book, so to speak, that we fail to take into consideration individual differences of our children. We fail to see the precious little efforts of love extended to their teacher, and they are hurt when we fail to see it. Like Robert Fulghum who needed to redeem the trust of his daughter, we need to show our students that we love them and that we feel good about wearing the title “Teacher.” I know, sometimes it’s not easy, but let’s forget about the past mistakes. Let’s ask God to give us the ability to love. *This can be your best year.*



THREE LITTLE WORDS!

Did you hear it? At a news conference on national T.V., the President of the United States, George Bush, said, "I don't know." Wonder of wonders!! My heart leaped for joy! Almost dropped what was in my hands! Just couldn't believe my ears! Did he really say "I don't know?" In my memory, these words have never been uttered by a politician - - let alone the highest official of our government! That news conference was a refreshing event. It's marked in my calendar as a high point of the summer of 1989. None of this going around in circles, using up five minutes or more saying absolutely nothing. Just a simple "I don't know." No one knows everything, but it seems our politicians are determined to give the impression that they truly have all answers to every situation.

Well, if the above three little words can make me this hyper being mature and supposedly having complete control of my emotions, what effect do you suppose it has on a classroom full of students to every once in a while say, "I don't know, but together we will find out."

Unfortunately, that disease, bluffing your way, or should we say, being dishonest, is not just in the ranks of the politicians. It seems to have pervaded every walk of life, including our great and wonderful profession, teaching. It's beyond me to understand why people who are in a position of responsibility feel that they must answer questions as if they were experts in every subject. Perhaps it's pride, afraid of losing face, or just thinking that people/students won't respect you if you're unable to answer the question.

A little girl was once asked a question of the teacher. She said, "I don't know, but tomorrow I will have the answer," and she did. The prophet Daniel, in effect, said the same thing when asked to interpret the king's dream. He went to the king and asked for time. It was given him (Daniel 2:14). Then, he and his friends prayed for the Lord's help. In verse 23, Daniel said: "I thank and praise you, God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Then in verse 27, Daniel speaks to the king: "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries."

Perhaps the answers we give will not have as far-reaching effect as the one Daniel gave, but many times it could affect the direction a young person's life might take. The wonderful truth is that the God of Daniel is, in fact, our God, and He revealed to Daniel important information because his (Daniel's) life was in tune with His (God's) life.



This is another school year. There will be difficult questions to answer. You will be tempted to act like the all-knowing teacher. My advice is to stay in tune with the Lord; He can reveal to you how to handle difficult situations, He can help you in your class preparation, He will show you how to lead your young people to Christ. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I know someone who does." Then show your students the relationship you have with your God.

The Teacher:
As Guide



LOVE UNDESERVED

In the January 1984 issue of Family Circle magazine there is an interview with Erma Bombeck. It has always been enjoyable for my wife and me to read her books and articles. This funny lady isn't always funny; sometimes she comes up with some important truths.

The interviewer asked the question, "What have you learned from raising them?" This was in reference to her three children. The answer was, "That a child needs your love most when he deserves it the least."

Where she came up with this insight is not known, but the philosophy of the statement is all through the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, i.e., the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The son left home with his fortune, not really even thankful for the fortune, feeling that it's mine so why shouldn't I have it to do as I please. That father waited in agonizing love until that boy came home. He was there with open arms waiting for him. The son didn't send a telegram to say, I'll be home on flight 352, please meet me at the airport. He didn't send a letter saying, I'm going to hitch-hike home, hope you don't mind. He didn't ask someone to run interference for him. He just decided to go home.

I think in his heart he knew he was wanted. He knew his father would be waiting even though he would be willing to be the lowest of servants for his father. I believe he knew how his father would react.

Growing up in a home that was full of love was something he began to realize meant more to him than anything on this earth. The father loved that boy even though humanly speaking the boy didn't deserve it. The father waited patiently for his return. He watched for him every day, and when he saw him coming, his joy overflowed.

Many of you have someone in your classroom who is hard to love. That young person is not mature, is still trying to find his or her place in life, does not understand the result of actions taken, and maybe does not know the Lord as a personal Savior.

The Lord loves us. In fact, He treated us as He deserved to be treated, even though we often treat Him as we deserve to be treated. Because of sin we do not deserve His love, but it is forever evident that God felt that as a result of sin we needed His love the most.

He sent His Son to save us. Praise the Lord!



RUNNING AGAINST THE CURRENT

Swimming against a current is very difficult. You may, in fact, swim as fast and as hard as you can, but you would still be going backwards.

One of my granddaughter's favorite treats is to go to the fish hatchery near her home and feed the fish with the food provided by those running the hatchery. The fish are put in long, narrow terraced tanks so the water falls over each terrace. At the end of each terrace, it's like a dam. The level of the water is about two to three inches above the dam, creating a rather swift current as it goes over the top. The interesting thing is that the fish love to place themselves right at the edge, swimming against the current, not really going anywhere, just standing still, but having to swim.

We watch them for a long time, all lined up across the top with their tails almost hanging over the edge. Then my granddaughter threw some food right at the line of fish. They all went after the food, and as quick as a wink, they were all thrown over the dam into the next vat. This space was quickly filled up by another line of fish across the top. Each time she threw food the same thing happened. Sometimes a few fish were washed over and sometimes the whole line.

You see the fish were doing all right as long as they kept their mind on swimming straight ahead, even though they were swimming against the current. As soon as they stopped doing what they were suppose to do, and went after something that would satisfy a supposed need, the current quickly took them over the top and they found themselves in a different tank. Apparently, this was not detrimental to the fish, but it got me to thinking how this is so much like life.

We try to come as close as we can to those in the world without joining them. Everything seems to go okay. We are swimming against the current, but so are many people, just look around you. They are there on both sides doing the same things you are doing. It's not a real problem as long as you swim straight ahead. You can even get out of this precarious situation by exerting yourself a little more. Then you can swim around and not be pulled by the tide, with time to see which way the water is moving, and even have time to eat and converse with one another without being thrown over the dam and being separated from those you have been associating with.

But the fish, just like humans, seem to get lulled into false security even though "over the brink into an unknown tank" is just a fraction of an inch away. Just as soon as they are sidetracked to get some food, they are thrown helplessly over the dam into the next tank.

It's the same way with our young. They venture just as close as possible to the devil's threshold. They never intend to join the other side, but it's so nice and it's so much fun to be near all their friends. And, after all, they are looking straight ahead, they are keeping their eyes on Jesus, what could it hurt! But then something comes along that looks so good, and they take their eyes off Jesus and follow each other. Before they know



what's happening, they are over the brink, lost, sometimes forever. They are lost, not because of their not knowing the right way, but because they aligned their lives too close to the edge.

It's our job, dear teachers, to guide these wonderful young people of ours to the middle of the stream, away from the strong current of evil so they have a chance to see the results of wrong choices without losing their way. This takes constant vigilance. Oh, what awesome responsibility you and I have. But the Lord says, "Lo, I am with you always. .", and I take Him at His word. He wants you to be a success at your work. Claim His promises everyday, and keep your young people away from the edge of the precipice of everlasting lostness.



A PLUMB LINE

The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord asked me, “What do you see, Amos?”

“A plumb line,” I replied.

Then the Lord said, “Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.” (Amos 7:8 NIV)

At our home we receive several church newsletters from friends around the nation. Elder Allen Priest from the Texas Conference brought back many memories with the devotional he wrote for his newsletter. He started off by reminiscing about how he had taken his children to the amusement park, Six Flags Over Texas, almost every year. They always had a good time. He said his children took him on all kinds of rides that any sane adult would shun. He told of a very simple structure not too far from the gate known as Casa Magnetica. Elder Priest said, “This building was built on a slope and was all out of square and plumb. It was quite a task just to stand up on this steep slope when surrounded with the structure and its associated things.” He said you would swear that water and balls were actually running uphill. “When leaving this place it took some readjusting to walk on level ground again.”

Having been in this same little structure a number of times, the thought came to me that if it were possible to stand absolutely straight and plumb inside this building, a person would look strange for he would not be like the surroundings. That’s why we as Christians should stand out in a crowd.

Elder Priest says, “Though we may do our best to keep from being extremists, Christians are still necessarily different. Attempting to stand all day in line with the world leaves us spiritually worn out from standing off the real center of gravity.”

We know not the day or the hour when the Lord is going to take that plumb line again and say, “Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people. I will spare them no longer.” Our job as Christian educators is to show our young people how to stand plumb, not with the world, but with Christ.



A CUP OF COLD WATER

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.” Matthew 10:42

Many of you have had the privilege of growing up on a farm — one that had a good well with crystal clear, cold water even when it was a hundred degrees outside. There is nothing that makes you feel better than a cup of good cold water after hard labor or good physical activity.

In canvassing one summer in North Carolina, at almost every home entered we were offered a glass (cup) of cold water. It just seemed to be the thing to do. It was almost the first thing asked upon entering the house, “Would you like a glass (cup) of cold water?” The answer was always, “Yes, please.”

The water was easy to get; it didn’t cost anything and it made both the giver and the receiver feel good.

Sister White elaborates on the subject saying, and I quote from Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings, page 40:

There are many to whom life is a painful struggle. They feel their deficiencies and are miserable and unbelieving. They think they have nothing for which to be grateful. Kind words, looks of sympathy, expressions of appreciation would be to many a struggling and lonely one as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of sympathy, an act of kindness would lift burdens that rest heavily upon weary shoulders, and every word or deed of unselfish kindness is an expression of the love of Christ for lost humanity.

There are so many that need that refreshment of a cup of cold water, and it’s so easy to give, and it costs so little. As teachers, that word of encouragement, that look of compassion, that smile, that arm around the shoulder that says, “Hey, I know you have some problems, but I’m on your side. I’m praying for you.” That, my friends, is a cup of cold water. Please serve if often to your students this year.



SIN SPOTTERS

In John 12, we find an interesting story of two people with opposite opinions of what is proper.

You remember the incident: it was Jesus' last visit to the little town of Bethany. Simon, a Pharisee, (who incidentally had been healed of leprosy by Jesus) lived there. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (one Jesus raised from the dead) also lived there. Jesus always spent time in the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha when He came to Bethany.

On this particular occasion Simon, who was so appreciative of what Jesus had done for him, made a feast and invited his Healer, the disciples, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and many others to this great affair. What a party it must have been with Simon (healed of Leprosy) sitting on one side of Jesus, and Lazarus (raised from the dead) sitting on the other side. What joy there must have been in recounting the blessings of the immediate past. Time was running short for Jesus. His work on earth was almost over but it seemed that only He realized this fact.

Then something happened! Mary, who was listening to every word spoken by Jesus, who remembered Him telling about His own soon death, became overwhelmed with love, gratitude and devotion. She had planned someday to show Him, in a small way, her deep appreciation. The right time just seemed to be now, so she poured expensive ointment mixed with her tears over His head and feet. She then wiped His feet dry with her long, flowing hair. She wasn't doing this to make a public expression, and it might have gone unnoticed had it not been for the sweet aroma that instantly filled the room. All eyes now turned to see what had happened.

We are only told of the feelings of two individuals: Judas, the one given the responsibility of holding the purse for the disciples, and Jesus, the Savior and Healer. Right away Judas became a sin spotter. He immediately started to complain to the other disciples that the money could have been better spent to help the poor. He implied that it was sinful to pour this sweet-smelling ointment on Jesus because it was such a waste of money.

It wasn't a sin, however. Jesus said to let her alone, but Judas was continually making all kinds of insinuations as to the wrongfulness of this loving act. In reality, the sin was his. Jesus could have stopped everything right then, stood before all the guests and disciples, and pointed His finger at Judas, revealing the secrets of his heart, but He didn't, for He knew that the sin spotter would reap his reward in due time. He also knew that patience and love would keep the respect of those around Him. Jesus simply said to let her alone, she was okay and that he accepted her appreciation for Him.

In my opinion, there are too many Judas-type sin spotters in this world, those who use the magnifying glass to find every fault, then go to the loudspeakers so that everyone will be sure to know the sin.



Educators I think, must be careful that they don't fall into the category of the Judas-type sin spotter. It's easy to become a Judas-type sin spotter because we have to correct and guide. That's our business. Guidance is the key word. Therein is the difference to me. First, we must correctly define the reason for calling attention to error. Second, we must guide with the help of the Holy Spirit in the correction. Third, we must point to the reward that awaits those who love and serve the Lord.

There are really only two categories of sin spotters: like Judas, or like Jesus. Ask yourself the question — which one am I?



YOU GOT TO HAVE THE WANT TO

Not long ago I heard a tape of the life of an old preacher by the name of Ogg. He was born with cerebral palsy and was not expected to live for a long period of time. His parents were told to pray for a merciful death; instead they prayed for a miracle.

This boy was stumbling when everybody else his age was learning to run. It was hard, but he even learned to ride a bicycle.

He went to college and passed his classes without even taking notes— he wasn't physically able to write.

It wasn't easy finding a church where he could preach, but he persevered because he had the "want to." He has been preaching for 35 years and is now an administrator of a small Bible college.

He even learned to play a little tennis. One day, while playing with a friend, he felt a sharp pain in his chest. It was a heart attack; he drove himself to the hospital.

When he was being wheeled to the operating room he called, "Stop!" but they kept on going.

Then one of the big boys in the church who had come to be of help put out his big arm and took hold of the bed. "The preacher said 'Stop'"

"Where's my wife?" he asked. "I can't see her!"

She stepped forward and said, "I'm right here."

"You stay right by me and don't let them take the preacher out of me!"

Later, as he was getting better in his hospital room, he wondered if he could still preach. Could he still bring people to the foot of the Cross? He made believe there was a crowd of people sitting where his wife sat in the corner of the room. He made a call and then he know he hadn't lost it; he could still preach!

Preacher Ogg closed his story by saying, "You can do anything but you got to have the 'want to!'" Then he broke into a song. He sang from his heart with the most sincere feeling, "I can never, never, outgive the Lord." He said, "**You know, it doesn't matter what you have to offer the Lord; it's what He has to offer you that counts.**"

Many of our good people feel they don't have any talents or abilities. We can help them by emphasizing that last sentence of Preacher Ogg, because it really doesn't matter what you have to offer the Lord; it's what He has to offer you that counts.



ARE YOU THE ENEMY?

Is it possible for you to be an enemy of your students? Teachers, you say, are not enemies—they are helpers and counselors of students. Why then do I ask such a question?

When a minister preachers the Love of Jesus, the Plan of salvation, and all the other wonderful doctrines of this church, there is no judgement coming from the pulpit. No one is graded on their conduct in church, their conduct at home, or their general attitude. A grade is not given to the congregation whether they pass or fail at the end of a sermon. Rather, the minister is looked upon as showing a way out of a difficult situation, pointing eternal salvation. A saving way— not an enemy.

You, as a teacher, have a different problem. Almost every assignment is given a grade, for example, “A” for Excellent or “F” for Failure. Some teachers pride themselves, stating that they grade on the “curve” and they tell their students there will be so many A’s and so many F’s. Right away that teacher has set himself up as an enemy to the student. The student now thinks, and rightly so, that if all his classmates are smarter than he is, “F” will be his grade regardless of how much knowledge he acquires in the class.

How much better it would be to somehow show our students that we are going to leave no stones unturned to see that they make it through with passing grades. Your goal should be to empower your students to study and learn for themselves to be successful. That will be almost impossible if the teacher is thought of as an enemy because he has the power to fail a student. How much better it would be for the teacher to say to the class, “We are working together. I am going to do my best to see that you accomplish your goals - one of which is to pass successfully this class or grade.”

No, we don’t like to think that we could possibly be our students’ enemies. We must study and evaluate ourselves according to the way we’re seen and/or perceived by them so that we are not seen as their enemies, because even though it be unconsciously, it could be devastating to those we most need to help.

Remember, our Lord states that salvation is available to all. He wants to empower us to make this available to everyone who desires eternal life. Let us empower our students to not only succeed in school, but more important, to be successful in reaching eternal life.



A LOVE STORY

A few weeks ago a friend introduced me to Tony Campolo, who is the Chairman of the Department of Sociology at Eastern College in Pennsylvania. This introduction was made through one of his books, Who Switched the Price Tags?. As you know, it is not my custom to quote in this column but this is a special story that has to be told just as the author intended.

I know of a schoolteacher named Miss Thompson. Every year, when she met her new students, she would say, "Boys and girls, I love you all the same. I have no favorites." Of course, she wasn't being completely truthful. Teachers do have favorites and, what is worse, most teachers have students that they just don't like.

Teddy Stallard was a boy that Miss Thompson just didn't like, and for good reason. He just didn't seem interested in school. There was a dead-pan blank expression on his face and his eyes had a glassy, unfocused appearance. When she spoke to Teddy, he always answered in monosyllables. His clothes were musty and his hair was unkept. He wasn't an attractive boy and he certainly wasn't likable.

Whenever she marked Teddy's papers, she got a certain perverse pleasure out of putting X's next to the wrong answers and when she put the F's at the top of the papers, she always did it with a flair. She should have known better; she had Teddy's records and she knew more about him than she wanted to admit. The records read:

1st Grade: Teddy shows promise with his work and attitude, but poor home situation.

2nd Grade: Teddy could do better. Mother is seriously ill. He receives little help at home.

3rd Grade: Teddy is a good boy, but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th Grade: Teddy is very slow, but well-behaved. His father shows no interest

Christmas came and the boys and girls in Miss Thompson's class brought her Christmas presents. They piled their presents on her desk and crowded around to watch her open them. Among the presents, there was one from Teddy Stallard. She was surprised that he had brought her a gift, put together with Scotch tape. On the paper were written the simple words, "For Miss Thompson from Teddy." When she opened Teddy's present, out fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume.



The other boys and girls began to giggle and smirk over Teddy's gifts, but Miss Thompson at least had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and putting some of the perfume on her wrist. Holding her wrist up for the other children to smell, she said, "Doesn't it smell lovely?" And the children taking their cue from the teacher, readily agreed with oh's and ah's.

At the end of the day, when school was over and the other children had left, Teddy lingered behind. He slowly came over to her desk and said softly, "Miss Thompson...Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother, and her bracelet looks real pretty on you, too. I'm glad you liked my presents."

When Teddy left, Miss Thompson got down on her knees and asked God to forgive her.

The next day when the children came to school, they were welcomed by a new teacher. Miss Thompson had become a different person. She was no longer just a teacher; she had become an agent of God. She was now a person committed to loving her children and doing things for them that would live on after her. She helped all the children, but especially the slow ones, and especially Teddy Stallard. By the end of that school year, Teddy showed dramatic improvement. He had caught up with most of the students and was even ahead of some.

She didn't hear from Teddy for a long time. Then one day, she received a note that read:

Dear Miss Thompson:

I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class.

Love,

Teddy Stallard

Four years later, another note came:

Dear Miss Thompson:

They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. The university has not been easy, but I liked it.

Love,

Teddy Stallard



And, four years later:

Dear Miss Thompson:

As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married next month, the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now; Dad died last year.

Love,

Teddy Stallard

Miss Thompson went to that wedding and sat where Teddy's mother would have sat. She deserved to sit there; she had done something for Teddy that he could never forget.

There are many Teddy Stallards in this world. You may have one in your room—one who is crying for recognition—crying for love. There are also many Miss Thompsons. Oh, that we all could be more like her! What Miss Thompson did for Teddy Stallard didn't come from a textbook, it came from a heart of love that saw the potential in a little unlovable boy. She gave of herself and did something that changed the life of this boy, changed from probable failure to success, not only financially, but in service to mankind.

Praise the Lord! We have the same opportunity. We can do it too!



Story taken from Who Switched the Price Tag? By Tony Campolo, Word Books, Waco, Texas

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JUST ONE LITTLE LIGHT

Is it just me, or are there more catastrophes happening? It seems that every day a bad storm, fire or accident has occurred! They come so often now that most of us have become quite calloused. Oh yes, we say, "How terrible!" We pray for the families of the victims, but before we get too involved with one catastrophe, something else has happened which takes our mind away from the previous one. Even though the Bible says that we are our brother's keeper, unless it is someone very close to us, we generally don't think too long about our brother's misery or hurt.

Since my work causes me to fly often, crashes that happen every once in a while sometimes make me a little nervous--well, perhaps a lot nervous! When you think of the thousands of little parts in one of those jumbo jets, sometimes it's just a malfunction of a small part that causes a terrible accident. Back in the middle of the 1970's my employing conference was given a two-engine airplane to help our office staff with its transportation. This was great! Because of the vast expanse of the conference, we were able to cover our territory with more ease. What previously took a minimum of three days to travel to an academy board, could now be done in just one. It was a wonderful time-saver. One particular trip, however, made me very conscious of how important little parts are. On this trip my wife and family came with me because it was just the pilot and me in a six-passenger plane. The pilot was very good about explaining everything to his passengers, what each knob was for, what each gauge was for, what all the little lights were for. It was, and still is, very fascinating.

This was not a long trip, but time was a factor, so permission was given to the pilot to take us to this important board meeting. It was truly great to have my family with me. Everything went fine on the way to Texarkana. It was so exciting, especially to my son and daughter.

After the board meeting we started back. Our pilot was always very careful about checking everything before takeoff. We always felt safe with him. He never started without asking the Lord for protection and this trip was no exception. After prayer, the engines roared and we were off for Keene, Texas. It was dark now, the sky was clear, the stars were shining, and we were all excited about all the lights we could see in the sky and on the ground. About halfway back we noticed that the pilot wasn't talking to us anymore, but instead, kept fidgeting with the instrument panel. This did not alarm us, however, because he was so calm. Then we noticed he was doing a lot of talking on the radio. We could see we were getting close to a large city. Finally, he turned to us and said, "I don't want to alarm you, but this light", and he pointed to the light on the instrument panel "indicates that the landing gear has not locked in place." He then said, "I think it's a malfunctioning light, but I can't be sure, so I have radioed Dallas Airport and told them our problem. We are going to land in Dallas because they have emergency equipment in case something goes wrong." He then proceeded to instruct us as to what we were supposed to do. So many things went through our minds. There wasn't any talking now, just listening to the pilot talking on the radio.



To our utter surprise, when we got close to the runway, it was lined on both sides with emergency vehicles. Lights were blinking. As we touched the runway, the fire engines were running along each side of the plane. All this for a little airplane. All this for one little light. As it turned out, it was a malfunctioning light, that's all! You can be assured that we all praised God for His protecting care. We soon took off again, and in just a few minutes we were landing at our lonely airport in Keene, Texas, safe and happy.

You say, "What's the point of all this?" It taught me that no matter how wonderfully smart man is, he cannot be completely trusted. It was just a little light, but it was wrong. It threw our lives into a panic for a period of about 20 to 30 minutes. It also taught me to be aware of the little changes that take place in the lives of our young people. It may be just a little light, but if it is malfunctioning, it needs all the precaution the pilot took when he saw the little light blinking in the plane.

Shouldn't we be just as willing to put out all kinds of safety nets to keep our young people from crash-landing?



LET ME PLAY...

Bill was a little boy who loved to play ball; in fact, he loved to play all kinds of sports. The problem was he wasn't very good at playing anything. If he was running for a pass in football he would stumble over his feet, fall flat and not even come close to the ball. He was clumsy with the bat in baseball, struck out most of the time. The boys said even the girls could do better than him. In tag, when he was "It" the game became boring because he couldn't catch anyone--and so on and so on. He was always the last to be chosen on a team.

One early Sunday morning as Bill was eating his breakfast, some of the boys called to him to come outside and play ball. Taking his new football he ran with great anticipation to the playground. The boys were already playing when he arrived. There was no room for anyone else. They had their teams. Bill took his very familiar place on the bench.

About five minutes later Johnny came to the field. Now Johnny was the most athletic boy in the neighborhood. He could play anything and do it better than anyone else. As soon as the teams noticed Johnny they were vying with each other for his presence on their team and in a moment he was playing.

This made Bill upset. There wasn't any room on the team for him. Johnny came and he was playing immediately.

