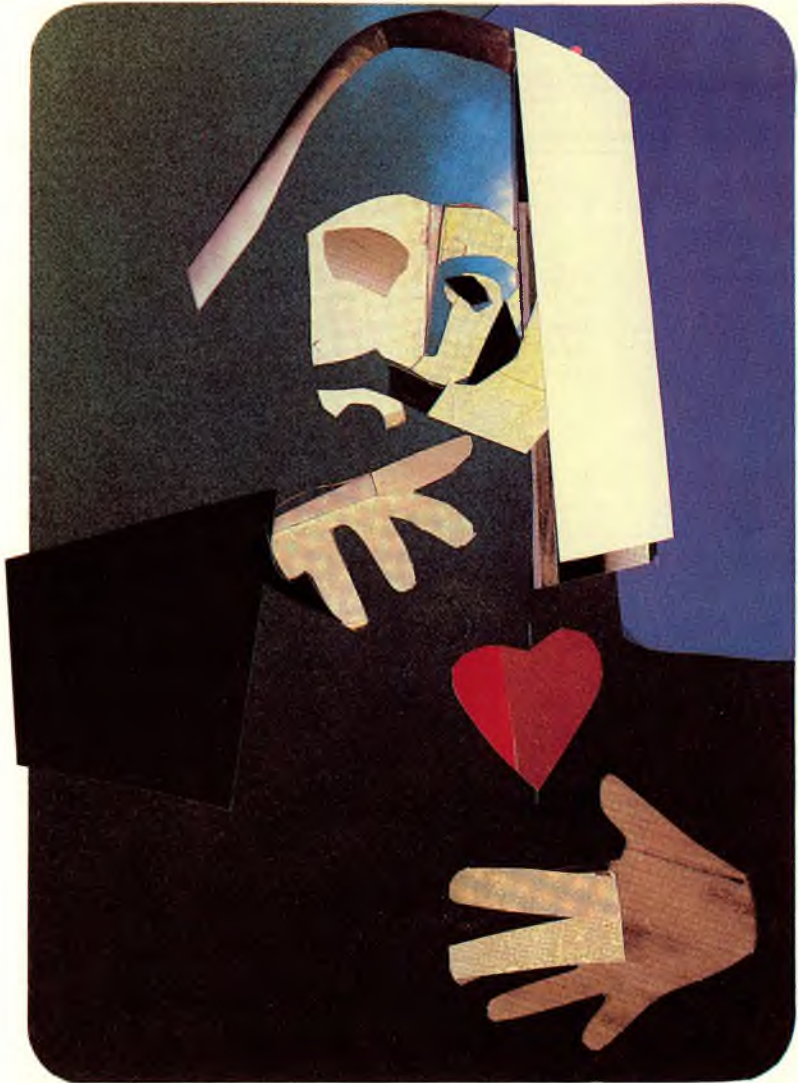


# COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

General Conference Church Ministries Publication

April-June 1988

## Passion Play



# Linda Hernandez babies her patients.



Meet Linda Hernandez,  
registered pediatric nurse,  
storyteller and part-time big  
sister at Porter Memorial  
Hospital in Denver.

"I think the Adventist  
philosophy of healing really comes  
to life in the pediatric department.

It's so obvious that children  
need more than medicine to get  
better. They also need love,  
comfort and reassurance.

We have a saying in our unit,  
*Don't just treat the symptoms—  
treat the child.* And we do. In fact,  
we've found that a simple hug is  
sometimes the best medication we  
can administer.

The joy of seeing a really sick  
child get better is my reward for  
working here, and I know my  
colleagues feel the same. Together,  
we're living Christ's words, 'If you  
have done it unto one of the least  
of these, you have done it unto  
Me.'"



**Porter Memorial  
Hospital**

Put your faith to work.

Make a career out of caring, call or write  
Porter Memorial Hospital, 2525 S. Downing St.,  
Denver, CO 80210, 303-778-5611.

© 1985 Porter Memorial Hospital  
An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/H/V.

## COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

April-June 1988  
Vol. 11, No. 2

**Editorial Office:**  
Department of Church Ministries  
General Conference of Seventh-day  
Adventists  
6840 Eastern Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20012

Place orders with  
Pacific Press Publishing Assoc.,  
P. O. Box 7000,  
Boise, Idaho 83707

### Staff

Editorial Director: Delmer Holbrook  
Editor: Graham Bingham  
Managing Editor:  
Laurell Peterson  
Editorial Secretary:  
Lynn Bratcher  
Pacific Press Editor:  
Lincoln Steed  
Marketing: Bob Gorton  
Sales Office: Shirley Sayers  
Publisher: Pacific Press,  
Nampa, Idaho

### Editorial Team

Graham Bingham, *Chairman*  
Lynn Bratcher, *Secretary*  
Charles Brooks  
Karen Flowers  
Richard Fredericks  
Erwin Gane  
Marsha Frost  
Clifford Goldstein  
Randal Wisbey

### Reading Committee

Thomas M. Ashlock	Delmer Holbrook
Graham Bingham	Frank Holbrook
Charles Brooks	David Jarnes
Karen Flowers	William Johnson
Richard Fredericks	Israel Leito
Marsha Frost	Les Pitton
Erwin Gane	Ray Tetz
Clifford Goldstein	Randal Wisbey

The *Collegiate Quarterly* is written by faculty, students, and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities around the world.

Copyright © 1988 by Pacific Press  
Publishing Association.

## Passion Play Studies in Hosea and Philemon

1. Scandal in the Parsonage .....	6
2. Me First! .....	16
3. Love Says It All .....	24
4. Marriage: Contract or Commitment .....	34
5. "Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God" .....	44
6. Starting Over .....	54
7. Reaping the Whirlwind .....	64
8. Payday Someday .....	72
9. "How Can I Give You Up?" .....	80
10. Laurels of Love .....	92
11. A Runaway Slave .....	102
12. "Liberation Theology" .....	112
13. Heirs Together .....	120

Scripture quotations used in this quarterly, other than the King James Version, are as follows:

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) copyright © 1978 by New York International Bible Society. Use by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

NEW ENGLISH BIBLE (NEB) copyright © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, 1961, 1970. Used by permission.

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE (NASB) copyright © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975. Used by permission.

NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NKJV) copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers. Used by permission.

REVISED STANDARD VERSION (RSV) copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission.

THE LIVING BIBLE, PARAPHRASED (TLB) copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois. Used by permission.

GOOD NEWS BIBLE (TEV)—Old Testament: copyright © American Bible Society 1976; New Testament: Copyright © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976. Used by permission.

PHILLIPS—The New Testament in Modern English: Copyright © J. B. Phillips 1972. Used by permission of the Collins Publishers, London.

*Collegiate Quarterly* (ISSN 0744-2939). Published quarterly by Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 North Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687, U.S.A. One year subscription in U.S.A., \$7.95; single copy, \$2.25. One year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$9.50; single copy, \$2.75. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Nampa, ID. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Collegiate Quarterly*, P. O. Box 7000, Boise, Idaho 83707, U.S.A.

Send editorial inquiries to *Collegiate Quarterly*, 6840 Eastern Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20012, U.S.A.

Send circulation inquiries to Pacific Press Publishing Association, P. O. Box 7000, Boise, Idaho 83707, U.S.A.



## THIS QUARTER'S ARTIST

Kris Hackleman designed this quarter's illustrations by using little paper collages.

Kris holds a Master's degree in art, with an emphasis in printmaking, from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. She received her Bachelor's degree from Southern Missionary College, with a major in art and a minor in Biblical languages.

Currently Kris lives in Berrien Springs, Michigan. She is working to establish herself as a free-lance illustrator, and she also spends as much time as possible making noncommissioned art.

The Hebrew words used in the designs for this QUARTERLY's section on Hosea translate as follows:

Lesson 1: Lo-ammi (Hosea's third child)

Lesson 3: Lo-ruhamah (Hosea's second child)

Lesson 4: "I will betroth you to me forever"

Lesson 5: Jezreel (Hosea's first child)

Lesson 6: "He will come to us like the rain"

Each of the other illustrations in this section is drawn from a verse in the corresponding Scripture passage.

The Greek for the first lesson on Philemon is translated, "Grace to you, and peace."



## CONTRIBUTOR PROFILE

### ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, MICHIGAN

#### Lessons 1-6

*Chaplain:* Patrick B. Morrison

*Contributors:*

Roger Allison  
Sissel Ames  
Wesley Amundson  
Deborah Bennett  
Bruce Closser  
Steve G. Davis  
Christian Y. Dupont  
Riliah Elmore  
David Ferguson  
Debbie A. Francis  
Ruth Gard  
A. Josef Greig

Carl Hall  
Theodore A. Hessel  
Miroslav M. Kis  
Leland Krum  
Patrick B. Morrison  
Wendy Munroe  
Julius Nam  
Bill Nickless  
Edward Pelto  
Joy K. Pelto  
Teri Potter  
Vanessa Prince

Ester F. Ramharacksingh Rosado  
David G. Rand  
William Richardson  
Darcy Smith  
Diedra B. Thompson  
Karl Thompson  
S. Douglas Waterhouse  
Janice Watson  
Julie Welsh  
Steve Yeagley

### LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY, LA SIERRA CAMPUS

#### Lessons 7-8

*Chaplain:* Steven G. Daily

*Contributors:*

Niels-Erik Andreassen  
Steven G. Daily  
V. Bailey Gillespie

José M. Muinos  
Rennie B. Schoepflin  
Charles Teel, Jr.

### KINGSWAY COLLEGE, OSHAWA, CANADA

#### Lesson 10

*Chaplain:* David Toop

*Contributors:*

Kirsten J. Bissell  
B. Ford  
Randy Heilman

Ralph R. Janes  
Jennifer Morgan  
Trudy J. Morgan

### OAKWOOD COLLEGE, ALABAMA

#### Lessons 11-12

*Campus editor:* Bernard W. Benn

*Contributors:*

Clarence Barnes  
Bernard W. Benn  
S. Haywood Cox  
Cecily A. Daly  
Larry Hasse

Kyna D. Hinson  
Jennith Lewis  
James H. Melancon  
Clifford S. Pitt  
Agniel Samson

### NEWBOLD COLLEGE, ENGLAND

#### Lesson 13

*Campus editor:* Andrea Luxton

*Contributors:*

Jonathan Gallagher  
Andrea Luxton  
Helen Pearson

Michael Pearson  
Joyce Samuel  
Cliff Sellors

### SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS:

Richard Fredericks, assistant professor of religion at Columbia Union College.  
Evert McDowell, news writer for ADRA International.  
John W. Webster, a student at Princeton Theological Seminary.

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

## Facts You Should Know

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is based on the conviction that there is transforming power in the Word of God and that one important way of tapping into that power is through group study. It is prepared with Adventist college students and young adults particularly in mind. Its purpose is to provide this group with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed together each week in Sabbath School.

Additionally, many who use the adult quarterly find that the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, since it deals with the same topics as the adult, enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist colleges and universities, along with young adult church groups, work together in producing the quarterly. The writing at each school is coordinated by the campus chaplain's office. Approximately 200 individuals contribute to the quarterly each year.

Circulation of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is about 25,000.

## Pointers for Study

1. The Bible passage to be studied for each week is indicated in bold on the introduction page (Sunday's lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

2. The Bible passage for the week is divided into sections on the Logos pages (Monday's lesson). When studying this section, carefully reread the Bible passages indicated in the bold headings before reading the comments beneath the heading.

3. Read the remainder of the sections for the week with the perspective you have gained by your own study of the biblical passage.

4. Keep in mind the purposes of each section of the quarterly:

**Introduction** (Sunday) is designed to get your attention and focus your thinking on the week's theme.

**Logos** (Monday), as described above, is a guide for direct study of the Bible passage for the week.

**Testimony** (Tuesday) presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.

**Evidence** (Wednesday) approaches issues raised by the lesson from a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective. It is likely to be the most "scholarly" article of the week.

**How To** (Thursday) discusses what the "theory" in the lesson means for day-to-day living.

**Opinion** (Friday) is a personal viewpoint on the lesson, meant to encourage further thought and discussion.

5. Through prayer, open your mind to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you study.

## The CQ and the Church

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is the General Conference-approved quarterly for the collegiate/young adult age group. It upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *However, its contents should not be regarded as official pronouncements of the church.* Particularly in the Evidence and Opinion sections, views are expressed which are only individual opinion, not official denominational positions.

# AN INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA AND PHILEMON

By Evert McDowell

When first brainstorming for this piece, I contemplated using the title "An Introduction to the Love of God." But further contemplation rejected this idea because *Hosea* goes so much deeper than mere "introduction." So striking is its illustration of God's love that it is almost difficult to comprehend. The lengths that God goes to save us from our own destruction which we so carefully scheme, astounds us. "O love that will not let me go!"

But why, the reader might ask, place the study of Philemon together with Hosea? The answer is simple. Hosea illustrates God's love and Philemon our response to that love. One message is incomplete without the other. The astounding love of God must not, cannot leave us unaffected! It has to evoke some change within us. Either, like Pharaoh's heart, our hearts become hard as sun-baked bricks or soft like Philemon's and lead us to forgive.

To forgive is the first positive response to God's love. The second is to reflect this same love. We too are called to love the despised, the rejected, society's "human refuse." Too often, though, this is where Christianity breaks down. It seems too difficult, the personal price too high. Nevertheless, the need of the "Gomers" in today's world still screams out.

The testimony heard during the hearings conducted by the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography told chilling tales. The stories are numbing, their horror acute. One such account was from Sara. At 13 she ran away from home and became a prostitute. She didn't run away to become a prostitute, she was merely seeking relief from the abuse she suffered at home. Young, innocent and alone, she fell an easy victim to the sharks of the night.

Continually raped, beaten, and threatened with her life, she was kept in line. "I was so frightened, I believed everything he told me. I know now that I was totally traumatized by my imprisonment, rapes, and the beatings.

"I tried on many occasions to escape my pimp. But my inexperience in the city made it easy for him to track me down. Each time I escaped he forcibly brought me back to his apartment. He would drag me through streets, out of restaurants, and into taxis, all the time beating me while I cried for help. No one came to help. No one wanted to get involved."

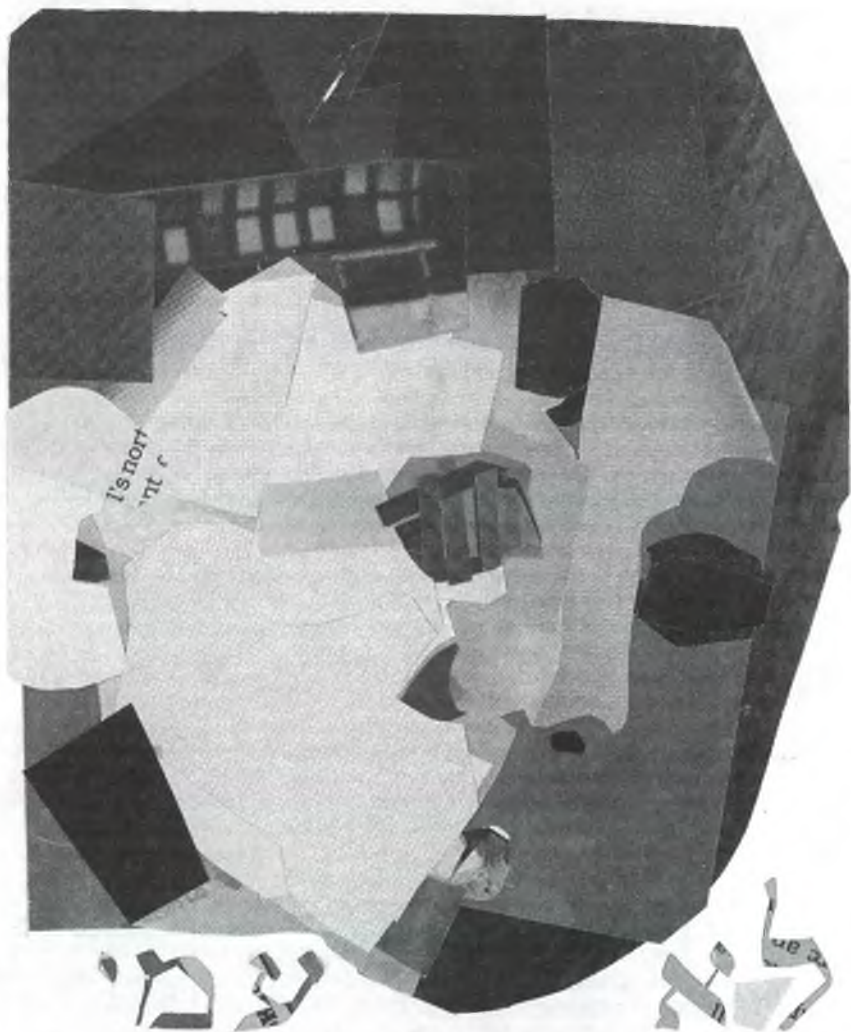
There are no "Happy Hookers," only human shells with empty numbing pain and bitter tears that cry, "I am unwanted and unloved, no one cares!"

It is for these that "God so loved the world" and it is we who are to express this great and unreasonable love.

\*As quoted in *Pornography: A Human Tragedy*, Tom Minnery, ed. (Wheaton, Illinois, Christianity Today, Inc., 1986), pp. 166, 167.

# Scandal in the Parsonage

"The Lord warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: 'Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.'" (2 Kings 17:13, NIV).





# Reflections of a New Father, Chiefly on Discipline

by Bruce Closser

As a new father, I find myself abruptly more sympathetic with the problems God's servants face in admonishing His wayward people. Suddenly I have the responsibility of guiding and directing for myself one of His newest children.

When 4-month-old Evan screams or cries, my wife or I go running to discover the source of his problems. Usually, after we've checked and changed his diapers, fed him a bottle, or satisfied ourselves that he is in no other physical discomfort, he quiets down. Sometimes it takes longer, and we have to cuddle him close and whisper reassurances into his ear.

We've listened while well-meaning, more experienced friends with children of their own say, "You'll spoil your son by running every time he cries." They're probably correct; but we appease our consciences with the observation one of our OB nurses offered before we brought him home from the hospital: "You can't spoil a newborn."

I know that somewhere in his development Evan stops being a newborn. When that time comes his crying may indicate not so much immediate physical need or discomfort as his own burgeoning egocentrism. When that time arrives, instead of running to check on him, I might have to steel myself and let him cry in order for him to

learn that he isn't the only person in the world. Frankly, I worry that I won't recognize when that moment comes.

I know that not only will he make unreasonable demands on my time but he will try my patience in other ways by getting into all kinds of trouble that I can now only begin to imagine. Dreading discipline as I do, I try not to think of having to set him straight. When I do think about how I will discipline him as he grows older, I find myself wondering whether I will have the moral courage to set him straight. I hope so.

It must have taken tremendous moral courage for Hosea and other prophets of God to cry out, particularly when, as so often was the case, their messages went unheeded and ignored. Thinking about correcting my own son when the time comes, I find that I am beginning to understand their hurt and rejection, which, though different from my own, must surely be as intense.

One day I'll probably say to Evan, as my dad said to me when I had done something amiss as a child, "This will hurt me more than it hurts you." And it will be true. He won't understand any more clearly until he has children of his own. But being a parent does give us insight into how our heavenly Father feels when His children go astray.

## INTRO- DUCTION

Scripture:  
Hosea 1:1— 2:23

---

Bruce Closser teaches composition at Andrews Univ.

# Lessons From a Scandal

by Dr. William Richardson

**LOGOS**  
**Scripture:**  
**Hosea 1:1—2:23**

**Theme:** God uses His servants the prophets to point out sin in the ranks of His people and to appeal to the people to repent and to return to Him. Hosea's experience with Gomer demonstrates how crucial the choice of a life companion can be.

## 1. God's Complaint—His People Have Turned Against Him (read Hosea 4:1, 2)

*"My people inquire of a thing of wood. . . . They have left their God to play the harlot" (Hosea 4:12, RSV).*

The thrust of Hosea's message about apostasy and forgiveness hits home because of Hosea's tragic family life. In chapters 1-3 Hosea makes several allusions to what must have been his private agony as his wife leaves him and degrades herself. Amazingly, after Gomer's degradation is complete, Hosea is still able to love and forgive her (3:1-3) and so they are reconciled. Then immediately following the account of his personal tragedy, the application to the people of Israel is swift and scathing—like Gomer, they are totally corrupt, "there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery; . . . and murder follows murder" (4:2, RSV).

But it is important to notice how the prophet portrays Israel's guilt. For Amos, inhumanity between persons was the height of sin, so he flailed the people for their cruelty against one another. But Hosea sees these same sins in a different light—they are not simply injustices against fellow humans, they are blatant acts of arrogance against almighty God. As a wayward wife seeks and seduces men not her husband, so the sinful Israelites brazenly break their marriage vows to God (" 'all the words which the Lord has spoken we will do' " Ex. 24:3, RSV), by their law-breaking ways ("You have forgotten the law of your God" Hosea 4:6, RSV). Hosea then is an important reminder to us that sinful behavior is to be seen, not simply as horizontal—humanity against humanity—but in its vertical dimension—humanity against God. This is what makes sin so serious.

*Why is it so hard to feel that sin somehow hurts God?*

## 2. The Prophet—God's Flawed Communicator

*"I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.' . . . Then the Lord . . . touched my mouth" (Jer. 1:6-9, RSV).*

God's methods of communicating with humans have advantages and drawbacks. Since He speaks through ordinary people and everyday circumstances, His messages are not so philosophical that they soar over the head of the hearer. That is good. However, the commonplace garb may seem, at first reading, to be only that, a personal story. But in this case the application is repeatedly driven home: "For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince . . ." (Hosea 3:4, RSV).

---

**William Richardson is the chairman of the department of religion at Andrews University.**

---

While no communication technique can be perfect when the hearers have a hearing disability (sin has distorted our ability to hear perfectly His intent), God has chosen to speak through that which is closest to us—the human voice and experience. The one time when He spoke to the people directly, the teaching was great, but the people were so intimidated that they asked Him to please speak through a human voice (see Ex. 20:19). From that time to this, He has acceded to that request. There is a certain risk in using human agents, since every human instrument is tarnished, but God seems to have decided that that procedure poses fewer problems than attempting to teach divine theory apart from a human instrument. Which raises an interesting question.

*Just how tarnished could an instrument be before God could no longer use it to transmit His message? In what ways are fallen human beings better equipped than angels to tell the good news?*

### **3. Hosea's Message—God's Judgments Are for the Purpose of Reconciliation**

*"I will lay waste her vines and her fig trees. . . . Therefore, behold, I will allure her. . . and speak tenderly to her" (Hosea 2:12-14, RSV).*

Hosea's book is not unique in drawing lessons from word-plays, but the key words in chapter one are the names of his three children, and in that respect his book is quite unusual. Hosea's second and third child ("Not pitied," and "Not mine,") may sound strange to our ears, but their names symbolized a deteriorating marriage and a deteriorating relationship between Israel and God. But it was the name of his first son that really encapsulated the message Hosea was to give to Israel.

Hosea is instructed to name his first son "Jezreel" since God is about to punish the house of Israel (see 1:4, 5). The term actually meant "that which is scattered," and so referred here to the "scattering" effect of God's judgment. But then in 1:11, in a most unusual turn of meaning, Hosea uses the idea of "scattering" to refer to the act of sowing seed, thereby symbolizing a time of restoration for the nation. Such a contrast calls to mind one of the oft-recurring themes of the prophets—judgment and reconciliation. The prophets consistently portray God's judgments as redemptive in nature.

In our time, we rarely think of God as passing judgment on a day-to-day basis. We don't usually look upon routine setbacks as judgments from God. Nevertheless, can we learn something from the prophets' repeated idea that God has "torn, that he may heal us; he has stricken, and he will bind us up" (6:1).

*In what ways can human suffering be thought of as redemptive?*

---

---

#### 4. The Prophet Takes a Wife—a Marriage Made in Heaven?

" 'Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry and have children of harlotry . . . ' " *Hosea 1:2, RSV*).

The marriage of Hosea the prophet with Gomer the prostitute is hard to accept. Even those who say, "If God told him to do it, it must have been all right," have to swallow hard on this one. The instruction in 1:2 is so contrary to God's instruction elsewhere that few scholars accept a literalistic interpretation of the verse. One plausible explanation is to take the phrase "of harlotry," as designating her origins, her flawed ancestry, rather than her actual character at the time. In addition, God may well have been describing prophetically what the young woman would become. In any case it is more than a little likely that she was pure and chaste at the time Hosea married her. As mentioned above, the names of the children suggest a deteriorating relationship rather than one that was broken from the start.

Also, since the thrust of Hosea's message draws so heavily on the analogy between his experience and that of Israel, it is more analogous if his marriage started good and then later turned sour, than if the marriage was flawed in the very beginning. Similarly, the moral depravity of Israel described in 4:1, 2 is sharpened when seen against the backdrop of what she had been. To put it another way, the tragedy seems compounded if a murky, polluted river began as a clear mountain stream.

Finally, the key intent of the book is to highlight the incredible ability of Hosea to forgive the most despicable behavior and thereby illustrate God's great forgiveness of Israel. And that lesson of Hosea's forgiveness is much more gripping if his wife was first pure and devoted, then became loose and immoral.

*Is it "normal" for a spouse to forgive flagrant immorality? What does this say about God's forgiveness of us and about the meaning of grace?*

---

#### THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING, June 25

The overflow offering will be used to build jungle chapels in Papua New Guinea.

Plan to give a liberal offering.

---



# Heeding God's Spokespeople

by Karl Thompson

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Hosea 6:5

"Through Hosea . . . [God] sent the ten tribes message after message, urging full and complete repentance, and threatening disaster as the result of continued transgression."<sup>1</sup>

Israel's history is full of such stories about the prophets God raised up to remind His people He desired their worship. Unfortunately, most of the stories end with Israel's rejection of His invitations to return. "The messages of reproof that God gave through His prophets to backsliding, apostate Israel, did not lead them to repentance. Misrepresented, misunderstood, His messengers were as sheep in the midst of wolves. Many of them were cruelly put to death."<sup>2</sup>

Unconverted hearts have always resisted reproof. Even today it is unpopular to speak warnings against sin and compromise, but "God has ever been faithful to punish crime. He sent His prophets to warn the guilty, denounce their sins, and pronounce judgment upon them. Those who question why the word of God brings out the sins of His people in so plain a manner for scoffers to deride and saints to deplore, should consider that it was all written for their instruction, that they may avoid the evils recorded and imitate only the righteousness of those who served the Lord."<sup>3</sup>

"This presents before us God's way of dealing with His people. He sends warnings. He pleads with them to cease to do evil and learn to do well."<sup>4</sup> Hosea's experience with his wife portrays God's seeking for us in terms we can relate to; rather than viewing God as a policeman chasing us down, we see His tender concern that we choose the best way.

These warnings may "hit close to home;" they may be unpopular, but they are always to bring us back into a close relationship with God. In 1906, after bearing a "decided testimony" to a church gathering, Ellen White was deluged with questions concerning her presentation. She responded with this appeal: " 'For years you have had many evidences that the Lord has given me a work to do. These evidences could scarcely have been greater than they are. Will you brush away all these evidences as a cobweb, at the suggestion of a man's unbelief? That which makes my heart ache is the fact that many who are now perplexed and tempted are those who have had abundance of evidence and opportunity to consider and pray and understand; and yet they do not discern the nature of the sophistries that are presented to influence them to reject the warnings God has given to save them from the delusions of these last days.' "<sup>5</sup>

1. *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 279, 280.

2. Ellen G. White comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1156.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 12.

4. *SDA Bible Commentary*, loc. cit.

5. *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, p. 31.

---

Karl Thompson was a horticulture student at Andrews University at this writing.

# Responding to Failure

by Bruce Closser

## EVIDENCE

Key text:  
2 Kings 17:13

Over the years, as I have read and edited the *Collegiate Quarterly*, I have noticed that the Wednesday section of the week introduces other evidence besides, or in addition to, biblical and testimony evidence. Thinking about what I might bring to the discussion from my field, composition and the teaching of writing, I seemed to remember an article I read some time ago by Nancy Sommers, "Responding to Student Writing," that I thought might apply.

I spent a half hour scanning tables of contents of various journals and discovered that I was not quite correct. The article by Elaine O. Lees bore a similar title, "Evaluating Student Writing" (*College Composition and Communication*, volume 30, 1979, pp. 370-374). In that article, Ms. Lees categorizes the kinds of comments she makes on student papers. Responses to student writing include:

1. Correct mistakes the student has made in mechanics or misuses of content.
2. Express emotional response to something the student has said, such as boredom or excitement.
3. Describe what the student has done.
4. Suggest alternatives that the student might attempt.
5. Ask questions about what a student has written.
6. Remind the student of something he or she has been told before.
7. Assign tasks that assist the student in implementing these responses in order to improve his or her writing.

Rereading the book of Hosea, I notice that God often takes a similar approach when admonishing His people to return to a more perfect life style. Consider the following:

**Correct**—As when God pronounces in metaphorical language His intention to "take back my grain in its time, and my wine in its season," because Israel will not return to Him (Hosea 2:9, RSV).

**Emote**—As when God anticipates Israel's return, "I will heal their faithlessness; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. I will be as the dew to Israel" (14:4, 5, RSV).

**Describe**—As when God describes Israel as the land where "there is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God . . . [where] there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery; they break all bounds and murder follows murder" (4:1, 2, RSV).

**Suggest**—As when God advises Israel to "rejoice not. . . . Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the harlot, forsaking your God" (9:1).

**Question**—As when God asks mournfully, "What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah?" (6:4, RSV).

**Remind**—As when God says, "It was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold" (2:8, RSV).

---

Bruce Closser teaches composition at Andrews University.

---

**Assign**—As when God directs Hosea to marry a harlot and father children by her to dramatize Israel's unfaithfulness (Chapter 1).

One point becomes obvious to me when I juxtapose Ms. Lee's comments to her students' writing and God's response to His erring children: God leaves no avenue for improvement untried. He offers us every available option to turn from our wicked ways, holding out hope of salvation as long as possible. That gives me great comfort.

## Help Papua New Guinea Prepare for the Future



Building techniques in Papua New Guinea are changing as the church struggles to keep pace in this rapidly developing nation. Sonoma Adventist College has trained many skilled tradesmen to construct desperately needed church buildings. But the union needs our help to provide construction materials. Please remember the needs of these churches.

**Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, June 25.**  
**South Pacific Division thanks you for your help.**

# The “Right” One

by Carl Hall

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Genesis 24:2-8**

How do you “know” when you have found the “right” one? For Christians the choice is easier because we believe God has a specific plan for our lives. But even God Himself doesn’t have only “one” specific person picked out for everyone. That would make marriage an automatic process in which we have no choice. There are times, as in Hosea’s case, when God tells you the type of person who is for you, but this is the exception. God may have several people in mind who would be well suited for one of His children; but, as with salvation, the final choice is ours.

In making such a choice you must consider a number of things. Here are a few that may help:

**1. Know what to expect from your marriage and from your spouse.** Make a list of the things you want in a spouse. This list may include broad areas of interest that you enjoy, similar attitudes toward specific philosophical issues, common interests in hobbies, in music, and in the goals you each have for your life. It may even be as detailed as to say you prefer a pizza-or-popcorn fan. Be reasonable, however. Nobody is perfect. Making such a list will help you narrow the field, and will also ensure that the relationships you have aren’t just emotional flings or infatuations. You will have thought about what you want and will have a list by which to measure prospects.

**2. Become thoroughly acquainted with your prospective mate.** Talk on a wide range of topics and issues. A good indicator is whether you can kick off your shoes and be yourself around him or her.

**3. Consult with others.** Talk first with your folks, who know you best, then to your close friends and maybe with your pastor. Later, after the engagement, talk to them together with your fiancée. Although premarital counseling sounds boring and unromantic, it has been shown to reduce the divorce rate by between 3 and 5 percent.

**4. Consult God.** God is concerned about the choice you make. In fact, He is very concerned about the choice you make, because it will have an effect on your service to Him. You may have planned on being a missionary, but if your wife can’t even stand to get her hands dirty in your back-yard garden—when the niceties of a bathroom sink with warm running water are so close—then chances are she won’t work into your missionary aspirations. Listen for God’s voice and watch for His leadings. He will guide you, but remember: It’s up to you to ask.

---

Carl Hall is a B.B.A. marketing-and-management major at Andrews University.



# “What About Me?”

by Darcy Smith

When we begin to delve into the moving real-life parable played out in the lives of Hosea and Gomer we see many aspects of God's character magnified. God, through His servant Hosea, is willing to lay His reputation on the line to demonstrate His eternal forgiveness for those who will come back to Him. The great I AM doesn't seem to look at how many nose dives we've taken; but, rather, the vital point is whether we come back.

In this beautiful story I find an undeniable application for my life in 1988. Hosea not only had the privilege of accepting God's love and grace but he also played a role in getting people back on the right road to heaven. As a prophet of God, he had to speak the truth in love, even when it may have hurt or offended. I believe we are to do the same.

At first glance, the thought of my coming right out and calling people down for something that may not seem quite right in their Christian lives seems rather repulsive, especially since I'm the type who doesn't like to "ripple the waters." Filling a role such as this can be dangerous also, since I stand the chance of becoming unpopular for it.

However, according to the Bible, rebuke, if presented properly, is not necessarily distasteful. David says that rebuke is "oil on my head" (Psalm 141:5, NIV). Leviticus 19:17 offers the command to "rebuke your neighbor frankly" (NIV). Solomon adds, "Rebuke a wise man and he will love you" (Prov. 9:8, NIV). And there are many more references where these came from!

Notwithstanding the misconception that popularity and the willingness to call sin by its right name are dramatically opposed, we may see that the individual who was willing to sacrifice popularity for a higher good is the one who really cares enough. Because one person was willing to be called an "oddball," today you flip a switch to light up your world. What was "Seward's Icebox" is today a great reservoir of natural resources.

On the other hand, if someone had spoken out before the countdown began, would seven precious lives have been lost in the Challenger disaster? Consider, also, that if a family member had cared enough to get after another member for a bad habit that was "nobody's business," would the world be so full of dying alcoholics?

As with everything in the Christian life there must be a balance. Jesus knew how to rebuke the wrong, while still loving the wrongdoer. So it follows in my life. Only through the love that Jesus gives will I be able effectually to rebuke my neighbor frankly, "while loving him as myself."

## REACT

1. Can a person be *too* honest with another? What is the difference between confronting and carefronting?
2. Can God work as well with an introvert to point out other's flaws and weaknesses in a constructive way?

---

Darcy Smith is a communications major at Andrews University.

**OPINION**  
Key text:  
2 Timothy 4:2

# Me First!

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (Phil. 2:3, NIV).



# "I" Disease

by Debbie A. Francis

*Ocular Fundus*—catchy title, I think. It's interesting what you will read in the waiting room of a doctor's office.

*Ocular Fundus* is a book about the inside of the eye and the changes that happen to cause eye disease. Some of the terms used are rather thought-provoking, such as "hereditary degeneration," which usually produces marked loss of function and areas of disturbance. When one develops "myopic degeneration" the diameter of the eye is enlarged, and with "amaurotic idiocy" there is a recessive hereditary characteristic that leads to blindness.

Sounds a lot like my daughter. She has an eye disease, only I spell it with a capital *I*. The other day I was in the middle of fixing dinner. I had been working late, and I was very tired. My daughter Lisa came into the kitchen and plopped a big mess of books and clothes all over the table.

I said, "Don't put that there. We're going to eat soon."

Lisa rolled her eyes toward the ceiling and replied indignantly, "Mom, I've got a Wilderness Club meeting in five minutes. You're going to have to drive me, because I have to take all this stuff and I can't be late."

"What about dinner?" I demanded.

"Make me a sandwich, I don't have time," Lisa said as she pulled on her coat.

I looked at her in disbelief

and then at the kitchen sink. It was piled high with the day's dirty dishes she was supposed to wash after school. I tried to control my anger as I said to her, "You haven't done the dishes. I don't suppose you've cleaned your room or taken your dirty clothes to the laundry room, either! You were stomping all over the house this morning because you didn't have anything clean to wear. I'm not your maid. I'm your mother. I would appreciate a little respect, and you had better watch your mouth when you speak to me. I have important things to do too, and I won't just drop what I'm doing at your command."

Lisa gathered up her things from the table, and without much sincerity said, "I'm sorry. The meeting is only an hour long. I'll eat and do my chores as soon as I get home."

She looked like a scolded puppy as she crept out the door.

I worry about how Lisa will ever make it when she decides to get married. What will she do when she's in partnership where both parties have to give? What will she do when she has children of her own and is looked upon to take care of all their needs, usually having to put herself second to her family?

But she's only 11. She has time to grow up. Those of us who are already adults and have "I" disease are the ones who should worry.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Hosea 2:1-6**

---

Debbie A. Francis is a dietetics student at Andrews University and mother of six children.

# Intimacy or Proximity?

by Patrick B. Morrison

## LOGOS

**Theme:** There are many hazards to happy homes. Two of the more common and the most destructive in their effects upon marital peace and prosperity are selfishness and incompatibility.

The Book of Hosea illustrates God's steadfast offers of mercy even in the face of Israel's incorrigibility and the pain it causes Him in the early days of the eighth century B. C. The text describes Israel's unfaithfulness and God's legitimate response and then God's merciful entreaties and plans. (Compare Hosea 2:2-13 with 2:14-23). In order to understand the depths of God's mercy one need only to study Israel's depravity. It is no light charge to compare a God-established nation's conduct to that of an unfaithful wife who is an adulterous harlot.

What could be so wicked that a "set-apart" people would be described as so depraved? Would using God's best gifts to Israel for obeisance to a *man-made* deity qualify? Would joyful celebration in all the sensuous and lascivious rights of the fertility cults qualify? Would crediting idols of wood and stone with providing rain at seed time and harvest qualify? Would arguing fine points of theology while people right around the church are starving physically and spiritually qualify? Would apathy toward the imminent second coming of Christ qualify? Would building lavish, personal and/or even corporate structures, with funds that should be devoted to spreading the gospel qualify?

The analogy of a harlot to depict unfaithfulness is not restricted to Hosea. Better known perhaps is the reference in Revelation 17 that describes in epic apocalyptic terms issues similar to those in Hosea. God views the spiritual unfaithfulness of His people as a very serious issue. God does have hopes and real expectations of people who take His name.

Why does God use the marriage or family analogy when He wants to make a strong point about loyalty?

Remember, of all the beautiful institutions and services Seventh-day Adventist Christians enjoy, the Sabbath and marriage predate the fall. Many of the other beautiful and special services and concepts that are so special are necessary because of sin. What is the point? Marriage is one of God's chosen means of explaining His kind of love and closeness. He has much more than a casual interest in the success of marriage and family relationships.

In the home, selflessness is a good foundation to happiness. Gomer's meanderings after "lovers" (Hosea 2:7) was founded in selfishness. She had violated all that was sacred in her marriage to Hosea. He had every right to put her away—not only in light of contemporary male-favoring customs but in light of her unfaithfulness. She spurned all that he had provided for her well-being. He legally owned everything she possessed and could rightly have taken it all (Hosea 2:9). What is love's response? Read Hosea 2:14-20 and

---

Patrick B. Morrison is the chaplain at Andrews University.



---

chapter 3:1-3.

What a difficult command God laid on Hosea! In terms of today, what did he and Gomer have in common? What did they have on which to build a relationship? God's command! God's love. *Incompatibility* is a modern term unfamiliar to Hosea. Even today it is often expressed as a reason for marital breakup when *selfishness* would as readily fit.

Selfishness and incompatibility are not acceptable reasons to explain separating from God either individually or as a people. The Lord has not changed. His compassion cannot fail—it is His very nature. Whatever your excuse—God invites you to come home.

When God, through Hosea, invited Israel He wasn't calling her to her rightful place, which could have been slavery or worse (Hosea 2:16, 17). He sought oneness again. He sought intimacy, not just physical proximity. The prodigal in Luke 15 finally figured that he could be better off at home as a slave than out on his own. He would have been satisfied with a slave-master arrangement. At least he would have his life-sustaining needs supplied. He had no rights left, nor did Gomer . . . nor did Israel . . . nor do we. This fact in the gospel has never changed. God's gifts are not dependent on mankind's correct response. Mankind apart from God cannot respond correctly.

Whether it is the self-gratifying separation like Gomer's or the apathetic separation of Laodicea—this is not the issue. God's love is persistent though always on guard against forcing the will. The results of rejecting are natural and logical. All life and breath and matter are His—He is in charge. When He is finally forced to retreat and withdraw, that's it, and it's final. Conversely, redemption and all that makes it possible is very unnatural—illogical. It is supernatural. All God requires is active acknowledgement of His lordship, and He accepts us as sons and daughters (see 1 John 2:3-6, 28, 29; 3:11). What will *active* acknowledgement of God motivate you to do?

What about God's modern covenant community? What will determine success there? What will prepare the way for a glorious marriage? (Revelation 21). It is very important that Hosea 2:23, last line, be perfectly enunciated through the Holy Spirit, " 'You are my God!' " (NIV).

"And it will be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation' " (Isa. 25:9, NKJV).

# True Love

by Rilah Elmore

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Philippians 2:3

As Paul explains in the Love Chapter, you may sacrifice all of your possessions and even surrender yourself to the grasp of death, yet such honorable and cherished gestures are meaningless without love's divine motivation. When you are motivated by such a love "your prayers, your performance of duty, your benevolence, your self-denial, will not be the theme of your thought or conversation. Jesus will be magnified, self will be hidden, and Christ will appear as all in all.

"We are to give [ourselves] in sincerity . . . from pity and love to the suffering ones."<sup>1</sup>

But how should you achieve such perfect love? In the struggle to gain victory over self "You may struggle hard and long, . . . but you will fail unless you receive strength from on high."<sup>2</sup> "The divine love ruling in the heart exterminates pride and selfishness,"<sup>3</sup> and "selfish ambition, desire for supremacy, will die when Christ takes possession of the affections."<sup>4</sup> "The soul that is constantly looking unto Jesus will see His self-denying love and deep humility, and will copy His example."<sup>5</sup> "It is never convenient to take up the cross and follow in the path of self-denial."<sup>6</sup> "We can receive of heaven's light only as we are willing to be emptied of self"<sup>7</sup> and "love for self will be swallowed up in love for Christ."<sup>8</sup>

Love without holy inspiration degenerates into a shallow self-centered affection that ignores the needs of others and destroys Christ's earthly illustration. The simplicity of overcoming self-love requires that we "in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:3-5, NIV).

With the acceptance of Christ's absolute and infinite love comes the birth of a new attitude for life and respect for others. A change is noticed "because happiness will not be found in shutting yourselves up" nor by being "satisfied to pour out all your affection upon each other. Seize upon every opportunity for contributing to the happiness of those around you. Remember that true joy can be found only in unselfish service"<sup>9</sup> and "no one can practice real benevolence without self-denial."<sup>10</sup> "If the divine harmony of truth and love exists in the heart, it will shine forth in words and actions. . . . Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. Love illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire man."<sup>11</sup> "It is because selfishness exists in our hearts that temptation has power over us. But when we behold the great love of God, selfishness appears to us in its hideous and repulsive character, and we desire to have it expelled from the soul."<sup>12</sup>

1. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 80, 81.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 49.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 168.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 170.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

6. *Counsels on Health*, p. 402.

7. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 334.

8. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 179.

9. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 362.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

11. *Counsels on Health*, p. 403.

12. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 118.

---

Rilah Elmore is an aviation major at Andrews University.

# More Glory Than Gain

by Vanessa Prince

"Yet by no means think that self-interest has inspired any of my endeavors; I am free from every kind of petty vanity; only divine Art, only in this are the levers that give me strength to sacrifice the best of my life to the heavenly Muses."<sup>1</sup> In this letter to his friend Hans Georg Nägell Beethoven discovered the secret of true life—surrender of self to God and others. Yet it is not without effort that this ideal is achieved; for we all have to remove the shell of selfishness that has covered us since birth.

By contrast, we recall the life of Franz Liszt, the son of a humble Hungarian official at the court of Prince Esterházy. As a pianist he had created his own throne and expected to be worshiped. He was accustomed to moving among royalty and being treated like a king. It is said that in his piano classes after he had entered a room, all would stand and bow respectfully toward him. The ladies would kiss his hand, and with grandeur Liszt would tell them to be seated. As a performer he was an egocentric. In 1875, eleven years before his death, he gave a concert in Leipzig that was reported in the *Musical Record* in London:

"Precisely at eleven o'clock a silver head of hair and a well-known countenance moved majestically down the room, and received with Caesar-like condescension the applause of the surrounding crowd. After having remained standing long enough to allow the opera glasses a sufficient survey of his fine head, Liszt . . . began an extempore fantasia."<sup>2</sup>

In Hosea 1:2, God instructs Hosea to take an adulterous wife because the land was guilty of the vilest adultery. The people had separated from God. In the life of Liszt we also witness the results of separation—"marriage to self." Even today this human dilemma dominates our lives. As adults we are reminded of our early years in the cradle—the crying baby whose wish is answered as an anxious mother runs to the call. Solomon in Proverbs 22:6 advises us to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (NKJV). Life's experiences have trained us well—we still have not outgrown our selfishness, and our performances are witnessed before our fellow men and shamefully before God.

Born with this sin embedded in our hearts, we are helplessly trapped. Yet our heavenly Conductor anxiously waits to direct our lives toward a harmonious relationship with Him. As Christians we have a responsibility to follow the admonition of Paul in Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (NIV). With this in mind, let us not be found seeking an "encore" from our earthly audiences; instead let us seek an audience with God.

**EVIDENCE**  
Key text:  
Philippians 2:3

1. From *Beethoven, Letters, Journals and Conversations*, translated and edited by Michael Hamburger, 1960.
2. From *The Great Pianists*, by Arnold Schoenberg, 1981.

---

Vanessa Prince is a senior music major at Andrews University.

# Pitfalls? in an Adventist Home?

by Leland Krum

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**1 Corinthians**  
**13:4-8**

How can we as Seventh-day Adventist Christian families avoid the hazards of selfishness and incompatibility? Here are a few points that might help:

1. **Self-respect, a family affair.** Self-respect is very important to the existence of a happy home. If every married person daily confirmed his or her spouse, many everyday frustrations would be removed and greater happiness experienced.

2. **Communication.** The fact that many family members don't set aside time to communicate with each other is a great drawback to developing unity. Communication relieves hurt, brings closeness, and remedies many other home problems. It's really not that difficult to communicate without putting down the other person. The solution is "I statements." The "I statement" simply conveys your feelings without telling the other person what to do. "I feel \_\_\_ when you \_\_\_ because \_\_\_." This does much to clear up misunderstandings, irritations, and unclear messages.

"I statements" work best when you choose a good time (when feelings have cooled), and speak in such a way that other family members will be most likely to hear your message. You can also avoid many misunderstandings if you get your thoughts clear in your mind before you try to discuss it. Learn to listen to the other person's point of view and opinion as much as you do your own, even if you don't agree. Develop skills of sensitivity and perceptiveness. Focus all your attention on the other person and don't let other things distract you.

3. **Family council or family feud?** How you make decisions in your family will greatly determine whether your family will function as a healthy unit or be continually deadlocked by family feuding. Here are a few suggestions:

- A. Set aside time to hold family meetings—make it priority time where nothing else interferes.
- B. Select leadership—make sure everyone knows who is in charge.
- C. Outline chores and responsibilities.
- D. Provide a clearinghouse for upcoming events—let your children help plan some fun times. Demonstrate that everybody's ideas count.

Perhaps Gomer would have contributed better to the welfare of her family if she had kept these points in mind.

## REACT

1. How can I change my present home situation for the better?
2. How can I implement these ideas into my everyday life-style?

---

Leland Krum is a biology major at Andrews University.

# The Giving-in Principle

by Roger Allison

## OPINION

Key text:  
Philippians  
2:4, 5

Have you heard the one that goes "In my family I'm the head, but my wife is the neck"? Or how about "In my family I always have the last word: Yes dear!"

These two examples are typical of jokes about husband-wife relationships that we've all heard. Like similar jokes, they raise a laugh primarily because they have a certain "rightness" about them. We see in them some aspect of ourselves, our circumstances, or our beliefs; and because we can laugh at ourselves through the jokes, we understand more completely the difficulties we have in getting along with one another.

Implied in both quips is the concept of acquiescence. Husband or wife, married or single, all of us recall instances where, to contribute to another's happiness, we gave in on some point of contention. Similarly, it seems to me that one characteristic of a happy home hints at one version of the old cliché: When push comes to shove, someone has to give in.

Let me offer just one simple example from my own experience. (I can say this without vanity, because Roger is a name I use when anonymity is convenient.) In our family budget I include personal allowances for myself, my wife, and my son; this way everyone has a little money to call his or her own. When supply fails to meet demand (which is most every week) I make sure my wife and son have their allowances, even if I must go without my own. This example typifies a principle, my wife and son get their way. I wouldn't say I'm particularly virtuous in admitting this, just practical; quite simply, I want my family to be as happy as possible under any particular set of circumstances.

Though it may sound so, let me add quickly that I am not a yes man; I have principles that I do occasionally uphold when I must. But I've learned that my greatest happiness comes, first, from seeing my family and second, as many others as possible, happy; no sacrifice of my own to accomplish this purpose is (at least so far none has been) too great.

True, as a teacher applying this principle to my students, I often have my good will taken for granted. I'm often reminded of the fact by well-meaning colleagues who want to protect me from overworking myself. The realist part of me admits that others do not always care as much about my happiness as I do about theirs. But the idealist in me hopes that my example will reflect that of Christ, who sacrificed the ultimate.

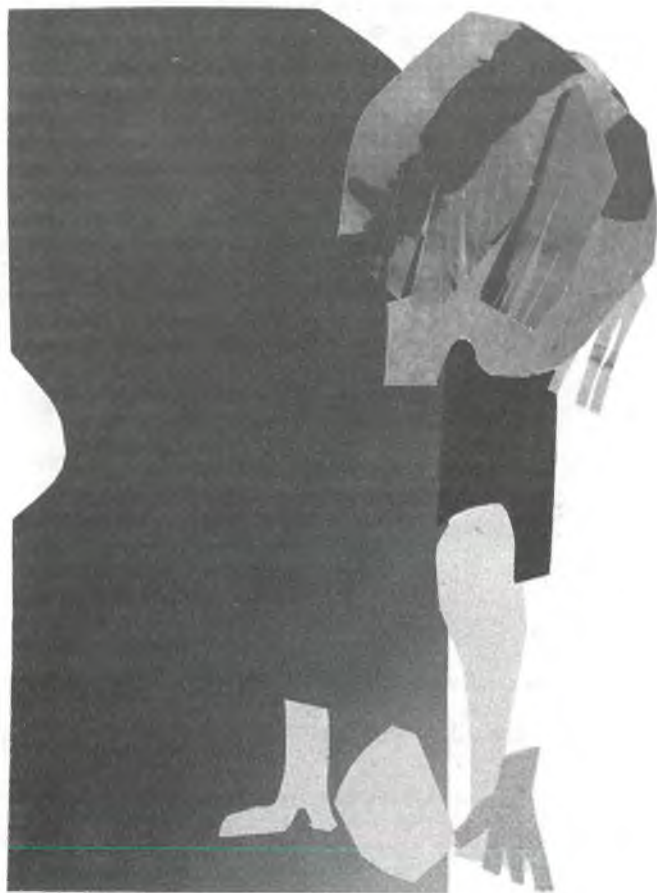
---

Roger Allison writes from Berrien Springs, Michigan.



# Love Says It All

“ ‘I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them’ ” (Hosea 14:4, NIV).



לא רחמה

# Long-Suffering Love

by Teri Potter

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Hosea 3**

The rain fell silently, running down the window like giant teardrops, and Hosea sat looking out at the night. On his right, in the darkness, the rose garden quietly soaked up the much-needed water. The wrought-iron gate that normally locked out unwanted strangers, banged loudly. To Hosea the slow methodical sounds of the gate seemed to say "Gomer . . . Gomer . . . Gomer . . . His wife, his beautiful, precious, mischievous wife. Why did he love her so? Why couldn't he have left her to her old life of fast friends and long nights where she seemed happier?"

Anyone with any sense would be thankful she was finally out of his life, but Hosea ached from the pain of his loss. She really wasn't a very good wife, she spoke without being spoken to, she hated cooking, she loved to spend his money, and she shared her affections much too freely. But she knew how to laugh. She enjoyed life. No one appreciated a pretty flower or a cascading sunset the way Gomer did. Her enormous black eyes reflected excitement. Yes, Hosea missed her . . . he missed her desperately.

"God! God . . . why? I know there's a reason why You made

me fall so incredibly in love with someone who will never love me back. What should I do? She grows restless in my calm, collected world. So she left . . . again! So she went back to her old life."

Hosea hung his head as warm tears ran down his rough, strained, haggard face. He looked out at the night, his thoughts racing ahead. No matter how much it hurt him, he still loved her. He couldn't help worrying about her out there on her own. She was so misunderstood by most people; she needed him whether she knew it or not.

"Maybe she will grow restless again. Maybe she'll always run, but it's so dangerous out there. She could be in trouble right now. She needs me. I've got to save her . . . save her from herself!"

With that Hosea ran down the dark staircase through the giant oak door, and out into the night. He was in such a hurry that he left his cloak behind. It was cold and wet, but he barely noticed it as he raced past the garden and through that wrought-iron gate in search of Gomer. The gate banged behind him!

---

Teri Potter is a pre-law student at Andrews University at this writing.

# Command to Go the Second Mile

by S. Douglas  
Waterhouse

## LOGOS

Theme: "The dominant theme of the book of Hosea is the love of God for His erring children."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 886.

### 1. Hosea's Unconditional Love for Gomer (read Hosea 1:1-8)

"The LORD said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry . . . , for the land commits great harlotry by forsaking the LORD' " Hosea 1:2, RSV).

The "woman" Gomer, whom we first encounter in Hosea 1:2, and again in 3:1, had betrayed the prophet's trust and love, causing continued domestic unhappiness. Since God is here utilizing Hosea's experience with a faithless wife as a "lesson" to illustrate His own unconditional love toward His "Bride" Israel (Jer. 2:2; Hosea 2:19, 20), it is useful to enlarge upon the comparison between Israel's marriage to Christ in the Sinai wilderness (Hosea 2:14,19) and the employment of Gomer as a "symbol" of faithless Israel in Hosea's day:

#### ISRAEL AT SINAI

Israel, of questionable character, accepts her Covenant Suzerain as husband.