Bill walked home mad and hurt, not understanding the facts of life. His father listened, feeling pain for his son. "Come on, Bill, I'll play ball with you." After about twenty minutes they sat down together. Putting his arm around his son, Bill's dad told him he couldn't make the boys like him, but he could help him feel better about himself.

This is not a new twist. It happens all the time. Young people can be so cruel to each other.

Like Bill's father you can help them feel better about themselves. You can lead them to Jesus who can comfort in all things.



MIRACLES, MIRACLES, MIRACLES!

One of my great thrills is to read and reread about all the miracles recorded in the Bible about the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, manna every morning, the floating of the axe head, the feeding of the 5000, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and many, many more. Our God is so great, so mighty, so powerful that nothing is impossible for Him, except for one thing.

Often the thought came to me, "Why can't we see the same kind of exhibits of God's power today? Then, ashamed of myself, my mind wandered to the many times the Lord has had a hand in my life in a miraculous way. God works miracles only when needed, and it is a fact that God is alive today just as He was in Bible times. Stories of miraculous help come across my desk every day. Instead of accepting this as something miraculous, however, we are tempted to say that it was just luck.

Esther Spielman, a senior citizen and faithful member of the New York Conference Board of Education, is loved by all. She has the ability to communicate well. She is a loyal and strong supporter of Christian education. You will often hear her tell stories of the miraculous help the Lord has performed for her. When Esther arrived at one of our board meetings her face was aglow and we knew she had a story to tell. It really wasn't surprising to those of us sitting at the table to learn that, once again, the Lord had shown her His loving care. She went on to tell us what happened.

The day of our board meeting was a stormy one. The road from Ithaca to Union Springs, New York, was somewhat treacherous. While traveling along, she said, "Lord, I'm probably foolish being out on these slippery roads, but I'm just trying to do your work and I'm going to depend on Your protection." This is so like Esther. She talks out loud to the Lord just as if He were right in the car with her.

Not long after this conversation with the Lord, the car went out of control. It spun around and headed for the ditch. Immediately she took her hands off the steering wheel, threw them up, and said in a loud voice, "God, help me!" Miraculously the car came to a screeching halt right in the middle of the road!

No luck there, just the Hand of God! That's what it was, a modern day miracle!

She didn't say this, but I like to think that the devil didn't like Esther talking to the Lord and expecting protection from her God. Perhaps he gave that car a push out of control. On the call of Esther, however, our Lord said "Get behind me, Satan! She is in my hands. I've put a hedge around her, so you can't touch or hurt her. She is mine!"

Now, friends, whether the above conversation took place or not doesn't matter. The fact is that the car came to a **complete stop** on a slick road, with no damage or harm to Esther. That was *not* luck. It was to me one of the many miracles our Lord does for us every day.



Guess what I'm trying to say is that the closer we come to the Lord, the more we see His mercy, justice, and love. So many times it is shown to us in the form of a miracle. He is our Lord, our God, He is still as strong and capable as He was in the Old and New Testament times, and I thank Him for that.

Now, to the one thing He can't do. So many of our students need a change of direction, a miracle, if you please. Unfortunately, our Lord can't do this by Himself. They must invite Him in. This is where we can help the Lord. We can be responsible for a miracle by praying for, and working with, a certain young person who needs to change his or her ways.

Yes, God is alive and well. Miracles are abundant, and we must do our part to assist the Lord in His effort to reach every young person under our care. Let's help God be a "Miracle Worker" in the lives of our students.



TELL ME WHAT TO DO

How many times have you heard the phrase, "Tell me what to do!" Probably hundreds of times. It may be a very serious problem, an earnest cry of desperation, "Please help me!" It may be just a way to find someone who will agree with them. Actually, they are told what they want to hear. It may be someone who does not have a very good self-esteem. They honestly think they must be told what to do. They are so afraid of making a mistake. They become so dependent on others that they can hardly think for themselves. It would surprise me very much if each of you did not have all of the above in you classroom.

Now, what to do? How do you recognize them? How do you tell the difference so you can give the kind of help needed in each case? Although each case is different, all three are in need of you attention, your care, and your love.

Each of you has taken basic courses in psychology in order to obtain your teaching credential. This does not, however, give you the answers to all the deep-seated problems you are presented with each day. How are you supposed to cope with these precious young people who so desperately need you help? It is not my intention to make light of serious problems, or to indicate that a simple answer is going to solve all areas of concern, but we do have an advantage that our counterparts in public education do not have. You as a dedicated sincere Christian have a very approachable heavenly Father to whom you can appeal for instant help, and even though you are not educated in the skills of caring for every problem, our God has promised to supply every need. He will help you to guide those very special cases, those who take more of your time than any other, those who try your patience to the very breaking point. Our God can work through you and give you those difficult answers that normally are only received through years of study and at much expense.

No, there are very few easy solutions, but my prayer is that all who deal with young minds will meet their Master frequently in prayer and meditation, bringing before Him the names and the problems of these most precious young people. Bring those names to the Master. Tell Him their problems, your problems, and expect and believe that He will guide you in your contact with your young people.



JUST THE RIGHT PROPORTION

Some time ago my wife decided she would make several kinds of pies to put in the freezer for a later date. First she made pumpkin, then apple, then pecan, and finally blueberry. When the work was finally completed there were twelve pies for the freezer.

As you might expect the aroma brought me to the kitchen several times to look, and to hopefully get a taste. A week later, on the way home from church she asked me what kind of pie would most please me for dessert. "Pumpkin" was my answer, and my mouth began to water just thinking about it, warmed in the oven, with ice cream on top. The main meal was delightful. The privilege of cutting the pie was mine. It looked so good with the ice cream piled so high, and it smelled so good. My wife took the first bite and she almost gagged. Into my mouth went a very small piece to taste. It was awful! It was apparent that the salt had been added twice. It got me to thinking salt is necessary in the right proportions, but when too much is used it destroys the good taste and makes the food inedible.

There are a lot of things in life that seem to require just the right proportions. Too much praise to a child may cause over-confidence; too little criticism may give the child a false idea of right and wrong. But, just the right amount of praise and criticism will help that same child understand what God has in mind for his life.

My wife said she didn't keep her mind on her cooking; hence, three spoiled pies. The results of not keeping our minds on our work are far more devastating. To put it more positively, our discipline, love, etc. given in the right proportion will go a long way to prepare the young people in our control for the Kingdom.



AFTER DEFEAT, THEN WHAT?

There is a special Sunday in January, every year. In the minds of sport fans it's football's finest hour. A day when two super teams meet, play, and one becomes a winner and one a loser. A day when literally thousands flock into a super stadium. A day when more people watch this event on TV than any other sports event. Many people are disappointed by the outcome of the game; however, there are just as many who are elated by the final score. In the final analysis, the losers need not hang their heads for they played in a true championship manner.

Perhaps the saddest thing of all is that it is impossible to have two winners. Only one team can win. The rules mandate that there must be a winner. Most of us sympathize with the loser. Oh, we are happy for the winner; but we can all feel the despair of the loser. But let us look at the question: After defeat, then what? Both teams that played in the Super Bowl have known the agony of defeat; have had to live with negative remarks. Both teams have started working for the future, working to find ways of improvement, and ways to correct the past mistakes. Both have been winners before and will be winners in the future.

Now, let's bring it closer home. All of us have watched the expression of despair and agony of defeat on the faces of the young people who sit before us every day. It has been an unfortunate fact of life that defeats do happen to our young people. It would be nice if our students never had to meet defeat; but since they do, we as leaders of youth, must be ready to make every effort to bring these students back to a positive position, turning their direction, if necessary, giving them encouragement, showing them that somebody cares and loves them.

At a Super Bowl there is only one winner. In the game of life where our students are, can't we as their coaches (their teachers) be prepared to show them that there can be more than one winner, or that it is not necessary to come in first to be a winner, or that some may never come in first but can still be winners. Even though, in my estimation, it would be better to never have had to go through the agony of defeat, it is not a reasonable position. Therefore, our job is to be tuned to the feelings of the students, taking them where they are, minimizing their failures and emphasizing their successes on every level. The ecstasy of winning can then be something that everyone can experience.

The Teacher:

In Need



STOP! TURN YOUR MOTOR OFF

Picture yourself at the top of a hill looking out over a beautiful lake. To the right there is a river with a lock connecting into the lake. There is much traffic on both the river and the lake, and as you watch more carefully it seems that the boats on the lake are hurrying as fast as they can to the open doors of the lock. The lake appears to be about thirty feet lower than the river; therefore, the only way to get from the lake to the river is through the lock. So the boats are rushing as fast as they can to get there before the big doors close. The sun is about to set and they do not want to have to wait for another cycle to take place. It is a busy scene; boats from every direction are all scurrying to one focal point. As the boats come to the channel that leads into the locks, they slow down to three or four knots so that when they enter the locks they will not make waves to cause other boats to bump and bang into each other. Once inside, they shut their motors off. Ropes are thrown from the top and each boat ties to one, then the big doors begin to close and everything is silent and still — no movement at all. Those in the boat are helpless. There is no way they can get from the lake to the river by running the motors of their boats. The only way is to stop, tie to the rope above and wait. When the doors are closed the water around the boats begins to bubble and they slowly rise. There is nothing to see except four walls, so most people look up.

I heard this illustration from Elder John J. Robertson, the author of The White Truth, while attending a meeting at the Southeastern California Conference office. The object lessons are many. As teachers we seem always to be hurrying along trying to do so much and not seeing how we can accomplish all that is needed, not being able to see a way out, and sometimes bumping into others and causing them unnecessary discomfort. It is times like this we need to stop our motors, become quiet, look up, grasp the help our Savior is ready to give, and let Him raise us up to a higher level of service.



WE ARE HIS!

At times my work and travel schedule gets rather hectic. Airports, airplanes, and more airplanes and airports — they all begin to look and sound alike. This is what happened in January and February of this year. Those of you who have been to Bermuda know that it is the policy of that airport that a flyer must be checked in at least one hour before the flight departure. February 16, 1982 found me exactly one and one half hours ahead of time. It was a good feeling; there would be time to leisurely read the paper and to sit back in the seat, put my head against the wall, and take a good nap. And this is exactly what happened; it was such a good nap that the first call to board failed to awaken me. What finally came to my ears was the announcement, “Final call for Delta Flight 1162 to Boston.” Quickly getting my wits together I jumped up and ran toward the gate.

To my surprise the room was full of excited people, looking out the windows, and pointing, and saying, “Here it comes!”

“Who’s coming?” was my question.

Several people looked at me in disbelief, as if to say, “How could anyone who had been in the airport for the last hour not know that on the British Airways airplane just arriving at the gate was none other than Prince Charles and Princess Diana.”

The attendant at the gate assured me it would be a few more minutes before the take-off of Delta 1162 — time enough to maybe get a glance at the royal couple. Yes, I did get to see Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Yes, my heart was beating with excitement. Yes, I was glad to be in the right place at the right time. No, they didn’t see me, shake my hand, or even know anyone existed with my name; but it was still exciting.

A few minutes later on flight 1162 my mind began to recount the preceding happenings. It was a tremendous experience to see the young royal couple. My mind went ahead to an unknown time in the future when real royalty will be coming to this earth — Jesus, and His royal entourage. Again it is in my plan to be in the right place at the right time. Next time I do not want to be caught off guard, asleep. One thing for sure — He will know me: he will see me: he will call me to go home with Him. The difference between the coming of royalty in Bermuda and the coming of the Royalty, Jesus, in the future is that He has a definite reason to come for me, you, all of us — He died for us. We are His!



HOSTAGES?

We human beings are a strange lot. We can fuss, fight, bicker, disagree and many other things with each other; but when there is a disaster or a national crisis all of our fault finding with each other is forgotten, at least for a short while, and there is a unity that is inspiring and beautiful. Take for instance the hostage situation in Iran. It has been a long time since I've seen this country of ours get together on one issue as it did on this one. It has been a long time since there was a genuine outpouring of love to one group of people.

It is no secret we are hostages. Satan is holding us while the heavenly hosts are anxious for us to come home. Of course, Jesus has already paid the price by giving His life in exchange for our lives. There will be no fouling up on the rescue mission. There will be no future "deals" made. The offenders will be destroyed and we will be free at last. This will be the greatest home - coming that this universe has ever know. These will be ticker-tape parades, no bands, and no riding open limousines; but there will be the welcome arms, the happy faces, love that will not be able to be contained, music like nothing we have ever heard before — a unity that we cannot now comprehend.

Friends, I am looking forward to the day when we can say we are "former hostages." We will not be able to remember all the wrongs and evils of captivity. I am looking forward to that triumphal ride home. I am looking forward to seeing the One who has made all the arrangements for our freedom.

Oh, Lord, come quickly. We have been held hostage too long. Some have been persecuted, others have been in solitary confinement, all are living in anticipation of freedom — freedom to do Your will completely.



BAD NEWS – GOOD NEWS

What do we have to offer the young people in our care? What kind of a world are we providing for them? What future do they have? Is it fair to them to have so much against them in overcoming the evils of this world? In short — is there any hope?

The bad news is if one is to look around, there is not much promise that we can offer to these restless, eager live wires we face each day. Violence is rampant in our land. The greatest nation in the world is falling apart. At this writing, it's the morning after a man in Long Island, New York killed four people and wounded almost two dozen others on a commuter train. Why? Because he hated certain kinds of people. These are the very trains, or ones just like them, that our young people ride every day to and from school. Scary, isn't it? A little girl in California was kidnaped out of her bed in her home, then killed. We are supposed to be safe in our homes, aren't we? A little girl was going just a short way up the road to visit grandparents and disappeared and is never seen alive again. Our neighborhoods are supposed to be safe, aren't they?

"Trick or Treat" on Halloween has become potentially dangerous. With razor blades in apples, and candy adulterated. Children should be able to trust older people, shouldn't they? A clergyman was sent to prison for molesting scores of young children. If a child can't trust his minister, who can be trusted?

Two brothers murdered their parents. The family structure is becoming more and more unstable with more and more single-parent homes, and more and more latch-key children. Two young, and I mean very young boys killed a small child! Where did they get these ideas?

A man was upset with someone who was holding a parking space so he shot him. There is no patience. The only thought is for me, I don't care about anybody, just me.

That, my friends, is the kind of world we live in. That's the bad news, and if that was all there was, there truly would be no hope — a very bleak picture indeed.

Now For The Good News:

Even though we are in this dismal world of sin, we are not left without hope. The Bible is filled with promises. You remember some of them, don't you?

1. ". . . lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:20
2. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psalms 34:7
3. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalms 19:105



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4. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Ephesians 6:11
 5. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16
 6. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Psalms 32:8
 7. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Psalms 73:24
 8. "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalms 48:14
 9. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil. 4:13
 10. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19
 11. "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." John 14:18
 12. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Psalms 55:22
 13. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalms 23:1

Yes, the good news is Jesus is coming again soon, and until He does come, we have these promises and countless others contained in His word to sustain us in the waiting period. These promises are very special to me and I know they are to you. Only the lack of space determined the length of the list of promises presented here. When you are discouraged, think on these things. The Good News brings comfort and joy.



KEEP HOLDING ON

At one of our Atlantic Union Conference Sessions, the Chuck Fulmore Trio gave special music at every meeting. The chorus of one has become a favorite of mine. It goes like this:

Never give up, Jesus is coming,
It's the darkest just before dawn.
Never give up, Jesus is coming,
Never give up, keep holding on.

This has been such an inspiration to me. All of us have had things happen to us where we cry out, Oh Lord, I can't stand it any longer! We have the promise that He will never allow more than we can bear.

So when that son or daughter has drifted, is not living the Christian life, and maybe is treating you like dirt under his/her feet:

Never give up, Jesus is coming,
Keep holding on.

When that husband or wife has decided they no longer want to be a part of the family of God and therefore cannot accept you because you have committed yourself to the living God:

Never give up, Jesus is coming,
Keep holding on.

When that good upstanding church member who has always been your friend and has always stood behind you suddenly believes the tales of some misguided person about how you handled some problem in school:

Never give up, Jesus is coming,
Keep holding on.

When you have come to the end of your patience with one of your students, the last straw it seems is broken, and you don't know what to do:

Never give up, Jesus is coming,
Keep holding on.

When you read your Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy and see the systematic way that each prophecy has been and is being fulfilled, when you realize that the wrath of Satan himself will be poured out on those who love the Lord:



Never give up, Jesus is coming,
Keep holding on.

Yes, dear teacher, Jesus is coming and there is nothing too hard for us to endure.

*For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth
in Him should not perish, but
have everlasting life.
John 3:16*



CONQUERING THE UNKNOWN

January 28, 1986, is a day that America will never forget — a day when millions watched as seven of their fellow countrymen blasted off into space. It was a day when we as educators were especially proud because a teacher was given the high honor of sharing in space conquest!

Christa McAuliffe was her name. With her bubbly personality, she captured the hearts of all. This wasn't just another space shot. The first civilian, a teacher, was going to instruct from space! Students all over North America were filled with expectation.

The shuttle, however, didn't go according to script. For nineteen years there were perfect or near-perfect launches. The general public seemed to feel that NASA could make no mistakes. The interest in the lift-offs waned. It was only because of a difference in the type of passenger that the interest heightened. The TV cameras were back for live coverage.

Just a little over a minute into the flight (apparently without any forewarning) the terrible tragedy happened — an explosion. Then it was all over.

The happy crowds turned silent in stunned disbelief. Millions of dollars of equipment were lost, but that faded into insignificance because of the seven precious lives that were snuffed out.

Man has an irresistible desire to conquer the unknown, to learn that which is just beyond the line of understanding. That's what those seven men and women were trying to do for us — to expand our knowledge, to help us conquer a little more of the unknown.

Even though you are reading this in the April issue 1986, it is being written the evening of the tragedy, January 28. The sadness was almost overwhelming. It did get me to thinking though. We too have a desire to conquer and to learn something new. God gave us a wonderful mind, but most of us do not have the courage or the will to use it to the fullest as intended by our Heavenly Father.

My interest in space travel is keen. No, my name is not on the application list to be an astronaut. There's not enough money in this world to make me interested in being shot into the unknown on top of all that fire power. My trip into space is going to be wonderful — no small cramped spacecraft, no special life support suit, no sitting on top of tons of highly explosive fuel, no wondering if all the thousands of parts are going to work right, no worry about an accident.



No, my trip and your trip is going to be, we are told, on a cloud! We will go just as we are, speeding faster than man can fathom. There won't be just seven people aboard, but an innumerable multitude of people. My prayer is that we will once more meet in space, you and me, and maybe, just maybe, those seven courageous men and women will be there, too.



OH, WHAT EXCITEMENT!

One February a few years ago superintendents, academy principals and Atlantic Union Office of Education personnel were privileged to attend the NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals). There were many good things that happened at that meeting. But there was one very exciting event that I will never forget. We saw the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, and heard him give an address to the large assembly of school administrators! There was an air of excitement everywhere.

We arrived at the convention center shortly after 8:00 a.m. A line had already formed, but we were within a hundred people from the front of the line. Everyone had to enter through the front door and that door was to be opened at 9:00 a.m. The President would be speaking at 11:00.

When the doors were finally opened everyone had to go through metal detecting equipment and then there was a mad rush for the front of the auditorium. We found ourselves in the second row; we felt so fortunate. Waiting two more hours didn't seem to be a problem because we were going to see the President of the United States in person!

It was so interesting to watch the Secret Service men making preparations for the President's visit. They all appeared to know what their jobs were.

Finally the time came, and to the tune of "Hail to the Chief," played by a high school band, the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, seventy three years old the day before, bounded up the steps looking the picture of health! Exciting? Yes, indeed! Goose bumps ran up and down my spine. I was in the presence of the most important man in the United States!

Our President has to be guarded by many men armed with guns, ready to do anything that is necessary to guarantee his life. He cannot arrive in just any car. His own special armor-plated limousine has to be taken to whatever city he goes to insure his safety. What a shame! It's not often the average man can get close enough to his National leader to shake his hand.

What a difference it will be when our Lord returns— no armored cars will be necessary; in fact, no cars of any kind will be necessary. There will be no body guards, and we will all have personal access to Him, Will it be exciting? Oh, yes! It will be more exciting than seeing an earthly dignitary. I will be in the presence of the Creator of the universe who will know me by name and will be interested in me. I can hardly wait!



DOUBTSTORMS

You have all heard of all kinds of storms — rainstorms, hailstorms, dust storms, snowstorms, windstorms — all of which can be horrendous. This year the people of Texas can tell you about rainstorms. In 1978 the people of the Northeast could tell you about snowstorms. The Egyptians, back in the Bible times, could tell you about hailstorms. The people of mid-America in the 1930s could tell you about dust storms. People living along the coast of our United States can tell you about windstorms.

What about doubtstorms? Perhaps this is the worst kind of storm. Oh yes, people lose lives in all the storms mentioned, but the loss of life in a doubtstorm can be eternal. The others may be just for a short while, until Jesus comes.

Yet you say we have every reason to doubt. Television, radio, newspapers, magazines are all shouting the bad news 24 hours of time where doubtstorms are constantly pressing.

The disciples of Jesus had to contend with doubtstorms, one of the best days of their lives was also one of their worst. Jesus, too, had doubtstorms. His forerunner, relative, and friend — John the Baptist, had been put to death. The disciples returned exuberant after a marvelous preaching and healing trip. They were excited; Jesus was excited for them, but He also had great sorrow in His heart for His friend.

Jesus wanted to take the disciples to a quiet calm place, so they got into a boat and headed for the place of refuge. However, when they arrived, the crowd was there waiting for them. No rest now! There was work to do, healing to do, lives to be touched with love. Rest could wait; the people couldn't. The day ended and the people were hungry. There was no food in sight; but a little boy's lunch pail became a banquet, and the whole multitude was fed, and they were full. There was plenty left over.

Now that the people were satisfied, their thoughts turned to Herod. "Why should we fear this monarch who is our enemy? Let's crown Jesus our King of Kings. He can feed us, heal us, comfort us. Why, this will be Heaven." So they become a multitude with a mission.

Even though it had been a wonderful time during the day, it now was a sorrowful time for Jesus. Knowing what was ahead, He dismissed the crowd and then slipped away to be by Himself and His Father.



It was also a rough time for the disciples. They were disappointed. Jesus could be King of Kings. They could be at his side. He could fight their battles. Everything could be rosy. **But** the crowd was dismissed and the disciples were sent on ahead to the other side of the lake. A storm was brewing, not only in the sky, but also in their minds. They pushed off. The doubtstorms furiously attacked each one. Then, the windstorm struck with a force they had not yet seen. Racked with doubt and fear, they couldn't believe that their Leader, Master, and King could do this to them.

Then the clouds parted. A soft shaft of light shown on a figure walking on the water. They cried in fear. A ghost! A phantom! Maybe it was a hallucination! It was dreadful — the doubtstorms almost cost them everything!

A well-know author, Max Lucado, puts it this way:

“When Jesus comes,” the disciples in the boat may have thought, “He’ll split the sky. The sea will be calm. The clouds will disperse.”

“When God comes,” we doubters think, “all pain will flee. Life will be tranquil. No questions will remain.”

And because we look for the bonfire, we miss the candle. Because we listen for the shout, we miss the whisper.

But it is in burnished candles that God comes, and through whispered promises He speaks: “When you doubt, look around; I am closer than you think.”

In The Eye of the Storm, p. 131

Doubtstorms are real, my friends — but look for Jesus. He is there, closer than you think.



QUALITY OR QUANTITY TIME?

While on one of my trips to Bermuda, David Rogers, the Bermuda Institute Bible teacher, gave a worship which was exciting to me. Following are some of the ideas expressed in his worship talk.

How much time should you spend in prayer? What is the right amount of time? Some think a hurried five minutes is plenty of time. Others say you must pray hours a day. But you ask, who has the time to spend hours a day in prayer? Have you ever had the urge to drop to your knees and say, "Well, here I am Lord — same requests and thanks as yesterday, Amen, and then get up from your knees to do the business of the day?"

Many parents talk about the quality time they spend with their children. Husbands and wives talk about the quality time they spend together. It is really a copout excuse for not spending time together developing trust, love, and direction of life. We must have both quality and quantity time with our children and with our mates. There just isn't any substitute for this.