God would not forsake His adulterous wife who received strangers (idols) instead of her Husband (Eze. 16:32; compare Num. 14:33; Lev. 17:7).

Though Israel, because of her "adultery," was driven to wander in the wilderness, nevertheless, her Husband did not desert her.

#### ISRAEL OF HOSEA'S DAY

Israel was in the midst of choosing whether or not her covenant husband should be Egypt, Assyria, or Aram (Syria). She didn't think of choosing God.

"My people inquire of a thing of wood. . . . They sacrifice on the tops of the mountains. . . . [And] go aside with . . . cult prostitutes" (Hosea 4:12-14, RSV).

Like Gomer, Israel of Hosea's day was in danger of being divested of her home and spiritual heritage, to be driven out into the "wilderness" (Hosea 2:3). Nevertheless, in spite of her conduct, God would restore His beloved, if she would return to her Lord (Hosea 2:15,16; 3:5).

*How does the prophet reveal that God made it difficult for Gomer, Israel, and for people in all ages to be lost?*

---

S. Douglas Waterhouse is a professor of religion at Andrews University.

---

## 2. God's Unconditional Love as Illustrated by the Theme of Marriage (read Hosea 3:1-3)

*"I will heal their disloyalty, I will love them with all my heart, for my anger has turned from them" (Hosea 14:5, Jerusalem Bible).*

Hosea's heartbreaking experience, illustrating as it does the intimate, caring love of Christ for His wayward people, is but another instance of what may be referred to in Scripture as the "marriage motif," that is, the recurring theme of our Saviour's union with His people as illustrated by marriage. For the Lord clearly declares to His people, "I am married to you" (Jer. 3:14, NKJV). "For your Maker is your husband" (Isa. 54:5, NKJV). Paul tells us that the church is the equivalent of Israel (Gal. 6:16; compare James 1:1; Rev. 7:2-8), who is betrothed as a pure virgin (2 Cor. 11:2; compare Rev. 14:4) to her Husband Christ (Eph. 5:30-32). The "husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body" (Eph. 5:23, RSV). In 1 Corinthians 6:16 we find the Old Testament text about "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24) quoted. "The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor. 6:13, RSV). Christians belong, not to themselves, but to the Lord (1 Cor. 6:19, 20; 7:23).

Those belonging to Jesus who seek the friendship of the world above the favor of God are "adulterers." And this "adultery" is succinctly defined by the apostle James: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). It is in just that sense that the woman named "Babylon" in Revelation 17 is said to be a "harlot" (Rev. 17:1, 5, RSV). She is an impure church in a state of apostasy, who has deserted her Lord for an unholy alliance with worldly powers. Even then, if a backslidden Israel should turn back again to her lawful Husband, then Christ would receive her with the fervor of first love, and would shower His loved one with spiritual gifts. "I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD" (Hosea 2:20, RSV). Here, then, is the story of Hosea, who takes back into his home a wife who is infamous for her infidelity.

*How does God, in His love and compassion, make known to Israel what He is willing to do for them? (See Hosea 10:12; 13:9, 10; 14:1-4).*

## 3. God's Unconditional Love for the Remnant (Hosea 3:4, 5)

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20, RSV).*

The presentation of the Saviour pleading with the Laodiceans to

---

---

allow Him to come into the life and heart of their church, so that He may share with her all the blessings of His love, takes on a much deeper, spiritual meaning when it is discovered that this familiar passage (Rev. 3:20) serves as a "pointer" to another context as found in the Song of Solomon 5:2. There the knocking at the door is done by the groom-to-be, outside the home of the would-be bride. Most unfortunate for her, she has been asleep and finds herself totally unprepared for her own wedding, for which she had yearned!

The message of a slumbering Laodicean church, at the verge of missing her own wedding, even though the Faithful and True Witness (Rev. 3:14 with 3:20) is at the very door of her own chamber, has a strong application for all Christians today. The northern kingdom of Israel turned down Hosea's appeal to renew their covenant wedding-bond. What a crucial turning point that turned out to be in their history. Will we continue in a Laodicean condition, remaining asleep at our crucial time of decision? God would have us become part of that remnant of Israel of God who "shall return and seek the LORD . . . in the latter days" (Hosea 3:5, RSV). "The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'" (Rev. 22:17, RSV).

*What encouraging assurance does Jesus leave for us today? (see Luke 19:10; John 3:17).*

## What Giving Means to Me

- If I give nothing,  
I cast a vote in favor of closing my church.
- If I give grudgingly,  
I shall neither find joy nor receive God's blessing.
- If I give systematically,  
I make it possible for my church to plan to advance,  
and I make it easier for myself.
- If I give sacrificially,  
I testify to the high value I place upon Christ and the  
ministry of his church to the physical and spiritual  
needs of suffering humanity.

—Thorvald Kristensen.



# God's Love for the Erring

by Wendy Munroe

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Hosea 14:4

Christians today, just as the Hebrews of old, many times reject God's light and leading. By doing so, their hearts become so hardened that the light that was once bright becomes dimmed to the point where it is not seen anymore. Ellen G. White writes, "The Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They were restless under restraint, and unwilling to receive reproof. . . .

"It is by sinful indulgence that men give Satan access to their minds, and they go from one stage of wickedness to another. The rejection of light darkens the mind and hardens the heart, so that it is easier for them to take the next step in sin and to reject still clearer light, until at last their habits of wrongdoing become fixed."<sup>1</sup>

After departing from God's light we, like the ancient Hebrews, are led deeper and deeper into sin. Each phase of sinful indulgence allows Satan to snare God's children until they are deeply corrupted. Ellen White continues: "The first departure from established forms of worship had led to the introduction of grosser forms of idolatry, until finally nearly all the inhabitants of the land had given themselves over to the alluring practices of nature worship. Forgetting their Maker, Israel 'deeply corrupted themselves.' Hosea 9:9."<sup>2</sup>

God did not forget about Israel when they rejected His light. Instead, He sent them warnings concerning what they were doing. God calls us back to Him and offers us His love when we backslide. Ellen White tells us that "The prophets continued to protest against these evils and to plead for rightdoing. . . .

"The transgressors were given many opportunities to repent. In their hour of deepest apostasy and greatest need, God's message to them was one of forgiveness and hope. . . .

"To those who had lost sight of the plan of the ages for the deliverance of sinners ensnared by the power of Satan, the Lord offered restoration and peace. 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely,' He declared: 'for mine anger is turned away from him.' "<sup>3</sup>

"From generation to generation the Lord had borne with His wayward children, and even now, in the face of defiant rebellion, He still longed to reveal Himself to them as willing to save."<sup>4</sup>

God watches anxiously for us to accept His offer of forgiveness. He wants every soul to return to Him and will wait "with a more tender compassion than that which moves the heart of an earthly parent to forgive a wayward, suffering son."<sup>5</sup> For this event to happen, "He cries after the wanderer, 'Return unto me, and I will return unto you.' Malachi 3:7. But if the erring one persistently refuses to heed the voice that calls him with pitying, tender love, he will at last be left in darkness."<sup>6</sup>

---

Wendy Munroe is a nursing student at Andrews University.

---

The patience of God is as great for us as it was for the Hebrews. "God may bear long while the account goes on, and calls to repentance and offers of pardon may be given; yet a time will come when the account will be full; when the soul's decision has been made; when by his own choice man's destiny has been fixed."<sup>7</sup>

"The erring can be restored in no other way than in the spirit of meekness, gentleness, and tender love."<sup>8</sup>

### REACT

Why do you think that some erring Christians, find it difficult to accept God's offers of love and forgiveness?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 404.
2. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 282.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 283.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
5. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 165.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 613.

# Hosea's Gift

by Bill Nickless

Poor Hosea! He has won himself a beautiful wife, but now she has left him for other men. But what does he do? He spends his fifteen pieces of silver and an homer and a half of barley to get her back. Let's examine three possible meanings for this gift:

First, Gomer may have fallen into a life of slavery or prostitution, and Hosea bought back her freedom. Thirty pieces of silver was about the price of a female servant or slave, and the homer and a half of barley made up the difference.<sup>1</sup> In the ancient Mosaic law, moreover, barley was used in the test for marital infidelity (see Num. 5:11-31). Barley was considered food for animals, so Hosea's gift may have symbolized that she was "like horse and mule which have no understanding."<sup>2</sup> Thus the barley grain may have symbolized the low state to which Gomer had fallen before Hosea redeemed her.

Second, Hosea may have been giving her a gift, as one giving a price or dowry for a bride. Since Hosea was probably a poor farmer by trade, this would be quite a substantial gift.<sup>3</sup> This could have been an attempt by Hosea to regain his wife's affections, or a statement that he wanted to reaffirm his marriage vows with her.

A third possibility seems more probable. His gift may have specified a time of moral purification for Gomer, where she would be separated from both her former associates and her husband, Hosea.<sup>4</sup> (see Deut. 21:13). During this time Hosea was providing for Gomer's basic needs, something that her former associates really didn't care about (see Hosea 2:7), while looking forward to the time when they could be together again as man and wife.<sup>5</sup>

Hosea had every right not only to divorce Gomer but to demand her execution for adultery. Instead, he took it upon himself to bring her back again as his wife. His love for his wife was not one of quick passion, a "me first" attitude. Rather, she was so important to him that he didn't care how much it cost or how much trouble it was to get her back.

I believe all three interpretations can teach us a lesson. First, as Hosea bought back Gomer, God buys us back from sin when we are not deserving. Second, He has given us a gift—the gift of salvation—in order to show His true affection toward us. Finally, He is waiting for the time when we are ready to go home and live with Him again.

## EVIDENCE

**Key text:**  
**Hosea 3:2**

1. Hans Walter Wolff, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Hosea* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 61.

2. E. B. Pusey, *The Minor Prophets—A Commentary Explanatory and Practical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953), pp. 42, 43.

3. Wolff, *op. cit.*

4. Pusey, *op. cit.*

5. William Rainey Harper, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 219.

---

Bill Nickless is a computer science major at Andrews University.

# To Love the Unlovable

by Julie Welsh

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 14:4**

When was the last time someone laughed when they saw you? Or screamed when they looked at your face? Or maybe even refused to sit next to you because your stench made them want to gag? Never?

If you were John Merrick you would have answered, "Just today" or maybe even "a few hours ago." Better known as the Elephant Man, Merrick suffered from a disease that grotesquely deformed him from birth. His mother couldn't stand the sight of him, so she gave him to a street side show, which charged twenty-five cents per person to gawk at the "Elephant Man."

Seeing the sign one day, Dr. Treves, a renowned surgeon and teacher, stopped to look at the "Elephant Man." Treves couldn't believe the inhuman way Merrick was treated, so he took Merrick away to his hospital and began researching him. Treves soon found that Merrick was a sensitive, intelligent man. Given a Bible, Merrick memorized whole passages.

What Merrick ached for most in his life was a woman's love. Treves brought in nurses to care for Merrick and tried to warn them of the sight they would have to get used to, but every time a woman went in to see Merrick, she would scream and run out. Treves found a Mrs. Kendall, who, being an actress, was able to hide her disgust. Mrs. Kendall helped care for Merrick and gradually became close friends with him. She was the only woman who really ever touched Merrick.

It is love like that of Doctor Treves and Mrs. Kendall on which this lesson is based. It's a love that is of the inside, not of the outside. It's love equal for the Christian and the non-Christian. Look at your life today. Are you turning away people because of their outward appearance or their reputation? How can you as a Christian learn to love unconditionally?

**1. Take time to look for the good in others.** Everyone has something good about them. It's harder to dislike them when you have taken the time to discover something good about them.

**2. Recognize our own flaws.** All of us have unlovable aspects about us. It's easier to accept the faults of others when we know we have our own sometimes equally annoying habits.

**3. Remember that Christ died for us all.** Even the worst of us was worth the sacrifice of God's Son. Whatever we may feel about a person, when we recognize this fact it's easier to see that person as valuable.

In Hosea 1:1-8 we find a Biblical example of this love. Hosea knew that Gomer was adulterous, but he loved through that sin and took her back time after time.

Look at our text for this week. God loves us with an even greater unconditional love than Doctor Treves and Mrs. Kendall had for John Merrick, or Hosea had for Gomer.

---

**Julie Welsh is a medical technology student at Andrews University.**

---

# The Love We Need

by Julius Nam

The following passage appeared in the *Lutheran Companion* many years ago:

"When Helen Keller was yet shut off from communication with other people by the impenetrable curtain of blindness and deafness, she conceived the existence of God. When at last her teacher had succeeded in getting messages to her, Bishop Phillips Brooks was asked to attempt to transpose to her fingers from his lips the message of God's love. The girl placed her fingertips on his lips, and he talked in simple language about God and His revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. The features of Helen Keller began to work, as her body grew tense and rigid. Suddenly she could stand it no longer, and she cried out: 'I knew Him! I knew Him! I don't know His name, but I knew Him.' "

It is only when we know a person that we love that person. Someone said that everyone has a God-shaped empty place in his heart, which only God can fill. God created in us a thirst for His existence and gave us the ability to reflect His love. In the beginning our holiness never "ran out," because we were always in touch with God. He dwelt in us, and we dwelt in Him. We knew and loved Him as He knew and loved us. We were like Him.

It was only when sin came between us and God that our knowledge of Him decreased and our love for Him deteriorated. Knowing and loving Him did not come naturally to us anymore. We had to make efforts to understand Him. To love Him we had to sacrifice greatly. Our lives no longer resembled His.

Consequently, we no longer love and know Him as we ought to. The absence of God's presence in us causes turmoil in our hearts. We have tried to fill that God-shaped vacuum with things of this world, but they do not fit in as well. We try philosophy, but it lacks life. Science gives answers to "how to's" but not to "why's." Entertainment may provide joy and imagination, but it lacks depth. Such worldly "pleasures" have covered up the spaces considerably, yet we constantly feel the emptiness in our minds. We continually feel unloved and ignorant. Love has become part of our daily lives. But we do not find love. We speak of things we know and love, but genuine love and true knowledge we do not possess. We look everywhere but to God.

Love is the essence of God, and God's knowledge encompasses all human understanding. Yet all we, like Gomer, have gone astray. Let us fill our God-shaped space with the One who can fill it. It is sad that only few of us have experienced such fullness of joy. We all know who God is and what kind of love He gives, but let us not stop there. Let us look up and *receive* His love and *gain* His understanding. It is when we know in such a fashion that we love God.

**OPINION**  
Key text:  
John 15:7-10

---

Julius Nam is a freshman theology major at Andrews University.



# Marriage: Contract or Commitment

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love"  
(Eph. 4:2, NIV).



# Confessions of the Unmarried

by Theodore A. Hessel

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Jeremiah 31:1**

Wife? No thanks, I'm celibate. It was a common answer to a common question during one of the varied phases of my life. I just had no use for marriage. Now that I have existed for a full twenty-three years, marriage doesn't seem like such a terrible idea anymore. Maybe I'm just mellowing in my old age or perhaps reverting back to a notion I latched onto in my childhood.

I can still remember the day back in sixth grade when I told a group of friends that I was getting married. They burst into laughter and wanted to know "to whom?" Now, I was simply stating a fact that I *knew* would transpire in later years. I had always accepted marriage as the inevitable and, therefore, thought nothing of expressing the idea. My parents had gotten married, and my grandparents before them. Surely it would be my fate, as well. Or would it?

College came along, and the pendulum swung the other way. I wasn't so sure anymore about this business of matrimony. It was starting to look like a lot of responsibility. But by then it was too late, I was a marked man. Now, *my friends* were the ones telling me I was going to get married. "Oh, sure you are,

Ted. You're the marrying type." Well, no one was going to make *me* walk down any aisle. It was then I announced I was celibate, and I heard laughter for the second time.

Well, my friends have moved on, and the laughter has subsided. My mind has begun to dwell seriously on the subject of marriage. Sometimes the idea of a life companion can be quite appealing. But today's divorce statistics have a way of reminding me that romance is not the only ingredient needed in this recipe of wedlock. To make everything come together and *stay* together takes more than a marriage license and mere determination. I think the Inventor of marriage had something else in mind.

God has many ideas for the happiness of a life partnership. The love relationship He had with His chosen people, Israel, was often compared to a marriage. To investigate God's part in this relationship might give us some insight into how a marriage should be lived. Knowing His plan could make the responsibility seem not quite as big and the joys and satisfaction more worth the effort. Who knows? Maybe someday God will tell me I'm the "marrying type."

---

Theodore A. Hessel is a biology major at Andrews University.

# Marriage: Contract or Commitment?

by Patrick B. Morrision

## LOGOS

Theme: Getting married is easy. It's the living together that's hard.

Heaven's efforts to devise ways to help fallen mankind to understand love have often been frustrated by people's distortion of God's best gifts. The beautiful gift of marriage predated the "Fall" and beautifully illustrates God's intended relationship with His people. The analogy of Ephesians 5—refers to Jesus' total sacrifice for His bride and to her submission to Him—and beautifully represents His willingness to redeem from sin. But even this reference in all its beauty and compassion is only a shadow of God's anxiety that His people get along with Him and one another.

The human tragedy in Hosea and God's efforts to redeem Israel are a poignant prophecy of present-day God-human and person-to-person relationships. What is God's design for His people now? What is His design for marriage and the home? What does He have in mind for His last-days church?

As in Hosea's experience, many marriage relations today are problematic. The happy home is the rare one, and commitment and loyalty are nice words reserved for the exceptional marriage. There are strong indications that getting married is not too difficult, but being married is hard work that less than half who marry find satisfying for life.

Similarly, a one-time commitment to Christ may be the experience of many; but the willingness to live consistently in Christ appears to be the experience of the few

### 1. Bond of Peace

*"Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3, NKJV).*

What is this unity that is bound together by peace? In the context it appears that this peace is a choice to love, and this love manifests humility and patience. Through the Holy Spirit's empowering the Christian there is a promising hope for marital peace and neighborly love in his or her relationships. Human relationships are enhanced by proper attention to heavenly relationships (see Deut. 10:12, 13; Matt. 6:33).

*Why do you think our personal, family, and community happiness depends to a large extent on our relationship with God? How does society in general view the qualities listed in Ephesians 4:2? How do you feel about them? Of these qualities, which describes you best? Worst? How could you capitalize on your strengths? How could you strengthen weak areas? What is God's part and what is your part in making improvements?*

---

Patrick B. Morrision is the campus chaplain at Andrews University.

---

## **2. Qualities That Make an Eternal Bond—Love or Lovingkindness (read Hosea 2:19, 20)**

*"Let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:7, 8, NKJV).*

Hosea loved God—it was evident in his unquestioning responses to God's requests concerning Gomer. In fact, Hosea illustrates what present-day society and most scholarship deem impossible—He loved on demand. For Hosea, love was a choice (see Hosea 3:1). What is more, he didn't just go through the motions, he included emotion (see Hosea 2:14). Hosea also exhibited the kind of love espoused in Ephesians 5:28.

*Is love an action or a feeling? Why? What does this tell you about love? When did you come to accept the fact that God loved you no matter how bad you'd been? How did this understanding change you? How has it helped you to love others?*

## **3. Qualities That Make an Eternal Bond—Loyalty**

Hosea persisted when his loyalty went unrewarded. Further evidence of God's supreme loyalty is found all through Hosea, chapters 1-3.

## **4. Qualities that Make an Eternal Bond—Forgiveness**

Hosea 2:2 is God's plea for His people to seek forgiveness for their waywardness. Israel had reached a low ebb morally and spiritually. The concept of forgiveness enunciated in the Lord's Prayer, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," should be part of the Christians lifestyle. Civil suits proliferate among those in the church as if there were no Biblical injunctions against such actions. Is Biblical morality and forgiveness outmoded?

*In our relationship with God/spouse/friends/associates, etc. is there ever a situation where we ourselves do not need forgiveness? Is there ever a situation where we do not need to forgive? What does this say to us about forgiveness?*

## **5. Qualities That Make an Eternal Bond—Forbearance**

*"Love suffers long and is kind" (1 Cor. 13:4, NKJV).*

God's forbearance toward Israel paralleled Hosea's toward Gomer and is worthy of emulation. With all the current emphasis on individual rights, forbearance needs emphasis within Christianity.

---

*When have you been hurt in a love relationship? What went wrong? How was the love in that relationship different from Hosea's love for Gomer and/or God's love for us?*

**6. Qualities That Make an Eternal Bond—Overlooking Faults**

*"The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and it is to his glory to overlook a transgression" (Prov. 19:11, NKJV).*

Where is the balance here? In every successful human relationship people either have mastered this concept or have moved one step closer to not even recognizing faults in loved ones. Is there a dangerous extreme possible here or does Hosea illustrate that we seldom go far enough in our compassionate attempts to overlook faults?

Hosea's account illustrates God's love for His people in spite of their infidelity. It further illustrates God's intent for His people in all human relationships including marriage. Peaceful unity is possible when, in Christ, people choose to love.

*Mary and John met in college and decided to marry after their junior year. Mary agreed to work until John earned his degree, but an unexpected pregnancy spoiled the plan. Mary wants John to sell his turbocharged Corvette and move in with her folks until he gets his degree; John refuses. The honeymoon is over. All they do is squabble, and a divorce seems imminent. They come to you for help. What could you tell them?*



# No Expiration Date

by Edward Pelto

Credit cards, groceries, limited warranties, driver's licenses, and health-club memberships all have something in common. Somewhere in small print is an expiration date. Often the words read "Sell before (month/date/year)." Things deteriorate quickly. We are products of the disposable-razor age. If something lasts too long we become bored with it.

Let us examine what Ellen White writes concerning the longevity of marriage, then react to it in view of the social ethic we see pervading society today: "Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church."<sup>1</sup>

"Though difficulties, perplexities, and discouragements may arise, let neither husband nor wife harbor the thought that their union is a mistake or a disappointment. Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. In every way encourage each other in fighting the battles of life. Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship, the love that binds the heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven."<sup>2</sup>

"Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny. Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. Marriage affects the after life both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve."<sup>3</sup>

"Men and women can reach God's ideal for them if they will take Christ as their helper. What human wisdom cannot do, His grace will accomplish for those who give themselves to Him in loving trust. His providence can unite hearts in bonds that are of heavenly origin. Love will not be a mere exchange of soft and flattering words. The loom of heaven weaves with warp and woof finer, yet more firm, than can be woven by the looms of earth. The result is not a tissue fabric, but a texture that will bear wear and test and trial. Heart will be bound to heart in the golden bonds of a love that is enduring."<sup>4</sup>

## REACT

What does Ellen White say concerning the longevity of marriage? Is that still relevant today?

How long do the effects of a good or bad marriage last? Why? What does that say to prospective spouses and married couples?

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Matthew 5:32

1. *The Adventist Home*, p. 95.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
3. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 359.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 362.

---

Edward Pelto is a junior education major at Andrews University.

# For Better or Worse

by Joy K. Pelto

**EVIDENCE**  
Key text: "Love  
is patient, love  
is kind" (1 Cor.  
13:4, NIV).

Just as God took His commitment to Israel seriously, so should a husband and wife take their commitments to each other seriously. If there is one thing we can learn from the life of Hosea, it is the meaning of the phrase "for better or for worse."

In the beginning, God created a perfect and sinless world occupied by humans. From this beginning mankind has doubted God's interest in his well-being. When Adam and Eve were confronted with Satan's temptation they lost confidence in God and broke His law. "Satan represented to the holy pair that they would be gainers by breaking the law of God."<sup>1</sup>

When God discovered their transgression He realized that punishment was necessary. But God didn't give up on them. He gave them a way out. God always provides a way out (see 1 Cor. 10:13). He gave them the promise of a Redeemer, and this promise was always present.

After Abraham was chosen to be the father of a great nation he lost faith in God more than once. He didn't trust Him to give the promised seed. So much so that he took it into his own hands to provide for himself an heir. But God didn't give up on him either. The promised heir came along, and the servant girl's son became a great nation as God had promised her.

In the days of Hosea "the Israelites had intermingled and intermarried with the pagan Canaanites and had compromised their religious practices."<sup>2</sup> Once again God's people lost faith in Him.

Throughout the history of the existence of Israel, God had been faithful in giving them many opportunities to repent of their ways, thus upholding His end of the commitment to His people. God gave them an opportunity to listen to Hosea and repent of their sins.

In order for Hosea to understand fully what God was going through, He told Hosea to marry a harlot, and Gomer was chosen.

Gomer left Hosea for her adulterous ways many times, but Hosea, like God, never gave up on her. "Gomer was a victim of her environment and became a slave to it. Hosea remained true to his God and his convictions and saved his wife from her enslavement."<sup>3</sup>

When a commitment is formed, as in marriage, it should be a lifetime commitment. As God committed Himself to Israel and Hosea committed himself to Gomer, so should a husband and wife commit themselves to each other.

Even when one partner fails, the commitment should hold the other to him/her. Hosea could have given up on Gomer. God could have given up on Israel or humanity. But He is committed to us in spite of ourselves. We should be committed to Him and to our spouses for better or for worse.

## REACT

What should a husband and wife be willing to go through to keep their commitments to each other?

---

Joy K. Pelto is a junior English major at Andrews University.

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 55.

2. Daniel R. Seagren, *Couples in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), p. 107.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

# When God Says "I Do"

by Steve Yeagley

"What's love got to do with it?" Tina Turner rasped to her top-forty listeners. "Who needs a heart, when a heart can be broken?"

Tina's song is the theme of thousands of broken and bitter lives. It's the mad melody of a generation seeking physical intimacy at an emotional distance—closeness without commitment. It's the desperate, doleful dirge of a world that's dying for love but living for itself.

Today's marriages are caught up in the music. Bonds of commitment are being weakened and dissolved in a "me-centered" philosophy of marriage. Wedlock is justified as the union of two partners seeking mutual self-gratification—an end seldom realized. Commitments are made with the hope that they will fill some loveless void. But one empty cup is stacked inside another.

As marriage fails, fear and pessimism grow. "I'm never getting married" is the comment frequently made. "I don't want a divorce." Even when marriage is ventured, little may exist to properly guide a young couple. A misinformed media and poor parental examples leave wide margins for error in relationship-building.

There is a desperate need for positive models of matrimony. As these diminish in the earthly realm, it is increasingly important that we look to the heavenly for guidance. Christ's commitment is clear and unwavering. "I will betroth you to me forever," He says, "I will betroth you in faithfulness" (Hosea 2:19a, 20a, NIV). The marriage metaphor is more than incidental. When God says, "I do," it not only helps us comprehend His relationship to us, it provides us with principles for human relationships, as well.

**1. Love requires closeness.** Love and intimacy are bound inseparably in the incarnation and ministry of Christ. His love brought Him to be with us physically and emotionally. We cannot love without coming close. Neither can there be short-cut emotional intimacy without bypassing love.

**2. Closeness requires commitment.** God's intimacy with us grows out of a commitment of "faithfulness" and "forever" (Hosea 2:19, 20). God intends that the intimacy of marriage take place in this context, also.

**3. Commitment requires dying.** Christ's commitment was costly. In the end-time wedding ceremony that unites Christ and His kingdom, it is a "Lamb that was slain" who comes to meet His bride (Rev. 19:6-8). God's great "I do" rings true all the way to the "It is finished" of the cross (see Phil. 2:8). This carries us far above tentative, shallow or romanticized notions of marriage. It speaks to a depth of commitment sorely needed today.