Now, back to my first question. How much time should you spend in prayer? Daniel prayed three times a day — morning, noon and night. David prayed three times a day — morning, noon and night. Jesus prayed all night sometimes. The Bible says that we should pray unceasingly. How much time a day do you spend in prayer — three minutes, five minutes, ten minutes? Do we use the same copout? Do we say, "I spend quality time with the Lord — I don't need to spend a long time in prayer?"

When people are in love they not only spend quality time but quality-quantity time together. There is no way they can have a successful life together communicating only three to five minutes a day.

But you say, "There is no way I can spend hours in prayer."

David Rogers tells the story of when he was a young man in college, His roommate, a fellow theology major, invited him and another student to a secluded place to pray and communicate with the Lord the entire morning. David always had an excuse because he didn't want to go. It didn't seem at all like fun. One Sunday morning David ran out of excuses, so he went with the other theology majors to pray and communicate with the Lord. They sang, meditated and then prayed. He prayed first — a long prayer, he thought. It lasted a whole five minutes. The morning dragged on, and the activity didn't seem to excite him much; however, he continued to attend the prayer sessions with his friends. Soon things changed for him. Joy came into his heart and he could hardly wait for the next prayer session to begin. He felt refreshed rather than tired and bored. One Sunday morning, after he and his friends returned from the prayer retreat, a fellow student mentioned that his face had a special glow. He knew that it was because he was revived



and refreshed after having spent all morning, which now seemed like only a few moments communicating with the Lord.

There is no substitute for quality time with the Lord. As this new school year begins, it is my prayer that all of us will decide to spend quality-quantity time with Him. I am convinced that not only our school life will be more profitable, but also our personal life will be more satisfactory and productive.



"I'LL WAIT"

Every once in a while something happens in my life that increases my faith in young people and my faith in God. This past summer at campmeeting time one such experience happened. My wife, who then worked as secretary in the Youth Department of the Southern New England Conference, told me this wonderfully inspiring story.

One morning during campmeeting a little boy came into my wife's office and asked if there was an opening left for him to go to a particular week at Junior Camp. Now, it so happened that the week he wanted, the only week he could go, had been filled to capacity for more than a month. The boy was told that there wasn't any space left. He then asked, "Do you ever get any cancellations?"

The answer was, "Yes, but it is highly improbable."

By this time all in the crowded office were listening to this young man but they weren't expecting what came from his lips next. He simply said, "I'll wait." My wife did her best to explain how slim the chances were, as did others in the room, but he was firm in his conviction that for sure something would happen. So, wait he did.

For the next twenty or thirty minutes he stood in the corner, not bothering anybody, but his presence was tugging at the heart strings of all in that busy office, all wishing they could do something, but knowing that there was virtually no possibility of helping this little boy.

The phone rang. My wife was saying, "You mean that you want to change to a different week of camp? Yes, we do have an opening there. That will be fine."

By this time, the little boy was standing right in front of my wife. "Is there an opening now?" He was told there was. He smiled and said, "I knew there would be. I prayed about it!"

After the boy left there was silence in the office as all were wiping their eyes, trying to control their emotions. They had witnessed an example of how real God is and of how important we are to Him. This little fellow could not put his application in earlier because he didn't have enough money for the fee. By the time the money was earned, the camp for the only week he could attend, was filled. His mother told him there wasn't room, but he prayed and had the faith to believe that Jesus could answer his prayer.

Oh, that we would have the faith to say, "I'll wait!"



SIMPLE FAITH

If the question was asked, what is a good definition of faith? Most Christians would quote Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Obviously, this is a correct answer and probably most of us understand what this verse is saying, or do we? Try it on your class, any class first through twelfth grade. Ask them to explain what that verse means, and you will no doubt get some very interesting answers. Of course, with the younger children, words like "substance" and "evidence" will have to be defined before they can even begin to think about the question.

What does the word "faith" mean to you? Websters Dictionary defines it as an "unquestioning belief that does not require proof; an unquestioning belief in God; a complete trust, confidence or reliance." Most of us can accept this definition and understand it, but to the young child it's still a pretty heavy statement. Unquestioning belief, confidence, or reliance probably don't mean much to them.

In December of 1890, Ellen White was being entertained at the home of J.S. Washburn, pastor of the Washington, D.C. SDA Church. Righteousness by faith was still a big issue, so the pastor asked her, "What is faith?"

Her reply was prompt and simple, "You believe what your Father tells you, do you not? That is faith."

J.S. Washburn goes on to say to Ellen White, "Faith was a simple and uncomplicated experience; just trusting belief as a child would trust a father."

A college friend of mine took his family on a trip to visit relatives. They all had a wonderful visit. When it was time to leave, my classmate reached into his pocket to get his keys -- which weren't there. He looked everywhere, but no keys. Everyone present was asked if they had seen the car keys. During all the hustle and rush of the incident no one noticed that the youngest child had disappeared into a bedroom and knelt down by the bed and simply asked Jesus to help her find the keys. The little girl got up from her knees, walked out the door, down the steps straight to a place in the lawn, bent down and picked up the keys. How could this happen?

Remember the story in Matthew where the disciples tried to cast out devils but couldn't? Christ said, . . . "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20).

Ellen White goes on to say in the book Education, page 253, "Faith is trusting God -- believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good." It seems the more intellectual we get in defining the term "faith", the more difficult to understand.



The answer that Ellen White gave to Pastor Washburn is the best to me. Just trusting belief, as a child would trust a father -- just as the little girl trusted and believed in her Jesus.



TRUSTING JESUS

We live in a world where trust in anyone or anything is a rarity. One would be foolish, indeed, to leave a car or house unlocked these days. Politicians give us all kinds of promises but we know that they can't produce.

Thank God this is a situation that is not happening within our Church! Oh, how I wish that statement was true. In my opinion there is more distrust in church leadership and in each other than at any time in our denominational history. Sentiment seems to come through loud and clear, "I'm going to look out for number one, that's me."

Yes, there have been some regrettable mistakes by some of our leaders. Isn't it a shame that we all have to pay for the wrongs of a few? This is still God's church; He still is in control. He can see the end from the beginning. He knows what is best for all mankind, even for you and me. He is all-wise and we'll see that in the end justice will prevail.

My fellow workers, if we would put our full trust in Jesus perhaps we would find it easier to trust our fellow church workers and man in general. Read the words of Ira D. Sankey that follow. This is my prayer.

Simply trusting every day,
Trusting through a stormy way;
Even when my faith is small,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Brightly doth His Spirit shine
Into this poor heart of mine;
While He leads I cannot fail;
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Singing if my way is clear;
Praying if the path be drear;
If in danger, for Him call;
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Refrain: Trusting as the moments fly,
Trusting as the days go by;
Trusting Him whate'er befall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.



TRUSTING – EASY OR HARD?

In 1992 Hurricane Andrew devastated Florida with a fury unknown to the U.S. In 1993 the great rivers of the midsection of our country overflowed their banks, breaking all previous records. Wars are threatening in many parts of the globe. Race relations don't seem to be getting better. Senseless crimes are being committed every day. When will it ever end? It has always been my opinion that if a disaster strikes my home, if life is not lost, my insurance will cover my losses, and living would go on with just minimal inconveniences.

However, these last two national disasters have shown me that there may not be enough insurance money to pay all the claims. Rightly or wrongly we have been taught to depend on ourselves, make sure we have savings when we retire, to make sure our property is correctly insured, to make sure our family is well provided for if we should die. It is my opinion that we should care for all of the above items. Remember when Christ was on the cross, He took time to see that His mother was given adequate care. It is very evident that we can be well - protected, but national disaster upon national disaster could leave us without insurance funds to recover.

Perhaps we who call ourselves dedicated Christians will have to learn what trusting completely in the only worthwhile insurance policy, Jesus Christ, is all about. The Lord tells us to occupy until He comes and to trust in Him -- words so easily spoken, but not always so easy to do. Oh to have the trust of the prophet Elijah! The Lord told him there was going to be a great famine and he was to go to the brook Cherith and a raven would bring food to him.

Now think, would you have gone? Would you have taken food from a raven, even if it was good food? After all, the raven is a scavenger. And would you ask a mother to give up the last of her oil and flour to feed you? Unless you have explicit trust in the Lord, it would be a very difficult thing to do. Which brings me to the next point. If we don't have that kind of trust, how can we teach our youngsters what true trust is when we don't know ourselves? It is that kind of trust I desire -- the kind of trust for which I pray.

There is a special friend of mine who, in my opinion, does live that kind of trust. When visiting her school and talking about a problem, I would ask her, "How in the world are you going to solve that problem?" Her answer was always, "Don't worry, I'm am putting it in the hands of the Lord and He will care for it."

"Oh sure," I thought, "those are good words, but you must have a plan. The Lord needs some help."



On my next rip I would ask about the problems, wanting to know that had happened, fully expecting it to have grown into a much larger problem. but that's not what happened. "Oh," she said , "the Lord worked it out for me." Then she would tell me the wonderful workings of the Lord.

This, my friends, happened over and over again. It hasn't stopped yet. During her last move, the Lord provided housing at an unusually low figure in a most unusual way. Her answer again was, "See, the Lord always provides."

A little child has complete trust in His parents. But somewhere between childhood and adulthood, things change and that wonderful trust disappears.

It is our job as Christian teachers to teach that kind of trust so that as they mature it will be precious for them to know.

"There is a guide that never falters
And when He leads I cannot stray
For step by step He goes before me
And marks my path.
He knows the way.
He knows the way that leads to glory.
My every fear He will allay.
And lead them safe at last to heaven.
Let Jesus lead ---
He knows the way."



IT'S NOT MY FAULT

Ben Haden is one of my favorite TV ministers. A few years ago, while attending some North American Division meetings in Chattanooga, Tennessee, I had the privilege of visiting his church one Sunday morning. He is now on TV in our area every Sunday night at 11 p.m.; a rather late hour, but it is worth tuning in to hear his sermons.

Recently, he related a story about the time when he was the chief administrator of a local newspaper. He indicated that he was rather young at the time. All those who worked under him were at least twice his age, and they didn't take too kindly to his administrative decisions. At the end of the first year of his administration he called a meeting of all the department heads. He told them that every problem the paper had experienced that past year was his fault. Anything that had gone against policy, he said, was his fault. "Why did he say that?" you might ask. He said that because no one would ever admit they had made a mistake. If something went wrong, their answer would be "**It's not my fault**" followed up with reams of statements and/or statistics to prove the position taken. Ben Haden didn't finish the story. He didn't tell what the reaction was on the department heads — I rather wished he would have. We can only surmise what took place.

Well, you and I see this same problem in teaching, and in general, our Christian life. How many times have you heard the statement "**It's not my fault**?" Think now — how do you react when you do hear it? Seldom will anybody admit to being wrong. Let's face it -- we don't like to admit our faults any more than the rest of the world. It's just not the way we do things. In politics it is almost never done. There are lots of faults, but they never lay at the feet of the politician. It's always his opponent's fault. It's not just the politician however, it seems to be imbedded in us to blame someone else for our mistakes.

It all started back in the Garden of Eden, when the infamous deceiver convinced Adam and Eve that it wasn't their fault. Eve blamed the serpent, and Adam blamed Eve. It's been that way ever since. It's Satan's way — never admit to anything that goes wrong. It's the world's way — that way most people live.

Jesus gave us the other side of the picture. He said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."



He has accepted all our sins. In essence, He said to the Father, "Forgive them -- it's all My fault."

My friends, when I think of my selfish ways, then realize what Jesus has done for me -- accepting all my faults, standing in my stead before the King of the universe -- I have to weep tears of thanksgiving. He has taken my faults and made them His. Now I can stand before the Father spotless.

This we must teach our young people -- not to be blaming their bad habits on others, but rather to be perfecting their characters, which will bring them into the realization that there is no goodness in any of us, save from the power of Jesus. This, then is the perfect solution -- that He wills us to be perfect: then He accepts all our faults and stands in our place so that we can, indeed, stand perfect before our God.

Thank God for such a kind, considerate, and loving Lord!



TOO SOON OLD – TOO LATE SMART

For ten days, it was my privilege to attend a Pan- American Division education meeting in Medellin, Colombia. This city of one million two hundred thousand people is nestled in a valley of the Andes mountains. At night it seems that the whole population is out walking in the streets. Those who were assigned to take us to the hotel warned us to watch our wallets. We were instructed to put our wallets in a front pocket, and then keep a hand in the pocket over the wallet. "That's silly!" was my silent thought. "That's not necessary!" But as our guide continued to impress the idea of being careful, my wallet found its place in my left front pocket, but without protection of the hand to cover the precious contents.

Much fun was had that day, and the next. Walking back to the hotel with Dr. Hirsch and Elder Stephan, paying little attention to those around us, suddenly I felt a hand in my front left pocket. With a shout, I turned. As quick as a wink he was gone. Fortunately for me, my wallet was still safely in my pocket. No one had to encourage me from the point on to be extra careful.

Isn't this the same way it is in our Christian life? We have all kinds of good guidance from the Bible, Spirit of Prophecy, ministers, parents, and friends, but how often we silently think, "It's not all that important," or "Really, I know better how to handle my life." And then something happens, and we realize how foolish we have been.

The Lord says, "Watch and be ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Let's not let the arch thief catch us unaware; let's put our hands in Christ's where the protection is complete and secure.

The Teacher:

As Leader



WHO CORRECTS ME WHEN I'M WRONG?

We are leaders, you and I, in what we feel is the best educational system. Now, it's easy for us to get to thinking that we are rather important people. Perhaps even more than we really are.

Back in 1910 Ellen White gave two morning devotions at the Pacific Union Conference Session. This was at the time when the denomination was deciding if Loma Linda was to be a medical school. Not all were for it, including the president. Thursday morning of the session she began:

In these perilous times, when the forces of evil are marshaling their hosts to thwart, if possible, the efforts of God's servants in the earth, it is vitally necessary for every laborer to walk humbly with God, Daily he is to maintain a close connection with heavenly agencies. Light has been coming to me that unless the workers lean heavily on the divine Source of their strength, many will be overcome by the power of the enemy. Satanic agencies will surround the soul of him who cherishes a spirit of independence and self-exaltation, and will seek to destroy his influence for good.

Those who are standing in responsible positions should understand clearly that they are not rulers over their fellow workers. Men in responsibility should be Christlike in deportment. They need to be leaders in every reformatory movement for the purification of the church. They are to reveal that angels of God are constantly round about them, and that they are laboring under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Carefully are they to avoid everything that savors of a spirit of selfishness and self-esteem, for in meekness and humility of heart they are to be examples to the flock. Pacific Union Recorder, April 14, 1910.

That same afternoon two members of the nominating committee came and asked her about the names to be presented for the offices of the union. She advised a change in the presidency. Then, the same afternoon she wrote a six-page letter to the president, a portion of which follows:

I am instructed by the Lord to say to our brethren and to you, that it is not the will of the Spirit of God that your brethren should place you in positions of large responsibility while you determinedly maintain your own ideas, for these ideas are not all correct, and the Lord will hold our people responsible for pursuing a wrong course. It would also be doing an injury to yourself, to sustain and uphold you in wrong decisions that have been made.



I am instructed by the Lord to advise our brethren to choose some other man to stand in your place as president of the Pacific Union conference. Letter 18, 1910.

The next morning for her devotion, Ellen White read to the congregation the letter she had written to the president.

Friends, how would you like to have been that leader?

We don't have to worry about a prophet coming to us and saying, "Thou art the man" or a bolt of light from heaven to turn us around, or a letter from the prophet to show us the way. So, how do we know if we are leading correctly?

Ellen White opened the Thursday morning session with this text:

"And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)

If we live by this advice we will be close enough to the Lord to know His will.



I KNOW I CAN

Here we are, once again, another school year is about to begin. You are probably gearing up to hear the old cliches, “A new beginning,” “A new start,” “A new rebirth,” “Look to the future,” “Don’t look back,” “There’s always room at the top of the ladder,” “If you do a good job, someone will always notice you,” etc.

As you can see from the title, I just can’t get away from them myself. Leadership is the subject of our first get-together this year. You are not just educators, you are educator-leaders. Leadership has its pro’s and con’s. Look at the next anonymous paragraph concerning leadership.

The price of leadership is always loneliness. The leader is the one who keeps ahead. Did you ever see men running a race? The man who keeps ahead has no encouragement. All he has is the weary road. The fellows behind him, the ones way behind, try to catch up with the leader, but the loneliest man on the turf is the man who runs ahead or alone. The loneliest ship on the Atlantic is the ship that sails fastest, and the loneliest man in your denomination is the one who sees the vision of what your denomination can do. And the loneliest missionary in Korea, or Japan, or Arabia is the man who sees what the others cannot yet see. But the price of leadership is always loneliness. There is a loneliness of the desert and a loneliness of the sea. There is a loneliness of the great city. But there is no loneliness so great as the loneliness of a great idea that nobody else has caught and only Y O U can see.

There is some truth in the above statement. However, it seems to me that it puts too much negativism into leadership. If to stay with the crowd of mediocrity to keep from being lonely. Personally, to be a good leader, you must be optimistic rather than pessimistic that is, see the glass as half full rather than half empty.

The above statement, in my opinion, doesn’t have to be true. That is, leadership doesn’t have to be lonely. Charting new courses is fun, it’s inspirational, it’s being creative, it’s saving students.

Leadership is being in touch with all entities a person is working with. It’s knowing when to fight for a point, it’s knowing when to fold and pull back. It’s liking what you do, it’s waking up in the morning anxious to find new solutions to old problems. Remember this truism:

If you think you can, you will.
If you think you can’t, you won’t.
In any case, you are right.



Leadership is also a mind-set, an attitude, a trust in God. For me, leadership has been fun. Oh, there have been times decisions would be different if they could be rerun, that's life. So instead of the negative statement that started this writing, let me put it a different way. The price of leadership is getting people to give their best. It's charting new grounds. It's learning new things. It's developing new ideas. It's accomplishing the impossible tasks. It's foreseeing problems before they arise. How can a leader be lonely? I just can't see it that way.

You educators are leaders. Make this year a happy experience, rather than a lonely one.

"The humblest worker, moved by the Holy Spirit, will touch invisible chords, whose vibrations will ring to the ends of the earth, and make melody through eternal ages." Desire of Ages, p. 823.



WHO IS THE GREATEST?

Have you noticed who is considered great in this world? It's the presidents of countries, the royalty, the executives of large corporations, the professionals, the doctors, the lawyers, the stars of Hollywood, the professionals in sports, the professional musicians and the ones listed in the Fortune 500. Notice that common denominators are money and power. Although there are some exceptions, in the eyes of the world it seems that a man must be wealthy and/or powerful in order to be considered great.

Unfortunately, we as Adventists play this game too. We have our heroes--our great ones. There is no disrespect intended but look at our list of greats. The presidents of our organizations, the professional men, the doctors, the lawyers, the businessmen who have acquired a reasonable amount of wealth, the successful teacher usually of large, prominent schools, the successful minister usually of a large and well-known church. Money or power are still the common denominator.

Fortunately, in both groups above, not all of the leaders take unfair advantage of those they have under their influence. Many have become great because of their deep sincere desire to care for others. As long as that is their first desire, we should have no quarrel with them.

Our Lord saw greatness in a different way than we do. Remember the story of the Pharisee and the Publican? Remember how they prayed? Money and power had brought one, the Pharisee, to greatness in this world. But the Lord looked at the little man, the insignificant man as far as the world is concerned. This man didn't have much to give momentarily but he gave his all into the Lord's hands. This is what the Lord counts as great!

Most of you teachers will never be honored in this world as great. Very few of you will be written up in a journal as the best teacher. Most of you will never know what it is to be wealthy and never want for anything.

But you are great and your greatness will be rewarded when the Master smiles and says to you, "Well done thou good and faithful servant. Thank you for the wonderful young people you have so faithfully led to the foot of the Cross."



Greatness in this world is shallow and short-live. Too often the wrong person gets the credit. The main reason for Adventist education is for the redemption of our young people. Your teaching must have that as your focal point. If you do, you will have a place of honor higher than any worldly honor given today.

“...man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM - HOW LONG?

On the wall in front of my desk hangs a picture given to me by David Rao, a former Superintendent of Schools in the Greater New York Conference.

It is a traditional picture of an old red one-room country school. There is a flag flying majestically from the top of the roof. There is also a bellhouse straddling the ridge of the roof where the sounds of the bell ring out each morning calling the children to school. The most important part of the picture is revealed only by a shadow bell tower and cross from the church which is a obviously right next door.

My heart is full of gratefulness for the religious freedom we enjoy. If you study the picture closely you will notice ominous clouds in the background. A storm is developing and is about to explode. The ray of light coming through the clouds will soon be quenched and the dark shadows in the foreground will envelop the school and the flag. Because there will be no light, all evidence of the church will disappear.

To my mind, this is a very accurate picture of what is now happening in the world. Thank God we enjoy wonderful freedoms in this country! But look carefully, there are ominous clouds forming. They are coming from every direction. They are going to blot out our religious freedoms. Time is short. What we must do must be done quickly. We must not waste a moment. The opportunities we have with our young people are precious. The time we have with our young people could be cut short. Our religious freedoms will not last. You have heard me say over and over again, "Lead your children to the Saviour daily while you still have a chance."

The Teacher:

As Reflector



SURE ELECTION

Most elections in the United States traditionally take place in the month of November. One year from now we will all be watching with concern the events that lead up to the election of the president of this great nation.

The list of candidates grows longer day by day. Two men have already dropped out of the race because of bad judgments in their personal lives. Now we hear the hue and cry that what one does with his personal life should have no reflection on his public life — that we should not look at the personal life of a candidate, but weather what he does while in public office. They say that it doesn't matter if one stretches the truth as long as he does his job in a respectable manner.

Sorry, this writer doesn't see it that way. My leaders, my heroes must be respectable, upright individuals, and if they fall from that position, they are no longer my heroes and no longer in fact my leaders! Some teachers have said to me, "What I do outside of school hours is my business." They are only fooling themselves — for it just isn't that way at all!

Gary Hart couldn't get away with even the appearance of immorality in a most immoral world and still be a viable presidential race.

Just because we live in a time when purity, honesty, and upright living seem to be the exception rather than the rule, the public still wants its leaders to be special people — people they can look up to — people they can trust — people they can put on a pedestal.

We, who serve the youth of our church, must realize that it does matter what we do outside the classroom. Our young people want and need someone to look up to — someone they can trust. We are uneasy about hero worship, but it is a fact that we will sometimes be put on a pedestal. It is at this time especially that we must show we are only a reflection of Jesus and His love. We must realize that everything we do is noticed by students, and parents — and, yes, the whole church.

No, we are not running for president of the United States — we have a greater race. As Peter said in 2 Peter 1:10, 11, "Therefore, my brothers, (teachers) be all eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."



CHRIST, OUR MODEL

You've seen the picture, haven't you, the one where the little boy is stretching his little legs trying his best to walk in his father's footsteps? It's natural for little ones to do this. They like to imitate the ones they look up to. Ellen White in **Child Guidance**, page 215, says: "The powers of imitation are strong; and in childhood and youth, when this faculty is most active, a perfect pattern should be set before the young."

Most everyone has models. No doubt you have had one or more yourself — I did. Unfortunately, not all the models we choose are as perfectly patterned as that which Ellen White was talking about. Modeling is a method of observational learning and it really comes quite naturally. We all do it at certain times without even realizing it.

The grandparents of a very beautiful little two-year-old girl decided they wanted a good picture of her, so they took her to a beauty shop and had her hair shampooed, cut and set. According to the grandparents, she was just the cutest little girl in the whole world. They got the picture and she did pose just right. It was a very satisfying experience for all concerned. Little did they realize how much the little girl was taking in. Apparently she came to the opinion that cutting her hair had something to do with all the nice fuss that was being made over her. So, perhaps thinking if once was good, the next will even be better, she gave herself a haircut just the way she remembered it being done by the beauty operator. She was modeling.

Some years ago, a friend of mine attended Baylor University and studied every night with one of his classmates who was taking the same courses. One night after supper the son was asked to carry out the garbage. The two men went to the dining room to study. The boy didn't come back, but nobody worried much, figuring he was detained by a friend. After quite some time there was a loud bang on the window. A man shouted "Is this your boy?" The man rushed outside and found the boy unconscious with a rope around his neck. Fortunately they were able to revive him. He had no serious lasting problems.

How did that happen? Just before supper the boy had been watching a cowboy picture on TV and there was a hanging. The boy, playing, modeled what he saw threw a rope over a limb just as he had seen, tied the rope around his neck and somehow got himself into a position in which he had no control.

Our students are going to be modeling us each day. Do as the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:1-2 (NIV): "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live



a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”



OUT TO LUNCH

Comedy is sometimes not so funny. We often laugh at the expense of others. We laugh at the comedian. When we analyze what we think is funny, it is usually something that makes fun of, or tears down something or someone. For instance, take a look at the next nine phrases:

He's not playing with a full deck!
Her train is missing the caboose!
His elevator doesn't go all the way to the top!
She's one brick shy of full load!
His light's on - but nobody's home!
She is rowing with only one oar in the water!
He is one cookie short of a dozen!
She's out to lunch!
He doesn't know when to come in out of the rain!

These are all funny sayings. We can think of characters that fit each one of these phrases. It's so easy to laugh at them! But wait a minute. Have you ever overheard someone uttering one of these or similar phrases about you? Now it's not so funny, but everyone is laughing so you laugh too — on the outside that is. On the inside you pray for a trap door, for the ability to become invisible, or perhaps for the power to forever quiet those who have inflicted this cruel, insensitive remark about you.

Probably not many of us as teachers have had to go through something like this because our very livelihood depends on our ability to be in control. However, even our proud profession does not escape the flippant ridicule that so easily rolls off the lips of some.

A more devastating problem is to hear these kinds of statements about some of the youngsters we teach. This is not saying it hasn't crossed our minds to use some of these phrases ourselves! The hurt that results from such remarks, even in jest, can never be erased.

Look at each phrase and ask yourself, "Would Christ say that about any of His own?" Of course He wouldn't! For a God of love would be sensitive to the needs of His subjects.



How do we control those under our supervision from partaking in this kind of jocularity? This becomes a much more difficult problem. Young people so often say things without thinking. Scolding sometimes accentuates the problem even more. Perhaps the best defense is a sincere Christian teacher who is constantly aware of what is going on in the classroom.

Yes, a Christian example along with thoughtful Christian guidance will help in controlling this problem. We need to protect our precious young as much as possible from unnecessary cruelty from their peers. If they don't see or hear us partaking in such, just maybe they will see a better way.



BE PREPARED!

While in Bermuda in December of 1982, Elder Goulbourne gave a short devotion for our board meeting at the school. The illustration he used touched my heart. My memory is sometimes short; therefore, the details may not be the same as they were given that night, but the point of the story is the same.

A passenger train was moving swiftly along toward its destination. Ahead lay a sharp curve, then a short few miles to the station. The passengers and crew sensed the run was almost over. The engineer, a veteran soon to retire, had made this trip hundreds of times and knew every foot of the track. As he came around the curve, just ahead there stood a freight train on the same tracks of the speeding passenger train. Instantly, he shut down and pulled on the brake all in the same motions. Somehow that big, sleek passenger train came to a stop just inches before the idle freight. Later, many accolades were given to the engineer. His actions saved scores of lives. One reporter asked him how it was that he was able to get that speeding train stopped so fast. "Well," he said, "I've been training for this from the very first time I came around that curve. I decided then that if something was in the way I would have to be prepared, so every time I came around that curve my hands were on the controls, my eyes were glued to the tracks, just in case. When I saw the freight train that day, I simply followed the plan that had been rehearsed every time my train came around that curve."

What a beautiful story on preparation! What a beautiful story on Christian education! We don't know all the problems or pitfalls that our young people are going to have to face. It's impossible for us to foresee each and every case. If we could, we would map out a course, write down all the problems, and give them the answers to everything they might encounter. As a parent or teacher, how many times have you wished you could do just that? How much sorrow could be averted. What we can do, is show them where and what the controls are, show them how to use them, and make it clear to them that when they come around that dangerous unknown curve of life that their eyes must be fixed on Jesus. The best way to accomplish this is by example — the example of a God-fearing person who is able under stress to make the right decisions. That example must be you!



“WHAT’S GOD LIKE?”

A little boy crawled up on his father’s lap, pushed the evening newspaper to one side, looked up into his father’s face and asked, “Daddy, what’s God like?”

Now, how would you answer that question? The thoughts that went through the father’s mind were overwhelming. The question his little boy asked was a very profound one. He could not go into a theological discourse; that would take too long and wouldn’t be understood. He had to say something that would keep his boy’s attention for just a minute or two and still get across the realness of God and that He is indeed well and alive. As he was contemplating just what to say, he felt a tug on his tie and he looked down into an upturned smiling, worshipful face. He said, “That’s all right, Daddy, you don’t have to tell me. I already know. He’s just like you.” Reflecting Him— that’s the answer isn’t it? Bishop Trent put it this way,

Oh, what a change one short hour spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
What burdens from our bosom take?
We kneel how weak we rise how full of power!
Why then do we ourselves this harm
That we are not always strong
When peace and joy and strength are with Thee?

Just how do your students see you? Those of you who are teaching in the lower elementary grades know how the little ones love and respect their teacher. Whether you like it or not they usually put their teacher on a very high pedestal. It has made me stop and take a second and third look at myself. Am I worthy of their love and respect? Am I living a life that is consistent with true Christian principles? Would I be willing for my children to know me outside of school as well as they know me in my classroom? Wouldn’t it be wonderful if when your students ask you, “What’s God like?” They might after thinking say, “Never mind, teacher. I already know. He’s just like you.” This would be the highest compliment a teacher could ever receive.



IS THAT ALL THERE IS?

A number of years ago I listened to a popular song where the singer told of how her father had taken her to see a circus. She saw acts, the animals, and the pretty ladies, but when it was all over, she asked, "Is that all there is?" The song told of several other experiences. The singer said, finally, that she fell in love with the most wonderful boy in the world. They would sit for hours just looking into each other's eyes, they were so much in love. And when he went away, she sang, "I thought I would die, but I didn't." And I asked myself, "Is that all there is to love?"

The song disturbed me. To me it depicted the emptiness and despair of the world in which God had been pronounced dead. Just things. Just getting and spending. Empty entertainment and disappointments and hypocrisy. If that's all, then why not find an escape from despair — if that's all. Of course, the answer is, "No, no that's not all." There's much more. There are causes worth the effort. There is love that is lasting and genuine. There is hope of enjoying a new eternal world.

I wish I could say that all of us act as if we know there is more. It would be nice if Seventh-day Adventist education could always guarantee perfect results, but it can't. But we can at least show the young, by our actions and our lives, that there is much more to this world than the emptiness implied by that song.



REAL OR PHONY?

Your director has had several opportunities to be on the isle of Bermuda this year. Every time the plane approaches the landing strip and I look out the window and see the beautiful blue water, the question comes to mind, “Can it possibly be real?” Many of you, no doubt, have been to places like *Disney Land*, *Six Flags* or other similar places. The parks are usually immaculately clean, but the water that carries some of the rides is artificially colored. It is colored to make the dirty water look clean, but it just doesn’t look right. You know it is phony. However, it makes little difference because the whole park is a make-believe, taking one intentionally out of the real life. There is nothing phony about the multi-colored waters that surround Bermuda. One stands in awe at the crystal-clear water colored by nature and can then realize that only a God that loves beauty and wishes to please mankind could have designed something so wonderfully perfect.

Sitting before you each day are from 6 to 36 young people with that many different personalities — some happy, some sad, some quick of learning, some not so quick, some showing the love of Jesus, and some showing a very different spirit. All have one thing in common, they are looking for something real, something they can believe in, something beautiful. To put it bluntly, they are looking for something or someone who is not phony. Those young people are quick to detect the phony from the real. What do your students see in your room and in you? Do they see, as it were, artificially colored water not quite covering up the polluted water; phoniness that is going to make it easier for them to resist the pleading of the Holy Spirit? Or do they see, as it were, the natural, multicolored waters, clear as crystal, as they stand in respect for one who they know is being directed by the Master Designer? Remember, our young people are not looking for a perfect teacher. They are looking for the opposite of a phony, a real someone they can believe in.



WHAT IS COMPETENT?

In education circles today we read much about competencies. You can pick up most any educational journal and read the pros and cons of the subject. It is not my desire to get into a full scale discussion on this topic, but maybe we as Christian educators should define in our own minds what we mean by the word competent.

One of the privileges of a superintendent is the opportunity to observe many different kinds of teachers in many different kinds of situations. Let us take teachers “A” and “B” for example. Both graduated from the teacher training course of the same college. They had been friends from childhood and therefore had elected to take the same courses in college. Their educational experience then was about as close as you can get — same professors, same assignments, same methods of teaching. With this background one would think that these two teachers would be very much alike in the operation of their classrooms. In actuality, if you were to pay a visit to their classrooms, you would be sure that they had received their training from two opposing methods of teaching.

The classroom of teacher “A” was relaxed, happy, and delightful, obvious learning was going on. The classroom of teacher “B” could be described more like a little concentration camp. Everything was precise, stern and businesslike. Yes, it was obvious that learning was going on there, too. Looking at test results at the end of the year produced not real surprises. Both were “competent” teachers as far as getting results from their students. To the casual eye, teacher “B” is usually considered the more competent teacher because her room is always quiet and orderly and discipline problems seem to be non-existent.

The word competent should take on much more meaning to a Christian educator. It is necessary to teach for mastery of skills, but more than that it is necessary to teach a satisfaction and happiness in applying learned concepts to real-life experiences.

How could two teachers be so different in the classroom, coming from nearly the same background? The answer is not a simple one but perhaps one continued the education process by studying the methods of the Master Teacher as outlined in the Bible and Spirit of prophecy while the other studied more of the methods of man. We cannot be like Christ unless we know what Christ is like. By beholding him we become changed. By beholding us our students become changed. Changed to what? That is the question.

What is competent? It takes on a whole new meaning when you think of it in this light.



IN HIS STEPS

Sometimes within the past year or two one of my articles dealt with the subject, “Imitators of God.”

This past December, the North American Division held a curriculum committee in Orlando, Florida. Since my parents live near Daytona Beach, it was my happy privilege to spend the weekend just prior to the meeting with them. It was such a good time — talking, eating, going to church together.

One evening my father and I were watching Presidents Bush and Gorbachev on the TV talking about things that just a few months ago we never thought would be possible to happen in our lifetime. We were simply amazed to hear and see what was taking place. While watching and listening, my eyes glanced at where my father was sitting. He had his hands clasped across his stomach — so were mine. He was twirling his thumbs — so was I. This may have been just a coincidence, but here was a son unconsciously imitating his father. It was so amusing to me.

My thought turned to more conscious thing — how this son is still imitating his father in such areas as: a strong belief in God, a dependability, promptness, and love for people. There are many who are not as lucky as this son, in having such a good role model to imitate — one who is still giving his best for God, church, and fellowman. It takes an incident like this to bring me back to the realization of how fortunate I am to have good role-model parents. Things that were taken for granted in my life really shouldn't have been taken lightly, but when you have known nothing different, it's hard to realize how truly blessed one has been.

Since this is again a new year (it seems they are coming around faster all the time), it is appropriate for us to focus once again on the One who is faultless, the One we can be proud to imitate, the One who loved us so much that he gave his most precious possession to make it possible for us to have an opportunity for eternal life.

So, instead of making New Year's resolutions that are so often broken before the first weekend, let's think about imitating our Heavenly Father.

The picture of the little boy stretching his small legs to the limit to put his feet in his father's footsteps has always been one of my favorites. The child's determination and look of utter reverence and respect for his father is the type of relationship I wish for each of us. The child's complete acceptance of a parent comes because of love, experience, and teaching — the same way we can come to a relationship with our Heavenly Father.



Some of your students who are not as fortunate as this writer to have wonderful parents need you to fill that gap, to be that role model to imitate. The responsibility, although frightening, can be the most fulfilling experience of your life.

Our ministry is with and for our young people. Although it may appear to be an overwhelming task, it is not. If we become imitators of God, then all the power of the universe is in our hands. There is nothing impossible for us because there is nothing impossible to God. Be ye imitators of God, and walk in His steps.



COPY CATS!

Almost everyone is guilty of imitating, copying something about another person they admire. The unfortunate point is that not all details of life that are imitated should be imitated.

I just finished a book entitled, *Season of the Carnival* by Aura Lindsay Grant. She is a middle-aged mother whose children have grown and left the nest. She still had two of the leftover pets from her children. Puppy was an 11-year-old adorable dog, short and stocky, close to the ground. It had been her son's dog. Orky was an eight-year-old little dainty prancing dog who had first belonged to her older daughter, and then when she left home, it became her younger daughter's dog.

The interesting thing about Puppy was that after taking a few steps one of his back legs would jerk straight out. He had a limp that could not be missed. When Orky came along she followed the older dog and did exactly as he did. She too walked with that funny little limp, even though there was nothing wrong with her legs.

Come to think of it, my children liked to copy my wife and me. The girls loved to dress up in hat, clothes, and high heels just like their mother, and my son would put soap lather on his face and try to shave. Those kinds of things were cute. We laughed at them. However, there were times we heard ourselves in our children. We saw ourselves being copied, and some of those events weren't so cute. In fact, we had to take definite steps to change our image in some areas to our children.

Imitation is a very effective teacher. We want the children we teach to be imitators of God first, and then of good strong people here on earth. Your young people are looking to you as teachers, and will be copying your strong points whether they are good or bad. Since most of our students think we are strong, we must be concerned as to whether they could be crippled because of copying something they say as a strong point in our lives, when in fact, it was a negative aspect of our character rather than a positive one.

Little Orky always walked with a limp. She didn't have to, but she admired a dog friend so much that she thought that was the way she was supposed to walk. She was handicapped all her life because of her misconception.

It is an awesome responsibility we have, you and me, leading those young minds. God can, and does, take our frail capabilities and make them strong and valuable to Himself; hence, worth being copied by those we love and teach.

The Teacher:

As Sufficient Grace



SUFFICIENT GRACE

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness'"
2 Corinthians 12:7-9 NIV

All of us has or have had a thorn in our flesh. Paul was asking to have his removed. There have been ideas, but no one really knows what his thorn in the flesh was. Lucado gives the following as possibilities:

1. Sexual Temptation — Paul battling the flesh? Maybe after all he was a single man. Remember he said "I want to do the things that are good, but I do the bad things I do not want to do."
2. Foes — Paul had his share of opponents - he said "This problem was a messenger from Satan."
3. Abrasive Nature — Whatever he learned at the feet of Gamaliel, he may have dozed off the day they discussed the topic of tact;
4. His Body — Eyes were bad - maybe he never got over his Damascus experience.
5. His voice — A translation of 1Cor. 2:3-4. I was so scared that I stuttered, so nervous that I forgot my point, and the fact that you heard anything at all is testimony to God.

Here is the scene: You and half a dozen other folks are flying across the country in a chartered plane. All of a sudden the engine bursts into flames, and the pilot rushes out of the cockpit.

"We're going to crash!" he yells. "We've got to bail out!"

Good thing he knows where the parachutes are because we don't. He passes them out, gives us a few pointers, and we stand in line as he throws open the door. The first passenger steps up to the door and shouts over the wind, "Could I make a request?"

"Sure, what is it?"

"Any way I could get a pink parachute?"



The pilot shakes his head in disbelief. “Isn’t it enough that I gave you a parachute at all?” And so the first passenger jumps.

The second steps to the door. “I’m wondering if there is any way you could ensure that I won’t get nauseated during the fall?”

“No, but I can ensure that you will have a parachute for the fall.”

Each of us comes with a request and receives a parachute.

“Please captain,” says one, “I am afraid of heights. Would you remove my fear?”

“No,” he replies, “but I’ll give you a parachute.

Another pleads for a different strategy, “Couldn’t you change the plans? Let’s crash with the plane. We might survive.”

The pilot smiles and says, “You don’t know what you are asking” and gently shoves the fellow out the door, One passenger wants some goggles, another wants boots, another wants to wait until the plane is closer to the ground.

“You people don’t understand,” the pilot shouts as he “helps” us, one by one. “I’ve given you parachute; that is enough.”

Only one item is necessary for the jump, and he provides it. He places the strategic tool in our hands. The gift is adequate. But are we content? No. We are restless, anxious, even demanding.

Too crazy to be possible? Maybe in a plane with pilots and parachutes, but on earth with people and the grave? God hears thousands of appeals per second. Some are legitimate. We, too ask God to remove the fear or change the plans. He usually answers with a gentle shove that leaves us airborne and suspended by His grace.

The Problem: When God Says No

Now we come to the problem Paul had — what happens when God says no? There are times when the one thing you want is the one thing you never get. You’re not being picky or demanding; you’re only obeying his command to “ask God for everything you need” All you want is an open door or an extra day or an answered prayer, for which you will be thankful.

And so you pray and wait.

No answer.



You pray and wait.

No answer.

You pray and wait.

Well what if God says no?

What if the request is delayed or even denied? When God says no to you, how will you respond? If God says, "I've given you my grace, and that is enough" will you be content?

Content, that's the word. A state of heart in which you would be at peace if God gave you nothing more than he already has. Test yourself with this question: What if God's only gift to you were his grace to save you. Would you be content? You beg him to save the life of your child. You plead with Him to keep your business afloat. You implore him, to remove the cancer from your body. What if his answer is, "My grace is enough." Would you be content?

You see, from heaven's perspective, grace is enough. If God did nothing more than save us from hell, could anyone complain? If stuck on a deserted island, would he be unjust? Having been given eternal life, dare we grumble at an aching body? Having been given heavenly riches, dare we bemoan earthly poverty?

But God has not left you with "just salvation." If you have eyes to see and ears to hear these words, hands to hold a book, the means to buy, He has already given you grace upon grace. We have been saved and then blessed even more!

But there are those times when God, having given us His grace, hears our appeals and says, "My grace is sufficient for you." Is He being unfair?

A little girl fell into a swimming pool when she was just two years old. A friend saw her and pulled her to safety. The father told God how wonderful He was for saving her. As clearly as if God Himself were speaking, this question came to mind: Would I be less wonderful had I let her drown? Would I be any less a good God for letting her die? Would I still be receiving your praise this morning had I not saved her?

Is God still a good God when he says no?

The Teacher:

Through The Year



BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Not a bad title as we begin the New Year you will notice that it doesn't say "Know what the End is Before You Begin." There is no question in my mind, however, that most happenings could be much different if there were any thought given to what might occur in the end. Many times friends will ask me what my schedule is for a few weeks in advance. My quip is usually, "I only know what is happening one day in the future." Well, you know that's very much an exaggeration, but it does seem to be a trend with people to only deal with the present, for to deal with the future is a little scary.

Let's think of some examples of poor planning – with seemingly no thought of the end in mind.

It wasn't Rebecca's plan that she would never see her son again when she helped Jacob deceive his father.

Jacob didn't plan that the deceit he practiced would come back to haunt him in the form of getting the wrong woman after working for seven years.

Laban didn't plan to lose a good portion of his flocks and herds to Jacob.

Joseph didn't plan to be a captive in Egypt when he acted like a spoiled hotshot around his brothers.

Samson didn't plan to lose his strength when he was playing around with Delilah.

Moses didn't plan to be exiled from his comfy position in Egypt when he killed an Egyptian.

Naaman didn't plan to contract the dreaded disease of leprosy.

The lives of some of these individuals changed when they began to look at life with the end in mind.

Jacob had much time to think of his deceptive ways and when he wrestled with the Lord that night, he was truly thinking with the end in mind. He said, "I will not let you go without a blessing."

Joseph, already in prison, could have thought, "I've done nothing to lose, I'll just have some fun" but he was thinking with the end in mind, and said "How can I sin against God?"



Samson came to his senses too. Even though he lost his own life, he was thinking with the end in mind when a temple of the evil one was destroyed when the strength from the Lord descended upon him once more.

Moses, while in the wilderness for those many years, began to look at his situation with the end in mind. His weaknesses now became strengths, and he became one of the world's greatest deliverers.

Naaman was a captive of his pride until a child convinced him to look at the end in a different way. When he did, his life was forever changed, physically and spiritually.

We all must begin each task with the end in mind not just the immediate end, but the eternal consequences or rewards that await us.

Our job as educators is greater than most. We dare not forget to begin with the end in mind. There are so many young minds looking to us, expecting that we will show them the right example. Let this be our mind-set for this new year. The Lord can't delay His coming much longer. All of our actions must be with this in mind.



SERVICE – A RESOLUTION?

Do you want to know what my New Year's resolution is this year? It's taken from the old hymn by John Greenleaf Whittier, "Dear Lord and Father." The second stanza goes like this:

"In simple faith like theirs who heard, Beside the Syrian Sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word, Rise up and follow Thee."

Many years ago I read about a prominent young physician. He had graduated with honors and was rapidly climbing the ladder of success. He was unusually bright, and it seemed that everything was working out just right in his life. No one doubted that he would someday be one of the most well-known and probably one of the wealthiest doctors in the country.

But then, at the worst time (he thought), there came a call to go to Korea to help thousands of people who were without a physician to care for their needs. He rebelled for a time. He said, "God, I can't go. It's not the right time. Everything is going so well for me. Let me get well-established. Then I can take a few years off and go do Your will." But the call of God to service was insistent, and he finally gave in.

A number of years later, one of the great preachers of our land, Louis H. Evans, went to Korea for a visit to the missions. He was asked by this godly doctor if he wanted to see a major operation. Dr. Evans said yes, and so at 1:00 p.m. he stood in the balcony with many Korean students, overlooking the operating table. The preacher said the sun was mercilessly beating down on the roof of the hospital. The heat, combined with the ether fumes, made him feel faint and he had to leave a half dozen times to refresh himself. The operation lasted seven long hours. Once it was completed, the good doctor went to the next room, where he was joined by the preacher.

"Is everyday like this?" he asked. With beads of perspiration on his forehead, eyes glassy, lips purple with strain, and hands that began to tremble with fatigue, the doctor only smiled.

When asked how much pay he would receive for that operation, tears welled up in his eyes, and with a choke in his voice he said, "Well, sir, for this I will get nothing but her gratitude, and my Master's smile. But that, sir, is worth more than all the plaudits and money the world can give."



I went out of the hospital that day coming to the conclusion that we are inestimably foolish ever to be afraid of Christ's will. We never truly find our lives until first we lose them. To give them away to Christ is to keep them forever. To submit to His bondage is to know perfect freedom. The path we fear to see is often the path which alone will bring us the greatest satisfaction and happiness.

Quoted from, Youth Seeks A Master by Louis H. Evans, D.D., p. 81.

I said, "Let me walk in the fields."
He said, "No, walk in the town."
I said, "There are no flowers there."
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."

I said, "But the skies are black,
There is nothing but noise and din."
And He wept as He sent me back –
"There is more," He said, "there is sin."

I said, "But the air is thick,
And the fogs are veiling the sun."
He answered, "Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone."

I said, "I shall miss the light,
And the friends will miss me, they say."
He answered, "Choose tonight
If I am to miss you, or they."

I pleaded for time to be given.
He said, "Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in heaven
To have followed the steps of your Guide."

I cast one look at the fields,
Then set my face to the town;
He said, "My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"

Then into His hand went mine;
And into my heart came He;
And I walk in a light divine,
The path I had feared to see.

"Obedience," by George MacDonald

What is your New Year's resolution this year?



NOT NECESSARILY NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS!

Here is one person who is tired of New Year's resolutions. You are probably surprised at that statement, because for the past several years in January this page has been dedicated to this topic. This is not to say that New Year's resolutions do not have their place. It's just that it seems we only think of making necessary or good changes in our lives at the beginning of each year. It is my opinion that every day is an opportunity to not only make changes in our lives, but also in the lives of those for which we have so much to do regarding their training.