**4. Dying requires "other-directedness."** Christ's death was the culmination of a daily "dying" to self-motives in a life of service to others. We are plainly admonished to follow His example (Phil. 2:3-5). Probably the most significant "death" in day-to-day married life is

## HOW TO

Key text:  
Phil. 2:1-11

---

Steve Yeagley is a graduate student at Andrews Theological Seminary.

---

that of one's own selfish expectations of the other. Acceptance and respect are key words. In a healthy relationship, this "other-directedness" will be mutual.

5. "Other-directedness" brings victory. Christ's love is triumphant (Phil. 2:9-11)! Couples committed to its principles and power never need face the defeat of divorce. Christians can be optimistic about love, confident in their commitments, and joyous in the blessings of true companionship.

## Help Papua New Guinea Finish the Work



RUSSELL GIBBS

Mission in Papua New Guinea has come full circle since Seventh-day Adventist missionaries opened the work along the coast in 1908. Fully trained national pastors and doctors are leading out in spiritual life and health-care throughout the Pacific. "It all began with the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering," church members say. But they still cannot do it on their own. They need our help again this Thirteenth Sabbath to build jungle chapels throughout their union.

**Thirteenth Sabbath offering, June 25.**

**South Pacific division thanks you.**

# Commitment to the Commitment

by Deborah Bennett

A friend of mine once told me that his grandfather liked to say that "marriage is the end of trouble—the front end!" If living together is so all-fired difficult, why is that something the majority of us plan on doing someday, or are doing now? Why do we want to place ourselves in positions that require countless books, articles, tapes, sermons, classes, and even a lesson in the *Collegiate Quarterly* devoted to how to forgive, being patient with, kind to, and loving toward our spouses? After all, being single isn't bad! Stacked up against all the work marriage seems to entail, it looks pretty good.

Researchers today are discovering what God has known since Day Six when He said, "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18, NIV). James J. Lynch in his book *The Broken Heart*, states that "U.S. mortality rates for all causes of death . . . are consistently higher for divorced, single, and widowed individuals of both sexes and all races. Some of the increased death rates in unmarried individuals are astounding, rising as high as ten times the rates for married individuals of comparable ages."<sup>1</sup>

"Human relationships *do* matter. . . . The fact is that . . . the lack of human companionship . . . and chronic human loneliness are significant contributors to premature death."<sup>2</sup>

O. K. Well, that's reason enough for me! But the truth is that the desire to love and be loved has been around long before these statistics were, and I believe it is a desire placed within us by a God who understands best the joys of love.

How then do we resolve the fact that loving someone isn't always that easy? Why is it that someone we love has the ability to irritate us as no one else can? I believe the answer can be found in our key text, where we are told to "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (NIV). When we find ourselves in conflict with that loved one, often that conflict assumes major proportions out of a desire to defend our stand. The goal becomes one of proving our particular point or stance instead of "keeping the unity."

I'm not suggesting that we strive never to disagree. How boring! But disagreement can occur within the context of a strong commitment to unity. If that unity is the goal, then I believe my approach to an issue on which I feel at odds with you will be different from my approach when my goal is to prove you wrong and me right.

I took a marriage class in college, and the textbook stated that the single most important factor in marriage stability is the presence of a strong commitment to the preservation of the marriage. It's not marrying the "right" person, it's not agreeing on every issue, or coming from the same background, or equality in education, age, or income. It is commitment, through the Holy Spirit, to a choice. A commitment to the commitment.

## OPINION

Key text:  
Ephesians  
4:2, 3

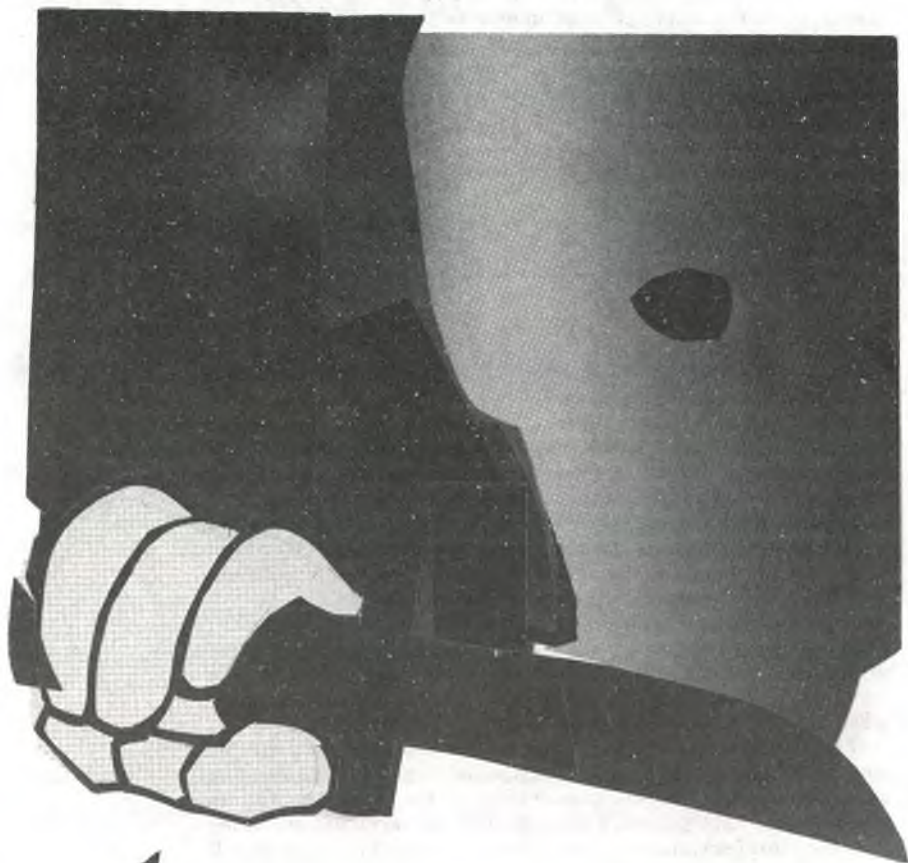
1. James J. Lynch, *The Broken Heart* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1979), p. 38.  
2. *Ibid.*, Introduction.

Deborah Bennett is a health psychology major at Andrews University.



# “Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God”

“ ‘And it will be: Like people, like priests. I will punish both of them for their ways and repay them for their deeds’ ” (Hosea 4:9, NIV).



יְזַרְזֵר אֱלֹהִים

# Anger in the Court

by Janice Watson

## Scene II

"Young lady, don't let me ever see you in this court again!"

"Sir, your actions were not only ill-advised and careless; they were dangerous and downright stupid!"

The edge of the hard wooden bench cut into my calves as I sat waiting for my turn. The sentences fell like large cannonballs from the man leaning forward in his seat high above us lesser mortals in the courtroom.

Inside I quivered, and that wet, shivery feeling returned to my stomach. "Was I wrong? Instead of being innocent, was I too guilty of negligence or downright stupidity? What would his verdict be to me?" As the morning progressed the judge's face seemed to grow harder, his voice sterner, and the verdicts stricter. I stood shaking as the bailiff called my name. The monotone recital of my alleged misdeeds seemed endless, and I left the courtroom with the judge's indictment echoing in my mind.

"You should be glad you had

Judge Mung," the woman behind the counter whispered as she accepted my check in payment for my fine. "Glad!" I stuttered. "He's a bitter, angry old man and the defendants are paying the price."

"Yes," she agreed. "He becomes very angry. That's because he cares."

As I walked from the courthouse to my car it began to rain.

## Scene I

Standing in the rain  
We listened  
(We three from the north)  
To the words lashing  
from the lips of the prophet  
Cold, cutting, crucially  
correct,  
They whirled with the wind.  
". . . a charge . . . you . . .  
no love, no faithfulness . . .  
murder, adultery, prostitu-  
tion . . .  
I—will—punish . . .  
a people . . . come to ruin!"

And the rain ran warm  
down our cheerless cheeks  
And we understood.  
God was angry!  
And we were glad.

## INTRO- DUCTION

Scripture:  
Hosea 4:1—  
5:15; 6:4—7:16.

---

Janice Watson directs the academic skills center and teaches classes at Andrews University.

# Decision Time

by David G. Rand

## LOGOS

**Theme:** As God's representative, Hosea presents a strong and specific indictment of sins against Israel, calling them to repent and return to God.

### 1. You, They, Are Me (read Hosea 4:1-19)

*"Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel" (4:1, NKJV).*

"It is human to stand with the crowd. It is divine to stand alone."

Like the automatic transmission, the human mind shifts to meet the need whatever the situation. We scream and claw for individuality and the freedom for self-expression when the benefits are in our favor. When the rent is due, when the chickens come home to roost, when it is time for the buck to stop, then "I" becomes "you," and "they." We seek ways to get lost in the crowd. We use the masses to cover our tracks. They are doing it, everyone's doing what I want to do, which, in the crowd mentality mode, means it must be acceptable.

While God uses all-inclusive statements relating to our salvation, "Who desires *all* men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4, NKJV); "Look to Me, and be saved, *all* you ends of the earth!" (Isa. 45:22, NKJV), He also makes it crystal clear that entrance into His kingdom is solely an individual matter: "Each of us shall give account of *himself* to God" (Rom. 14:12, NKJV): "My reward is with Me, to give to *every one* according to *his* work" (Rev. 22:12, NKJV). Hosea's "you," and "they," of necessity must become "me." I can never fully appreciate the warning until it becomes a personal matter between God and me. The "you," and "they," are "me."

Those five indictments of Hosea 4:2 leveled against God's people some 2,700 years ago must not be passed off as musty with age and outdated, but must be seen as fresh as the evening news and as personal as if it happened to me today. Mark, chapter 14, records Christ's exposure of His betrayer and the response of the disciples—a response that also should be mine. "IS IT I?" Am I guilty of Hosea's indictments?

Is my profession of Christianity true and genuine? The Christian always stands out among non-Christians, and they know when his profession is no more than just a profession. God seeks through me to be more clearly seen and understood. Am I a negative or a positive influence in the lives of others for Christ? Our age has fine tuned the masters of small print, double standards, and smooth talk. Does this approach characterize my life-style, or is Christian integrity my guiding principle? Expediency, circumstances do not govern my actions as much as What does God require? God hates lying, but how much lying is cloaked in Christian garb? Before people in general have I sworn against God by not rightly representing Him, and in particular have I in personal dealings lied by breaking the spirit of interpersonal relationships as defined by the Lord?

---

David G. Rand is a chaplain at Andrews University.

---

Hosea continues to stab at my being, by pointing out that killing is more than taking someone's physical life. No action is action. Am I content to hoard the gospel and allow others to starve to death spiritually? Is there written by my name "character assassination"? Whose spirit has been crushed to death from my lack of caring as I passed by insensitive to their need which I could have readily supplied? In my headlong flight to care for number one, have I compounded the sin of killing with stealing? Misuse of God's time and talents is theft from Him and from my fellow man in that he, too, is defrauded of the benefits of what God has given to me. Stealing has become a two-edged sword, for it takes away from God the joy of seeing others blessed through me, and it deprives others of that which is rightfully theirs.

Finally Hosea touches the depths of separation and selfishness, spiritual adultery. First Corinthians 6:16-18 places sexual relationships in juxtaposition with oneness. The two become one. Have I become one with Satan? If there has been no illicit sexual contact, then have I as wife or husband abused and/or misused my mate sexually? Has my mind been given free rein in contemplating pictures or persons, to the point of lust? Trying to serve God and self simultaneously is spiritual adultery. God accepts nothing short of total allegiance.

Hosea warns God's people of the sure results of their actions, and in this warning is a demonstration of God's love. Judgment is sure, therefore change your ways because forgiveness is offered freely. The "you," and "they," are "me." It will not be "you" or "they" in the fires of destruction or in the eternal bliss of delights, it will be ME. I cast the decisive vote.

*In what ways does your life-style accurately describe your theology? Who determines your life-style? The crowd? You? God?*

## **2. Privilege Means Responsibility (read Hosea 5:1-15)**

*"Hear this, O priests! Take heed, O house of Israel! Give ear, O house of the king' " (5:1, NKJV).*

Juvenal observes, "Examples of vicious courses, practiced in a domestic circle, corrupt more readily and more deeply, when we behold them in persons of authority."<sup>2</sup> Priests, rulers by example have led the nation on a toboggan ride of debauchery and dissipation, when it should have been a steady advancement of a nation of people becoming more like their God. Leadership set in motion a malevolent cycle that pitted brother against brother, that led the nation to call upon heathen empires for protection and tragically as the result of their stubbornness to be left alone by God. While Hosea addresses specific leaders, one cannot be wrong in concluding that his words are directed at anyone whose actions lead another into disobedience. Consider the following commentary, "It is to the shame of men and women of intelligence that they

---

have no higher standard than that of imperfect human beings. The course of those around them, however imperfect, is considered by some a sufficient excuse for them to follow in the same path. Many will be swayed by the influence of some leading brother. If he departs from the counsel of God his example is at once gladly seized by the unconsecrated, who now feel that they are free from restraint.”<sup>3</sup>

Inspiration never leaves loopholes. Thus Hosea indicts the nation, which includes its leaders, then singles out the leaders by naming certain offices. However no one could say because I held no office I am excluded. Again we see the importance of the individual in the indictment and redemptive process. In either or both cases God first relates to the individual.

With privilege comes responsibility. The privilege of leadership, whether given or taken or exercised simply by place and time, bears with it responsibility. Think what a difference the principle of Romans 14:21, NKJV, “It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do *anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak” would have made in Hosea’s day!

Enumerate the differences such a standard, if followed today, would make.

Leaders by example set in motion a process that led the people from God, which led the nation to dishonor interpersonal relationships, thus inspiring dependence on other nations for protection. Their downward course took them farther from God, so that He could do nothing to restore them until they repented and desired restoration. Through the seeming impenetrable gloom of Israel’s rebellion shines the specific power of God, for He does not destroy, but waits for repentance, that He might restore.

*In what ways do you see that each one of us is a leader? How would Hosea’s assessment of leaders apply to you today?*

### **3. The Ultimate Redemptive Question (read Hosea 6:14-16)**

*“O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?” (6:4, NKJV).*

The number seven is often symbolic of completeness, and Hosea uses seven metaphors to describe Israel’s holistic condition. Like morning mist, like Adam, like bands of robbers, like an oven, like a cake unturned, like a silly dove, like a loose bow. Could Israel’s departure from God, her descent into the depths of degradation, be more completely described? One can only answer No! when the metaphors are seen in the light of what God has done for Israel. Nowhere is there a reliable record of God’s being accused of unfulfilled promises to His people, and yet people are consistently seen as

---



---

reneging on this commitment to the Lord. Thus God in great redemptive love cries, "WHAT SHALL I DO TO YOU?"

The ultimate redemptive question is both a question and an answer. There is nothing more that God can do for Israel, but Israel can do something for herself. " 'Break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.' " (Dan. 4:27, NKJV). As with ancient Israel so it is with modern Israel, we have come to the fork in the road. It is decision time, and what will your decision be? " 'And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my house, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD' " (Joshua 24:15, NKJV).

*How can one know if he or she is saved?*

1. Eleanor L. Doan, *The Speaker's Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), p. 71.
2. Tryon Edwards, *The New Dictionary of Thoughts* (New York: Standard Book Company, 1954), p. 175.
3. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 393, 394.

# Enough Is Enough!

by Diedra B. Thompson

## TESTIMONY

Key text:

Hosea 4:6; 5:14

"I've had it up to *here* with your foolishness!" "This is the last straw!" "Enough is *enough!*" How many times have we heard those fateful words pass the lips of some terribly frustrated parent? And how many times have we stood on the receiving end, quaking in our boots as we imagined the consequences soon to be suffered as a result of driving our parents to the end of their proverbial rope? Could it be a tongue lashing? Maybe a close encounter of the physical kind. Too old for that? Well, how about kissing the television goodbye, or the telephone, or (oh, no!) the car?

With childhood memories in hand, let's look at the same situation on a grander scale. God is the angry, frustrated parent, and a whole nation are His children. He's been unusually patient and understanding, but He's finally reached His limit. He's taken all He could possibly take. What will the consequences be for His wayward children? The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that "the nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy."<sup>1</sup>

"In every age, transgression of God's law has been followed by the same result. In the days of Noah, when every principle of rightdoing was violated, and iniquity became so deep and widespread that God could no longer bear with it, the decree went forth, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.' Genesis 6:7. In Abraham's day the people of Sodom openly defied God and His law; and there followed the same wickedness, the same corruption, the same unbridled indulgence, that had marked the antediluvian world. The inhabitants of Sodom passed the limits of divine forbearance, and there was kindled against them the fire of God's vengeance.

"The time preceding the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel was one of similar disobedience and similar wickedness."<sup>2</sup>

"It was because they had persisted in turning aside from His law that God was compelled to let them go into captivity."<sup>3</sup>

In view of God's response to the people of Noah's time and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, I'd say the Israelites got off lightly. At least they lived to tell about it!

## REACT

How can we, as individuals, tell when we are pushing God to His limits in our own lives? What personal consequences can we expect to suffer?

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 627.

2. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 297.

3. *Ibid.*

---

Diedra B. Thompson is working toward an M.A. in school counseling at Andrews University.

# Hosea

by A. Josef Greig

## EVIDENCE

Key text:  
Hosea 6:1

Hosea was a prophet to Israel, this grounded his messages in the Exodus-covenant tradition of the old tribal league, rather than the tradition of the Davidic monarchy of Judah. The book of Hosea does not develop the covenant theme so much in terms of the suzerain-vassal relationship as it does by the husband-and-wife relationship. The account of his marriage to a harlot reports symbolic acts intended to illustrate the relationship between God and Israel—God the faithful husband and Israel the unfaithful wife. Three children were born to this union. “God will Scatter,” “Not Pitied,” and “Not My People,” all symbolic messages of judgment on the unfaithful nation. Later on, after the judgment had fallen, the names would be reversed to “God Will Sow,” “Pitied,” and “My People.”

The Canaanite fertility religion forms a large part of the background for understanding Israel's apostasy and Hosea's messages. The Canaanite myth of the sacred marriage embodied in magical and cultic rites involving sacred prostitutes is allegorized to depict the relationship of Yahweh to Israel in Canaan and to accent the moral nature of the covenant. The sacred marriage of Baal to the land is supplanted by the marriage of Yahweh to Israel, and the deities worshiped in Canaan became Israel's illicit lovers from whom she sought the harlot's price of oil, wine, and grain. The cycle of fertility in which life is reborn becomes the renewal of Israel, and the course of nature is replaced by history as the sphere of God's action.

Hosea's charge is that Israel had been unfaithful, had broken the covenant. The indictment is formulated in terms of a covenant law suit, which, along with the punishment, is played out on the stage of history. Israel is found guilty as charged, and because faithfulness to the covenant was Israel's only true means of identity, by their apostasy they had become “Not My People.”

Hosea's reproaches are directed largely at Israel's failure in cultic and political life. She had adopted the Canaanite cult, and her priests had been derelict in their duty of teaching the knowledge of God. The unscrupulous Israelite kings who were dependent on alliances with foreign powers were not appointed by God; rather they were the product of Israel's sin. Israel had “sown the wind,” now they would “reap the whirlwind.”

Israel would lose both state and cult to the power of Assyria. But Yahweh would bring them back into the wilderness where they would learn to depend entirely on Him as they had once before. For Hosea, the wilderness period of Israel's life was the best of times. After a return to the wilderness, never again would they confuse Yahweh with Baal. God would bring them back to the land. And to those He had once said, you are “not My people,” He would then say, you are “My people,” and they would respond, “You are our God.”

---

A. Josef Greig is an associate professor of religion at Andrews University.

## “There’s a Moth in My Closet”

by David Ferguson

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 5:12**

Certainly this has happened to you: You go to your closet to pull out that part of your wardrobe reserved specifically for the upcoming season. You begin to put on that big coat in an attempt to recapture that cozy feeling you always achieve while wearing it. Suddenly, as your arm grapples for the sleeve hole, there is a ripping sound as your hand pierces the side of your coat. Mouth agape, you begin to inspect the damage. Your casual perusal becomes more frantic as you begin to suspect foul play. A sort of clothing vandalism has gone on here. And for the next month (give or take twenty-four hours) any creature with wings is in danger of meeting with swift death. There has been a moth in your closet!

Or, how about this: It is the middle of the day, and you’re tired and hungry. You begin to fanticize about suppertime. You plan to kick off the shoes and lie back until the supper starting-gun is fired. Then you’ll indulge in a delicious meal, capped off by that dessert that you know is waiting in the fridge. A couple of hours later all has gone as planned, and the wonderful meal is over. Now, time for dessert. You jump to your feet with renewed energy and rush to the refrigerator knowing what to look for inside. You spot the container and nimbly whisk it from the bottom shelf. Quickly flicking off the top, you peer in at your light-green prize. An alarmed panic spreads over your body. The light-green-colored pudding would cause no alarm if it were not for the fact that it used to be a chocolate pudding. Overcoming your panic, you are furious. It seems that someone or something has schemed to ruin your day. The pudding is rotten!

In Hosea 5:12 there is a description of God’s relationship with the Israelites:

“Therefore I am like a moth to Ephraim, and like rotteness to the house of Judah” (NASB).

There seem to be three key factors in making a relationship with God that will work and be devoid of moths or rotteness.

1. **Read Hosea 7:13.** What is it that will cause the destruction of the people? It is that they have strayed away from God. The “wrath of God” as spoken of in Hosea seems to be the consequence of our leaving Him, not His punishing us. The point: Let’s stick it out with Him. Any relationship requires a strong commitment to working through any problems that might come along.

2. **Read Hosea 6:6.** God doesn’t delight in mere legal adherence to the rules. He delights in our knowing Him, and our having a loyalty relationship with Him.

3. **Read John 10:10.** Living in a relationship with Christ is not meant to be like a moth in our clothing, but, instead, the best, most happy, most fun, most exciting, most abundant life we can possibly have.

---

**David Ferguson is a senior in religion and business management at Andrews University.**

# Angry Love

by Miroslav M. Kis

An angry God of love? How can this be? Anger means loss of temper, a sign of weakness. Love is expressed in forbearance, patience, and graciousness, and God is more like that. He is love. How can love be angry? This would seem to be a contradiction impossible for God's harmonious character.

Yet we cannot ignore it. In both Testaments of the Bible God reveals His love and His anger. "His wrath is poured out like fire" (Nahum 1:6, NIV). Even Jesus, who showed the full extent of love to those around Him (John 13:2-5, NIV) also looked around with anger (Mark 3:5) and drove out the money-changers (John 2:13-17).

For centuries, thinkers attempted to make sense out of this mystery. Some believed that the "wrath of God" was only a human metaphor. To others the language of "wrath" had a pedagogical function. Cultural anthropologists saw in it a vestige of the primitive fear of taboos. Our modern and enlightened civilization refuses to be impressed by anger. It responds readily to the call of love alone.<sup>1</sup>

God can be angry, Scripture states. In Him these two attributes do not stand in contradiction. His wrath is different from human anger. Lactantius, a third-century apologist and tutor of emperor Constantine's son Crispus, says that man is a creature of time, and his emotions are related to the passing moment. His anger, therefore, ought to be curbed. But God is eternal and perfect. His anger is no passing emotion, but is always of set purpose and design.<sup>2</sup> God is slow to anger, but angry with a purpose. His wrath is the clear expression of His saving love.

Nor is God's love like human love. It is first of all the message of God's wrath and our disgrace. Love tells us that God means business with sin and evil. He is the avenger for all injustices, swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and adultery (see Hosea 4:2). It would not be loving for God to be easygoing with our sins. Because God cares enough, the distinction between good and bad, right and wrong, still subsists. Because He loves us and hates sin, one day all wrongs will be made right. The uneasy conscience, the feeling of guilt, these are good news of God's anger. It helps us to fear to sin (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 217,218) because God's wrath is revealed (Rom. 1:18). And this fear is the beginning of wisdom.

God's loving wrath makes new beginnings possible. The new beginning after the Flood, the new birth in the Christian experience, the new creation of the earth to come, are all the results of God's angry love. He is angry at sin, angry and uncompromising with evil, but tenderly loving with sinners. His wrath consumes the sin in me, and this is how He prepares the way for forgiveness. This is how He makes me safe to be loved.

It is good to be in the hands of an angry God, for His anger is *for me, not against me*. And "when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold" (Job 23:10, NIV).

## OPINION

**Key texts:**  
Hosea 4:9;  
Romans 1:18

1. Lloyd-Jones, D.M. *The Plight of Man and the Power of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1945), pp. 61, 62.  
2. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, ed., *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), vol. 7, p. 277.

Miroslav M. Kis is the chairman of the theology and Christian philosophy department of the theological seminary at Andrews University.



# Starting Over

"Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you" (Hosea 10:12, NIV).



# “Cotton Candy, Stuffed Animals, and Helium Balloons”

by Esther F. Ramharacksingh Rosado

It was a lazy summer morning as the sun slowly poked its shining face above the horizon. It crept across the cornfield and tiptoed through the open window into Jamie's room. No need for hushed tones today. Jamie was gone. There would be no lazing around *this* morning—he was going to the big county fair. Oh, how he had looked forward to this day. Today would be the day to make the one purchase he'd been dreaming of.

By the time the bus reached Jamie's farm it was already full of excited passengers. He scampered aboard; the bus took off; and within moments he arrived at the fairground in pursuit of his dream.

It didn't take long for Jamie to find the object of his desire. There it was! He could see it above the stands. Keeping his eye on his dream, Jamie dodged through the crowd and finally stood in front of the stand. There in his eager outstretched hand was placed the string that connected him to his treasure—a big, red, floating helium balloon.

Jamie was ecstatic. He clutched the string tightly as he and his balloon danced in the sunlight. With his desire in hand he made his way through the jostling crowd. He saw big stuffed animals, miniature men doing skits, a five-legged lamb, and a house full of mirrors that

made him look funny. His balloon bobbed in the air as it rode with him on the merry-go-round. While on the ferris wheel he saw another balloon float by and determined to hang on tightly to his. He would never let go. When he tired of the rides he feasted on cotton candy, popcorn, lemonade, and “vege” hot dogs. His hands dripped with watermelon and ice cream. What a wonderful adventure! So many attractions, so much to see, and so much to do!

As the day wore on, his hands were full with prizes he had accumulated for himself: one rubber ball, a small plastic duck, two small stuffed animals, and several consolation prizes. It was quite a chore getting back on the bus with all his belongings, but at least this time he had a double seat all to himself. As the bus started up, Jamie laid out his treasures to count and admire them one by one. He'd made quite a haul. As he sat back to reflect on his day a growing panic slowly crept over him. Something was missing—his most important treasure! Somewhere, somehow as imperceptible as the slipping away of the now-setting sun, Jamie had let his treasured balloon slip through his fingers. He hadn't made a decision to let it go—it just happened as he got involved with the other attractions. He'd gotten tired.

**INTRODUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Hosea 5:15 —**  
**6:3; 10:12**

---

Esther F. Ramharacksingh Rosado is an assistant chaplain at Andrews University.