This year, I'm going to change the direction of our thought. Perhaps we don't need to start over again, but rather identify the good things we are doing and then continue to do them. Following is a list. After reading it you may want to make your own.

1. Love those students you teach. It is possible that the only affection some of them get is from you – don't let them down.
2. Make school a fun place to be. This is not to say that learning is always easy; sometimes, however, it can be done in such a way that your students love school and want to be there.
3. Be a true minister of education in your school. Spend time with each child individually. Give each one a personal invitation to accept Jesus as their Savior. Plan to do this several times a year.
4. Be known for your study of the Word of God. We used to be known as a people that knew the Bible.
5. Be known for your dependence on prayer. It's very catching – others are more apt to start a dependence on prayer when they see someone they trust having a personal experience with the Lord.
6. Be a joyful Christian. Young people will imitate those they love.
7. Strive to be like Christ in **all** your dealing in and out of school.



This list is not just thrown together. On the contrary, this is really a list of attributes of the teachers who had the most to do in the shaping of my life. Miss Musick (now Mrs. Waters), my first through third grade teacher; Miss Munson, my third through fifth grade teacher; Mr. Hillier, my ninth and tenth grade teacher; Prof. Shull, my academy principal; Elder Banks, my major professor in college; Dr. Hammill, the dean of the college where I attended – they were the epitome of this list. You, too, are shapers of young lives. It is my hope that your list will include these, not necessarily New Year's resolutions but resolutions to lead young people to Christ.



JUST FOR TODAY!

JUST FOR TODAY: I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life's problems at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appal me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said – that, “Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

JUST FOR TODAY: I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will adjust myself to whatever is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will exercise my soul two ways. I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will have a quiet half-hour all by myself, and relax. During this half-hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

JUST FOR TODAY: I will be unafraid. Especially, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful; and to believe that as I give to the world ... so the world will give to me.

There you have it “Just For Today!” I especially like the last item:

JUST FOR TODAY: I will be unafraid. Especially, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful; and to believe that as I give to the world ... so the world will give to me.

At a recent directors' meeting Elder Anderson from the Pacific Union used the above verse for the basis of a worship talk. This new year won't you read this often.



A NEW BEGINNING

January is the first month of the year. It is a time, according to many, to begin anew. So many times, however, it results in a false start. Perhaps it should be said that it is a fast start, then a sputter, then a fizzle – and a new beginning becomes a miserable failure. Instead of a high, there is a feeling of depression.

It's certainly all right to make New Year's resolutions – a new beginning – if it is the right time for a new beginning. To start something new at the wrong time will often result in disaster. This is why, in my opinion, New Year's resolutions, just for the sake of making them, can cause much disappointment in our lives. Therefore, we must determine what is the right time for a new beginning.

Let's look at some of the right times in past history of men and women:

The right time for Saul was on the road to Damascus. In his case, God chose the right time for Saul's new beginning – and what a beginning! He was given a new name, a new faith, and a whole new line of work.

The right time for Esther was when she was chosen to be queen. The only apparent reason for her being chosen was her beauty, but what a choice! It was God's choice again, and Esther was able to save a nation.

The right time for Joseph was when he was sold as a slave – a new beginning in his life. It certainly was not what he wanted or expected, but again, it was God's choice. Joseph was in the right place at the right time. Because of his home training and his faith, he was prepared and willing to listen and act on the words of God, which led him to highest honors with almost everyone with whom he came in contact. The tragedy of Joseph's life became his new beginning – and what a beginning it was! He was chief among prisoners, second only to Pharaoh in Egypt, and savior of his own family.

Now, one might ask the question, "What about them? You have given examples of three extraordinary people whom God used in unusual ways." Yes, you are correct. All three were educated, loyal to their beliefs, ready to accept responsibility given to them, and attuned to a higher authority.

Each of us could become a Paul, an Esther, a Joseph, but first we must be attuned to our Heavenly Father so that it can also be His choice. I am convinced that God **does** set us up in our local areas and we can give a great influence as the above mentioned people.



No, I'm not against New Year's resolutions, per say, as long as they are prayerfully thought out, and we are sure that they are the will of God.

Paul, Esther, and Joseph were God' choices. They accomplished much **because** they were His choice, and I am certain that each of us can also accomplish much by being God's choice. I like to think that God has chosen each one of us to be in the position where we are. If this is the first time that this thought has occurred to you, then let this be a new beginning.

May your influence be great to all those around you.



IRRESOLVE

Have you made any New Year's resolutions? This is a time for beginning again, turning over a new leaf, or a rebirth of an idea which died because of inaction. These resolutions may be something that you can make public such as starting on your diet again, exercising daily, or having your own personal devotions every day. They may, however, be something known only to you, to you and your mate, to you and your children, or to you and God.

However, it must be pointed out, there are many criticisms of New Year's resolutions – too unrealistic, too easily broken, not well thought out, impossible to keep, or the well-worn one, New Year's resolutions are made to break.

Are we then to throw out the idea of New Year's resolutions altogether because it seems that most are broken within a short while after the new year begins? No, not at all. It is good to have a time when we can start over again. It can be a new month's resolution, a new week's resolution, or even a new day's resolution. Probably the reason so many resolutions are not kept is because they are made with the idea of reform within oneself without any help from others or God.

Last week my church enjoyed the communion service. Personally it was a rebirth, a beginning again, a time when decisions were made in cooperation with the Lord. The time for rebirth, beginning again, is everyday when we have seen a new vision of what a certain child can do. The time for rebirth, beginning again, is after we have fallen yet another time, but look up and realize that with God's help the problem can be solved.

Don't be afraid to make resolutions – not just at the New Year but every day.



MILLIONAIRES OF GODS LOVE

John Smith, winner of 6.8 million dollars! Joan James, winner of 2.2 million dollars! Jim Davis, winner of 10 million dollars! The list goes on and on.

No, we don't play the lottery, but millions of people do, and every one of them dreams of the big payday when they are purchasing their ticket. Who of us hasn't dreamed of what we would do if suddenly we found ourselves rich beyond all imagination. In our minds we make our list of all the people we could help, all the students we could give assistance in obtaining a Christian education, all our friends who have had hard luck. We could extend to them an outstretched hand, we could buy our parents a new home, we could build a new church, we could . . . and the list goes on and on and on.

Many have the attitude that unless they have something big and expensive to offer someone, they think they haven't anything worthwhile to give, therefore, they miss many golden opportunities to make others happy and to receive a blessing themselves.

My mother-in-law used to say, "You never have so little that you can't share." She practiced what she preached too. She was not rich with this world's goods but she was always giving flowers that she grew in her garden or bread that she baked in her oven because she liked to, because she wanted to, because it made her feel good inside to share with others.

This is a new year – a time when we are always talking about doing something new or resolving to do something that would make this world a better place in which to live.

For sure we all seem to have one thing in common, money – the lack of it that is. We are, however, so rich in other ways. It doesn't cost a cent to be kind, to smile, to be nice, to care, to share the love of Jesus.

The people who mean the most to me gave the most, not in money but in things just mentioned. No, it didn't cost them a cent. The more they gave, the more they received back. The bank of goodness never runs dry. They become millionaires of God's love.

We can all become millionaires of God's love. It really doesn't take long to become one, for the interest is compounded every second. This bank is different; when we give, what we have left doubles. That's the way God is! That's the kind of person I want to be. How about you?



TODAY IS IMPORTANT

It's that time of year again. "I resolve to do this or I resolve not to do that." Some of you do a wonderful job of making good lists but doing as that list demands is another story. It's hard, not impossible, but almost. We like to think of ourselves as ideal people so we make resolutions that will make us perfect, at least in our own eyes. Then at the end of each day we take out our list to see how we have done.

Yes, there are some, with God's help, who can turn their life around or who can improve their state of being. But if the articles that come across my desk are true, most of the resolves are broken almost before the ink is dry. Many times the authors of the resolutions find themselves worse off than before they make their stand because they have failed and now decide "What's the use?" This may sound like a treatise against making New Year's resolutions; that is not my intention.

The other day my wife gave me a statement that goes like this: "What I do today is important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it." The author of this simple little statement is not known to me but that really doesn't matter. What does matter, however, is that we look at life as a whole for improvement rather than picking out some little part to check off when we are good. This is the kind of resolution that appeals to me because it draws our attention to the complete life. What we do every day better be good for there will never be a day just like today. We will never have exactly the same opportunity to use our influence as we did today.

Every day Jesus spent on Earth was important to him. So important that he exchanged His life for ours.

Friends, if we are giving our life each day, then we had better make sure that what we do is in fact important every day. "What I do today is important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it."



ANOTHER NEW YEAR

A new year again! I like new things – new clothing, new books, new cars. There is something about things that are new. They are usually perfect, shiny, not scratched, smell good; feel good, look good, and many times they are attention-getters. I like babies; they are new too. Their skin is so soft, they are so helpless, and so trusting. Every year as December closes its doors on another year, the old year is depicted as an old man, sometimes a crotchety old man, but old at any rate, eyeing the new kid on the block – the new baby named the “New Year.”

Norman Vincent Peale once said,

“In Rome, many people maintained the curious custom of throwing something old – crockery, radios– out the window on New Year’s Eve. Down with the old is the idea. How wonderful it would be to take every worn out idea and throw it out at midnight on New Year’s Eve. What a relief to get rid of every old resentment. What healthy mindedness would result if we were to take every old fear that has been held for so long and dispose of it. How great it would be to get rid of old prejudices, old notions, old ways of doing things.

Dr. Peale’s thought is very appealing to me. It would be wonderful to get rid of all the problems we have. It would be great to start a new year completely renewed. Sometimes we as educators think we are doing this by changing jobs. We leave our old problems behind and run off to a new teaching position. That doesn’t really renew us, for in no time at all, those old unsolved problems which have followed us are still causing us turmoil.

We really didn’t get rid of them. We just laid them aside to find them again in another place and they become more frustrating than ever.

“Several years ago a farmer passed from this world leaving his widow and five children. One world had ended for them, but she opened up a new one with the view that they had God above them, the soil beneath them and each other at their side; and thus with this combination she concluded that they would make it. The years passed and they more than made it. Each child made such a mark in the world that it attracted wide attention. As interest grew in this intriguing story of success, mothered and nurtured in the hills, a magazine sent a reporter to interview the gracious and God-fearing, humble and hard-working mother to learn the secret of her accomplishments, to ascertain how she with so little gave her children so much. She answered the question by saying, “Being I don’t have much education, I just had to use my head.”

She had never had a course in psychology, but in using her head, she taught them by word and deed the graceful and stalwart conditions of health and happiness, well-being and joy. She cultivated the following:



1. **LOVE.** She had love in her heart which she manifested toward them. In turn they loved her and each other. She had no hate toward anybody nor harbored any bitterness because of the blow that had befallen her: and they, too, grew up free of animosity and resentment.
2. **CHEERFULNESS.** She was cheerful and happy in her tireless toil. They could see it because she sang much as she worked.
3. **WORK.** She knew no rule for success would work unless they did. She put inspiration into her children and took perspiration out of them.

Each morning sees some task begun,
Each evening sees it close;
Something attempted, something done,
Has earned a night's repose.

The Village Blacksmith, Longfellow

4. **OPTIMISM.** The optimism of her heart unaffectedly and softly gleamed in her face like warm welcome rays of light breaking across yonder hills in the east. As this farm widow broke the soil and planted the seeds she saw nutritious bread, not wasted toil; and as clouds appeared she saw silver linings that would water her crops not destructive times to more than justify the bright outlook storms . . .
5. **RELIGION.** It might have been hard for this mother to eloquently define religion, but there is one thing for sure – she knew how to eloquently demonstrate it . . .

She could have become her worst enemy, life-shortening and happiness-shattering, by crawling into a self-made prison of despondency and helplessness, gulping tranquilizer after tranquilizer which would have doctored the symptoms but not the cause. Instead, she befriended herself, prevented the cause, by **HELPING, LOVING, ACCEPTING AND ADJUSTING** herself.

*Better Than Medicine - A Merry Heart
Leroy Brownlow*

This is a new year – like the widow in the story, you have the opportunity to change things for the good. I pray that God will give you the strength and courage to be a life-changer.

Happy New Year!



I'D DO IT AGAIN!

Yes, you read it right; the title is "I'd Do It Again!" Usually at this time of year we talk about a time of beginning again, making New Year's resolutions, turning things around, not about doing something over again. Probably we should be thinking of how we can make a difference in our lives and the lives of those we associate and work with; but that's not what I'm talking about.

At one of our Teachers of Tomorrow Banquets held on the campus of Atlantic Union College, Dr. George Akers, Dean of the School of Education at Andrews University, presented the after-dinner speech. This was the title and the theme that ran through his entire talk.

Have you been asked the question, "If you were a freshman in college, would you again take the teacher training course?" Or, "If you were just beginning in your work career, would you again choose teaching as a profession?" Dr. Akers emphatically stated, "I'd do it again!" How would you answer those questions?

Here's my answer,

Yes, I'd do it again! Most of us would like to have more of this world's goods, and that includes me – but it's not because of money. It's not because of the big important prestigious schools which have employed me – that would be mine, but most of us haven't even seen the inside of such a school.

I would do it again because of the great feeling that comes to a teacher when looking over a class of eager learners when suddenly "the light dawns," a hand goes up, there's a smile, and the look says, "I understand." Let me tell you, then there is an exhilaration on the part of the teacher as well as the student.

And I would do it again because many of the students need a friend and confidant.



CELEBRATIONS - WHY?

Every month we celebrate something. Sometimes many things. Every day of the year is somebody's day. Every week of the year is some organization's week. Depending on your perspective on the matter, these celebrations are either very important or very insignificant.

On my five-year calendar, the month of February 1989 has only four days highlighted:

- February 2 - Ground Hog Day
- February 12 - Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- February 14 - Valentine's Day
- February 20 - George Washington's Birthday

GROUND HOG DAY. Now that's just about as insignificant as you can get! Yet on an important calendar sold to probably millions of people, there it is in bold letters to make sure that everyone knows it's Ground Hog Day. Who cares? It's just a myth anyway! How did we come to a place that a ground hog could be so important to be remembered every year?

VALENTINE'S DAY. Celebrated as a festival of romance and affection. World Book says, "Valentine's Day comes on the feast day of two different Christian martyrs named Valentine. But the customs connected with the day have nothing to do with the lives of the saints. They probably come from the ancient Roman festival called Lupercalia, which took place every February 15. The festival honored Juno, the Roman goddess of women and marriage, and Pan, the god of nature."

This day has become one of the big money-makers for Hallmark and other companies that make cards. Now don't get me wrong. I'm no against love and marriage, but it seems to me we're on shaky ground when we celebrate Valentine's Day the way the rest of the world does.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAYS. Now, these are days well worth remembering, at least in my opinion. They certainly were not perfect men, but from their youth they developed good characters. Even if they had not become presidents of our country, they did things that would be worth remembering.

"Honest Abe," what a beautiful way to be remembered! It was that kind of characteristic that made him a great president – a man who accepted every man as an equal, a man, so the story goes, who walked many miles to make right a mistake on a transaction.



George Washington. The story is told about the cherry tree that he chopped down, and his famous words, "I cannot tell a lie." Liars are not respected, and for the most part, liars don't get elected to high positions. Liars don't become known as "The father of our country."

Yes, I love to read about Abe and George – really, more about their young lives, more about their character traits, more about them before they became great in the eyes of history. Greatness, to me, is found in those who in their lives have shown the fruits of the spirit, those who in little things are always thinking of the best for mankind.

There are many days on the calendar that are special to me. They probably wouldn't mean much to you if I told you why they were important to me. But they make a good deal more sense than Ground Hog Day. If we must celebrate special days, and I think we must, then let's celebrate for the right reasons.



WHAT IS SACRIFICE?

What is sacrifice? Is it possible that none of us really knows the answer? Our ministers are continually exhorting us to sacrifice so the work can go forward. Every year our Church sponsors Week of Prayer. To climax the fall Week of Prayer a special offering is taken – the Week of Sacrifice offering. Years ago people were encouraged to give one week's salary as a special sacrificial offering. No one can tell you what a sacrificial offering will be, whether it is a week's salary, ten dollars, one hundred dollars, or a thousand dollars. Only you and the Lord know.

In looking this over, however, it is my opinion that in my own life there has never really been a sacrificial offering given. Oh, yes, there have been offerings given for the poor and the needy, but it has never really hurt financially.

What is sacrificial giving? Let's go to the Bible. The widow who gave her mite, God the Father who gave His only Son - that's sacrificial giving! We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that the Lord would have been here long before this if we had done our part. Our part includes sacrificial giving, financial and of ourselves.

This year the annual Week of Sacrifice offering is to be received November 10, with a goal of \$3,500,000. Our NAD Director of Education, Elder Stephan, is asking our teachers to encourage their students to participate in the offering. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a world church and this particular offering is a world mission offering.

Let me encourage you to present to your students the world approach of our church, the meaning of the word sacrifice, and what it might mean to each one of them. A sacrificial offering to them might mean a week's allowance. We train our young people in other things, why not train them from kindergarten through grade 12 in what it means to give sacrificially?



ONE HIGH DAY!

February 27, 1993 was a high Sabbath day for me. It didn't start out that way, though. With my many travel appointments, my Sabbath worship attendance in my home church, the College Church, is about fifty percent.

We have a new minister. His sermons are articulate, well-organized, interesting, and best of all, Bible based. My soul is always blessed after sitting at the feet of this preacher.

My wife and I sat in our usual section this Sabbath morning on the far left-hand side of the church. I looked at the bulletin to see what the sermon title was. Then a great wave of disappointment came over my soul. Elder Nixon, my minister, wasn't preaching this morning. The sermon was to be given by three people none of whom I recognized. This was going to be a bummer. Reading further on in the program, I noticed that there were many musical numbers. All by children elementary-aged and younger. Being both a music lover and a lover of children, I knew that there would be at least a musical blessing.

Oh what a blessing indeed! First on the program was the baptism of a young man. That was the only time for the next hour in which an adult spoke. The rest of the service—announcements, prayers, call to worship, call for the offering, music, and the sermons were all given by young people, and I mean *young* people! The kind you expect to see on a playground running, jumping, giggling, and not being able to stand still for a moment. It was obvious that this program didn't just happen. Everything was well-planned and executed. The young people spoke right into the microphone, they spoke slowly, distinctly, and confidently. The music, well, maybe it wasn't always perfect, but it was still heavenly. They knew their parts so well, and performed it with such enthusiasm that as I previously mentioned, it sounded just heavenly.

Then came the sermon; the part I really wasn't looking forward to hearing. Three young people, two girls and one boy, preached three very inspiring sermonettes. I was indeed blessed! More than that, I was proud. That's right, proud! Proud that my church recognized the worth of youth. My mind was overflowing with spiritual joy, and it was the young people of my church that were responsible for this joy.

Why isn't this kind of service done more often? Perhaps it's because it takes a lot of planning. Perhaps it's because it takes a lot of practice. Perhaps it's because something might go wrong. Perhaps it's because we are afraid of doing something different, something interesting, something that will truly involve these great children.



Yes, I'm sure it takes extra time to practice with the young people, extra time to show them how to properly use the microphone, extra time to guide them in writing the sermonettes, extra time to listen to their practice, helping them to speak so that everyone can hear and understand them. Believe me, it's worth it. To this mature man, February 27 was a wonderful high Sabbath, and I applaud my pastor and his staff for having the courage to teach our youth the true meaning of joy in service.

It is my sincere wish that you will plan a high day in your church. It will take a lot of extra work, it will take practice, but it will be worth it if your people are as blessed as I was on Sabbath morning, February 27, 1993.



SECOND COMING FOOL!

How many times have you been the victim on the first of April of some harmless joke and then been called “an April Fool?” According to the World Book Encyclopedia, the observance originated in France after the adoption of a reformed calendar by Charles IX in 1564. France was the first nation to adopt this calendar. Up to that time, the New Year celebration began March 21 and ended April 1. When New Year’s Day was changed to January 1 some people still celebrated it April 1. These people came to be known as April Fools. The custom of fooling friends and relations on that day became popular in France, and it spread to other countries.

During my teaching days, my students seemed to plan for weeks ways to catch me off guard sometime during the day of April 1. No matter how prepared I was, even with signs all around the room to remind me of the special day, they would catch me. Of course, then everyone would have a good laugh. It was always a very unsuspecting time. There was a bond of trust between the students and me. It was easy to fall prey to one of their harmless jokes because they were so convincing, so sincere.

There is another day coming when many people are going to be fooled. They will be caught off guard, even though they have been looking for this special day maybe for years. It will be no joke then, when Christ comes! No second chance! No time for a good laugh! No opportunity to be better prepared! It looks hopeless. Even with people we trust it’s April Fool’s Day every day. No! We can’t expect to make it through on our own preparation alone. Without Jesus as our partner, confidant, and Savior, we are all doomed! With Him, the Second Coming of Christ will not be unsuspected. We will be ready even though we won’t know the day or hour until it arrives. The saddest phrase that we could ever hear would be uttered by our adversary, the devil **SECOND COMING FOOL!**



YOU CAN BE FORGIVEN

Isn't it hard to believe we are coming to the end of another school year? You will soon be checking to see if your students accomplished all that you had hoped they would.

This thought started me to thinking. Every year you check in many ways the growth of your students. You carefully record every score made on quizzes and tests. You read every assignment and counsel the students on how their scores could be improved. You talk to the parents about their children's problems and successes. You laugh with them, you cry with them, and you pray with them. Most of the time you're loved and appreciated but sometimes you are misunderstood, misrepresented, maybe even mistreated, but you still love those "kids" of yours and will go on seeking ways to help them grow up to be mature Christians.

For some, this will be your last year of teaching; you are retiring. No doubt your mind is in a whirl thinking very little about the problems of the past, but mostly of the exhilaration and blessing of your long life of serving the denomination. Your mind flashes back to every student. You see their failures and successes, and in your mind again the evaluation process takes place and, oh how you wish you could have a second chance. How differently you would do certain things. At Pentecost, the disciples had the same thought, In The Acts of the Apostles, page 36, it says:

"As they (the disciples) called to remembrance the words that Christ had spoken to them before His death they understood more fully their meaning. Truths which had passed from their memory were again brought to their minds, and these they repeated to one another. They reproached themselves for their misapprehension of the Saviour. Like a procession scene after scene of His wonderful life passed before them. As they meditated upon His pure, holy life they felt that no toil would be too hard, no sacrifice too great, if only they could bear witness in their lives to the loveliness of Christ's character. Oh, if they could but have the past three years to live over, how earnestly they would strive to show Him how deeply they loved Him, and how sincerely they sorrowed for having ever grieved Him by a word or an act of unbelief! But they were comforted by the thought that they were forgiven."

Yes, you probably have made mistakes this year, but like the disciples of old, take Christ's hand and renew your experience with Him and you too can have the experience of being forgiven.



ALMOST OVER

It's that time again. School is almost over for another year. Think of those words "almost over." They can have so many meanings – sometimes happy, sometimes sad.

My thoughts go back to graduation from high school. Those last few weeks at the academy were happy. However, when someone would say, "It's almost over!" the feeling of overwhelming sadness would come over me because our class was going in different directions. We knew we would perhaps never see each other again.

When it was time for college graduation and someone said "It's almost over!" a different feeling came over me. Even though my college classmates meant a lot to me, there was a great deal of excitement for completing school and getting out into the work world. I could hardly wait to get to something new and different!

When it was time for marriage and someone told me "your freedom is almost over!" a wonderful feeling came over me. There was no sorrow of losing something. "Almost over" meant a new life, literally, a beginning again. It meant leaving the old single life for a new life with someone I loved.

There may be times when life deals some very bitter experiences. How comforting it is for a mate or a good friend to say, "Have courage, it's almost over." How many times has this been said in a delivery room of a hospital when a child is about to be born: "Don't give up, it's almost over!"

Yes, this school year is almost over but more important, life on this old world is almost over. This could bring all types of feelings – happiness, sadness, fear, excitement, dread, or satisfaction.