---

He had too many other things to carry around. And now he had a big gnawing lump in his stomach. How could he have let something so precious slip away. He had been so sure he'd never let go of *his* balloon. If only he could start his day again—he wouldn't become so distracted.

A tear welled up in his eye and trickled down his cheek as the bus groaned to a stop. Dejected, he gathered his things and slumped off the bus. His whole day seemed to have lost its sparkle. Dragging his feet he

made his way up the lighted porch and climbed the stairs to his room. Once more he spread his prizes before him, but they couldn't fill the emptiness he felt. He longed for his balloon. Alone in the silence of contemplation, he heard a slight tapping at his window. He looked up and, as a parable would have it, there, resting in the branches was his big, red balloon. The string was dangling close at hand, just waiting for Jamie to reach out and take it once again.

# Starting Over

by Wesley Amundson

LOGOS

**Theme:** God appeals to His people—both ancient and modern day Israel—to repent and to return to Him, experience true revival, and be the recipients of His richest blessings.

## 1. Repent

*"I will go away and return to my place until in their horror they seek me, and look earnestly for me in their distress" (Hosea 5:15, NEB).*

Because of humanity's existential inclination, repentance is never its basic reaction; defensiveness and justification are. However, this scenario can be quickly altered if two things happen: First, if one gets in serious trouble and there seems to be no human way out, or second, this same individual dons a philosophical hat and begins to ask questions about the relationship of life and meaning.

We all know and have heard of experiences of "foxhole Christians" and we all have personally endured "limiting" experiences that "force" us to flee to God and repent. Distress causes us to seek an alternative. Hence, negative experiences can bring positive changes based upon our reactions. This method of "repentance" is perhaps the common methodology, but it is not God's ideal or intention for His people. Rather God bids, through life's experiences, for mankind to reflect upon the relationship of life and meaning. The Scripture repeatedly admonishes that we should meditate, meditate, meditate. Why? Because in reflection life becomes sorted out and we assign meaning to fragmented, disjointed, and seemingly unrelated experiences. We begin to discern a *gestalt*, a pattern, and it is then that we begin to "re-cognize" that repentance is meant to become a "healing" experience. Suddenly repentance is not seen as a negative reaction mankind is forced into, but rather it becomes the healing experience upon which a meaningful life can be built. The Scripture elevates this method to be God's ideal in His reunion with wayward humanity. With understanding that accompanies positive repentance, mankind's motivation changes, and hence the life of anxiety gives way to a life of meaning and discovery.

## 2. Return

*"Come, let us return to the Lord; for . . . he will heal us . . . he will bind up our wounds" (Hosea 6:1, NEB).*

The book of Hosea is important because it gives a unique perspective to the relationship of God and mankind. Hosea's subject of preoccupation is not the apostate individual or nation, nor the backslider, but rather, it is God, the abandoned One. Hosea gives us a glimpse into the inner life of God as He ponders His relationship to Israel, and hence, to all humanity. Whether in parables or lyrical outbursts, Hosea illustrates the decisive motive behind God's strategy in history. This decisive motive, he declares, is love. When one contemplates God's position in this controversy over humanity, one

---

Wesley Amundson teaches at Andrews University in the Institute of World Mission and the seminary.

---

can discern three possibilities that could be employed, namely, love, power, or justice. Taken individually, power or justice could have proven the superiority of God over any demonic forces of uncommitted humanity. But only love could be the basis for a healing relationship. (Of course, rightly understood, love includes both power and justice.) Only love can provide the right motive for mankind to enter into this healing or reconciling relationship.

This motive becomes exemplified as one comes to understand the purpose for healing, that is, for humanity to meet its ultimate potential. God accepts us where we are, but He bids us become what we ought to be. Suddenly we discover that God deals with humanity on an "as if" basis—as if it truly is possible to find ultimate meaning within reality. This "as if" quality to life, usually referred to in the Christian life as justification, frees from the despair about one's guilt and state of being. Freed from guilt and despair's bondage, humanity becomes free to "open" up new possibilities of transformation.

### 3. Revival

*"He will revive us, . . . he will restore us" (Hosea 6:2, NEB).*

The ancient Israelites at the time of Hosea had a great fascination with Baal and Ashtoreth because they found that these gods were more comprehensible than the invisible God of Abraham. The conception of one God who had created both heaven and earth was hard to imagine. But pagan gods could be approached and appeased more easily because mankind and gods are of one race. Herein Israel felt security.

Security is what each individual or nation longs and strives for. It is the "passion" of each life, both individual and collective. However, God bids that ultimate security is found only in His healing and reconciling union of God and people. Seeking security outside this relationship only brings eventual anxiety, despair, and meaninglessness. Entrance into this "invisible" relationship may seem to be, at a superficial glance, a "risk," that is, a giving up of that by which we measure security. But in reality it is the very dimension that places human life in order and in perspective, and is that element that brings long-sought security. The purpose, then, of revival and restoration is to provide that ultimate security necessary to life.

### 4. Blessings

*"Let us humble ourselves, let us strive to know the Lord, whose justice dawns like morning light, and its dawning is as sure as the sunrise. It will come to us as a shower, like spring rains that water the earth" (Hosea 6:3, NEB).*

Hosea's central complaint against his own people was that they did not know God. When he employs the verb *to know*, he does not have in mind mere "acquaintance with." In most Semitic languages, *to know* signifies sexual union, as well as mental and spiritual activity. What

---



---

this signifies is that no abstract knowledge is referred to here; rather Hosea's "knowing God" encompasses inner appropriation and feeling—it involves both an intellectual and an emotional act. Hosea wanted Israel to see and understand that knowing involves concern, inner engagement, dedication, and attachment.

Yet this is not hard when one recognizes that it is in this knowing relationship that true and ultimate meaning came to humanity. There is natural affinity towards that which restores and completes. That is precisely why Jesus said that "if I be lifted up, I shall draw all men unto me." It is a natural desire of everyone to be in the presence of someone who brings fulfillment and meaning to life. Hosea recognized this, and he spoke eloquently and passionately for this end.

But as any wise person realizes, the positive consequences of any action, if known and perceived, provide a powerful incentive. Hosea skillfully points out this incentive, namely, the blessing of rain. In an agrarian society in which everything in life revolved around ample rain, the security and blessings of life come in the form of abundant rain. Hosea promises just this if Israel would only come to see the priority of knowing God.

In the information age, rain has come to be less prominent on our list of blessings, however it still is a symbol for what is the natural result of a "knowing" relationship with God. What significance does this symbol have for us? Just this, that in knowing God, His ultimate gift becomes accessible to mankind. And what is this ultimate gift? Simply stated, the Spirit of God who regenerates and transforms. The promise of completion and fulfillment is no idle promise. The power of God illustrated through the function of the Spirit becomes available to work in and through mankind. This transforming power, usually referred to in the Christian life as sanctification, aids humanity to become what it can and ought to be. With each new discovery and sense of fulfillment, the individual "opens up" to further development and develops a passionate desire for the ultimate completion that both Hosea and the rest of the Scripture writers reflected upon. It is in this experience that the various elements of life become woven together into an integrated whole. And in this experience, mankind experiences true "security."

---

# Drawn to Obedience

by Sissel Ames

## TESTIMONY

**Key text:**  
John 3:16

"Do not listen to the enemy's suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better, until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then you will never come."<sup>1</sup>

"There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are."<sup>2</sup>

"By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go."<sup>3</sup>

"Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul."<sup>4</sup>

"The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' Ps. 40:8."<sup>5</sup>

1. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 320.
2. *Steps to Christ*, p. 31.
3. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 182.
4. *Steps to Christ*, p. 26, 27.
5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 176

---

Sissel Ames is a Norwegian working on a master's in nursing at Andrews University.

# Spring Rain or Morning Mist?

by Christian Y. Dupont

Sprouting amidst fields of judgment and despair, Israel's song, "Come, let us return to the Lord," appears as a vine of encouragement. Yet, when the winter and spring rains pass, the vine yields no fruit. Its large green leaves cover withered buds.

Hosea 5:8 sounds a battle cry. Ephraim, the northern rump of the long divided kingdom, feels threatened by Assyria's bitter breath. He joins forces with the Aramites to conquer Jerusalem in order to gain military strength (2 Kings 16:5). God uses Ephraim to humble Judah, whose King Ahaz continually demonstrates his unfaithfulness (2 Chron. 28:19). In a counter-attack, Judah reclaims more than his share, displacing ancient boundaries, thereby incurring judgment from the Lord (Hosea 5:10). Ephraim, "intent on pursuing idols" (5:11, NIV), only a few years later disappears into Assyrian captivity. Stop to read 2 Kings 17:18-20. Describing these events, Hosea portrays God as a great lion who tears apart his prey and carries it off to his den to devour. There God waits to hear the repentant cry of His people (5:14, 15).

The people do respond, but only with a hollow liturgy resounding with the blood of numerous sacrifices spattering on the altar. The worshipers gather from the ends of the kingdom, making the three-day journey to the Temple. As surely as the Lord "has injured us but he will bind up our wounds," they reason (6:1, NIV). But God is not capricious in judgment, nor is He automated by words that confess no sin and desire no change.

Therefore the Lord despairs: " 'What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah?' " (6:4, NIV). In contrast to the winter and spring rains, God compares the devotion of His people to a mist that vaporizes under the morning sun. He proclaims His chastising necessary to awaken their consciences. Says the Lord: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings" (6:6, NIV). Sacrifice only proves guilt; mercy and genuine knowledge of God brings obedience (see 1 John 2:3).

Ellen White warns our generation: "I saw that many were neglecting the preparation so needful and were looking to the time of 'refreshing' and the 'latter rain' to fit them to stand in the day of the Lord. . . . Those who refuse to be hewed by the prophets and fail to purify their souls in obeying the whole truth . . . will come up to the time of the falling of the plagues, and then see that they needed to be hewed and squared for the building. But there will be no time then to do it."\*

## REACT

God desires us to repent. What does His promise in Hosea 14:4 mean to you?

**EVIDENCE**  
**Key text:**  
**Matthew 3:8,**  
**NIV. "Produce**  
**fruit in keeping**  
**with repen-**  
**tance."**

---

Christian Y. Dupont is a junior preseminary student at Andrews University.

\*Early Writings, p. 71.

# In the Valley of Decision

by Ruth Gard

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 10:12**

How do you continue to love in a relationship that seems only to reap hardness of heart? You are the one being rejected, being turned away. Stop, wait for a minute, reflect. Considering the content of this week's lesson, does it sound familiar?

Place yourself in God's position, the love you pour out unconditionally is being denied, How do you feel? Time after time, rejection after rejection you continue, yet they are hardened, no more are they able to respond to that first love they had. "How can I give you up, Ephraim. . . . For I am God, and not man—the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath" (Hosea 11:8, 9, NIV).

"I have loved you with an everlasting love. . . ." (Jer. 31:3, NIV). With this overwhelming love and acceptance, how will you respond? What is your decision for His everlasting love to you today? How do I make it work for me today, right now, as I grope for love, assurance even when crises enter my life—my boy friend choosing to be "just friends," or your teacher telling you, "You just aren't making it," your family never calling you to say, "I love you." No matter what the crises, here are some steps I have found helpful:

**1. Make a decision.** This is the most crucial point, for indecision eats you up like cancer and traps you. Making a decision can free you and give you energy to move on. "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15, NIV). Make a decision to serve God—starting today!

**2. Repent.** In your prayer life, that's private and in the "closet" so to speak, "only acknowledge your guilt. . ." (Jer. 3:13, NIV). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, NIV).

**3. Have faith.** Claim a promise and believe! For this begins your on-the-job training in trusting the God of this universe!

**4. Application.** If you've made your decision to return to that first love you had; here's a promise for you: "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5, 6, NIV). Is this the first time you've brought God into your life? Have faith, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. . . . You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord" (Jer. 29:11, 13, 14, NIV). Return, fellow-Christians, with me to the Lord our God, for our time is running out! Each day could be my last day on earth. How have I lived it for the Lord? Eternity begins now, this moment, with your decision.

---

Ruth Gard is a sophomore working on her B. A. with a religion major/behavioral science minor at Andrews University.

# Heading for Higher Ground

by Steve G. Davis

## OPINION

Key text:  
Zechariah 10:1

Changing locations from California to Michigan gave me more than a change in life-style. I had to get used to a whole new visual environment. Since I grew up in "The Californias," I'm used to huge redwood trees, miles of crashing waves, long sandy beaches, looming mountains, tumbling waterfalls, skyscrapers, freeways, and shopping malls. The big and the beautiful!

Then plop! Nothing but cows and cornfields. Or so I thought. Soon I discovered that Michigan has its big and beautiful moments, as well—lightning storms and lightning bugs. Lightning storms are grand spectacles of flashing light-streaks and booming thunder-blasts with torrents of rain. Although seasonally sporadic, these sky shows seem to last for hours.

Lightning bugs dance and sparkle silently against the dark-blue dusk sky consistently from late spring to early fall.

Heading for a higher-ground life-style or beginning anything new can be just as filled with discovery—about yourself and about the God who created you.

Steve Green's album *For God and God Alone* includes a contemporary song by Jon Mohr with the title "Higher Ground." (The suggestion is to build a house on higher ground and not castles in the sand, and reminds me of that Sabbath School song about the wise man building his house upon the rock, which stood firm, and the foolish man building his house upon the sand, which fell flat.) "Higher Ground" gives some life-style building advice:

God is calling us to remain unstained  
In the rising flood of sin,  
And it's easier to keep it out  
If we don't invite it in.

You are in control of inviting what you want for your life. God wants to talk with you about some wonderful plans (see How To). Satan also has plans, some clever deceptions. But you send the invitations out by what you see, hear, say, and do. To Seventh-day Adventists the call goes out to "remain unstained" and live up to the light we know.

I have a favorite quote by the German writer Goethe that gives me reason to make a higher-ground commitment.

"Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now."

---

Steve G. Davis is pursuing a marketing, design, and advertising career in Berrien Springs, Michigan.



# Reaping the Whirlwind

“ ‘They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up’ ” (Hosea 8:7, NIV).



# The Seventh Deadly Sin

by Steven G. Dally

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Hosea 8:7**

Our journey through the book of Hosea during the past few weeks has supplied us with quite a catalog of Israel's sins. The prophet condemned God's people for idolatry, theft, deceit, swearing, murder, and sexual immorality. More important, he has focused the greatest responsibility for Israel's apostasy on those in the highest positions of authority. He does not spare the political leaders, or the priests, or parents, or even his fellow prophets. All are guilty. All are in danger of impending judgment.

So what's new? The message of Hosea is not particularly unique. Most of the prophets condemned the sins of God's people, and warned their leaders of coming judgment. And most of the prophets were ignored, ridiculed, persecuted, or martyred for their efforts. Why should Hosea be any different? He was just another prophet who failed to get a sympathetic hearing from God's rebellious people. Our tendency today is to marvel at Israel's lack of faith, and to criticize their repeated spiritual failures with condescending judgments. But whom are we trying to fool?

Can you imagine how we would treat Hosea today? What were his credentials? We would call him young, inexperienced, brash, arrogant, a man of poor judgment, and certainly immature. After all, what gives him the right to judge us or to condemn our leaders when he

cannot even manage his own household? Do you really think that any messenger could have credibility today in the Seventh-day Adventist community if he were married to an active prostitute? The saintly tongues in our community would never stop wagging! It is hard enough to deliver a message of warning and judgment if your family life appears to be in order. But what would it be like for a man whose home was in complete disarray and chaos?

Our lesson this week focuses on Hosea's warning of judgment, and his condemnation of Israel's apostate leaders and sins.

Israel's sin was not idolatry, deceit, murder, or adultery. These were all sins that the heathen nations were committing. Israel's most tragic sin was a sin that the heathen nations were incapable of committing. Only God's professed people are capable of violating the third commandment. Taking God's name in vain does not consist primarily of uttering common profanities or mindless swear words. To take God's name, to profess to be a Christian, while we choose a life-style that directly contradicts the principles of God's kingdom and covenant, is the most serious and tragic sin. This is the sin that does more harm than any other because it misrepresents the nature of true religion, and alienates sincere and talented potential converts from the kingdom of God.

---

Steven G. Dally is chaplain at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus, and pastor of the New Life Church (the student church on campus).

# Reaping the Whirlwind

by Niels-Erik Andreassen

## LOGOS

**Theme:** Impervious to the appeals of a merciful God, headstrong Israel plunged recklessly ahead in its downward course toward certain destruction. They failed to learn what we must learn—God's way not only is the right way but it is also the best way.

### 1. Sowing and Reaping

*"For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7, RSV).*

What does this proverb about sowing and reaping mean? It invites us to consider the life of farmers. These workers of the soil are often looked down upon by people whose work does not require them to touch dirt. But the Bible does not do so. It speaks well of farmers who make good things come out of the earth—grain, fruit, and green vegetables. Perhaps the work of farmers illustrates God's work well. They sow good grain and reap a better harvest. Their work begins with the good and ends with the better. So does God's work.

Not so, the work the people of Israel do. They sow what is bad, a wind, and reap what is worse, a whirlwind. Their work leads in the opposite direction from God's. His work is creative and always leads to the better. Their work leads to the worse, is destructive, and so must be of the devil.

### 2. Working in the Wrong Direction

The tragedy of the people of Israel in the prophet Hosea's time is that they worked so hard—in the wrong direction. Every progress of theirs became regress; every conquest turned into a defeat; every gain returned a costly loss. Consider the texts: Israel claims to know God, but God spurns them (8:2-5); Israel appoints kings, but God does not recognize them (8:4); the harvest yields no grain, but should there be a little, strangers will collect it (8:7); Israel has built cities, but God will burn them up (8:14). Whatever they attempt to do turns out badly. How does a nation come to such a tragedy?

### 3. Vulture Over Israel

Hosea 8:1 begins with an important announcement heralded by a trumpet blast. Ordinarily, trumpets were blown at the sanctuary as a signal to the people. One blast would indicate one message; a blast followed by a shout would indicate another, and so on (Num. 10:1-8). Therefore, at the sound of the trumpet all eyes would turn to the sanctuary and would see the pillar of fire or cloud (God's very presence) stirring to move, and the people would follow (Num. 10:11ff).

But here in Hosea's time a vulture, not a pillar of fire or cloud, was seen to hover over the sanctuary. A vulture up above signifies that a dead corpse lies down below. But what does this dead immovable body in the sanctuary below the vulture represent? Not a dead nation, for we

---

Niels-Erik Andreassen is the associate dean, division of religion, at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.

---

read that Israel appointed kings and set up princes (8:4). Not a dead religion, for we read that the people collected silver and gold for the sanctuary (8:4). Rather, the vulture over the sanctuary signified that spirituality had died down below, for we read that the people had broken God's covenant and transgressed His law (8:1). Consider these two terms.

The word *covenant* signifies a contract, an agreement, or a partnership between God and Israel. This means that a covenant is never an end in itself, just as a contract is not an end in itself. It has a goal—namely, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. For example, when God first established His covenant with the nation of Israel, He explained its goal: "You [Israel] shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6, RSV). That is the meaning of covenant.

The second matter concerns the law that Israel transgressed. It contains instruction for life under the covenant. For example, the law is to the kingdom of Israel what the Constitution is to the United States. For Israel to transgress the law and break the covenant would be as if the citizens of the United States ignored the Constitution and gave up their independence. There would not be much hope for such a nation, would there? In such a case, the vulture would circle over the Capital ready to dismember the corpse. So was Israel's condition in Hosea's time.

Notice that the covenant between God and His people (Ex. 19:3-6) was established at Sinai, just after Israel's exodus from Egypt. This explains the prophecy that after breaking the covenant, Israel would "return to Egypt" (Hosea 8:13; 9:3, RSV). It would be like threatening the United States that if it ignored its Constitution and gave up its independence, it would once again become a British colony. But that is not likely, is it? Britain is no longer a colonial power, and similarly Egypt in Hosea's time was no threat to Israel's independence.

But notice Hosea's special prophecy in Hosea 8:9; 9:3. Not Egypt, but Assyria will enslave Israel. Assyria, the new Egypt, will do the work of the vulture over Israel, which had become spiritually dead. Did that happen? It certainly did. Toward the end of Hosea's ministry (722 B.C.) the Assyrian king, Sargon II, conquered Israel, its capital, Samaria, and according to his records, took 27,290 people captive.

Even more tragically, these 27,290 captives never returned home, but disappeared, as did the whole nation of Israel. "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind," said Hosea. What should they have done? How shall we respond to this prophecy?

---

# I've Got Bad News and Worse News

by Steven G. Dally

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Romans  
11:17-21

The work of a prophet is seldom rewarding and never easy. Hosea had the audacity to condemn Israel for its sins. Ellen White had the audacity to suggest that God's rejection of Israel should serve as a warning to the Seventh-day Adventist Church today. "The closing years of the ill-fated kingdom of Israel were marked with violence and bloodshed such as had never been witnessed even in the worst periods of strife and unrest under the house of Ahab. For two centuries and more the rulers of the ten tribes had been sowing the wind; now they were reaping the whirlwind. King after king was assassinated to make way for others ambitious to rule. 'They have set up kings,' the Lord declared of these godless usurpers, 'but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not.' Hosea 8:4. Every principle of justice was set aside; those who should have stood before the nations of earth as the depositories of divine grace, 'dealt treacherously against the Lord' and with one another. Hosea 5:7."<sup>1</sup>

"The words of God to ancient Israel have a solemn warning to the church and its leaders today. Of Israel the Lord said, 'I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.' Hosea 8:12. And to the priests and teachers He declared, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; . . . seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.' Hosea 4:6.

"Shall the warnings of God be passed by unheeded? Shall the opportunities for service be unimproved? Shall the world's scorn, the pride of reason, conformity to human customs and traditions, hold the professed followers of Christ from service to Him? Will they reject God's word as the Jewish leaders rejected Christ? The result of Israel's sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?

" 'If some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not. . . . Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee.' Rom. 11:17-21."<sup>2</sup>

## REACT

1. How do you define the words "highminded" and "fear" in this quotation?
2. Do you believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is subject to rejection by God today?
3. How can we be loyal to the institutional church without giving it blind allegiance?

1. *Prophets and Kings*,  
p. 279.

2. *Christ's Object  
Lessons*, p. 306.

---

Steven G. Dally is chaplain at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus, and pastor of the New Life Church (the student church on campus).



# “... The Way Things Are”

by Charles Teel, Jr.

“They have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.” “For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind” (Hosea 8:1, 7).

What happens when humankind forgets God’s law? It’s the pits, says Hosea. Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. It’s inevitable. That’s just the way things are.

So wake up! shouts Hosea (and all of those other “minor” prophets we skip over en route to the tithes and offerings text in Malachi). Forget God’s law/covenant, and life goes down the tubes: thorns multiply, fig trees wither, the corn shrivels up, oil and wine cease to flow, vineyards are overgrown, breasts cease to give milk, and holidays are no fun.

Some of us have a God whose law can be “broken,” a God who zaps us if we “go against” his list of things to do—or things not to do. Not so with Hosea. Hosea’s God doesn’t zap folks. And for Hosea, God’s law isn’t a list you can “break.” Rather, God’s law is simply the way things are. When a people tunes in with the way things are, life’s a beach (figs are plump, the corn is full, the oil and wine fairly gush forth, breasts are full of milk, and holidays are fun). Go against the way things are, and the reverse is true. Life is the pits.

So that is the way things are? Glad you asked, says God. Start with the books of Moses. The Torah. These writings tell us that the universe and humankind are made for community under God. Create community under God, and life’s a beach. Forget about creating community or forget about God, and you are going against the way things are. And going against the way things are is the pits. That’s just the way things are.

Theologian Emil Brunner put it this way: “In His law, God tells us nothing but the natural laws of human life, you must do so and so if you want to live a human life; as the physician says, you must live so and so if you wish to remain healthy. This counsel is nothing fearful, but God says, I desire that you should live human, not inhuman, creatively and not contrary to nature. . . . Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.” \*

“Because we have failed to create community under God, life is the pits,” screams Hosea. That’s because we have gone against the way things are.

## REACT

In your family, your school, your city, your time at the voting booth, how can you go about creating community under God? (P.S. Can life sometimes be less than a beach but still not be the pits? What makes the difference?)

## EVIDENCE

Key text:  
Hosea 8:1, 7

---

Charles Teel, Jr., is the chairman of the department of ethics at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.

\*Emil Brunner, *Our Faith* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936).

## How Do You Know?

by José M. Mulnos

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 8:8-10**

In his message from God, Hosea makes a point of letting God's people know that they have made a grave error in making alliances with the surrounding nations. The Israelites made these alliances in hopes of making their own lives better. Now it could be that the Israelites made a mistake because those nations were corrupt, or maybe it is a mistake because any alliance with an unbeliever is a mistake? From the context of the text one would assume that the mistake comes really from the allies that Israel chose. These were countries that were far from what God had as an ideal, but does that mean that all alliances between God's people and others should be avoided?

As students in school, or maybe as workers out in the real world, should alliances with non-Seventh-day Adventists be avoided also? And if some alliances are good and some not, then how does one tell which are which? Add to this the fact that the word *alliances* can have different meanings to different people. An alliance can be anything from a tennis partner in a doubles tournament to a lifelong marriage companion, to a large Seventh-day Adventist hospital hiring an excellent non-Adventist doctor.

The basic line has been that being "yoked to an unbeliever" should be avoided at all times. This has been balanced with statements like "being the salt of the earth." It was much easier in Hosea's time for a self-contained community to exist, but today's Seventh-day Adventists are scattered in many places, and many times must make alliances in many situations. All this can leave a person a little perplexed as to what is best when it comes to teaming up with people, and just how to go about it. When it comes to important alliances a few points may help.

**1. Make sure you do not rush into anything at all.** Some of the biggest mistakes in life are made because of haste. It is better to lose a potential opportunity if it means making a fast uninformed decision.

**2. Do not assume that all Seventh-day Adventist alliances are better than non-Adventist alliances.** Outside of marriage it may be more advantageous to make a non-Adventist an ally in many endeavors. Past church investment failures are prime examples of this point.

**3. Get plenty of information about the person or organization you are uniting with.** This information includes not only facts but spiritual guidance, also. Find out what friends, family, and knowledgeable people in the specific area have to say.

Finally, as the well-known prayer teaches: Ask the Lord to help you accept the outcomes of your alliance, or to give you the strength to change it, but mostly the knowledge to know which of the above to do.

---

At the time this article was written Dr. Mulnos was on the faculty of Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.

# A Lesson in Reaping

by V. Bailey Gillespie, Ph.D.

**OPINION**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 8:7**

How do you cure guilt? Is there any way to feel better about the things that you have done that are obviously wrong? How can you eradicate the nagging feeling that you have violated what is true and right? These are some of the issues that may have bothered the prophet Hosea as he tried to sort out the apparent split between religion and politics, between God's will and individual freedom, between listening and not hearing God.

You will remember that Hosea has tried to tell the people that God wanted to "allure" them back to Him. And after blocking His people's way to the Baals, He intended to "speak tenderly" to them and bring them again into the wilderness (Hosea 2:16). This meant nothing less than the fact that God was going to take them back to the place where He originally began with them, back, as it were, to the beginning of the whole road. But in this passage for study this week, we noticed that there was a kind of frustration regarding the people's rejection and a seeming disappointment on God's part regarding their actions.

"My anger burns against them. How long will it be till they are pure in Israel?" (Hosea 8:5, RSV), and "for they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (8:7, RSV). What is it that makes God seem to be frustrated with the people?

First, God seems to be frustrated when people seem to relish their sinning. It is bad enough to sin when you feel that you have been trapped, or caught, or somehow slipped into evil ways. But when individuals relish, enjoy, and even seem to use the sinning they are doing as opportunities to multiply their sins, God seems especially wrought and angry.

Next we observe that the dealings with Israel at times seem to be some sort of training, some sort of educational plan aimed primarily at setting the erring ones on the right path by depriving them of certain things and circumscribing their actions. This chastisement and hand slapping done by God is meant for something. It is meant to lead to repentance. It is only through repentance—a real turn around in the life—that God's blessings will again be given to His children.

Finally, we notice a parallel in our own lives with this wise counsel. Evil is always evil. No good dwells in anything that is sinful. We confuse the issue when we try to make excuses before God about our sinful lives. We must come face to face with a reality that exposes our selfishness and egoism. We too when captivated by evil in our lives, may sow the wind but reap much more than we bargained for. We, too, may frustrate God in His plan to show the world what ultimate good really is. We do it by our continual enjoyment of the sin we commit. We do it by failing to learn from our mistakes. Hosea provides a mirror-look at our own lives.

---

V. Bailey Gillespie is professor of theology and Christian personality and chairman of the church and ministry department at Loma Linda University's division of religion, La Sierra campus.

# Payday Someday

"The truly righteous man attains life, but he who pursues evil goes to his death"  
(Prov. 11:19, NIV).





# Love Is Blind

by Steven G. Daily

You would have expected her to turn out right. She grew up in a God-fearing home with godly parents. She attended strict religious schools during her elementary and academy years, and graduated from P.U.C. (Palestine Union College). She was bright, attractive, popular and talented. But somewhere along the line something went wrong.

It may have been the early influence of friends who talked her into wearing jewelry and lipstick. It may have been her obsessive interest in stylish clothes. It may have been her early willingness to experiment with alcohol, drugs, and sex. But whatever the cause, by the time she hit college she was no longer choosy about the boy friends and had a party reputation that just would not quit. Things finally degenerated to the point where her name could be found written on certain walls across the campus. For a reasonably priced "good time" call G. 231-4768.

She was the kind of girl that all the guys knew about, but not the kind that anyone would ever want to date seriously. Anyone, that is except H. He was known on campus for doing weird things. He would often carry placards or signs which warned of coming judgment and condemned various sins. But no one ever expected him to pursue G, that was just too weird. He certainly did not appear to be her type, and she obviously was not his type. Yet, for some

strange reason, she was flattered by his persistence, and the two of them were married.

If He believed that he could change his wife's bad habits through love, then he was wrong. If he believed that having children would create a bond of unity in his marriage he was mistaken.

How far does "unconditional love" go? It was H who reared the children, and tried to protect them from a mother who was given to vulgar language, seductive behavior, and fits of drunken rage. It was H who had to explain to his teary-eyed children why the kids at school called their mother such ugly names. It was H who put the children to bed at night and then went off to find his wife at the police station, the local bar, or in the second story of an X-rated bookstore in town.

Our lesson this week traces the encounters of Israel from her first love experience through a sad history of ignoring and forgetting God. Why did God choose Israel and remain faithful to her? The story of Hosea and Gomer reminds us that Gomer was not chosen because she was worthy of being chosen. Hosea did not remain faithful to her because she deserved it. I wonder whether she was wise enough and humble enough to recognize that fact. But more important, do we as Seventh-day Adventists perceive this reality in our experience today?

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Prov. 11:19

---

Steven G. Daily is chaplain at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus, and pastor of the New Life Church (the student church on campus).



# Sow for Yourself Righteousness

by Niels-Erik Andreassen

## LOGOS

**Theme:** Our lesson this week traces the encounters of Israel from her first love experience through a sad history of forgetting God. The prophet shows how the nation became spiritually degraded. He closes chapter 10 with a dirge of disappointment, warning the Israelites that they will pay dearly for their apostasy.

### 1. Plowing, Sowing, and the Harvest

*"Sow for yourselves righteousness" (Hosea 10:12, NKJV).*

We suggested last week that Hosea spoke of farming to illustrate God's relationship to Israel. Three times in this section of the book we read of plowing, sowing, and the harvest, and it seems as though these references follow upon each other in chronological sequence.

The first reference (9:10) describes the discovery of first fruits and refers to the earliest point in Israel's history. The prophet here pictures a traveler (God Himself) who in a most unlikely place, the dry, hot desert, found a new crop of juicy grapes. Several emotions surface in this picture. The wilderness is an inhospitable place. It threatens to kill the traveler with thirst and dehydration. Therefore, to discover ripe grapes in the wilderness is a source of great joy. But the wilderness is not a good place for grapes to grow. Hardly anything grows there, least of all juicy grapes. Therefore, to come upon grapes in the wilderness is surprising, even miraculous. Joy, surprise, happiness, and a sense of miracle characterizes God's relationship with Israel in those early "honeymoon" days after the exodus from Egypt.

The second reference (10:1) describes the grapevine after it has grown luxuriant and is very fruitful. We presume that has reference to Israel in the Promised Land. Here the harvest of fruit increased greatly, and the emotions one experiences now are of the contentment and satisfaction that follow sweet success. But success seeks after success. Contentment can lead to greed, and satisfaction to pride. Such uncertainty characterized God's relationship with Israel in the Promised Land. What will come of Israel's success, we wonder? Will it produce pillars of pride (10:1, 2)? Monuments to success? Will it lead to thanksgiving and shared benefits?

The third reference (10:11) portrays the work of a wheat farmer who has just brought in an abundant harvest. The joy of threshing is portrayed by a young cow happily walking around on the threshing floor stomping the kernels out of the husk, and probably nibbling contentedly along the way (see Deut. 25:4). The joy, as well as satisfaction, shared by all at harvest season is well known throughout the Old Testament, not least after Israel settled in the Promised Land and began to cultivate its soil.

But who gives the harvest? No longer do farmers simply discover the first fruit, or see the grapevine increase in size. No, the farmer must work for his harvest now. Plowing, harrowing, sowing must precede

---

Niels-Erik Andreassen is the associate dean, division of religion, at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.

---

harvesting. There is work to be done regularly, responsibilities to be shared willingly, and obligations to be met honestly. So, here we see God's relationship with a maturing people, a people who have become partners with God in the work of redemption.

## 2. Stages in Israel's History

By means of these three references to life on the farm, we see three stages in Israel's history with God and three stages in her spiritual growth.

First, we noted the joyful "honeymoon" relationship, full of happy surprises. It represents the exodus from Egypt and the first steps in faith, a childlike faith.

Second, we noted the satisfaction of growth and increase, the contentment it brings and the danger of self-sufficient pride. It represents Israel's entrance into the land and the second step in faith, the faith of a young person.

Third, we noted the responsibility for hard work, consistent effort, honest participation. It represents Israel after the settlement in the land, and is the third step in a growing faith, the faith of a mature adult. Notice how carefully the prophet Hosea has worked out his historical analysis. It reminds us that the Old Testament prophets were well aware of the earlier portions of Scripture and frequently referred to them, all the way back to Creation. Whenever reading the prophets, try to note how often they refer back to earlier Scripture or events in Israel's life.

But now comes the most important question in our text. How well has Israel progressed in this faith development—the move from childhood faith, to teen faith, to adult faith, as we have described these steps? Unfortunately, they did what we so often do also, exhibit no development at all. Thus, no sooner had they found faith in God as new believers than they ran after other gods in the wilderness at a place called Baal-peor (Num. 25:1-5). No sooner had they gained success than they turned their satisfaction into pride, illustrated by pillars and altars and the false hearts, symbols of Canaanite fertility religion (Hosea 10:1, 2). And when they reached the adult state, which called for work, responsibility, justice, and truth, they refused to plow, harrow, and sow righteousness and justice, choosing instead to play on the threshing floor, like the young cow, in childlike naïveté.

What will God do to such people? Punish them, you say (9:11,12,16,17; 10:3-6, 7-10, 13-15). Yes, but worse, God will take away their future (9:14). No children or grandchildren will be born to believe after them, because when faith stops growing, the future stops coming. As Hosea prophesied: "In the storm the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off" (10:15, RSV). How can we reverse this trend?

---

# Pantheism, Old and New

by Steven G. Dally

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Romans  
3:10, 23

If there is any major doctrine of the Christian church that can be supported by hard empirical and historical evidence, it is the doctrine of human sinfulness. In the following passage Ellen White reflects on the natural human tendency to worship the creature or creation rather than the Creator.

"The iniquity in Israel during the last half century before the Assyrian captivity was like that of the days of Noah, and of every other age when men have rejected God and have given themselves wholly to evil-doing. The exaltation of nature above the God of nature, the worship of the creature instead of the Creator, has always resulted in the grossest of evils. Thus when the people of Israel, in their worship of Baal and Ashtoreth, paid supreme homage to the forces of nature, they severed their connection with all that is uplifting and ennobling, and fell an easy prey to temptation. With the defenses of the soul broken down, the misguided worshipers had no barrier against sin and yielded themselves to the evil passions of the human heart.

"Against the marked oppression, the flagrant injustice, the unwonted luxury and extravagance, the shameless feasting and drunkenness, the gross licentiousness and debauchery, of their age, the prophets lifted their voices; but in vain were their protests, in vain their denunciation of sin. . . .

"The first departure from established forms of worship had led to the introduction of grosser forms of idolatry, until finally nearly all the inhabitants of the land had given themselves over to the alluring practices of nature worship. Forgetting their Maker, Israel 'deeply corrupted themselves.' Hosea 9:9.

"The prophets continued to protest against these evils and to plead for rightdoing. 'Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy,' Hosea urged; 'break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.' 'Turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.' 'O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity: . . . say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.' Hosea 10:12; 12:6; 14:1, 2."\*

## REACT

1. If the sin of Hosea's day was equal to that in the days of Noah, how would you compare it to the sinfulness of our own age?
2. What particular sins mentioned in this passage are particularly notable today?
3. Nature worship is a form of pantheism. Do you see a new pantheism emerging in the Western world today? If so, how so?

\*Prophets and Kings,  
pp. 281-283.

Steven G. Dally is chaplain at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus, and pastor of the New Life Church (the student church on campus).

# “ . . . The Way Things Still Are ”

by Charles Teel, Jr.

“Sow . . . righteousness; reap . . . mercy . . . You have plowed wickedness; you have reaped iniquity” (Hosea 10:12, 13, NKJV).

Hosea's earthy metaphors come straight from the farm, yet they require no translation even for suburbanites who have never touched a plow or planted a seed. Humankind falls short. And we know it. We are called to sow righteousness, but we more often than not plow wickedness.

Martin Luther King Jr. confessed to the gap between the “isness” of human nature and the “oughtness” of the divine.\* It is a task of prophets to remind us of that gap, to rebuke us for that gap, and to call us to confess our responsibility for widening that gap, and to do something about it.

Hosea's message is simple. It is easy to understand. But our lives are complicated. It is easy to forget the gap. So he plays the prophet's song. And he needs but one string.

When community is created under God, humankind is likened to a cluster of plump grapes or a fertile fig tree (9:10). Verdant, full, productive, becoming what we are made to be. That's oughtness.

When community gives way to self-interest; when selflessness gives way to selfishness; when justice ceases and injustice prevails; when righteousness fails and unrighteousness achieves pride of place, then what remains is but an empty vine or a barren fig tree. That's isness.

The gap will ever remain between the ought and the is. Yet only as we listen to the prophets—rather than stone them—are we reminded of that ought which beckons us. And only as we are reminded of that ought will we engage in disciplined reflection upon how we may individually and corporately more closely approximate that divine oughtness.

What is the difference between plump grapes and an empty vine; between a full grain floor and an idle threshing floor; between a fertile fig tree and a barren stump? The difference is in the planting and plowing, says Hosea. Do we plant and plow as stewards of God's animate and inanimate creation, or do we selfishly plunder that creation? Sow righteousness and reap mercy . . . plow wickedness and reap iniquity.

## REACT

1. Are the prophets pessimists or optimists? (Hint: Read the last verses of Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Obadiah before you finalize your answer.)
2. Why do prophets generally operate on the fringes?
3. Do prophets make a difference?
4. How might Hosea make a difference in your personal life?
5. How might Hosea's concerns be reflected in your communal life?

**EVIDENCE**  
**Key Text:**  
**Hosea 10:12,13**

\*Key works by Martin Luther King, Jr., include *Stride Toward Freedom* (Harper and Row, 1958); *Strength to Love* (Harper and Row, 1963).

**Charles Teel Jr. is chairman of the department of Christian Ethics at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.**

# Remembering Mistakes

by Rennie B. Schoepflin

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 10:9**

We Americans love to revel nostalgically in our memories of a past full of "good old times." Such reveries shift our attention from the often vainglorious and tawdry present to a pristine past filled with unending glories and unimpeachable virtues. Such memories both remind us that we are really better than we now seem to be, and excuse our failures by implying that the world is harder to handle now than in the past. We seem to be saying, "Things may not look too good right now, but don't measure us by the present. Remember the glorious past. That's the real America."

As individuals we do the same thing. It's easy to remember the good times and *misremember* or forget the bad. When things go well—when friendships are sound, when finances seem unlimited, when pleasures seem unbounded—our minds create an indelible record that drives our egos and builds our self-esteem.

Reinvigorated, we return to the world outside ourselves, possessed of the courage to try new things, think new ideas, or go to new places. But the bad times inevitably come, and to get ourselves through, we begin to recreate the past. It is an all-too-easy but finally debilitating endeavor. A triumphalist history that never takes serious account of the past failures of a nation, a church, or an individual dooms one to the certain failure that follows ignorance and overconfidence.

As individuals we must each learn not only to recognize and admit our faults but to remember them, as well. Where do we begin?

**1. We must learn to recognize our mistakes.** Rather than ignoring the advice of our parents, teachers, and friends, begin to listen seriously to their suggestions.

**2. We can admit our mistakes.** The human ego is often frail, but through cautious exercise and the grace of God, it can be strengthened. Recognize that every person makes mistakes; but only those who admit them can correct them.

**3. We must remember our mistakes.** Let the prophets pull you up short. They have a disturbing way of forcing us to revise our memories by recalling our mistakes:

"Your sins, Israel, all began at Gibeah  
And there you remain defiant still" (Hosea 10:9,  
Phillips).

---

Rennie B. Schoepflin is assistant professor of history at Loma Linda University, La Sierra campus.



# Truth or Consequences

by V. Bailey Gillespie, Ph.D.

**OPINION**  
**Key text:**  
**Proverbs**  
**11:19**

Nobody likes to feel hopeless. Everybody wants to see the light at the end of the tunnel. But in Hosea, this week, we have a picture of failure. The book suggests that the children of Israel have finally done about all that they could do to fill up their cup of iniquity. The truth of their wickedness is finally out in the open, the consequences of their actions and attitudes are finally coming home to roost.

Hosea declares that cause and effect is a law in God's universe. Life seems based on this axiom. What you do will finally be known. What you believe will be tested. Your loyalty and your behavior are coupled together in some way. The people claimed to know God, but God is pictured as one who discovers the people in their sins, in need of help; and God was watching to see what they might do when they discovered their need and potential. "Like grapes in the wilderness, I found Israel. Like the first fruit on the fig tree, in its first season, I saw your fathers," God says (Hosea 9:10, RSV). But even with this picture of longing and anticipation on God's part, the conclusion of this hopeful viewpoint becomes dashed as the people of God turned their backs on God and followed false gods.

The story is not new in the history of religion. Ezekiel believed that the people were listening to God in His prophetic dialogue, too. But the people, in the midst of saving acts by God and warnings of destruction, go to the Temple, to the very symbol of the presence of God, and worship with their backs to it and bow down to the sun, rather than to God (Ezekiel 8:14-16). People have a way of finding their own "truth." God has a way of reminding them of the consequences.

Religion that has missed the point is pictured in these chapters of Hosea. What is the point of religion? What is the essence of the true religious response? One can become aware of these questions only when confronted with the saving acts of God rather than the statements and hints of impending doom. And the true essence of religion seems to be personal integrity and commitment to the possibility that someone else is in charge of our lives. Distractions and personal plans have a way of shifting our focus, and moving us off course. Hosea reminds us of the consequences of false devotion and neglect.

Make a personal application today. What are the things that distract us? What are the ways in which we replace God with the false gods of this century? What are the demands of the gospel in my life? In answering these questions, we, too, are confronted with the truth and the consequences of life in God's world. Hosea's reminder is that we sow and reap, that He remembers our iniquity, that when we sow for ourselves righteousness we reap the fruit of steadfast love.

But we are not without a direction as we live in the truth of our sinful lives. God continually reminds us that it is high time to begin to plant what is right. "Break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain salvation upon you" (10:12, RSV).

---

V. Bailey Gillespie is professor of theology and Christian personality and chairman of the church and ministry department of Loma Linda University's division of religion, La Sierra campus.

# “How Can I Give You Up?”

“But I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me” (Hosea 13:4, NIV).



# Gomer's Story

by Evert McDowell

With a twentieth century mindset, the story of Hosea's love for Gomer might seem to fit better in the realm of fantasy. Who today goes to such lengths as he, especially when examples of his wife's love are so common? Few if any of us can claim love as high and pure as his. And with contemporary examples so scarce it can even be hard to understand. But Gomer, we all know her. And perhaps the best telling of her story, our story, comes from Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*. In his poem, he tells of his flight from God and finally to Him. Below are selections from it:

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Review of**  
**Hosea, chapters**  
**1-10; Hosea**  
**11:1—13:16**

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
And shot, precipitated,  
Adown titanic glooms of chasméd fears,  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
But with unhurrying chase  
And unperturbéd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat—and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet—  
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

I pleaded, outlaw-wise, . . .  
(For, though I knew His love who followéd,  
Yet was I sore adread  
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.) . . .  
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
The long savannahs of the blue;  
Or whether, thunder-driven,  
They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven  
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet—  
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
Still with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbéd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy.  
Came on the following Feet,  
And a Voice above their beat”—  
“Nought shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.” . . .

I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,  
Heaven and I wept together,

---

Evert McDowell is a news writer for ADRA International.

---

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;  
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart  
    I laid my own to beat,  
    And share commingling heat;  
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart. . . .  
    Nigh and nigh draws the chase  
        With unperturbéd pace,  
    Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;  
    And past those noiséd Feet  
A Voice comes yet more fleet—  
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me." . . .

    Now of that long pursuit  
    Comes on at hand the bruit;  
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
    "And is thy earth so marred,  
    Shattered in shard on shard?  
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!  
    Strange, piteous, futile thing,  
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
Seeing none but I makes much of naught" (He said),  
    "And human love needs human meriting:  
    How hast thou merited—  
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
    Alack, thou knowest not  
How little worthy of any love thou art!  
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee  
    Save Me, save only Me?  
All which I took from thee I did but take,  
    Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
    All which thy child's mistake  
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:  
    Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"  
    Halts by me that footfall:  
    Is my gloom, after all,  
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
    "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
    I am He whom thou seekest!  
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."  
Francis Thompson (1859-1907)

---

# Hosea and "The Wrath of the Lamb"

by Richard Fredericks

LOGOS

**Theme:** The book of Hosea, with its graphic love story of wanton Gomer and faithful Hosea, embodies many basic truths of the gospel. Many centuries later these precious truths still are applicable to our spiritual and family life.

There is a strange passage in Revelation 6 where the wicked of the earth, including kings, commanders, and the strong, cry out to the mountains and the rocks to hide them from the "wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:16, NASB). The wrath of a lamb?! Picture a lamb for a minute. Not exactly the epitome of terror in the natural flow of things, right? Yet somehow this Lamb strikes a suicidal fear in the hearts of the mightiest and most self-sufficient of earth's multitudes.

In the Old Testament a lamb offered for sins was the symbol of sacrificial love, the promise of forgiveness from God to all who turned to Him as Lord and Saviour, based on the suffering of Another in their place (see Isa. 53:4-7). For the early Christians that promise was gloriously fulfilled on a wind-swept hill called Calvary: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29, NASB). In Christ the way was opened to God and "whosoever will" could come (see Heb. 10:12-22). In Christ, God stooped low in utter humility and total self-sacrifice to save every sinner who recognized his need and repented of his rebellion.

But our verse in Revelation 6:16 concerning "the wrath of the Lamb" reveals the other side of Christ's death on the cross. For from that cross flows *both* mercy and judgment; *both* redemption and condemnation. In other words, God's love will never let go of those who respond to it; but that same love brings eternal damnation in the hour of judgment to all those who remain steadfastly self-absorbed, self-sufficient, and indifferent to such grace. Judgment comes to every person—either at Calvary or in the end—depending on how we respond to the Lamb now.

This is what Hosea's message is all about. It prophesies of:

A. The magnitude and sufficiency of God's unearned, undeserved love offered to all—"For there is no savior besides Me" (Hosea 13:4, NASB).

B. The reality that we *can* refuse God's call and neglect so great a salvation—"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (4:17, NASB).

C. The fatal danger of determined and proud self-sufficiency—"None of them calls on Me" (7:7, NASB).

Review Hosea's message for a minute. It begins with the autobiography of his marriage: "The Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take to yourself a wife of harlotry'" (1:2-11, NASB). How much God trusted this man Hosea. He called the prophet to be, not simply His messenger, but a symbol of Himself. God told Hosea to marry a prostitute and then model, through his relationship with her, God's own faithfulness, forgiveness, and determined love for the harlot nation of Israel. Hosea

---

Richard Fredericks is assistant professor of religion at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.



---

becomes a parable of that self-giving love that would take Christ to His death for the very sins of His crucifiers.

So Hosea took to himself Gomer and made her his wife, the mother of his children. But true to her character she played the harlot again and again, leaving Hosea for lovers she thought were better, who promised everything and held out gifts that glittered. But they only used her and abused her, leaving her desolate and cheapened. Hosea came and took her back (read chapter 2). He offered her genuine love, but this was a gift her uncommitted heart was slow to understand, and soon there came other lovers, with other promises, and gifts that seemed so bright—and Gomer left Hosea again. And again, the so-called lovers' promises ended in cruelty and poverty of spirit, and their love turned out to be only self-seeking lust.

This time, when they grew tired of her, Gomer's "lovers" bound her as a slave to be auctioned off as nothing more than discarded merchandise. The day came, and Gomer stood on the auction block before a crowd of uncaring eyes—a slave of sin—wishing she could return to the freedom and love of the man she had rejected. But when the bidding begins, a voice rings out above the crowd that silences all others (read chapter 3). Hosea, in faithfulness, had come to redeem his unfaithful wife and renew with her a covenant of lifelong fidelity: "You shall stay with me for many days. You shall not play the harlot, . . . so I will also be toward you" (3:1-3, NASB).

This type of love, says God to Israel throughout the remainder of Hosea's book, is but a shadow of the love I have for you: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel?" (11:8, NASB). "I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely" (14:4, NASB).

Yet God's absolute, unearned love does not equal unconditional indulgence. The historical setting of this book is the last days of the northern kingdom of Israel after a long succession of apostate kings. They had led people and even priests into idolatry, that is, into a life centered in the works of their own hands and the proud imagination of their own hearts. The nation had a long history of prosperity and abundance, but these gifts turned Israel from their Giver. They were a people too proud to bow, too busy to obey. They used God's mercy as a license for their sins of greed (12:8).

In the beginning Israel had gradually strayed from God, but as their arrogance grew they openly rebelled and stopped calling to God—and finally they "devis[ed] evil" against God (7:13-15). What began as indifference to God's love matured into antagonism against His will, for when the big God goes, the little gods come and rule the selfish heart with a vengeance. Faithfulness and kindness to one another were early casualties of the loss of knowledge of God (4:1); and idolatry (spiritual prostitution) led to gross immorality (the word *harlot* appears at least sixteen times; see 4:7-19). Israel never heeded Hosea's call, and shortly

---

---

after his death the entire nation fell to the sword or the chain of the cruel Assyrians.

Hosea shows us God's dilemma and our danger. When God gives rich gifts to His people our perpetual tendency is to become self-sufficient and turn from Him: "They became satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud; therefore, they forgot Me" says God (13:6, NASB). Hosea also shows us God's response. He allures, forgives, redeems, pleads, and warns—but only until that dark moment when His discerning voice must say of an individual or nation: "Their heart is faithless; now they must bear their guilt" (10:2, NASB).

There are two sides to the cross of Christ: The total gift of His righteous life and His total claim upon our unrighteous life. Either we receive both in Christ, or we have received neither. This is the message of Hosea. Therefore "you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always" (Hosea 12:6, NIV). Listen friend, "how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3, NIV).

"For God so loved . . . that he gave."

John 3:16

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also  
so to walk, even as he walked."

John 2:6

# Adultery—the Other Side of the Story

by Graham Bingham

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
John 8:1-11

Hosea's heart bled in gut-wrenching pain with each of his wife's flirtatious expeditions. When would Gomer stop her adulterous meandering that brought so much hurt to the family? How could this happen in a minister's home? What was Hosea to do? How was he to handle it?

Aware that the Bible and the church *do* recognize divorce on grounds of adultery, what would we do in the instance of Gomer? What would Jesus do? What kind of attitude does Jesus wish a Christian spouse to manifest for a fallen partner? Hosea, Joshua, and Jesus are derived from the same root, and mean "Salvation" (cf. Matt. 1:21).

Hosea forgave Gomer and took her back into the family. Jesus forgives and receives the fallen back into God's family when they repent.

"The woman [caught in adultery] had stood before Jesus, cowering with fear. His words, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone,' had come to her as a death sentence. She dared not lift her eyes to the Saviour's face, but silently awaited her doom. In astonishment she saw her accusers depart speechless and confounded; then those words of hope fell upon her ear, 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more.' Her heart was melted, and casting herself at the feet of Jesus, she sobbed out her grateful love, and with bitter tears confessed her sins. . . .

"For this erring woman the world had only contempt and scorn, but the Sinless One pitied her weakness, and reached to her a helping hand. While the hypocritical Pharisees denounced, Jesus bade her, 'Go, and sin no more.'

"Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. The greater the sinner's guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. With His own blood He has signed the emancipation papers of the race. . . .

"Today He is standing at the altar of mercy, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Whosoever will, may take hold of God's strength, and make peace with Him, and He will make peace."<sup>\*</sup>

## REACT

1. When we commit spiritual adultery is this sufficient grounds to end our marriage relationship with Jesus? Give some theological reasons for your answer.

2. How does awareness of your own sins make you a different person?

3. What can we learn from Jesus about distinguishing the sin from the sinner?

<sup>\*</sup>*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 89, 90.

---

Graham Bingham is editor of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

# God's Inability

John W. Webster

The book of Hosea seems deeply troubling to many. Not only does it portray Yahweh giving rather strange commands with respect to the prophet's personal life, but it also depicts a view of God's character that seems almost "too good to be true." No matter how unfaithful Gomer is, Hosea is still to love her. And by implication, no matter what we do, God will never reject us. Now on the one hand we do want to declare that God is loving, full of mercy and grace, and "slow to anger." But on the other, we feel uneasy about giving the impression that God is *too* loving. That we may somehow forget that God (as holy, just, and good) is also portrayed as a God of judgment and wrath. Isn't it possible to presume too long upon God's love and mercy? Could it be that God is *very* patient, but that ultimately even God has His limits? Is God faithful to His own promises (be it to Israel or to us) *forever*, or is there a point at which God reluctantly has to abandon His declared purposes? Is God's love unconditional, or is it in the final analysis dependent on our response, and limited by our behavior? I think that while all would probably want to reply that God's love is indeed unconditional, most people sooner or later start thinking and talking about limits and conditions to God's acceptance and love.