The Lord is very plainly telling us through the signs of our time, by the events that are taking place, through the incredible increase of knowledge, and by the unprecedented calamities of nature, that "It's almost over."

How does that make you feel?



TEST WEEK!

School is almost over. It hardly seems possible, but it is. The majority of learning for this year has already taken place. Students and teachers alike are anxiously looking forward to the last day of school and the first day of summer vacation. Before summer, though, there comes an experience that brings forth all kinds of reactions – Test week! To some students, test week is just another week to which they rather look forward to. To others, it is like a plague and they are not sure they are going to get through without succumbing to the fatal disease; failure. When one begins to realize the kinds of climate developed for such a time as test week, it is no wonder there is such a difference of opinion toward such an institution. For instance, some teachers continually build up the test week to the place that the students feel the whole year rests on one thirty minute, hour, or two hour test. Some students then worry to the place where they become sick. Others approach it in a different way and they give the outward appearance that they don't care. Some parents push their students in all kinds of ways, wondering why one child can't do as well as another, which develops a climate of fear for the student. They are afraid of looking stupid before their peers and of disappointing their teachers and parents. We could go on and on. Thankfully, this is not the majority of cases, but it still happens too often.

Against tests? No, indeed! But against all the man-made pressure, yes. Emphatically, yes! Now, to be sure, some have problems with exams because of their unconcern to prepare. We will never be able to completely overcome that hurdle. But, for the normal students who do their best to be prepared, should not test week be made such a part of the regular program that it indeed becomes a good learning experience? It is realized that the teacher cannot solve all the home problems, but the climate within the classroom is the responsibility of the teacher. As you prepare for the final weeks of school it is my prayer that: (1) much care will be taken in the composition of the test to be given, (2) the test will be used as a learning experience, (3) the climate of the room will be one that will put the students at ease, (4) the dignity of the student will be preserved.

Happy test week to you, and have a good summer.



GOD'S GOING TO WIN

Every sport has a special ending—in baseball it's called the World Series, in basketball it's called the Playoffs, in hockey it's called the Stanley Cup Series, in football it's called the Superbowl. Many are trying to predict who is going to win these contests. The sports writers interview everyone hoping for some new bit of information. The odds-makers study all the statistics to determine who is the favorite and who is the underdog. Even the computer gets into the act of predicting and often comes out with the winner against the wit of man. The outcome is often not decided until the last few seconds of the contest. No one can, for certain pick the winner; if we could, gambling on sports events would end for no one would bet on a loser.

There is a greater contest going on called the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. It's a different kind of a contest. Both leaders have chosen everyone who ever lived on this planet to be on his team. There is no need to decide a favorite or an underdog because in this contest we know who the winner is! Christ sealed that on the cross. Then why is it, so many are opting to play on the losing team?

We are coming to the end of another school year. Your classroom will never be quite the same. Some of your students may not return. Opportunities to be recruited on the winning team for some young people may be lost forever.

I wish we had a special ending for our contest each year, if we can call school a contest and we can. I would call it the Conversion Bowl where every teacher would give every student a personal invitation to accept Christ as his Saviour, to be on the winning team— where every teacher would make sure students understand that it's not Satan but God who is going to win!



I ACCEPT YOU

This may be the end of another year, but it's not too early to be looking ahead to the beginning of the next school year. You know, teachers are like that—always looking ahead to new challenges.

There is an article in “Leadership News,” a publication of the AASA, about Chris Zajac, an articulate and devoted teacher of American education. She became well-known after the publication of the best-selling book, Among School Children, by Tracy Kidder. Mr. Kidder spent an entire year in Chris Zajac’s room, seeing her in all situations—her good times, and her times in isolation and frustration with some of the growing social problems among her students. How would you like to have someone, a writer, in your room every day, knowing that the person was putting down on paper everything that you were doing? It is my feeling that it would make most of us very uncomfortable.

Chris said that it took time to get used to having a writer in the room every day, but she found that his questions helped her with self-examination. “If I couldn’t give him the reason why I placed the desks a certain way, or why I was doing something,” she said, “maybe I shouldn’t have been doing it.”

Chris focused on the theme that she must reach **every** child—and to do that she said, “I first must accept every child.”

Do you realize the importance of that last statement? When you think about it, it’s the Master Teacher’s greatest method of teaching.

Jesus always accepted people where they were; He accepted every child; He told them by His acceptance, “You are worth everything to me.” And by doing this He was able to release their bursting energies in the right direction.

We all know it’s not easy to accept every student—I mean *really* accept them to the point where you would do anything for the good of that living soul. We have so many prejudices in our own lives; and some of our young are so hard to love! They come to our classrooms filled with mixed signals from their homes, their church, and the people around them. They are not sure who they can trust; so it may take time before they begin to trust you as a teacher and friend.

This is where we must take the example of our Lord. No matter what the youth are like, or what they have been, we must accept them where they are and show them that as their teachers we love them. We must still remember as Chris says, “I am not going to reach every child in the ways I want to—so they leave my class loving learning, life and me.”



School is more than the recitation of facts, the quoting of a poem, or the development of the reasoning power. It should be a place where such simple phrases as “success spoken here,” or “each child a promise,” can be heard. It should be a place where young people know that they are succeeding.

It is my desire that all of you can look back on this year as a success. But more than that, you can look forward to next September, using this past school year’s success, with God’s help, as stepping stones to an even *greater* success in the future.



OPEN MINE EYES

A man who lost everything he owned on this earth made the observation. “I knew then what I know not . . . but I didn’t see then what I see now.”

As we come to the end of another school year, we can all make the same statement –but for different reasons.

Remember Elisha the prophet? He had a training school for young prophets. He took one of these prophets with him to the city of Dothan. The king of Syria was not having any success in overcoming Israel, so he asked his spies why this was so.

“We’ll tell you why,” they said, “because everything said in the bedroom of the king of Syria is know instantly to the king of Israel.”

“Why is that?” he asks.

“Because they have a man of God, and that man in Elisha.”

“Where is he?” he asks.

“He’s in Dothan,” they answer.

Immediately the king of Syria sends his army to Dothan.

Now, we don’t know what time Elisha gets up—but his young assistant, a student, gets up apparently a bit earlier. He looks out at the city. Under the cover of night, troops and chariots have surrounded the city, and now they are circling it. Instantly the attendant is anxious.

“What shall we do?” he says to Elisha. He shows the same kind of panic and anxiety that grips us in every crisis; we stagger from one crisis to another. Elisha looks at him.

“Those who are with us are more than those who are with them,” he says.

He looks again—the same troops, the same chariots are circling the city. And as far as this young student is concerned, he and Elisha are defenseless. Then Elisha turns and prays: “O Lord God, open his eyes that he may see.”

God opens his eyes, and suddenly surrounding Elisha are chariots of fire—far more protection than that which circles the city.



That young man had a different experience than the man who lost everything– for he gained insight and knowledge that must have put him in awe of the God he served. He could make the same statement: “I knew then what I know now . . . but I didn’t see then what I see now.”

Each of you met a group of students this year– they were your students. You have now had them for approximately nine months, certainly enough time for many changes to have taken place in their lives – some good things, some negative.

My prayer is that you won’t be like the man who lost everything, but rather like the young man with Elisha after his eyes were opened. Then you can say, “I knew then (the beginning of the school year) what I know now . . . but I didn’t see (realize all the potential in each of these students of mine) then what I see now.”

Praise the Lord for these young minds and the opportunity you have had in opening their eyes to a service for our Master.



MAKE IT COUNT

In this life we are always talking about beginnings and endings. We are coming again to another end— the end of the 1993-1994 school year. It won't be long, however, until we will be talking about the beginning of the school year 1994-1995. Yes, it is hard to believe, I said 1994-1995! Time does not change. It marches forward and at the same rate of time. That is what we all know, but the older we get the faster it seems to slip by.

Most of us spend our time looking forward to the beginning of activities. But let's take a look at some of the endings we must meet in our lifetime. We need to make beginnings so that there can be endings, but more than that we need to make good endings to accomplish our goals.

We end each day. Did you realize that if we are all given our three-score and ten years to live, some more, some less. That means we have 25,550 days to accomplish whatever it is we intend to do in this life. Now, think back over this year. How many of your days ended with you feeling good about your achievements? When you look at the improvement your students have made, you can say: "Yes, things really went quite well this year." You need to know that we who are a little farther away from the trenches, so to speak, appreciate your diligent effort to help every child learn and realize the goals for which they should be aiming.

It is really quite awesome to think that each day of the school year you have spent more time with your students than most of their parents. You have a lot to do with how your students feel about the ending of their day. It is also a little bit scary when you realize that each day you spend with your students is one day subtracted from the 25,550. That day will never be used again.

We end each school year. Think of that three-score and ten years the Bible talks about. Again, it seems such a long time when you are seven. How different it looks when you are 50 or 60! What a wonderful opportunity you have— the training of young minds, to see them develop into useful citizens, and to watch them work for the church. It is also nice as we grow older to have some of our students tell us how much we mean to them and to thank us for the things we did for them. These statements sometimes come from, as far as you are concerned, the most unlikely students.



We end our life work. Some of you will be ending your careers as teachers by retiring this year. It could be as many as 40+ years. What a great accomplishment. We all salute you. We all want you to remember that you still have more years to live and serve your Master. The end of your teaching is not the end of your useful life. Do not sit back and think the church now owes you everything. The happy retirees that I am acquainted with use retirement as a new beginning – the ending of a good organized lifework and the beginning of a life of service doing things they never had time to do before. There are two retirees in particular that come to mind.

Edna Lett Williamson is a former teacher at Oakwood College and principal of Northeastern Academy. She has now been retired more than ten years, but she is so active she tells me she doesn't have enough time to do everything. Edna is a great inspiration to me. Her ending of organized work was a beginning of a new life or service to others. Just last week we were talking about her activities. She indicated that she hadn't learned to say "No" yet. Well, Edna, I think the Lord keeps giving you strength because you are still willing to do His will.

Ned Kilgore, my father, has been retired for about 26 years. He can still work circles around me. Until this year he was still an elder in his church, most of the time first elder. Most of these years he taught a Sabbath school class each week, held Revelation Seminars, and had prayer meetings in his home. Dad is a master craftsman in woodworking. Anything the church or school needs such as shelves, desks, lecterns, etc., he makes in his garage. Since Mother isn't able to care for herself, he also does all the housework and cooking. He, too, has a hard time saying "No." Just as in Edna's case, I believe the Lord continues to give strength because of his willingness to do His will.

There is one thing I can tell you for sure. I've watched my father and my friend Edna through the years. I have decided that's the kind of ending experience I want. Retirement is not here yet for many of us, but for some of us it's nearer than we might wish. So do as I do, think each day that it is one of the 25,550.

Make it count for you, make it count for your family, make it count for the Lord.

It is true that this is the ending of the 1993-1994 school year, but I am sure that if you are like me you are all looking forward to the great 1994-1995 school year. Have a good summer!



DON'T CHANGE

As a rule, when an advertisement comes on the television, the mute button is immediately pushed in my house; we just don't want to hear all that mess. But there are some commercials that are downright cute. AT&T has one that makes me choke up a bit every time it comes on. Perhaps you will recognize it.

A well-dressed business man is sitting in his car, stuck in traffic. His thoughts go back to his youth when apparently, as big brother, he had to make sure his little sister got home from school safely. In his daydreaming he sees the school bus stop, and he and his sister get off. The little girl is distracted and runs in the opposite direction from home. He hears himself calling for his sister. He finds her, takes her by the hand, and runs toward home.

As he is sitting in the traffic jam smiling to himself he decides to call that little sister—now grown up. She answers the phone to the question “How are you?”

She's very pleasant, but obviously very rushed, “OK” she responds, “but I'm a little late.”

He smiles and says, “My little sister late? How can that be?”

She says, “I know, I'm always late.”

Then, with obvious deep love and affection he says, “I hope you will never change.”

What he no doubt was talking about was the kind of person his sister was, not that she seemed to always be on the late side, but rather that she was a sweet, loving, inquisitive and caring person; one that was always running short of time to do the million things on her agenda. To me, that's what big brother didn't want to change in little sister.

My thoughts now turn to our heavenly Father, how He must look down on us, wishing we would hurry up, get things done, get ready so He can take us home. Yes, I can see Him watching you, my friends, smiling to your students, helping them through difficulties, caring for them, praying with them, crying with them, being there for them when there is no one else. Yes, I can hear Him saying, “Please hurry, but don't change the way you treat my children, always be there for them.”

The following statement caught my attention the other day:

“God doesn't hurry, but He's always on time!”



How true this statement is! There are many stories of how He has set in motion to answer prayers before there is even a request for help. He doesn't have to rush pell mell around, arriving at a place of need out of breath just in the nick of time. He anticipates our **every need** and the moment of time it is needed.

I like to think that our God is anxious for us to hurry, but still, like the older brother in the commercial, He is saying, "Don't change, continue to be kind, loving, and caring— and lead my children to the Love of God."

This summer as we relax from a very busy school year, let's not forget those we led to knowledge. Remember, their needs don't stop. They will continue and they will be continually changing. Let's make a special effort each day this summer to pray for all of our youth. Please pray for each of our students individually. Let us pray that when they are in need we will be there to help— and be there on time.



A NEW LEADER

You will not read this until October, but it is being written as I sit in one of the business sessions of the General Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana in July of 1990.

It was a very interesting time— rather awesome—when one realizes that your vote is helping to shape the direction of this great denomination for the next five years.

Looking around at approximately 2600 official delegates from all over the world, including Russia, was an experience that is without match. We are truly a world church. The North American Division is only a very small part of this church. One suddenly realizes just how small it is when out of 276 nominating committee members, only 26 came from the North American Division and only two from the Atlantic Union.

Let me share with you some of the happenings of the General Conference:

1. The re-acquaintance of old friends. Some who haven't been seen in over 30 years. It makes me think of how it will be in heaven when we won't have to wonder if we are remembering the correct name.
2. The music from around the world was wonderful. There are so many different ways to praise God. The Atlantic Union was represented well by the New England Youth Ensemble, Atlantic Union College choir, and Dr. James Bingham, who directed the large mass choir the second Sabbath.
3. The inspirational sermons—especially the one presented the second Friday evening by Elder Charles Bradford, our retiring North American Division president. We are going to miss “Brad”—as he is affectionately known to us. He was a good leader and an outstanding speaker.
4. The nightly reports from each of the divisions, which helped us all to realize the vastness of our work, the marvels of God's blessing in each world division, and also bring to our minds that there is still so much to be done.
5. The exhibits of each division, departments of the General conference, institutions, and others— things free, things to buy, new ideas, pictures, videos, books—all kinds of items of interest.
6. The audience—about 50,00 on the second Sabbath. This is the same place where football fans will be cheering the Indianapolis Colts. Fifty thousand Adventist Christians were cheering for their Lord Jesus Christ.



As you know, the church manual can only be changed at the General Conference session, so much time was spent on these items. It was rather tiresome and tedious to sit through all the speeches from the delegates for and against each item that came before us. But we, as delegates, had the final say by our vote of approval or disapproval of items that came to the floor.

Of course, the biggest change of personnel came the first Friday when at the end of a very long and difficult day the presidency of the General Conference changed hands, and Elder Robert Folkenberg became our new world leader. One of the first sentences spoken by our president was, "Jesus Christ is the real General Conference President." Let us all pray for Elder Folkenberg. The pressures will be greater than any man should have to bear, but with God's help they will be bearable. Let us rally to our president's support.



DEATH IS NO VICTOR

On January 5, 1993, many of us gave our last respects to one of our number – Bob Snyder, teacher of Grades 5 and 6, who also taught an academy history class at Pine Tree Academy. Funerals are not happy occasions, even when we plan to meet that person again at our Lord's second coming. It's not easy to say good-bye to someone you love and respect.

Looking around the crowded church—extra chairs had to be brought in to seat everyone—I noted expressions of concern on both young and old. There was only an occasional whisper—no laughing or loud talking, no smiles. It was really a very somber audience.

Then for me everything suddenly changed. I started to listen carefully to the organist. Nothing flashy or showy, just beautiful, carefully chosen, comforting hymns quietly wanting through the church; songs of Jesus' love and care. Then came my favorite—“When We All Get to Heaven.” I could have shouted “you're not supposed to do things like that!” But I didn't. That song took the somberness out of my heart.

Sing the Wondrous Love of Jesus,
Sing His mercy and His grace;
In the mansions bright and blessed,
He'll prepare for us a place.

While we walk the pilgrim pathway
Clouds will overspread the sky;
But when traveling days are over
Not a shadow, not a sigh.

Let us then be true and faithful,
Trusting, serving every day;
Just one glimpse of Him in glory
Will the toils of life repay.

Then the last stanza – what beautiful words!

Onward to the prize before us!
Soon His beauty we'll behold;
Soon the pearly gates will open –
We shall tread the streets of gold.

*When we all get to heaven,
What a day of rejoicing that will be!
When we all see Jesus,
We'll sing and shout the victory!*



The sermon was helpful, the letters read from students and staff were pleasing, the sharing from the audience was noteworthy, and the prayers were sincerely prayed. But it was that wonderful old hymn that wrapped up the service for me.

*“When we all see Jesus,
We’ll sing and shout the victory!”*

Death is sad – but it’s not the end. Jesus will have the last word, and I want to be there to hear it, don’t you?



HOMILY GIVEN AT MEMORIAL SERVICES FOR DELANO GILLIAM

We are here today as family and friends to pay tribute to a special person – Delano Gilliam. We all feel sadness and sorrow, it's always difficult to say goodbye. It's made easier because for the Good News of the Gospel that Jesus is coming again and when He comes those who have been at rest in the Lord will arise in perfect stature, in perfect health, perfect in every way. We sincerely believe that Delano will be in that number.

In words penned by Wayne Hooper:

We have this hope that burns within our hearts,
Hope in the coming of the Lord.
We have this faith that Christ alone imparts,
Faith in the promise of His word.
We believe the time is here, when the nations far and near
Shall awake and shout and sing – Hallelujah! Christ the King!
We have this hope that burns within our hearts,
Hope in the coming of the Lord.

Not quite 2000 years ago our Savior went through a day of upheaval – probably the most traumatic day in His life with the exception of His crucifixion. It was actually a roller coaster day from lows to extreme highs and back again. You remember the story. He is informed that His cousin John was put to death; it was a blow to Him; John was the one person who knew Him best – the one person who understood His mission. He was gone; Jesus felt deep sorrow and sadness. He wanted to take his disciples and go to a quiet place to be alone with friends. He needed a time to meditate, a time to pray, a time to weep, but just at that moment the disciples returned followed by a huge crowd. It was a triumphant return from following His command to preach and heal. Naturally the people wanted to hear the Master, so Jesus taught them. Evening came, the disciples wanted to send the crowd away, but Jesus said no – to feed them. Then there was the feeding of the 5000 – all wonderful, but He still desired and needed to be alone. The crowd wanted to crown Him king. He knew He couldn't let that happen. He fought His way with His disciples to the beach and sent the disciples on their way. He told them He would meet them on the other side. Finally alone with His father in the mountains, he received that comfort, that strength, that courage to go forward and complete His mission.

I love this story of Jesus for it shows that He too suffers when tragedy hits. We've always been taught that He suffers just as we do. But sometimes we doubt that He has gone through all our trials. Well, take courage friends, for we now know how Jesus felt when He lost His most beloved relative and friend.



It's okay to feel sad, it's okay to sorrow, it's okay to weep – Jesus did. It is okay as long as we find refuge as He did with our Heavenly Father – for that's when the Holy Spirit can do that special work He was ordained to do – to comfort.

I Thess. 4:13 - NKJV says:

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.”

The Living Bible:

“And now dear brothers, I want you to know what happens to a Christian when he dies so that when it happens, you will not be full of sorrow, as those are who have no hope.”

Delano would want us to grasp hold of that Hope. He would want us to look to the future and not dwell in the present. He would want us to examine our lives. He would want us to rededicate ourselves to the Lord Jesus – to accept that Hope as real with the knowledge we can meet again if we believe and accept.

You see this beautiful picture plaque, it's a collage of Delano's life. To us he was Mr. Education. His heart was especially in elementary education and he served his church as an elementary teacher, principal, supervisor, associate superintendent on the conference level, and associate director of a union.

Delano was a happy person, always on the go. Never doing just enough to get by – but leaving nothing to guess. When he was principal, his school was so neat and clean that we used to say you could eat your lunch on the floor.

He loved children. All three of my children had Mr. Gilliam as their principal. They all love him, they always said he was fair.

He loved gardening. He grew more than needed, he loved giving produce to others.

He loved flowers. When we worked together, my office was always decorated with beautiful plants – people thought that I was great with plants. It was Delano – not just with my office but the whole office complex.

He loved animals and snakes. Yes, snakes – about the only area we didn't see eye-to-eye. Once he asked me to take a young snake, in a sack, mind you, tied with a weak string to one of our principals I would be visiting. “Delano,” I said, “that's where friendship ends.” I don't know if the snake was ever delivered, I just know I didn't take it.



He had a strong hand shake. He always said “Good morning, y’all” no matter what time of day it was.

He was fiercely loyal to his family, teachers, friends, co-workers, church and God.

He loved his teachers and they loved him. Just a few days ago we had a curriculum committee comprised of about 20 of his former teachers and associates. They wanted to talk to him, so we arranged for a speaker phone ...it was supposed to be short but he wouldn't let go. He called each one by name and then related some incident of the past. They had decided to sing a song – they did – a happy song for a happy person. And there again, instead of us cheering him up, he brought a great deal of courage to us.

Every week we would spend time in my office talking about what had taken place in the past week and our plans for the next week. So many times we could not understand why certain things happened the way they did. He would always say – “Well, Paul, you know what the Spirit of Prophecy says – if we could see the end from the beginning we would never doubt or question the Lord's leading.” And he told me that again in the last few weeks.

It is not often in this world that one has a friend the caliber of Delano. We all have many friends – but in a lifetime there are only a handful that become close – or closer than a brother. Delano was that kind of a friend. Remember Christ had a relationship with His disciples, but a special relationship with Peter, James and John.

There is no question in my mind that he, Delano, will expect to see his family and friends again, it is said that Peter Marshall on his death be looked up at his wife and spoke these words – “I'll see you in the morning.”

I would have liked to have been by Delano's bed last Friday morning – to take his hand and to have said – “Goodbye, dear old friend. I'll see you on the other side.”

Death is not easy – because it means separation – a reorganization of plans– everything different.

But even though we have feelings of sadness and sorrow, we know that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he will be made new again.

Betty, Kevin, family members, and friends, you want to again hear that cheery “Good morning, y'all.” I do! You want to grip that strong hand and feel that arm around you with a hug. I do! You want to talk to him about the new home you will be living in and the new and perfect life you will have together. I do!



Then let's this day, rededicate our lives to the Lord. Let's make plans to be ready to meet our Maker.

It's a wonderful thought – Delano's death is as a peaceful sleep. The next thing he will know will be the resurrection morning. **Glory! Glory! Glory!**



TEACHERS CONVENTION

Do you remember our Teachers' Convention at the Sheraton Hotel, in Leominster, last October 8-11?

Do you remember the wonderful fellowship we had with each other?

Do you remember our keynote speaker, Barbara Coloroso – that rapid fire, dynamic person who believes that kids are worth our care and understanding?

Do you remember the good food we had at our banquet?

Do you remember the inspiring messages given by Elder John Thurber each morning?

Do you remember the workshops that gave us so much fun, inspiration, and practical ideas?

Do you remember the problems we had getting checked into the hotel? Feelings of disgust and impatience were quite evident. Funny, how that doesn't seem to matter much anymore.

Do you remember (some of you) how you didn't want to go on the Heritage Tour because you had been there before and didn't think it was worth the time?

Do you remember sitting in the Washington, New Hampshire Church singing those beautiful, old hymns – thinking that you may be sitting in the very spot Rachel Preston sat when she pointed out the Sabbath truth?

Do you remember going through the William Miller House, standing in his study, where the prophecy of the 2300 days became clear to him?