But what are we to make of this strange text (Hosea 11:8, 9, my own translation and emphasis): "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim [cities that perished with Sodom and Gomorrah, Deuteronomy 29:23]? My heart is turned within me, my pityings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: *for I am God, and not man*; the Holy One in your midst, and not a destroyer." Something more than just a promise of continued mercy, seems to be at stake here:

"What is the meaning of this inability of God, of His pityings, of the holiness in which He will not forsake His mercy to an ungrateful people, because He is God and not man? Does it not signify that the love with which He loved this people in its youth and called His son out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1) was a love which according to the witness of this prophet belonged integrally to His essence, so that He could deny it only as He denied His very nature as God?"\*

Could it be that Hosea is stating implicitly, what we read about explicitly in the New Testament—that *God is Love*? That is, not merely that God is very loving, or that love is one of the most important attributes of God, but that love is God's mode of being—God is essentially self-giving love. Perhaps we are too quick to think that 'love' and 'justice,' or 'grace' and 'holiness,' are opposites to be held in some sort of tension. Perhaps, both mercy and judgment are but forms of God's love. Perhaps, God's power is the power of love, and God's love the form of His power. Then the old dilemma discussed by the scholastics of the Middle Ages—is God able to create a stone heavier than He can lift?—is not so much an exercise in idle specula-

## EVIDENCE

Key text:  
Hosea 11:8, 9

---

John W. Webster is currently pursuing graduate studies in theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

---

tion as it is an expression of a misapprehension of the omnipotence of God. Perhaps God's omnipotence should be understood not so much as the naked possession and/or exercise of all power, but as God's faithfulness to His own nature—the inability of God—that is His inability to be other than what He is: Love.

#### REACT

1. Can you think of ways that, even in human experience, genuine love may be consistent with acts that on the surface seem to be rather unloving?

2. What are some of the ways in which it is possible to think of God's love as unlimited and unconditional, without having to accept the notion that human behavior and attitudes do not count in this life? Does such thinking lead to the conclusion that in the end all will be saved?

“God  
could  
have

reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work. In order to enter into His joy,—of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice—we must participate in His labors for their redemption.”

The Desire of Ages, p. 142.



# “How Can I Give You Up?”

by John W. Webster

It seems to be a strange paradox of human relationships that if you want to change someone, the only way to bring it about is to stop trying to change them. None of us work well under duress, while most of us flourish in an atmosphere of acceptance. Both the story of Hosea and passages like Romans 8:31-39 give moving accounts of God's unconditional acceptance, while the Gospels portray Jesus as the Man who was unconditionally *for* others. But true unconditional acceptance is hard to grasp, and even harder to put into practice ourselves. It is not easy really to believe that God accepts us unconditionally, and it is frustratingly difficult to accept unlovely persons without becoming callous or blinded to that which makes them unlovely.

We need to *learn* to love unconditionally. And at least part of the purpose that underlies the four fundamental institutions that structure our social life—friendship, marriage, family, and church—would seem to provide the necessary context for us to develop the practice of unconditional acceptance. This may mean learning to accept friends for what they are; respecting the individuality of a child; loving a spouse “warts and all;” relating to parents who are not above hypocrisy; and extending Christian fellowship to a church member whose personal theological views differ from your own. It is by struggling to practice unconditional love that we begin to understand what it means to be loved unconditionally by God. Here are some pointers that may help you as you struggle with one or more of these relationships:

**1. Unconditional acceptance is not an exercise in unreality.** It is not a question of trying to love everything about everyone. Neither is it an attempt to see through the person to what they could be, or to see Jesus in their place, or to abstract to some ideal humanity (however helpful these strategies may be at times). It is rather the genuine acceptance of another for what they are, in spite of what they have done.

**2. Unconditional acceptance is not some sort of tactic to get what you want.** The point is to learn to accept and value another as they are now, while being fully aware of what they should still become. It is only in the context of acceptance that one is free to become what one is not yet.

**3. Unconditional acceptance does not mean that we become soft on evil.** There is nothing “soft” about loving unconditionally. It takes true strength of character.

**4. Don't become distressed if it seems out of your reach.** Unconditional acceptance is something that we can experience only from God. What we practice will be only something of an approximation—relative unconditional acceptance.

## HOW TO

Key text:  
Roman 8:31-39

---

John W. Webster is currently pursuing graduate studies in theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

## Idolatry: Where Are Our Golden Cows?

by Richard Fredericks

### OPINION

Key text:  
Exodus 20:1-3

When Hosea cries out against Samaria to throw out its "calf-idol," a derogatory description of the statue of a golden bull that symbolized the power and fertility of the cult of Baal worship (see Hosea 8:5-7), it might be easy for a careless modern reader to feel safe from such foolishness, since no bull shrines reside on the lawn or in the living room. But notice the verses that precede the dirge against bowing to bull statues: " 'Israel cries out to me, "O our God, we acknowledge you!" But Israel has rejected what is good. . . . With their silver and gold they make idols for themselves to their own destruction' " (Hosea 8:2-4, NIV).

What is the sin of idolatry? It is not necessarily (or even usually, as the Old Testament confirms) disbelieving that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of the Exodus and King David, exists. The idolaters of Israel and Judah all assented to that reality. No, idolatry is much more a matter of *worship* than theological awareness; it involves prostitution of the affections more than ignorance in the head. An idolater may know God is there and yet choose to worship something else as the center of his existence.

Paul put it very succinctly in Romans 1:21-25. Read those verses and ponder them. The great apostle says the essence of sin, what he calls "the lie" (1:25, NASB margin), is the tendency of man to worship the creature rather than the Creator; in other words, to put himself at the center of his universe and live as if he is autonomous and self-sufficient. Emil Brunner echoed Romans 1:25 when he declared: "Man's arrogance consists in believing that he can look after himself better than God can, that he knows what is good for him better than his Creator."\*

Notice again, the issue is not what you profess, what denomination you belong to, whether you go to church (read Jeremiah 7), or whether you have correct doctrines. Each of these things is vital in determining the issue, but in the end they are not the issue. The issue is worship, and the root word in worship is worth—we worship that which has the highest worth or place in our life. Every external can seem right, and a man can still be filled with the spirit of antichrist.

Caiaphas and his fellow priests proved that; they silenced Jesus for such a noble cause: to preserve the organization—God's organization. Then there were the Pharisees: they crucified Christ in defense of their own twisted concept of the Law, the Sabbath, and the Spirit of Prophecy (Moses). But in reality they were all idolaters bent on preserving the status quo in order to preserve the center of their universe: their own prosperity, power, and popularity.

Idolatry is the sin of pride. It gives the highest worth to our own success and security, above faithfulness to God and trust in God. It is our natural habit of worrying more about impressing men than being loyal to God. It is a sin all of us alternately struggle against or embrace every day; especially those of us who are religious, for the most subtle

---

Richard Fredericks is assistant professor of religion at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

---

and fatal idolatry is that religious activity done to prove our righteousness rather than as a response to God's saving righteousness in Christ. *Idolatry is our intense preoccupation with ourselves, even our religious selves.* It is the practical absence of God in the heart; a life focused more on who I am than on who God is.

Idolatry deceives, most of all the idolater himself. But here is a test; idolatry breeds both immorality and greed (Hosea 4:13; 12:8; Rev. 9:20, 21). The values that find their source in God are not long maintained within the privacy of our own inner thoughts once God is rejected as Lord. When the true God goes, the gods of materialism and lust enthrone themselves—especially materialism. Jesus probably talked more about basing life's decisions on money and the search for prosperity than any other topic. Babylon is described in Revelation 18:12, 13 as that spirit in humanity that puts gold and silver first and the souls of men last. There is only one cure for idolatry. It is to live with a fresh and personal understanding of Christ and Him crucified as the source of our security and the model for our lives:

"What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Rom. 8:31,32, NIV).

\* Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1939), p. 131.

Lesson 10, May 29—June 4

---

# Laurels of Love

"Who is wise? He will realize these things. Who is discerning? He will understand them. The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them" (Hosea 14:9, NIV).



# Catching My Breath

by Trudy J. Morgan

An unexpected chill of nervousness gripped me as I sat on the hard upright chairs between my mother and my father. "Don't be silly," I chided myself. "It's nothing to be afraid of." To soothe my jittery nerves, I looked out the window at the solid gray on the street, the pinkish blur of the building on the other side, the vague illegible letters hanging above the door. Then the man with the clipboard called my name.

"Do they fit right?" my mother asked anxiously.

"They pinch behind my ears. A little bit." I stared at my unfamiliar face in the mirror.

"I'll have that fixed for you in a jiffy," the man said. And he did. My first pair of glasses now fit perfectly, but they still rode awkwardly on my nose and ears.

"Let's see what your dad thinks." My mother led me back into the waiting room.

But before I saw my father, my brand-new eyes were caught—riveted—by the scene outside the optical-store window.

Where before had stood a building of undefined pinkish-gray there now rose a wall of separate, speckled pink tiles. The sign plastered on top clearly read "Murray's Shoe Store." Barely able to control my excitement, I rushed outside to inspect the street. No longer a solid stretch of gray, it sparkled with millions of impossibly tiny stones and cracks.

My face was glued to the window that whole ride home. Trees! I'd never really seen trees before—never seen that they were made up of shining clusters of leaves. Actually to see each spearlike blade of grass as our car sped past seemed incredibly, impossibly wonderful.

Over the next weeks things I had never known were there for the seeing—the weave of fabric, the peeling of house paint—made me catch my breath in awe at the amazing new world all around me. I sat in church for many Sabbaths slipping my glasses on and off, comparing the pastor's clear, sharp eyes and nose with the blank, featureless blob that had stood in the pulpit before.

Now I slip on my glasses or pop in my contacts first thing in the morning, taking for granted the miraculous world of 20/20 vision.

There have been many "first times" in my life, when the world has suddenly become as clear and sharp as the street outside the optical shop, and I've gasped in wonder and awe. First falling in love, first sitting in a university classroom, first knowing that a wonderful, caring God was with me in the everyday of my existence. And, sadly but inevitably, loving, learning, living in God, have all become, with the years, as habitual as putting on my glasses.

In Hosea 2:14-23, God promises to take Israel back to her "first love" experience with Him, back to the desert where the awe and wonder of a loving Creator first made her catch her breath in amaze-

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Hosea 2:14-23

---

Trudy J. Morgan teaches English and history at Kingsway College, Oshawa, Canada.



---

ment, where once again "she will sing as in the days of her youth" (verse 15, NIV).

Refreshing. Renewal. The world made new again.

This Sabbath in church I'll take off my glasses and look again at the fuzzy preacher up front. And I'll ask God to give me again the gift of fresh vision, the joy of first love.

**"I Didn't  
Know  
Where  
the  
Money  
Was  
Going**

So I didn't start a Sabbath School Investment project. Then God reminded me that He would take care of the money and send the blessings where they belonged. So I invested my talent for teaching Hawaiian guitar. That year I earned \$205 for investment. I wonder how many I deprived from hearing the gospel during those years I neglected to get involved!"  
Church Member, Citra SDA Church, Florida

# Promised to God

by Jennifer Morgan

LOGOS

**Theme:** God planned great things for His people. Instead of following His plan, they went deeply into apostasy. But the day is coming when God's plan will triumph. In the great finale: "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people" (Hosea 2:23).

## 1. Remembered Promises (read Hosea 2:14-15)

*"There she will sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt" (Hosea 2:15, NIV).*

An arid, empty wasteland, howling winds over dry undergrowth; that's my picture of a desert wilderness. Depressed, discouraged, doubting, tested, and cynical; that's my concept of Israel's "wilderness experience." It was no "trip down Lover's Lane," certainly not a "romantic evening with just the two of us." But that is how Hosea describes Israel's desert experience.

"Therefore I am now going to allure her . . ." Hosea writes of his fornicating wife Gomer (verse 14, NIV). "Darling, I have a romantic evening planned," God tells His estranged wife, Israel. "I want us to get back together—Beloved, let's go back to the desert!" Sounds pretty alluring to me!

Israel didn't think too highly of that desert experience—testing, hunger, crying babies, and sand in the eyes. But it was also a time of first love, unexpected miracles and a love dependency on her new husband (Jer. 31:2; Deut. 29:5, 6; Jer. 31:32). It was a time of promise—a promised betrothal of Israel with her lover—God (Deut. 5:6; Jer. 31:32).

The fashionably dressed couple stands in the kitchen of the dingy apartment. Their fur coats and virgin-wool suits clash with the gray walls and unhinged doors. They have returned to celebrate their thirtieth anniversary. They laugh, they cry, they embrace, and they remember their first love.

The second image used is that of a vineyard (Hosea 2:15, compare with Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 31:4-5; Matt. 21:33-43). In Matthew, Jesus describes Israel as a vineyard, taken away from her original tenant (the Jewish religious leaders), and given to people who will produce her fruit (the new Israel—Christ's followers). Isaiah also pictures Israel as a vineyard, destroyed by God. "What more could have been done for My vineyard . . . ?" cries God, the frustrated Farmer, "When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?" (Isa. 5:4, NIV). But in Hosea the destroyed vineyards are restored whole to Israel.

Image Number Three: Israel and "The Valley of Trouble," the Valley of Achor. Joshua described the broken covenant between God and Israel (Joshua 7:24-26). It was God, the protective Husband, who had saved Israel, and pushed the walls of Jericho down. Running toward the city, the cheering Israelite army had devoted all captured precious metals to God. It was the soldier Achan who stole, and it was his family who harboured one Babylonian robe, five pounds of silver, and one and

---

Jennifer Morgan, a religion major from Andrews University, was visiting her cousin Trudy Morgan when she wrote this article.

---

a quarter pounds of gold. They had broken Israel's promise with God, and the place of their execution was named the "Valley of Trouble."

But Hosea, in chapter 2 verse 15, describes this valley of broken promises as a valley of hope, a valley of new dreams. As Miriam and the women sang on the banks of the Red Sea (Ex. 15:21), so Israel shall sing in that valley of broken promises.

*What are the tests of your life that have proven to be the blessings in your relationship with God? Do we have to suffer to know God better?*

## **2. Broken Promises (read Hosea 1:4, 5; 2:9-13)**

*"Yet this I hold against you; you have forsaken your first love" (Rev. 2:4, NIV).*

The first-born son, a healthy, screaming, baby boy, is usually reason for rejoicing and celebration. Yet the house is quiet, the wife is crying, the husband reproachful. The husband says, "His name is Jezreel" (see Hosea 1:4, 5).

In the Valley of Jezreel was a beautiful vineyard, lovingly planted by its pleased owner, Naboth. In 1 Kings 21, read about that vineyard. Read about the jealous king who couldn't buy it, the queen who arranged Naboth's death for it, the prophet who placed a curse on it (verse 19). In 2 Kings 9, read about Jehu, the man anointed to execute judgment. The king's son is killed, the idolatrous queen slain, her children executed, her pagan priests massacred. All because of the beautiful vineyard in the Valley of Jezreel.

"'Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away'" (Hosea 4:3a, NIV). In the Hebrew mind, when evil was done (or Israel broke her covenant with God), the land cried out in mourning, produce failed, and famine prevailed (compare Jer. 4:28; 3:2, 3; Joel 1:10; Isa. 5:6).

The boy, Jezreel, was named after a land cursed when Israel cheated on her God. He lived, a growing symbol of Israel's broken promises, and the land of Jezreel cried out in mourning.

*If we are living in the last days, what does the Seventh-day Adventist Church need to reform to be truly the remnant, and return to its first love? What do you need to change to return to your early Christian experience? Are you still seeking a first-love relationship with God?*

## **3. Renewed Promises (read Hosea 2:18-23)**

*"I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him" (2 Cor. 11:2b, NIV).*

But the promise will not always remain broken. "'In that day . . . I will respond to the skies,'" declares the Lord (Hosea 2:21, NIV). The land responds to the earth, and the earth to the grain, the wine, and the

---

---

oil. Abundance has returned, order has been restored, despair is gone. God has put new life into His once-dead marriage. He has taken His bride back to the desert, where they first became engaged, and they are starting all over again (Jer. 31:31-33).

“ ‘In that day,’ declares the Lord, ‘you will call me “my husband”; you will no longer call me “my master” ’ ” (Hosea 2:16, NIV). It is no longer a business contract, with the employee complying to the wishes of the employer. It is a marriage contract; the wife and the husband choose to serve each other.

God repeats His marriage vows. “ ‘I will betroth you to me forever’ ” (verse 19, NIV). A betrothal of righteousness, justice, love, and compassion.

*Is God's redemption still creating order from chaos in nature—or was that just a figure of speech?*

**“T**here is means enough in hands of believers to amply sustain the work in all its departments without embarrassing any, if all would bear their proportional part.”

*Testimonies to the Church, vol. 3, p. 410.*

# Restored

by Ralph R. Janes

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Amos 9:13-15

In symbolic language Hosea set before the ten tribes God's plan of restoring to every penitent soul who would unite with His church on earth, the blessing granted Israel in the days of their loyalty to Him in the Promised Land.

Referring to Israel as one to whom He longed to show mercy, the Lord declared, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi ["My husband," margin]; and shalt call me no more Baali ["My lord," margin]. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name" (Hosea 2:14-17).

"In the last days of this earth's history, God's covenant with His commandment-keeping people is to be renewed. 'In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord' [verses 18-20]."<sup>1</sup>

"In that day' 'the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, . . . shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.' Isaiah 10:20. From 'every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people' there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, 'Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come.' They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will 'worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.' They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God's mercy. Obedient to the divine requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept 'the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Revelation 14:6, 7, 12."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Prophets and Kings*,  
p. 299.  
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 299, 300.

---

Ralph R. Janes, an ordained minister, is president of Kingsway College, Oshawa, Canada.



# Great Expectations

by B. Ford

In His promise to make Israel "the head, and not the tail," God clearly shows His commitment to nothing short of excellence. No child of God will ever have to live with inferiority. However, like any plan to rebuild, His covenant requires commitment and, since the covenant promises ultimate results, it admits of nothing less than ultimate commitment from both parties.

God has already demonstrated the overwhelming strength of His commitment, but "ultimate" is a word that humans find very difficult to bring to reality. What is the essence of the commitment we need to make? Probably the best English word for it is *discipleship*. The intensity of commitment implied in discipleship seems to have faded, been obscured, and severely clouded. One of the most vivid descriptions of the true meaning of discipleship is given by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Cost of Discipleship*. Using the example of Jesus calling Levi (Mark 2:14), he writes:

"The call goes forth, and is at once followed by the response of obedience. . . .

"Beside Jesus nothing has any significance. He alone matters.

"When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to an exclusive attachment to His person. The grace of His call bursts all the bonds of legalism. It is a gracious call, a gracious commandment. It transcends the difference between the law and the gospel. Christ calls, the disciple follows: That is grace and commandment in one. 'I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy commandments' (Ps. 119:45).

"Discipleship means adherence to Christ, and, because Christ is the object of that adherence, it must take the form of discipleship. An abstract Christology, a doctrinal system, a general religious knowledge on the subject of grace or on the forgiveness of sins, render discipleship superfluous, and in fact they positively exclude any idea of discipleship whatever, and are essentially inimical to the whole conception of following Christ. With an abstract idea it is possible to enter into a relation of formal knowledge, to become enthusiastic about it, and perhaps even to put it into practice; but it can never be followed in personal obedience. . . . In such a religion there is trust in God, but no following of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

Clearly discipleship cannot be merely a vocation; it must be an obsession. God calls us to follow whatever the consequences. He says very bluntly that mild enthusiasm and hesitance makes Him sick like lukewarm water in the mouth. The business of discipleship is a very heavy challenge.

This article is not meant to be a harangue. It is simply something that my little voice says very clearly to me as I read Hosea. The sweet part of the covenant is what God offers. As C. S. Lewis says, "Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."<sup>2</sup> How can you say No?

**EVIDENCE**  
**Key text:**  
**Deuteronomy**  
**28:13,14**

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: The Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.), pp. 61-64.  
2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: The Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.), p. 190.

**B. Ford teaches computer science and mathematics at Canadian Union College.**

## Re-ignition

by Kirsten J. Bissell

### HOW TO

Key text:  
Hosea 14:9

Tony and I had enjoyable dates for a while. Lately, however, I've been confused about my feelings for him. Before, I couldn't bear being apart from him more than a few hours. Now it doesn't seem to matter if we don't see each other for several days. He calls and wants to go out, but sometimes I'm just too busy or not interested. Then, too, perhaps it has something to do with the fact that I've been going out on my own and enjoying myself without him. Let's face it—I've fallen out of love and don't know how or even whether I want to regain my feelings for him.

So it was with the children of Israel during Hosea's time. Despite the wonderful promises of peace and prosperity in Hosea 2:14-23, they went their own way and lost their first love.

But it isn't a problem unique to the Israelites. At times we struggle against becoming apathetic or losing our desire to maintain a relationship with God.

If you find you have slipped into such a state, there are three simple steps that can help put things back into perspective:

1. Realize that, for whatever reason, your relationship with God isn't what you wish it to be. Then make a conscious decision to recapture the essence of that first experience.

2. Determine which mediums best draw you closer to God and renew your faith in and commitment to Him. There are as many different possibilities as there are people on earth, so don't limit yourself to what is thought standard for everyone. What strengthens someone else's relationship with God may not necessarily have the same effect on you.

3. Persevere. Remember, it requires time and effort to reestablish a relationship. No meaningful relationship with God can be maintained if it is one-sided. You must do your part to keep the lines of communication open.

Above all, realize that, even as you turn your faltering steps back toward God, He is one step ahead of you, ready to reach out and steady you as a therapist reaches out to an accident victim learning to walk again.

### REACT

Is it realistic to expect your Christianity to be a continual honeymoon experience? In what ways is maturing love more rewarding than even honeymoon love?

---

Kirsten J. Bissell teaches French at Crawford Adventist Academy at Willowdale, Ontario, Canada.

# Back to the Fold

by Randy Hellman

**OPINION**  
**Key text:**  
**Hosea 2:14-23**

My 2-year-old son was standing by my wife's side in the bustling waiting area of a medical center in the middle of town while she was getting a prescription filled. She was keeping a close watch on him. She looked down after dealing with the pharmacist. Our son was gone! She dashed out into the lobby. She inquired of the people sitting there whether they had seen her son. Yes, he just went up the elevator. My wife was frantic. Thoughts raced through her head about losing our boy. She quickly took the elevator up and found him on the sixth floor, crying. She was ecstatic at recovering him. She wanted to scold him for leaving, but could only hug him and cry tears of gladness at finding him.

God is like that. God is anxiously crying out to us through the Holy Spirit, seeking to "find" each one of us ready for His return. God is deeply hurt when we run away from Him. He will provide us with protection, yet we choose to leave His presence. He is concerned about our eternal welfare. When we go astray we are choosing not to be God's people. But according to Hosea 2:14, God still has an unwavering love for His people, even when they have chosen apostasy. We, like my son, have many times not intentionally left God. We simply follow what seems good to us, and after following our own path, instead of God's, for our life, we find that we are far away from Him. Many people find themselves wondering where God is after they have wandered away from Him.

God is seeking to allure each of us to come into a close relationship with Him. He is unfailing in His forgiveness and will take us back no matter how unworthy we feel we may have become. He is anxious to bring us back to the fold. He is the Good Shepherd. He wants to bring us back to a close relationship with Him, even more than my wife wanted to find our temporarily lost child. Will you submit your life to Him?

---

Randy Hellman teaches science at Kingsway College, Oshawa, Canada.

# A Runaway Slave

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (Gal. 6:1, NIV).



# Priceless Friendship

by Jennith Lewis

It is a pleasure to receive encouraging and important letters from friends. Paul, while in prison for Christ, wrote a most significant letter to his personal friend Philemon many years ago, which was filled with words of encouragement. Philemon was an active leader in the early Christian church well known for his good works. Paul wrote to Philemon to ask him to receive back as a Christian brother his runaway slave named Onesimus, who had become a Christian convert. Paul had influenced both men to become Christians through his ministry, and he loved them both dearly as friends. Paul penned his words very carefully in his letter of intercession for Onesimus, who was being sent back to Philemon by Paul in order to make right the wrong he had done by running away.

*The Living Bible* paraphrases Paul's greeting to Philemon this way, "May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you his blessings and his peace. I always thank God when I am praying for you, dear Philemon, because I keep hearing of your love and trust in the Lord Jesus and in his people. And I pray that as you share your faith with others it will grip their lives, too, as they see the wealth of good things in you that come from Christ Jesus. I myself have gained much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because your kindness has so often refreshed the hearts of God's people" (Philemon 3-7, TLB).

This greeting expressed Paul's sincere affection and appreciation for Philemon's love and faith in God, and his kindness to others. Paul received comfort and joy from this friend for whom he prayed. Paul used tact in complimenting Philemon with words of encouragement before making his intercessory request for Onesimus. This approach was the act of a priceless friend.

Many who are slaves to sin today need Christian friends who will intercede for them with words and deeds as did Paul. The world needs to be told that man's most precious friend and intercessor is Jesus Christ, who serves as a "go-between" for mankind before the throne of God. Christians need to show more love and concern for others in need and for all who seek salvation from wrong acts committed in this life. Let us ask Christ to help us to become a priceless friend to others. Grenville Kleiser has written a poem entitled "My Daily Prayer" which says:

"If I can do some good today,  
 If I can serve along life's way,  
 If I can something helpful say,  
 Lord, show me how.  
 "If I can right a human wrong,  
 If I can help to make one  
     strong,  
 If I can cheer with smile or  
     song,  
 Lord, show me how.  
 "If I can aid one in distress,  
 If I can make a burden less,  
 If I can spread more  
     happiness,  
 Lord, show me how."\*

**INTRO-  
 DUCTION**  
**Scripture:**  
**Philemon 1-7**

\* Charles L. Wallis, ed., *The Treasure Chest* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 123.

**Jennith Lewis is the director of library services at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.**



# Church and Intercession

by Dr. Agniel Samson

## LOGOS

**Theme:** Paul wrote a loving and tactful letter to Philemon in an effort to assure Onesimus, his runaway slave, of a wholehearted reception back into Philemon's household.

Philemon is the shortest of the Pauline Epistles. Of a personal character, it does not feature any doctrinal teaching. Throughout the epistle beats the tender and affectionate heart of the apostle.

### 1. A Prisoner of Jesus Christ

As was usual in those days, Paul opened the letter by introducing himself. In most of his epistles he has appended to his name the titles of "servant" (slave) or "apostle." But writing to Philemon, he presented himself as a "prisoner of Jesus Christ" (verse 1).

Paul used a genitive that expressed origin, possession, and relation. The apostle was a "prisoner" because he had been "arrested" by Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. He was also a "prisoner" belonging to Jesus Christ. Finally, he was a "prisoner" owing to his rapport with Jesus Christ, as a minister of the gospel.