Do you remember standing on Ascension Rock, tears filling your eyes as you tried to realize the terrible empty feeling of those people when Jesus didn't return in 1844?

Do you remember bowing your head in the Miller Chapel, almost hearing William Miller praying for our Lord's soon coming?

Do you remember standing by the grave of William Miller, where Sister White tells us angels are guarding the grave? It almost felt like we were on holy ground.

Do you remember that the fund-raising part of our Harvest 90 campaign began on October 22 and ended at Christmas vacation?



Did you remember to give a dime folder to each child? Yes, you remembered. I know, because good news about our campaign is coming in from all parts of our union.

Remember, our Adventist heritage is important to each of us. It is especially important to our young people to know about where it all began.

Thank you, in advance, for your part in this Harvest 90 campaign. May you always be an inspiration and friend to each of your students, not “just the teacher.”

A heartfelt thanks to each of you for the beautiful cards and the financial gifts bestowed upon us at our convention’s closing session. We really felt unworthy since we were, like you, just fulfilling part of our job description. Your thoughtfulness and kind words in the many letters that have arrived since we were together are humbly accepted.



OUR HERITAGE

This is the time of the year when the world thinks about witches, ghosts, goblins and spirits. As Adventists, October has much more meaning than Halloween. It's a time when we think about our beginnings.

Many times it has been my privilege to visit some very special places of our Adventist heritage such as the William Miller home, chapel, and cemetery, and the Washington, New Hampshire church. The feelings of emotion cannot be expressed fully on paper.

It is a thrill to walk through the old Miller home – especially to stand in the room that is believed to be his study, where he no doubt labored long hours over the scriptures concerning the second coming of Jesus. If only the walls could talk! What a glorious story they could tell!

It is a thrill to sit in the pews of the old Miller chapel singing the old advent songs – the same songs that were sung there more than 140 years ago by our pioneers who were so much looking forward to the coming of Jesus.

It is a thrill to stand on Ascension Rock, overlooking the valley where many Adventists waited on that fateful day of October 22, 1844 for Jesus to return. Any one who has even stood on that rock could not help but put themselves in one of our forefathers places. What a terrible disappointment it must have been.

It is a thrill to stand by the grave of William Miller. Sister White states that angels are guarding his grave. It was almost like standing on hallowed ground knowing that angels were closer.

It is a thrill to sit in the pews of the old Washington, New Hampshire church – the first Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was here that the Sabbath truth was first presented by Rachel Preston. That was a momentous time for our church. I couldn't help but wonder what my thought would have been had I been there that day and heard the seventh-day Sabbath presented the very first time.

It is a thrill to know that most of our early pioneers were young people of great faith and dedication to their God.

But all of that is in the past. Here we are, 143 years since the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844. So much has happened since then. It is hard to see how our Lord can delay His coming much longer. We seem to have lost the fervent anticipation for His coming. It's easier now to understand the scripture that says that He will come like a thief in the night. Let's get the spirit of 1844 revived. Jesus is coming soon—whether or not you and I are ready.



HOW WONDERFUL TO BE THANKFUL

Thanksgiving is a time when our thoughts go back to the beginning of our country, to the time when the pilgrims were literally thankful to have been able to survive the winter, and then to have been provided, by God's great love, a harvest of plenty. But the Thanksgiving season is much more than that, because when we take time to jot down the things we are thankful for, it usually becomes pages and pages of wonderful blessings of God.

A number of years ago, while serving as principal of a junior academy, one day my students were in a rather bad mood. I don't remember what the problem was. There was probably a change in the weather to complicate things. At any rate, our Bible class just wasn't going anywhere. The students sat like bumps on a log, sullen and unresponsive. Finally realizing that no one was getting anything from that exercise, we all closed our books and I started relating some nice things that recently happened to me, laced with other Thanksgiving stories. After about fifteen minutes, they were asked to take out a piece of paper and on one side list all the things they were thankful for. They had twenty minutes to finish. You should have heard the groans. It took a while for some of them to get started because they were sure they didn't have anything to be happy or thankful about. But at the end of the twenty minutes when the papers were due, they were all still writing . . . not on one side of the paper, but on several pieces of paper. The room was quiet, tenseness had disappeared, and contentment and smiles were present on their faces. They didn't want to stop.

This was such a great lesson to me as a teacher. Yes, we may have to lead our youngsters into feelings of happiness and thanksgiving. The teachers I remember and loved the most are the ones who showed me how to smile, and be happy, and be thankful, for they were showing a side of my God that is very attractive.

I am thankful this Thanksgiving season for so many things . . . thankful for a place in God's work . . . for my family . . . and for you teachers who are the life line of this church.

Have a good and happy Thanksgiving.



I'M THANKFUL

Seventeen years of my working life were spent in the state of Texas. At first, my impressions of Texas weren't very great. My wife and I agreed that we should spend three years in Dallas and then return to the Northeast. Three years then grew into seventeen wonderful years.

We have completed many years back in the Northeast where there are four distinct seasons - the beauties of the fall leaves, the ecstasy of the first snow, the thrill of seeing the birds return in the spring, the wonderful joy of eating the delicious vegetables from our own garden.

Not long ago it was my privilege to go back for a visit to Texas, way down to the Rio Grande Valley. The further south we went the warmer the swimming pools became at the motel each night, the hotter the driving as my clothes were always wet with perspiration, and I wondered, "How did we ever stand it down here." My memory then took me back a few years when I was stating to everyone that "Never did I want to work in the snow country again! In other words, I was satisfied with my surroundings. How good the Lord is to us! How easy it is to fall in love with the area you are working in, and with the people for which you are working. No, I wouldn't trade the Atlantic Union for any other place to work because of the beauties around me, because of the good people to work with in the office, because of you, the wonderful teaching staff, and because I believe the Lord wants me here. I'm thankful at this Thanksgiving season to be right where I am. How about you?"



SILENT NIGHT! HOLY NIGHT!

Of all the holidays, Christmas wins hands down as my favorite. “Why?” you may ask. “Is it because of the present received?”

Well, maybe. But then again, not really.

Is it because of the snow that is usually on the ground at that time of the year?

Yes, that has a lot to do with it.

Is it because of the decorations seen in and on the homes and buildings?

Yes, it’s beautiful: and this is a part that is always looked forward to with great anticipation. The ritual in our house is that the tree goes up Thanksgiving afternoon and stay up until New Years Day. Many nights are spent driving around looking with oohs and ahs at the beautiful lights and the decorations.

Some of it is because of friendships being renewed by Christmas cards, letters, and pictures.

Yes, it is nice to hear from friends even if it is only once a year.

Yes, is it because of the good food – the special food that is made particularly for this Christmas season?

Oh! Yes! Of course! My wife has a special fruit cake recipe that she makes once a year. It’s the best! My mouth waters just thinking about it. And then there’s the hot wassail that tastes so good when you’ve come in from a cold winter’s night.

Is it because of the ingathering program of the church?

Well, maybe that’s stretching the point just a little bit. Really, it is fun to go with the caroling band. The people are usually so happy to hear you sing. Strange, isn’t it, but it just seems like any group can make carols sound good.

We could go on and on asking question as to why we like the Christmas season, but there is one question that has been purposely left until the last.

Is it because we are celebrating the birth of Christ?

Yes, that is the best reason. Not that we believe that Christ was born on the twenty-fifth of December, but that He was in fact born and lived on this earth.



Dear friends, more than any other year in my life it has been proven to me that Christ is alive, cares for me, my wife, and my family. He has answered prayers. I praise God, especially this Christmas season, for the birth, the life, and the resurrection of my personal Savior. My family and I wish you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY AND GOOD NINETEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY THREE!

CHRISTMAS IN THE CLASSROOM

Shining eyes, happy hearts,
Christmas plays, learning parts,
Gifts for all, large and small.
Christmas in the classroom!

Party day! Who enjoys
Lots of eats, lots of noise?
Large and small, one and all.
Christmas in the classroom!

Home-made cribs everywhere;
Christmas songs fill the air.
Girls and boys, lots of noise.
Christmas in the classroom!

Brand new toys, food galore
We collect for the poor.
Each child brings many things.
Christmas in the classroom!

Home-made gifts, letters too –
Mom and Dad, they're for you.
Motives pure? Can't be sure.
Christmas in the classroom!

Faith and hope, love and joy
Live in each girl and boy.
So you see, there must be
Christmas in the classroom!



WHAT SHALL I GIVE?

What would you do if one morning you woke up to a world where money was absolutely worthless? There would still be many pretty things in the store to buy, but you couldn't purchase them because your money wasn't any good. Add to that, Christmas is just around the corner. Your family and friends are expecting you to continue your tradition of lavishly bestowing beautiful, expensive gifts upon them. This, you have been doing for years – not necessarily buying things that were good and useful, but just buying something because it was expected of you. You didn't know any other way to celebrate Christmas. Yes, you went to church, you enjoyed the Christmas music, you enjoyed the Christmas dinner, but the gifts were uppermost in your mind. Now, what can you give?

You look at your list: your spouse, your son, your daughter, the people you work with. The list is long, for you truly do enjoy giving. For a moment you let your mind wander. Why did the Lord let this happen to you? You return your tithe, you gave offerings, you are faithful in attendance of all church meetings, you are a church leader, you love the Lord. Why me, Lord? Then the realization comes to you that the Lord doesn't give money as gifts, neither does he buy expensive nick-knacks just for looks to give to his friends. He doesn't have a special list of just a few friends on which to bestow His special love, He gives to all.

Now, your mind is really beginning to whirl. Christ, our example, gave the greatest and most expensive gift, one that couldn't be measured in dollars and cents. And you think, "All I have to give for Christmas this year to my friends and to my family is myself." You wonder just what you can give. You take your Bible, pen, and paper, and as you study the life of Christ you begin to make a list of the things Christ gave. You put them under the names of those on your Christmas list. The list grows longer and longer, not only of gifts, but of people to give them to. You realize, perhaps for the first time in your life, the true happiness of giving. For it is the first time you have truly given yourself as did Christ to bring joy, comfort, love, understanding, peace and hope to a people who are longing for something that is real. What are you giving for Christmas this year?



MARVELOUS AND WONDERFUL MYSTERY

The story never grows old, neither does it cease to be thrilling. It's an event of tenderness, a love story unsurpassed. It's a happening that humanly couldn't be explained because its origin was divine. It's something that had never happened before and has never happened since. It's a show of love and grace unmatched to mankind – a story of forgiveness, love, and promise, all in one. Yes, it's a marvelous and wonderful mystery; and once every year in December we read and re-read the account and marvel at the unfolding of the plan of salvation.

A virgin with child? Impossible! But it was true! This young woman, Mary by name, was carrying the Savior of the world – a baby in her womb – the origin of which was divine.

This couple, Mary and Joseph, had to be extraordinary people. They both must have been living respectable lives. They were good citizens, solid church people, receptive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Think, however, what they had to go through for three quarters of a year.

Mary was a young woman respected in her community, loved by her church, a person of unquestionable character. We are not told when Mary talked to Joseph about her encounter with the angel. It is doubtful she talked to many about her conversation with the heavenly being. She knew her body was changing before it became apparent to the rest of the world. She must have discussed with Joseph the strange things that were taking place. What a difficult position in which these two upright citizens of the community and church found themselves. Mary knew she was pure; nobody else on earth knew this – in fact, they didn't believe it. To them, she was just another fallen woman.

Joseph, what a man! Truly in love with Mary. He wanted to believe her, but just couldn't. How could he? It wasn't natural – it had never happened before. It just wasn't possible. Joseph watched his future wife grow in size, agonizing because he knew the embarrassment both he and Mary were going to share. He was even willing to move away to save his fiancée from all the gossip. Then something wonderful happened to him. The almighty communicated with him and he believed. No, the gossip didn't stop, but he accepted the heavenly message as trust, and now it didn't matter anymore what anyone said or thought.

The divine nature of Jesus' birth is both wonderful and exciting, but the human side of the story is touching in, and of, itself. Although she is told in advance about the miraculous birth, Mary must surely feel the embarrassment of being thought of as unchaste by her family and friends. She must surely feel the weight of concern in the mind of Joseph. When the two of them find themselves far from home at the time of delivery, they must both feel a terrible isolation and awesome expectation about this special child from



God. Yet Mary's confident faith and Joseph's loving support are both rewarded with more celebration than any other human family has ever known at the arrival of a new child. From lowly shepherds on the earth to the highest halls of heaven, the majesty of the occasion is heralded with songs of joy.

The Narrated Bible, p. 1356

We can't explain the virgin birth of Jesus— I'm glad we can't! It's a marvelous and wonderful mystery! A baby was mothered by a woman who had complete confidence in God.

Ever since that wonderful day of His birth, the entire world has been blest. It will *never, ever* be the same again.



GROWTH SPURTS- PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

Many years ago, while visiting a friend's house, my attention was drawn to a portion of the kitchen wall where there were many lines with names and dates. My friend explained that every Christmas time the children were lined up, measured, and the names and dates were put on the wall. It was very interesting to note the difference in the sizes of the physical growth spurts. We wish we could have done that in our family, but as a worker for the church, we have moved too many times.

Wow! It's almost Christmas time again! You, no doubt, remember me saying that it's my favorite time of the year. What are the memories that come to your mind? Please indulge me in some reminiscing.

When each of our children came along, we were anxious and excited to see how they would react at Christmas time. We couldn't wait to put up the Christmas tree. But, when we took the baby in to see it, there was very little reaction. We knew the baby was too young to react, but we wanted it to respond because it was such a happy time of the year. Even though the response was nil from baby, we still opened it's presents. If you could have been there and seen the expression on our faces, my wife's and mine, and listened to our chatter, you would have thought "surely that baby must be understanding everything."

Well, so much for the first Christmas. The rest of them that follow are quite different. The next year, the baby is crawling or walking, putting everything it can reach into its mouth. The baby is fascinated with the Christmas tree lights. In fact, it can sit for long periods of time just looking at them sparkle.

The second Christmas is much more fun for the family because baby can now open presents.

The third Christmas – now this is the real one. The child is much more aware of what Christmas means. At home and in Sabbath School it has been told of the story of Baby Jesus. The Christmas tree ornaments get re-arranged at the bottom of the tree; yes, even a few get broken; but that doesn't matter. Paper on the presents, accidentally gets torn, once in a while, but mom, with motherly love, can always fix it to look just like new again.

As the children grew older it was fun to watch them move from stage to stage, when they could finally leave the Christmas tree alone, when they really understood that Santa Clause was mom and dad, when they understood the real Christmas story, when they understood that Christmas wasn't really Christmas unless we helped someone in need and, in effect, gave Jesus a present.



One thing has never changed in our home. Even though we are now grandparents, when our children come home they still sit around the tree, shake each present and rearrange them, sometimes two or three times a day. And you know, we don't mind.

Enough with physical growth spurts! Let's think of some spiritual growth spurts. We don't expect much from the baby. Baby knows how to get what it wants. It even learns that all it has to do is open its mouth and cry, and someone will come and care for its need. This aspect of the child's life sometimes goes on too long. But then, all of a sudden, as a parent, you see spiritual growth spurts. When the child begins to distinguish between right and wrong, when the child becomes aware that others need help, when the child understands the story of Jesus, when the child understands the process of re-birth and asks for baptism, when the child becomes a man or a woman, he or she has, by word and action, become God's man or woman. This, my friends, is the grandest gift any child can give to the parents.

Let's remember that spiritual growth spurts come like physical ones—some years, not much, other years by great leaps. Our goal should be both physical and spiritual maturity for our children.



SUDDENLY

Suddenly” is an explosive word. The dictionary says it is an event that happens without warning or preparation, something that happens all at once or all of a sudden. It seems it is mostly used at the time of a disaster, an accident, a death in the family or of a national figure, a fire or an earthquake, a tornado, or any number of tragedies that happen without prior notice.

Fortunately, not every “suddenly” happened that way. There are some very good things that occurred in the history of this old world without prior notice.

At this time of the year we think of one such event, the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The difference with this “suddenly” is that the birth of Jesus was published years in advance. Those who wanted to know, did know. Those who had receptive minds and hearts did receive this news with gladness. However, for the majority of people on earth, the coming of Jesus was a nothing. It was a “suddenly” that for many was a tragedy of great proportion because of closed minds and hearts to the most wonderful gift this world was ever given. To those who were ready to receive Him, the coming of Jesus was a “suddenly” which was a wonderful, explosive, and glorious event. It set off a series of events that settled forever the fate of man’s eternal death or eternal life.

Long ago, it was the decree of Caesar Augustus that all the world be taxed. This must have been disturbing news to Joseph. Mary was almost ready to deliver her baby, and a trip of that length would be very hard on her. The emperor, however, had spoken, and it was the law. Joseph and Mary must make Joseph walked the seventy miles beside the donkey, which carried Mary. Upon arrival, all rooms were taken. He could find nothing but a stable and a clean pile of straw for his precious wife. Imagine! The most wonderful “suddenly” this world has ever known was witnessed by sleepy cattle and sleepy sheep. Their gentle lowing and bleating welcomed the gentle Jesus to this earth.

Every woman who has ever borne a child can only try to imagine what Mary must have felt the night He came. She was not an educated woman, nor wise with years. She was little more than a child herself, but her life had been clear enough and her commitment to God so all inclusive, that He could make his entrance into human history through her.

It is not surprising that we are never given any of Mary’s actual words after she pondered these things in her heart. We are told that she kept them there. What else could she have done? Even if she had been educated, could her thoughts have been expressed? Birth itself is strange and holy enough. To have given birth to Life Himself, locked her lips.



Every Hebrew woman prayed to be the mother of the Messiah, but God chose, Mary, knowing that pride in this service to Him would never strain her thoughts. He could trust Mary with her thoughts. It is rather easy to appear to be humble. Most of us can calculate far enough in advance to manage outward humility in a certain set of circumstances. But true humility, of the kind Mary possessed, can only be given by God to a totally single-minded person. Mary was willing to go through with the strange birth— pregnant before the legal year of her engagement was up— only because she loved God with all her heart. Only because her motives were totally unmixed

God had entered the mainstream of human history in person, the Person of Mary's Baby, Jesus, and with Him came, not only hope for the world, but responsibility and obligation to God which this simple Jewish girl could only ponder silently in her own heart.*

None of us will ever experience the same kind of “suddenly” that came to Mary, but conversion of the heart is an experience without precedence. The individual has nothing to compare it with. In that way, the birth of the first-born child and the conversion of the heart have many similarities. You have a wonderful opportunity to experience the glorious “suddenly” of a young person accepting Jesus as his or her Savior—the conversion of the heart.

*(Excerpts taken from God Speaks To Women Today, by Eugenia Price, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI



NO ORDINARY PEOPLE

“In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary (Luke 1:26,27, NIV).

Gabriel— an angel of God, but no ordinary angel— God’s special messenger. Virgin Mary — no ordinary virgin — one to whom a God was to be born. Joseph— no ordinary man—special, upright, upstanding man of the community who loved his God. Pledged to be married— this meant more than today’s engagements. A couple was considered married when pledged— they just didn’t have the wedding feast. To dissolve a marriage pledge one would have to be divorced.

The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.” (Luke 1:28,31, NIV).

Highly favored— Mary had apparently been living such a life that she wasn’t frightened by the appearance of an angel, but for him to say “you are highly favored” surprised her, and she wondered what this meant. Then he said, “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1: 34, 35, NIV).

When Mary asked “How will this be?” It was in astonishment, not unbelief. The angel answered and told her just how this was going to take place. Then she gave one of the most wonderful answers ever recorded in words.

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:38, NIV).

By this statement she revealed a belief in the Word of God and a submission to the will of God.



But now she had to tell Joseph. How could she expect him to understand? He didn't understand; after all, there had been no precedence for such a happening! It was just too much for him to accept.

“Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.” (Matt. 1:19, NIV).

This must have been a terrible trial. He loved Mary, but what would people think? He couldn't bare the humiliation; he would quietly divorce her.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:20-22, NIV)

The wonderful part of this story is that Joseph also accepted what the angel of the Lord said. Knowing full well that others would not understand, he took Mary home to be his wife. One can imagine, once it became obvious that Mary was pregnant, the people counting of their fingers the months they had been married. How the tongues must have wagged.

Joseph and Mary were by no means ordinary people. They accepted what the angel told them and became a part of something that had never happened before – and no doubt will never happen again. They overcame all the uncomfortable circumstances because of their personal relationship with their Maker. They believed without question.

There is a great need, especially in the classroom, for the extraordinary person today— a person who believes the Word of God, a person who knows the voice of the Lord, a person who can say, “**I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.**”



GIVING IS GOD'S WAY

There has never been a greater gift than that which was given to this world by God. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The following story came to my attention not long ago. It took place during World War II in London, England. It was not easy for those who before the war were financially sound. For those who were already at the bottom of the financial ladder, however, the war brought on almost unbearable conditions.

Think, if you will, of youngsters, who not only knew they would get nothing for Christmas but also did not know where their next meal was coming from!

One such lad came to a bakery window. He noticed an American soldier at the counter trying to make up his mind as to what he wanted. Out of the corner of his eye the soldier noticed the little boy with his nose and hands pressed against the window looking longingly at all the sweets available. The soldier made his purchase and without looking at the boy turned and quickly made his exit. To the surprise of the little boy, suddenly the soldier was standing right beside him!

"Son," he said, "would you like a dozen doughnuts?"

The little boy couldn't believe it! The soldier handed him one of the two bags, then turned and walked away. The lad couldn't speak at first. Then he ran after the soldier, tugged at his sleeve, looked right up into his eyes and said, "Mister, are you God?"

It is said that we are never more like God than when we are giving. That's what Christmas is all about – giving, not getting.

Little children often think of teachers and parents as if they were God. Their trust is complete. We give to them not just because they need it, but, most of all because we love them. That's God's way.

This is the Christmas season. Perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our families and to our students is our love, our understanding, and ourselves, completely.

For (your name) so loved his/her family and students that he/she gave himself/herself completely in love to them, that whosoever believeth in him/her, should not perish but be led to accept eternal life from our Heavenly Father.



JOY TO THE WORLD

“Joy for what?” you say— this world is full of crime, full of hate, where people tell lies, cheat and think only of themselves. This is a world where there are many natural tragedies such as floods, earthquakes, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, and famines. This is a world where Christians hate Christians, denominations downgrade each other, and preachers are caught in the very act of the most vile sins—as witnessed by the recent television evangelists’ scandals. This is a world where you can no longer leave your home or car unlocked, or walk the streets at night feeling safe. A world whose prisons are filled to beyond maximum capacity, where prisoners are released early because there is no room for them. This is a world whose music has become so degraded that thinking people won’t even discuss hate lyrics in public. This is a world whose hospitals are full of sick, whose doctors are baffled by new diseases that are emerging, a world where so-called rest-homes are filled with lonely people, people who remember the “good old days,” but find in their twilight days that their lives are empty and useless. “Joy to the World?”

The above sketch is not a pretty picture, and if it were not for Jesus, we would have absolutely *nothing* for which to look forward.

Christmastime, the time when we celebrate the birth of Christ, is a most beautiful time of the year— a time of beautiful music, gifts, and good will— time when we do think of the poor and needy— time when we feel good by giving of ourselves and our resources to help someone less fortunate.

The “Joy to The World” that is uppermost in my mind is much more than just a Christmas greeting, it is a fact, and attitude, a way of life, an everlasting promise; without which there would truly be no joy to the world!

“Joy to the World”, of course will be Christ’s second coming:

Joy to the world, the Lord will come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing . . .

Now **there’s** something to be joyful about! The Lord as King of this world. Notice it says that heaven and nature will sing. What joy!

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let me their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy . . .



When Jesus is our King, even the lonely and poor cannot be kept from their songs of joy. Again, we will hear from nature – it will repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the course is found . . .

Now is the time for the sick and those who have lost loved ones to sing. Now is the time for the farmer to rejoice. Think of it – no more sorrow, no more sickness, no more weeds and thorns to infest their crops.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove,
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love . . .

Now friends, won't that truly be "**Joy to the World**"! That's what we mean– **joy** when Jesus reclaims this world, **joy** when all nations will bow to Him, **joy** when the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love are accepted with gratitude by all!

Don't let anyone keep you from singing "**Joy to the World**." We have the promise that Jesus will come again. We can, by doing His will, make this a joyful world.

Merry Christmas, and a **Joyful** New Year to all of you!



WHAT DID HE GIVE?

The birth of a child has always been a beautiful occasion. It seems like all parents think that their child is going to be somebody great – going to do something that no one else can do. When the child first arrives on the scene of action, there is only one thought on the minds of its parents – love. This is a part of my own body. What can be done to assure the safety of this small bundle of life? Do we have the proper clothes? Do we have the proper shelter? Do we have the proper food?

Most people know what they are going to name the baby long before it arrives. Most young couples select the name they want, not a name that was picked out by someone else. Usually they have a name for a boy and a name for a girl to make sure they won't get caught short. It was different with Mary and Joseph though. The birth of the tiny Christ Child was exceptional. Read Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a Son and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The doctor didn't tell Mary and Joseph that Mary was going to have a boy. They didn't have that kind of capability in those days, but an angel said it was going to be a Son. Mary and Joseph didn't have the chance to choose names for the Child; the angel commanded them to name Him Jesus. They didn't even have to wonder what His life work was going to be, for the angel said He was to save His people from their sins. Now, we know they didn't fully understand what that meant, but in one short verse they knew their Child would be a boy, and they knew His name and His life work.

The gift of life is a most wonderful gift, but the gift God gave to man, a life that has power to save us from our sins, cannot be compared. No, you and I cannot save people from their sins, but we can lead young people to the One who can. The greatest gift we could give would be to lead someone to the Author of the plan of salvation. God knows how to give good gifts. He gave his all, His Son. It's beyond me how He could do this for us, but He did, and at this Christmas season I thank Him for that most precious Gift.



PRICELESS GIFTS!

The Christmas story is a story of love. What wonderful love the Father had to send us His Son, to let Him become a baby to grow up on this earth, to go through all the hassles, and to take all the guff because He loved us!

What wonderful love the mother of Jesus had. She realized that her Baby was going to be something special. She knew that her conception was God – sent. She didn't have many with whom she could share this miracle; in fact, I doubt she had any except her husband, Joseph. Who would believe her? She was with Child, conceived of the Holy Spirit but unable to share that knowledge.

What wonderful love Joseph had for his fiancée, who later became his wife, and for his God. Apparently he didn't at first believe his fiancée when she told him of her condition and that she was still pure. Not wanting to cause her further hardship, he decided to quietly get a divorce. But he was given a dream and was told the truth. Your Mary is O.K. She hasn't sinned. She is with Child by the Holy Spirit. He believed, because he loved and trusted his God!

The emphasis is not on Joseph in the Christmas story; it is on the Baby Jesus, and rightfully so. But what a wonderful example of a man who was in tune with His Maker. He didn't argue, "Lord, this is too hard, I'm going to be embarrassed!" No, his attitude was, "Lord, You said it; I believe it because I love and trust You."

Joseph not only received the greatest gift any family could possibly receive, the Baby Jesus, the Saviour of the world, but the gifts of understanding, of tolerance, of love, of trust, of obedience – every one priceless! What more could he have asked?



BEST FRIENDS

Most of us have at least one best friend. Some of us have many. These are friends who remain by our side during our best and worst times, and accept us because they truly love and trust us. Although I have many best friends, I would like to tell you about three in particular.

The first one is a man I have known for thirty-three years. We attended college together, sang in a quartet together, shared our joys and sorrows together, and worked together. Even today, if there is an important decision to be made in our lives, we consult each other. He currently is president of one of our conferences – and to me that’s wonderful. Others now see him as a man of great administrative ability. He sees potential in everyone, and has the unique ability to bring out the best in people. Many see him as I see him – for they trust him, and so do I.

The second man I’ve known for only seven years, and already he has become one of my best friends. Many mornings we would arrive at the office together to talk and pray. Oh yes, his prayers meant so much to me. He no longer arrives early at the office, for he has retired and moved to North Carolina. But he wrote me a letter the other day, and it was good to know that he hasn’t forgotten me. Everyone, it seems, loves this man. It must be that they trust him, and so do I.

The third man has been one of my best friends for twenty years. We were principals together and then co-workers in the same conference office. Now he is my associate in the Atlantic Union Office of Education. Since we both think so much alike on educational matters, I don’t worry about his responses to problems that arise. Some people have called me by his name, although I don’t know why because we don’t look alike; however, I feel honored whenever this happens. It is my opinion that many of you feel the same way as I do about him. No doubt, it’s because you trust him, and so do I.

It is the Christmas Season, the best season of the year to me, and what a lucky man I am to have these three wonderful friends. They probably don’t realize that they have given me such a wonderful Christmas gift. Their trust is a gift that is continuous and lasting.

There is of course a purpose for this article and this is that we cannot forget another Best Friend. I have saved this man for last because He should be everyone’s Best Friend. This man of course, is Jesus Christ. How fitting that we should celebrate His birthday during this joyous season. He is the greatest gift that man can receive. Millions love Him, because they trust Him – and so do I.

The Teacher:

As Trustee



TIME

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says,

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.”
NIV

It is said that time doesn't change. There are 60 seconds to every minute, 60 minutes to every hour, 24 hours to every day, 7 days to every week. . . and on and on — always the same, no less and no more. It is a fact that this is true.

Remember when you were a five or six-year-old youngster and had to take a nap. That hour seemed to stretch into 24 hours. Remember when that special occasion took so long to come. Church went on for an eternity. Remember when it was important to give your age by half years rather than full years, as in 6 1/2, instead of 6. Remember when you got a little older and thought that mowing the lawn was like taking the time to mow a hayfield. Remember when you were going swimming in the afternoon, and the morning seemed like a week. Remember when you were having fun, time wasn't something to worry about; therefore, the time was enhanced — when you were young.

Strangely, though, as we grew older, the time that is always the same — but was so slow when we were young — gradually picks up speed to where it seems the hours have become minutes, and weeks have become days. Things keep crowding in on our time. There's no time for your family, no time for your church, no time to help you neighbor, no time even for yourself. The older we get, the faster time appears to fly. We just get used to writing one year, and suddenly it's the next.

Perhaps you can tell me why there is such a difference in the perception of time at different phases of life. The Bible does say there is a time for everything. But in our own actions we don't always think that is true. How many instances have you said that there just isn't any time to do such-and-such? Do you think that perhaps when we were young our minds were not so cluttered with worries and other cares of this life — that we were more aware of the existence of time? Do you think that perhaps the enemy of our life has taken one of the most precious gifts our Savior has given us, and has made us to be so busy with unessential things that we don't appreciate or know how to use the time that is given to each of us. The Bible tells us that we have about three score and ten years to life — some more, and some less. That's 611, 520 hours of lifetime, not even a million and sometimes we are so casual as to how we use our time. We get so involved in non-essential things that before we know it, time truly has passed us by.

- Think how many of your students were never taught how to use their time in study— perhaps *no time* at all.
- Think how many of your students do not spend any quality time with the Lord— perhaps *no time* at all.



- Think how many of your students do not have parents who will spend quality time with them— or perhaps *no time* at all.
- Think how many of your students go to churches that do not give quality time to them— or perhaps *no time* at all.
- Think how many students have schools that do not really plan for quality time for them— or could it possibly be *no planned time* at all.

The Valuegenesis Report showed us the areas in which we need improvement. In my opinion, they all revolve around time— that is, the way we place our priorities. We develop new materials that cost enormous amounts of money to save our youth, when maybe what we should do is change our time agenda and spend that so-called “quality time” with our children that God has so graciously given us. Instead of telling them what to do, maybe we should show them by our example.

My friends, if the Lord gives me but 611,520 hours to live, that means I have only 93,184 hours to go. How many more do you have? Remember, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. . .”

Especially this year, let’s pray that the Lord will help us to know what is really essential, and how to schedule our lives to include these in our agenda to save our youth.



THANK YOU, LORD, FOR TODAY

The week has two days for which we must not worry — two days for which we must feel free of fear and apprehension. One of these days is yesterday with its errors and preoccupations, its pain and worries. Yesterday is gone forever and out of our control. All the gold in the world cannot bring yesterday back. We cannot undo a single one of our actions. We cannot erase a single word spoken. Yesterday is gone!

The other day for which we should not worry is tomorrow, with its possible adversities, its burdens, its great perspectives and poor realizations. Tomorrow is way beyond our immediate control. The sun will come up tomorrow, in all of its splendor or behind a mask of clouds, but it will come up. Until then, we have nothing to do with it because tomorrow is yet to be born.

This leaves us only one day, today. Men can fight the battles of only one day. When you and I add the burdens of two important eternities — yesterday and tomorrow, it is then that we utterly fail.

It is not only the experiences of today that disturb our peace of mind. Many times it is the remorse or bitterness for something that happened yesterday or the fear of what tomorrow will bring; therefore, let us live one day at a time.

The foregoing words are taken from a newsletter that my preacher friend, Allen Priest, who lives in Texas, sends to his parishioners. So often we are so worried about yesterday and tomorrow that we don't have time to be thankful for today.

Haven't you found that it's not the really big things that make your day as much as it is the little everyday happenings?

The cheery "Hi, honey!" from your mate when entering the door at home.

The kids running and throwing their arms around you!

The dog wagging its tail, jumping up, and putting its paws on your coat!

The aroma of good things to eat on the stove!

The friendly wave of the hand by the policeman, a neighbor, or the little girl next door.

The color of the fall leaves, the flock of geese overhead, or the snow falling so gently.



The busy shopkeeper who smiles and sincerely says, "Thanks for coming!"

A tearful mother who so appreciates what you are doing for her child.

The look that says "I love you" from one of your students.

The still small voice that speaks to you while you meditate on the day's activity.

Maybe it's all of these. Perhaps most of all, it's the knowledge that God loves you and me.

Yes, friends, I am thankful for each day God gives me to work for Him. Yesterday has gone, tomorrow is in the future, but today is for us to enjoy. Thank you, Lord, for today.



TIME: WASTED OR USED?

Have you ever said, “I wish there were 26 hours in a day, I just can’t get done everything I need to in 24?” Or maybe you put it this way, “If I only had an extra day once in a while then I could get caught up.” To be very honest with you, I have made both of these statements many times.

Analysis of my problem found that it wasn’t the number of hours in a day or the number of days in a week that was the problem, but rather my use or non-use of the time the good Lord gave me.

As you know, retirement pay is based on years of service; the longer the service the better the retirement benefits. In our organization maximum benefits are received after 40 years of service.

What has happened to all the time given to us? There are many times now that I wish I had had the courage to say “no” to some things because there were so many more important things to do.

Now, let’s do a little figuring. If we take 40 years as the working period of our lives, this gives a total of 350,640 hours (this includes ten days for leap years).

Total working hours for 40 years service	350,640
Subtract eight hours a day for sleep	<u>-116,880</u>
	223,760
<u>Subtract two hours a day for eating</u>	<u>-29,220</u>
	204,540
Subtract 40 hours a week for working	<u>-78,400</u>
(3 weeks vacation *40 years has been taken into consideration)	126,140
Subtract two and one half hours a week for attendance at church and Sabbath School	<u>-5,200</u>
	120,940
Subtract one hour a day for personal devotions	<u>-14,610</u>
	106,330

Now, as you can see, that leaves 106,330 hours for everything else; a lot of time to be used profitably or otherwise. Maybe it’s time to take inventory. If we could put in our wasted time by one hour a day, that would be 14,610 hours in a 40 year work period or almost 87 weeks.

I submit to you, my fellow workers, that the extra time we so often ask for is, in fact, within our grasp.



DIFFERENT NEEDS

When riding on the turnpike in New York State my radio is always tuned to a Christian radio station based in Syracuse, New York. On a recent trip the story of Pat Williams, then General manager of the Philadelphia 76ers, and his wife Jill, was being unfolded for everyone to hear. They were being interviewed by Dr. James Dobson. To my dismay, the interview was divided into two parts and my travels would take me out of range the next day. A cassette tape and book were offered, however, so I ordered them.

The book and tape tell the story of how the Williamses saved their marriage. Now before anyone gets the wrong impression, my wife and I are not having marital problems! The interview was just so interesting!

Briefly, Pat, the husband, was a very successful Christian businessman who took his faith seriously. He belonged to a group known as The Fellowship of Christian Athletes and was in great demand as a speaker.

Outwardly, everything was fine. They were the epitome of the very best of everything, the all-American family. Inwardly, however, there was real turmoil in the home. From the very beginning of the marriage, understanding was lacking by both Pat and Jill — especially Pat. He didn't take time to understand his wife's needs and he almost lost his marriage because of it!

Why am I writing about this? Well, no one has to tell you that there are differences between men and women, but sometimes we forget just how great these differences are. When we take time to discover these differences and then take them into consideration in everything that is done, a marriage or friendship has a better chance of survival.

My thoughts go to the classroom, the different needs of girls and boys. How often have you heard it said of a teacher that he plays favorites with the boys or plays favorites with the girls? Could it be that the teacher hasn't taken into consideration the fact that boys and girls have different needs? The Lord made them different — physically, and in other ways as well!

Pat and Jill saved their marriage mostly because Pat was finally willing to listen and to do something about the problem. They both had to learn the differences in needs of men and women.

Let's not forget, boys and girls have but a few years before they will be men and women. They are different; their needs are different. The happy classroom is one where you the teacher, with God's help, takes these differences into consideration.



UNPREDICTABLE!, PREDICTABLE!

My son worked in Alaska this past summer helping to clean up the infamous oil spill not far from Valdez. Last September he sent home a book entitled, "Alaska Bear Tales", by Larry Caniut. Once the book was opened, it was difficult to put down.

Being a lover of God's creatures, I've always had a great interest in the big, powerful animals. The size and speed of the Alaskan grizzly is incredible. They can weigh more than 2000 pounds, and when standing on their hind legs they can reach a height of 12 feet. The book indicated that a brown grizzly can cover nearly 50 feet a second. The Alaska Department of Public Safety said that bears have been clocked at 35 miles per hour. They have been seen to outrun a horse. After watching one huge bear run, measurements were taken and the strides were found to be nearly 20 feet between tracks. The man who did the measurements wore a size 15 rubber hip boot. He stood in the hind print with his boots side-by-side, and the bear print extended on both sides as well as beyond the heels and toes of his boots. The power of these creatures is phenomenal. They have been seen to break the neck of a steer or moose with a single swipe of their paw. Hunters have had their guns swatted out of their hands and the barrels bent. Such is the power of this magnificent creature.

Even though they are beautiful, and even though at times they look like a big teddy bear, they are unpredictable and dangerous creatures. You should not allow yourself to get close to them in an unprotected area. There are many tales in this book about people being mauled by these creatures. One such story follows.

Doug and his friend went of a fishing trip. It was evident when they reached their destination that this was bear territory, salmon carcasses littered the ground. After fishing awhile, Doug decided to go into the woods, find a bear, and kill it. He hadn't gone far when he was charged by a big grizzly. Everything happened so fast that he had no time to aim his gun, the shot missed the target. What happened next is not a pretty picture. The bear bit clawed, and picked Doug up with his jaws, shaking him like a dog would shake a woodchuck. Doug played dead, and after a long time the bear left. When his friend found him, Doug's condition was almost indescribable. His face was gone, eyes included. To make a long story short, he was given a 1-in-50 chance of pulling through. He did make it, but blind. He learned Braille, went on to graduate summa cum laude from college, and then earned a doctorate in educational psychology. He could have given up after the mauling, but chose to make the best out of life in spite of circumstances.



Doug states, —

Part of my adjustment was to make peace with myself (and this emerged many years after the mauling). In essence I had to acknowledge that when I whimsically chose to kill a bear, that is just to commit the act itself, I was doing violence to that which I loved dearly, the out-of -doors. Also, only after I had acknowledged that I had chosen to be in those woods and was responsible for placing myself in a dangerous situation, could I fully accept my blindness and be at peace with myself. (Shortly after the mauling my peers wanted to avenge me by killing all bears in the immediate area of the attack, but over the years my attitude has changed 180 degrees. I have no desire for people to go out and kill bears — that bear was just doing his bear thing.)

The analogy is not perfect, but when we knowingly put ourselves in places where the enemy of life has all the advantages on his side— terrain, power, size and speed — how can we expect not to be mauled! Sometimes the will to live for the Lord is crushed from our being. Even if by God’s grace we recover, the scars are with us for the rest of our lives. The enemy of life has his territory, and when we step into it we can expect him to be predictable and to do his destructive work on all with whom he comes in contact.

Parents give us care over their precious young ones because of the desire that there will be a building of a defense system to help protect them from the predictable destructive force of the enemy of life. Thank God, the Lord is always predictable. He is stronger than the enemy, and he is **always** there when needed.



THAT HAVEN OF PEACE

Yesterday my wife and I received a packet of pictures from our oldest daughter. We love getting pictures. My daughter and her family live 3,000 miles away, so pictures help keep us up-to-date with the growth of our one and only grandchild. The pictures were particularly beautiful because of the snow around the house. There has been an extraordinary amount of snow this winter in Northern California. To see our granddaughter playing in the snow was truly a thrilling sight. To know that she has good parents who love her and who make sure she is cared for is very satisfying indeed. As we looked further we found pictures of their two pets — a big tan dog, and a big black cat with a white front. We were stunned! Never had we seen such *healthy* animals! They looked so contented — and as I said before, it was all so satisfying. Here was a family full of love for each other, for their child (our granddaughter), and obviously, for their pets. This is (what we like to say) “a little bit of heaven on earth.”

My thoughts then drifted to the millions of children all over the world who do not have the opportunity to be brought up in a home of that kind. Tears welled up in my eyes as I thought of the terrible plight of so many of the world’s children.

It’s difficult for me to watch TV when pictures of starving children are shown — bone thin, hardly able to do anything but stare. I find myself switching channels. I just don’t want to see all that doom and gloom. But, in reality, these scenes can’t be shut out. No matter how hard we try, it’s always there. If you have children, you know what I mean.

Just think, if only the children of the world could be treated as good as my granddaughter, or even as good as my daughter’s pets, what a wonderful thing that would be.

There is yet another burden on my heart. Unfortunately, there are so many of our young who sit before you each day who are starved — hungry for love and recognition. You can see it in their eyes. They look for that little word of reassurance, that sympathetic look, that feeling of acceptance.

No one person can save the children of the world, but one person can make a difference. Each of us must be that one person who makes the difference. Too many of our young children come from homes where they are abused, neglected, or just plain not wanted. They need our understanding, our prayers, our praise, our love, and our acceptance. Our model, the Master Teacher, put the children first, and according to the Scriptures, they adored Him, ‘they trusted Him’, they were drawn to him because he accepted them where they were — and they know they were safe with Him. Somehow, that’s what I believe we should be to the children in our church. If they can’t feel safe or loved by their parents, then we must be that person who offers that place of safety.



My granddaughter feels safe and loved at her home. Her pets feel safe and loved at their home. May your classroom **be** that special haven for your students because **you** are there — because God has called you to be there because of your love and respect for children.



WHAT ARE RICHES?

History is one of my loves. It is easy for me to sit down with a good book that lets me in on the secrets of past years, and then lose all track of time. The last such experience was when I read a book about that terrible time of our nation's history — the Civil War. We usually read about the battles won or lost, or about the deeds of men. This book was different. The title was , ***Heroines of Dixie, Winter of Desperation***. It made me think and really consider about what are my riches, where are they kept, and what is the real value.

One hundred twenty-seven years ago, the Civil War was in its final stages; losses in life and property were terrible. One thread of hope ran through the book, and that was a sense of survival. Some of the women written about could be put in our history books as great, because of the service they rendered to their country, north or south. Most of the women depicted, however, were just ordinary citizens like you and me. When the going got tough they were able to use their faith, ingenuity, and just plain survival instincts to bring them through.

April 3, 1865, Richmond, Virginia had just fallen, the Union army had arrived. The leaders of the South knew it was over. Judith Brocken Brough McGuire writes,

Last night, when we went out to hire a servant to go to Camp Jackson for our sister, we, for the first time, realized that money was worthless here, and that we are in fact penniless. About midnight she walked in, escorted by two of the convalescent soldiers. We collected in one room, and tried to comfort one another. . . .”

That got my attention. Like instances have happened throughout the history of this old world. We are told by financial planners to save for a rainy day. But what is really safe today?

While traveling, I usually have my car radio tuned to one of the talk programs. One type that is very interesting to me is the one in which they tell you what to do with your money. It amazes me to hear some people talking about the hundreds of thousands of dollars they have, which never seems to be enough because they are still trying to find out how they can invest to make more. Now don't get me wrong — I'm for saving, but the way my Bible reads, our riches are not attached to gold. So far, the latter part of the 80's and the early part of the 90's show us how unreliable financial security has become.

That which happened to Judith McGuire back in 1865 could, in fact, easily happen to us. The question must be asked again, “What are we doing with the finances over which the Lord has so graciously given us stewardship?” No doubt you have heard of people whose only goal in life is to be a millionaire before the age of 30 or 35. Many of them do reach that goal, but in the twinkling of an eye it can vanish.



Now, it's not my place to tell you what to do with your finances, but the Lord has left no doubt as to our responsibility. His command was to lay up treasures in Heaven. Ellen White indicates that there will come a time when the money that could have been used in the spreading of our saving gospel will, like Judith McGuire's, be worthless.

The enemy of our soul wants us to forget that our Creator takes care of the fowl of the air and is willing and capable, and wants to care for His children on this earth.

When we look around and see the predictions of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy coming true, it's time for us to decide what our riches really consist of, and in what bank our riches are deposited.

We, as Christian educators and parents, are blessed with the greatest of riches on earth, our children, biological, and those we teach. We may never be rich in this world's goods, but we are laying up riches in heaven to be shared for eternity.



LOVE THY STUDENTS

In March 1990, it was my privilege to speak at the West Townsend and Brattleboro, Vermont churches. It was, in itself, a wonderful experience. For me, however, the best was yet to come.

An invitation was given to go to the home of Brother and Sister Paul Miller. Now, the Millers live on a large dairy farm that has been in the family for several generations. This wasn't my first visit to the home, so my expectations of being fed well was not a disappointment. The food was wonderful, the fellowship could not have been better, and the presence of the Lord could be felt. This, however, as good as it was, wasn't what impressed me the most.

After our good Sabbath meal, it was my desire to see the animals. So my host found a pair of boots for me to wear, and out to the barn we went! First we stopped to see the youngest calves. Something happened there that was to happen at every stop as we went from calf pen to calf pen. From the very young animals to the older animals, they all crowded around their master, Paul Miller. There was an obvious love affair between Paul Miller and his animals. It was so amazing to watch; from the little ones to the almost adults, they all wanted to be close to him. It didn't stop there; the adult cows seemed to have the same kind of respect for him— all desired to be close to their master.

As we begin another school year, this experience comes to my mind showing that the treatment given to animals makes them want to give back to their master unquenching love and respect. This is how we, as teachers, should be acting toward our students.

Now, the way Paul Miller is able to get the love and respect of his animals is probably not much different than what we need to do to gain love and respect from our young people.

1. Our young people must be treated with respect.
2. Our young people must be loved.
3. Our young people must be dealt with firmly and fairly.
4. Just as the animals are fed the right food diet, we must give our young people the right learning diet.

Oh, how good it is to see our young people crowding around their teachers because they want to, because they know they are respected and loved, because they genuinely want to learn. It could happen at all ages. We have all seen it. From the pre-school teacher to the college president, students know when a person is sincere, and they respond in like sincerity.



Our Jesus had that experience — from the youngest to the oldest — children and adults. They all loved him and wanted to be close to Him, to touch Him.

To be a teacher like that, one must have compassion for others, just as Jesus had compassion. A teacher must care for the feelings of each student, just as Jesus cared for all with whom He came in contact. A teacher must love the most unlovable, just as Jesus even loved his betrayer.

That, my friend, is my dream for a happening between you and your students, fellow workers, members of your church, and parents of your students — a happening that culminates in the salvation of people, young and old.