That phrase expresses Paul's conviction of the meaning of his imprisonment. It was part of his apostolic mission. Paul always saw his mission in terms of participation in Christ's sufferings. Writing to the Colossian church, he spoke of his sufferings as filling up Christ's afflictions (Col. 1:24). It is evident that Paul was not ascribing an atoning dimension to his own tribulations. Neither was he implying that Christ's expiatory ministry was insufficient. Paul was rather affirming that, because of his role in the preaching ministry, he was also called to share Christ's passion. Jesus Christ's mission passed through martyrdom, but culminated, beyond the grave, in the establishment and development of the church, and the eschatological glorification of both the Messiah and His people.

It is true that Paul said elsewhere that he was a prisoner (cf. Col. 4:10, 18), but this is the only time he appended such a title to his name. The reason is obvious. He expected that to lend "weight to any suggestion he might make."\*

*Have you ever felt like a prisoner? Explain. If Paul were writing to you, what advice would he probably give you about your prison experience?*

### 2. Address

The Epistle is addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the whole church of Colossae.

A. Philemon. He is mentioned only here in the New Testament. Nothing is explicitly said about his role in the church. The apposition "our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer" (verse 1) is too vague to reveal exactly to what extent he was Paul's co-worker. One thing is

---

Agniel Samson is associate professor of biblical languages and New Testament at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

---

certain; he was a member of the church, well considered by Paul. Probably the Colossian congregation met in his house. It was only during the third century that the Christians began to build temples. Before that time, the Christian communities would meet in houses belonging to well-to-do Christians.

B. Apphia. She was probably Philemon's wife. Would not the mention of her name say something about Paul's high respect for Christian women? The apostle acknowledged Apphia's right in the making of decisions that would affect not only a slave but also the whole church.

C. Archippus. He was perhaps Philemon and Apphia's son. The appellation (fellow soldier) has led most scholars to conclude that he was then the pastor of the Colossian church. Paul knew that, as a minister, Archippus would certainly experience the same compassion that he personally felt, and would intercede with his father for the runaway slave.

D. The church. It is surprising that such a personal matter had been brought to the attention of the whole church. However, a closer look shows that:

- a. Such a procedure was in harmony with Paul's ecclesiology. According to the apostle, the church is a body, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-27). Whatever affects one of her members disturbs the whole system.
- b. Paul is calling the whole church to exert her intercessory ministry in favor of Onesimus.
- c. The apostle knows that the church must preach its message without any hindrance. Philemon was a very influential member of the church. He was even identified with the Christian community. It was to be expected that his attitude would be of great consequence for the witnessing mission of the church (verse 6).
- d. Consequently, the rapport between church members is not a private matter. It has to be focused in its proper perspective, the perspective of the ecclesiastical community.

*Do you think it is important that Christians in the church reconcile their disputes? Why or why not? Should disputes in the church be settled by the courts or legal system? Why or why not?*

### 3. Practical Applications

The Epistle to Philemon is not an antiquated piece irrelevant to modern Christianity. Paul's concern for Onesimus, the runaway slave, tells us:

A. The relationship between members of the church should be characterized by love, forgiveness, and mutual acceptance.

---

---

B. The church has been commissioned to preach a saving message. Part of her redemptive mission is to perform an intercessory ministry in favor of the "heirs of salvation."

C. The members of the church form one body. Their togetherness should not be broken by the socio-cultural stratifications of the world. They are expected to show genuine and working "love and faith . . . toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints" (Philemon 5).

*How serious do you consider the offense committed by Onesimus? Does the fact that Onesimus has become a Christian lessen the seriousness of his offense? Why or why not? What does it tell you about Paul that he sends Onesimus to Philemon, in spite of his concern for Onesimus? What does this tell you about Christian ethics?*

\* Frank E. Gaebelin, ed.,  
*The Expositor's Bible  
Commentary*, (Grand  
Rapids: Zondervan,  
1978), vol. 11, p. 458.

# Use Tact, Not Flattery

by Bernard W. Benn

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Philemon 4, 5  
(TEV)

Tact is the wisdom to show sensitivity and considerateness in dealing with others. Tact is not to be confused with flattery, duplicity, or the insincere compliment. It is of divine origin<sup>1</sup> and should characterize the life of every consecrated Christian.<sup>2</sup> Christ exercised the greatest tact in His ministry, and He expects His followers to do likewise.

"Behold," said Jesus, 'I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' Christ Himself did not suppress one word of truth, but He spoke it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact, and thoughtful, kind attention in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He fearlessly denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity, but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes."<sup>3</sup>

In trying to bring about a reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus, Paul showed that he was not merely a great evangelist but a tactful minister, as well. "Paul made Onesimus the bearer of a letter to Philemon, in which, with his usual tact and kindness, the apostle pleaded the cause of the repentant slave and expressed a desire to retain his services in the future. The letter began with an affectionate greeting to Philemon as a friend and a fellow laborer."<sup>4</sup>

Paul knew the importance of a sincere compliment and a word of encouragement. He said, "Brother Philemon, every time I pray, I mention you and give thanks to my God. For I hear of your love for all of God's people and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus" (Philemon 4, 5, TEV). Paul was not trying to soften Philemon just to make him more willing to grant the favor he was about to ask of him. Paul was truly thankful to God for Philemon's Christian spirit, and he was about to appeal to that spirit on behalf of Onesimus. That was tact, not flattery. Ellen White warns strongly against flattery:

"Flattery is a part of the world's policy, but it is no part of Christ's policy. Through flattery poor human beings, full of frailty and infirmities, come to think that they are efficient and worthy, and become puffed up in their fleshly mind. They become intoxicated with the idea that they possess ability beyond what they do have, and their religious experience becomes unbalanced. Unless in the providence of God they shall be turned from these deceptions, and become converted, and learn the A B C of religion in the school of Christ, they will lose their souls."<sup>5</sup>

## REACT

How can we learn to draw the line between encouragement and a sincere compliment, and the flattery that leads into false paths?

1. See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 184.
2. See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 667.
3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 353.
4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 456.
5. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 304.

Bernard W. Benn is chairman of the English and communication department at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

# Runaway Slave

by James H. Melancon

## EVIDENCE

Key text:  
Philemon 1:1-7

The letter is a private correspondence from Paul to Philemon. This fact gives it a special significance. But more significant, while Paul doubtless wrote many private letters, this is the only one that has survived. And the church of Colossae thought it sufficiently important to preserve it for inclusion in sacred Scripture. It must be asked: What was the nature of its importance? A clue may be found in the salutation.

In the salutation Paul departs from his customary use of *apostolos* (apostle) and *doulos* (servant-slave) and uses the word *desmios*. *Desmios* suggests the condition of one who is a captive bound in chains for whom there is no possibility of running away. While Paul does use the word elsewhere at least four times, it is only in Philemon that he uses it in the salutation.

By using of *desmios* Paul may be reminding Philemon of a slavery they share as Christians that is more binding than the slavery of Onesimus. Some credibility exists for this opinion in that Paul uses *doulos* in the only reference he makes to the slavery of Onesimus.

There is a strong suggestion that the literary structure of the salutation artfully classifies both Paul and Timothy and also Philemon as prisoners in chains for Christ Jesus. If this is allowed, then it might be said that in the salutation Paul first announces himself and Timothy as Christian workers and hence prisoners in chains for Christ Jesus. Then he reminds Philemon that he too is a Christian worker and hence a prisoner in chains for Christ Jesus. Apphia, presumably Philemon's wife, and Archippus, perhaps his son and probably the pastor of the congregation that met in the home of Philemon, are also addressed. If the letter is in the form of an ancient letter of commendation, as it has been suggested, Apphia and Archippus, serve to validate Paul's commendation of Philemon, and Philemon would be obliged to be open and receptive to the forthcoming appeal of Paul in behalf of Onesimus.

The uniqueness of the letter to Philemon is attested by the mention of Apphia and Archippus and the church in Philemon's house in the salutation. Each of them is an addressee of the letter. The letter itself is persuasive enough. And if not, then quite likely, as some suggest, the other addressees are in a position to bring additional persuasion and perhaps even Christian pressure upon a reluctant Philemon.

As he addressed the letter to Philemon, Paul doubtless sensed that he was about to make a statement of considerable gravity. Reflecting on the nature of what he had to say, he transformed an otherwise charming and personal letter into a message to the universal church. That message may well be: "We are all prisoners in chains for Christ Jesus. You and I and Onesimus. We are one with Onesimus. Onesimus is one with us. We are one with the world. The world is one with us. God so loved the world. The world is passing away."

---

James H. Melancon is professor of religion at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.



# Lessons From Philemon

by S. Haywood Cox

There are those who would tell you that the book of Philemon is a treatise on brotherhood, or prejudice, or some aspect of the slave-master relationship. But all that is only a half truth. Because whatever is said about slavery, prejudice, or brotherhood, is incidental to the fact that primarily and fundamentally what is said is focused on *Christian fellowship*.

"That the fellowship of your faith may become energetic in the full recognition of every good which is among you toward Christ" (Philemon 6, writer's translation).

The letter to Philemon reveals several important points we need to learn:

1. **The energizing of relationship.** The facts of the matter are clear. Onesimus, a slave, ran away from his master, Philemon. Through the influence of Paul, Onesimus was converted. This was a transforming experience for Onesimus. It involved a change in relationships. As an expression of his repentance, Onesimus returned to Philemon. This was a test of the new relationships. In order for Philemon to receive Onesimus, he had to be willing to erase earlier images.

2. **The shifting of life-styles.** Before any of this could happen a "conversion" had to take place in the mind and life of Philemon. Slavery was not merely a custom that some people practiced; it was a way of life. To accept Onesimus back was more than a change in attitude. It meant a change in life perspective and maybe even in life goals. Philemon must think not only of himself but also of his family and friends. What would this mean to them?

3. **The full acceptance of responsibility.** Onesimus must admit his guilt of running away. He must return to the scene of his crime and to those he had wronged, and there make good.

Likewise Paul was willing to share his part and repay any debt Onesimus owed. But financial debts are minuscule when compared to our debt of gratitude to God for salvation! Philemon too had a debt; and in accepting Onesimus he partially fulfilled it. Responsibility and repentance go hand in hand.

4. **The full recognition of partnership.** If fellowship is to become partnership there must be genuine change. Paul was not appealing for a mere verbal change for Onesimus by which the old order was continued under a new name. Onesimus was to be received not only as a saved slave but as a brother who is loved *in the flesh* and in the Lord. He was to be accorded both the privilege and status of being a brother. What this would cost both Philemon and Onesimus only time would tell. But a willingness to risk is part of what it means to be changed from slave to brother.

The names and places may be different in our case. No Onesimus, Philemon, or Paul. If one of our brothers should stumble and fall, let us be there to help him rise again. We cannot be judgmental, full of conceit, and so void of love that we just let him lie there. He's our

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Galatians 6:1,**  
**NIV**

---

S. Haywood Cox is chaplain of campus ministries at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

---

brother! But for the grace of God that could be we lying there with our face in the mud. Reach out a helping hand. Lift up your brother! Try it! You'll like it!

**REACT**

How do we relate the 19th century slave situation in America to that of Onesimus and Philemon?

### Help Papua New Guinea Prepare for the Future



Building techniques in Papua New Guinea are changing as the church struggles to keep pace in this rapidly developing nation. Sonoma Adventist College has trained many skilled tradesmen to construct desperately needed church buildings. But the union needs our help to provide construction materials. Please remember the needs of these churches.

**Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, June 25.**  
**South Pacific Division thanks you for your help.**

# The Rich Man and His Slave

by Larry Hasse

**OPINION**  
**Key text:**  
**Philemon 1-7**

The account of Onesimus and Philemon is the story of two new Christians, one a man of deep inner strength and the other a man with some weakness of character that put his soul in the balance. Philemon, a person of high social position, was the weak man; Onesimus, his slave, was the man of strength.

Few Christians have ever faced such an oppressive duty upon accepting Christianity as faced poor Onesimus. He was an escaped slave, and his condition of poverty notwithstanding, he had gained from his master his most precious possession, his will. But his great joy was short-lived. Paul presented the truth to Onesimus that under the circumstances of the Roman Empire an even greater goal existed than his personal freedom. Onesimus must voluntarily return as a slave to Philemon. Philemon's duty then was to accept Onesimus as an equal in Christ, and thus return again this man's will. Paul seemed unsure that Philemon possessed the ability to do this act of love that went against his old character. If Philemon could do it, however, the act would complete a perfect example of reciprocal Christian love that would open wide the door to the spread of Christianity. Onesimus by volunteering his servitude would free his master and himself alike. With his example of love and sacrifice he exerted a powerful influence that reached the heart of Philemon to accept Onesimus as an equal. A duality thus was created. God's greater purpose was served, while slavery was defeated by the reciprocal love that had been created between the two men.

Let the readers of this story not forget that slavery is an affront to God's universe and an evil of great dimensions. Would followers of Christ reach another conclusion? Is it not a sin to take the will of another human for our own purposes—a slave, a wife, a child, or an employee? Could it be wrong to work actively to free the bonds of people suffering from such an evil? If so, there should have been no movement in our time to gain the civil rights of Black Americans, and Apartheid should be considered merely a quirk of a particular culture, and the Holocaust of the Third Reich existed merely as a German political matter. What kind of morals would Christians hold if such persecutions are defensible through the example of Onesimus and Philemon, and our duty to oppose such deeds nullified by higher duty?

---

Larry Hasse is an associate professor of history at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Lesson 12, June 12 - 18

---

# “Liberation Theology”

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Rom. 1:16, NIV).



# A Reason to Return

by Kyna D. Hinson

No one in his right mind would buy this idea. The proposition, at face value, borders on the insane. But there it was, not only spoken, discussed, and agreed upon, but now written out. The words formed a timeless, permanent record. Onesimus was going back, back to the place where his worst nightmares had been hard realities, where cruelty had been a constant companion, where he had merely existed as a *slave*.

He was held in bondage in the house of Philemon, a wealthy Colossian. Perhaps he was a captive from a faraway land. Perhaps he was a child of slaves who grew up in this household. Perhaps he was simply a poor Colossian from "the wrong side of the tracks" who fell on hard times and wound up in slavery. It could happen. Whether Onesimus wore the slave's garb for a few years or for a lifetime is not known, but underneath, his bitter hatred for the slaveholder, the system, and the no-class citizenship was always there. It rippled just under the surface of his impeccable manners and "appropriate" behavior. It was there each time he received a visitor's cloak, or poured a goblet of wine, or offered a tray of food. The hatred that poured through his eyes was enough to chill the heart of any man—especially the one for whom it was all intended. None of this was lost on Philemon.

Then it happened. Onesimus seized his chance. The fertile mind that never rested was led

by the heart's desire of all slaves—freedom. Perhaps he took advantage of a season of feasting and revelry. Perhaps he used disguises. He did take the chance; he seized the moment and simply disappeared.

Time passed, and Onesimus surfaced in Rome, a city large enough to conceal any "displaced person," or so he thought. He believed he was running away, until he encountered an older, more experienced "runaway" who had been down a road or two himself. Paul knew Onesimus' story after taking one sweeping glance. He knew what set the hard jaw, and what burned behind the eyes. He knew of only one way to help the runaway slave, and he patiently, then joyfully, introduced Onesimus to Jesus.

Something happened to Onesimus. A new fire lit his eyes and melted his heart. He felt whole and complete, loved and respected, for the first time. Now he knew. He was free!

Something had happened to Philemon and his household, as well. Paul's evangelism had reached there, too. Now angels loved to linger there. God's name was held in reverence.

Onesimus had a sharp perception of what his return would mean. He came to believe his return would not awaken more nightmares. He could expect a warm reception as a brother in Christ. He would bear the tidings himself. He believed he had a reason to return.

**INTRO-  
DUCTION**  
Scripture:  
Philemon 8-19

---

Kyna D. Hinson is an assistant professor in the department of English and communication at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.



# The Power of the Gospel

by Clifford S. Pitt

## LOGOS

**Theme:** The gospel, demonstrated in the letter to Philemon, changed lives and worked miracles in Paul's day. It must and will manifest the same power in our day.

### 1. The Power of the Gospel

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16, RSV).*

These words of Paul underline the impartiality in the salvific acts of God. God saved Jew and Gentile, master and slave, alike. The prime qualification, then as now, was the exercise of faith in the saving power of Christ the Redeemer.

It is of the genius of the gospel, that it applies itself anew to every age. It antedates the Bible and saves lives even before the writing of the first Bible book. Noah preached the gospel without the benefit of the Sacred Writings. Abraham shared it with the members of his household, and Jacob transmitted it to his offspring. The gospel was then good news of an event still future that had to be transmitted orally. Because it existed before the Bible, it is true to say that the gospel both contains the Bible and is contained by it.

*What does Paul say about the nature and meaning of the gospel? When did the truth of the gospel break through in your life? How?*

### 2. The Meaning of the Gospel (read Titus 2:11-13)

*"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12).*

It is important to note that the gospel that saves is not just a story or a set of beliefs. And it is more than good news about salvation. There may be a doctrine of salvation but no saving doctrine. It takes a person to save a person and a soul to save a soul. Jesus is, in fact, the truth of His own gospel, and when He came into Galilee preaching that "the kingdom of God is in (i.e., among) you," He was saying, "I am the kingdom." "I, the kingdom of God, am now among you." It is the Redeemer who saves and not the words. The words are merely conduits. There must be a relationship with the Redeemer, or there can be no salvation.

Paul was saying the same thing when he said, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). That grace that saves is more than good news—more than unmerited favor. It "appeared," i.e., made itself manifest in the gospel of Christ the Redeemer. He is the grace of God. He it is who saves, and the faith that makes salvation power a reality to Jew and Gentile is merely the vehicle that brings this saving Person into our lives.

---

Clifford S. Pitt is an associate professor of religion at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

---

The gift of salvation in Christ had its origin in love, and not in some sense of obligation. One connotes freedom, the other coercion. Paul chooses between these two motivating forces in pleading the case of the slave Onesimus with his master, Philemon. He presents the gospel as a great leveler among people differing in rank and status. Both men were sinners in need of grace. Both had had a conversion experience in which Paul had been the conduit of grace. Now he reminds Onesimus that he and his servant are brothers through redemption. They are brothers "both in the flesh, and in the Lord" (Philemon 16), and Onesimus was to be received as if it were Paul himself.

*How does Paul show that all people are equal before God?*

### 3. The Equalizing Power of the Gospel

*"Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord" (Philemon 16).*

Paul had ever been concerned to show the equalizing power of the gospel. On one occasion he confronted the apostle Peter, who had been in the habit of eating with Gentile Christians. When certain Judaizers from Jerusalem came to town Peter was concerned for his image and refrained from this intimate association with non-Jewish believers. Paul saw that this attitude conveyed the impression that there were two classes in the church, and he opposed it vehemently, as alien to the nature and content of the gospel.

Paul had himself experienced a radical change in his own attitude, as a result of his encounter with his Redeemer. He had been changed from an arrogant, overbearing, and cruel religionist, into a kind, loving, and considerate person. It is such a kindness that he now seeks to elicit from Philemon. He is willing even to pay for any wrong that the latter had experienced as a result of the disappearance of his runaway slave. He is confident that Philemon, as a converted person, would manifest the same Christian spirit.

The gospel has the same effect on the lives of men and women today. It not only saves, it transforms. Love takes the place of hate; kindness the place of revenge; and discipline the place of weakness. The gospel places redemptive imperatives on the saved person, so that he is free, but only within the constraints of love. Faith in Christ must manifest itself in obedience. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "If ye love me, keep My commandments."

*Why do you think Paul considers Onesimus' conversion to be grounds for a reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus? What Christian principle is at work here?*

# Gospel Pizzazz

by Cecily A. Daly

## TESTIMONY

Key text:  
Romans 1:16  
(Phillips)

The gospel of salvation has within it attraction, stimulation, and vitality to regenerate people by "the quickening, assimilating power of the grace of God.

"None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of this power. In all who will submit themselves to the Holy Spirit a new principle of life is to be implanted; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity.

"But man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change can be effected."

The energizing power comes only from God, and any person who wants to be changed into Christ's likeness must submit to it. "The power of Christ alone can work the transformation in heart and mind that all must experience who would partake with Him of the new life in the kingdom of heaven." It comes from God and it leads to God. "It will purify the heart and renew the mind, and give us a new capacity for knowing and loving God."<sup>2</sup> Watch the amazing result of this power working in the lives of men in a total transformation.

"Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. . . . If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world."<sup>3</sup>

From the vilest sinner to the most hardened criminal, all can be changed by His saving power and made into new beings. So total and amazing is this new-birth experience that whether in Bible times or contemporary time, "angels are amazed as they behold the transformation of character brought about in those who yield themselves to God, and they express their joy in songs of rapturous praise to God and to the Lamb. They see those who are by nature the children of wrath, converted and becoming laborers together with Christ in drawing souls to God. They see those who were in darkness becoming lights to shine amid the moral night of this wicked and perverse generation."<sup>4</sup> Our joy, our stimulation, we channel into glorifying the power of the gospel to change men's lives and work this miracle. With this great hope, "Let the repenting sinner fix his eyes upon 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29); and by beholding, he becomes changed. His fear is turned to joy, his doubts to hope. Gratitude springs up. The stony heart is broken. A tide of love sweeps into the soul. Christ is in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."<sup>5</sup>

## REACT

When a person apostatizes, has the power of the gospel lost its effectiveness in that person's life? Explain theologically what has happened.

---

Cecily A. Daly is a reading specialist at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

1. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 96.

2. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 156.

3. *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 337.

4. *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 50.

5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 439.

# “Useful”

by James H. Melancon

Since Paul was responsible for the conversion of Philemon, Onesimus may have met him previously. During the course of his stay with Paul, the young slave was converted. He evidently both served Paul and served with Paul in an admirable fashion in the work of the gospel. The regular meaning of the name *Onesimus* is “profitable,” or “useful.” Paul obviously notes this as he acquaints Philemon with his decision to send Onesimus home.

“[Philemon] I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me” (verses 10, 11, NIV). This is obviously a play on words. And more.

Onesimus means “useful” in the sense of functional utility and only in that sense. This is what he was when he came to Paul. And now Paul is sending him back *euchrēstos*—“useful” for all the purposes of the Christian witness. And he wants something in return from Philemon. Paul had the authority to demand what he wanted. If he had, his action would have exacted a horrendous dividend. Philemon would have doubtless acquiesced. But our charming little book would not have been so charming. As such, it would not have survived. We probably would not have heard anything further about Onesimus.

There is ample reason to believe that the profitability of Onesimus to Paul went well beyond Paul’s lifetime. The letters of Paul were first collected and edited at Ephesus. The bishop of the church at Ephesus at the end of the first Christian century was someone called Onesimus. In all probability, this Onesimus of Ephesus was Paul’s convert and played a leading role in collecting the letters. His own contribution to the letter collection was the charming little letter he hand-carried to Philemon of Colossae at the instruction of Paul. And thus Philemon found its place among the letters of Paul. Onesimus. Useful to Paul. Surrounded and supported by Paul’s ambient love.

## REACT

What does your name mean? Is it an apt description of your character? What does Jesus mean when He says of overcomers that He will grant them a new name? (see Rev. 2:17; 3:12).

## EVIDENCE

Key text:  
Philemon 8-19

---

James H. Melancon is a professor of religion at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

# How to Live Victoriously

by Clarence Barnes

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Romans 1:16**

Freedom, liberty, eternal security, everlasting riches, and unceasing joy are given to us in Christ. "We are more than conquerors through Him" (Rom. 8:37, NKJV). " 'If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed' " (John 8:36, NKJV).

Now that the Scripture has spoken, the question then is How do I as an individual get a handle on this mighty and everlasting power? How can I be free from the power of sin? How can I be certain of eternal life?

1. **Obey.** An important lesson that we must learn is to obey the word of God explicitly. The person who believes God, submits to Him and obeys Him through the enabling power of His Holy Spirit, has passed from death to life and has become an heir of God's kingdom (see Rom. 8:17). Again and again Scripture tells us that Abraham believed God, acted on His word, and "he credited it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6, NIV; see also Gal. 3:6; James 2:23). God is not partial. In a similar manner righteousness is available to us. Mary's sound and sensible admonition is for us to, " 'Do whatever he tells you' " (John 2:5, NIV). "He who does the will of God, who walks in the path that God has marked out, cannot stumble and fall."<sup>1</sup>

2. **Study.** Do not wait until you feel like studying. Just make it a habit to study a portion of God's word daily. Soon you will find you cannot do without it. Christ has told us the Scriptures "are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Victorious living is impossible apart from Christ. " 'The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life' " (John 6:63, NKJV).

3. **Pray.** There can be no spiritual life without prayer. "Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The Divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads."<sup>2</sup> As long as we shall live in this world we shall have to contend with temptation. Prayer is the key to success here. "When the first suggestion of wrong is heard, dart a prayer to heaven, and firmly resist the temptation. . . . The first time temptation comes, meet it in such a decided manner that it will never be repeated."<sup>3</sup>

4. **Resist.** The word of God is "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7, NKJV). Learn to say No and say it decisively. Never compromise the right. If you must go to jail because of your stand for principle, remember you are in the company of heroes such as Joseph, Daniel, the Hebrew young men, and countless others.

5. **Accept.** Remember, your strength to live victoriously is in Jesus. He is the way, the door, the beginning and the end. "Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. . . . He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and make it beautiful with His own glory."<sup>4</sup> God is longing and waiting to do wonders for you.

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 527.
2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 564.
3. *SDA Bible Commentary*, p. 1155.
4. *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 11.

---

Clarence Barnes is chairman of the department of history and political science at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.



# The Cure for Social Injustice

by Bernard W. Benn

## OPINION

Key text:  
Philemon 9

Is it right for the Seventh-day Adventist Christian to participate in freedom marches? Was it all right for Seventh-day Adventists to join the demonstration in Forsyth County, Georgia, on the Sabbath day? How can Seventh-day Adventists in "good and regular standing" justify participation in civil-rights activities in the United States and around the world when Ellen White makes this telling statement:

"The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments."<sup>1</sup>

At first sight this statement seems to be good ammunition for those in the church who would perpetuate racial inequality and other forms of social injustices. It seems to support those who hold that there is no need for agitation in the church for social justice because "God will work things out in His own good time." But the above-quoted statement is only a portion of Ellen White's statement on this subject. She goes on to say that Jesus kept aloof from earthly government "not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart."<sup>2</sup>

That is the reason Paul appealed to Philemon on the basis of love to receive Onesimus back as a brother and not as a slave. That is the reason Paul did not exercise his authority as an apostle to compel Philemon to accept Onesimus as a brother. It is interesting to note that Paul said that he had the authority to order Philemon to do what should be done. This makes it quite clear that there is no place in the Christian church for slavery. Yet Christ (if we are to accept Ellen White's already quoted statement) did not lead any marches against slavery. How then could Paul make such a claim? The fact is that Christ's life spoke more eloquently than social slogans and civil rights-marches. His dealings with the Samaritan woman at the well, His dealings with Mary Magdalene, His dealings with other social outcasts, all declared emphatically that Christ was against racism, sexism, and slavery. Christianity may sometimes lead the Christian even into civil disobedience. Paul's appeal to Philemon is a rebuke to the white missionaries who are quite chummy with the black brethren in the dark recesses of Africa or the Caribbean but who retreat into their white world on their return to North America. Paul's admonition to Philemon is a rebuke to the black brethren who refuse to trust the white brethren because "the white man cannot be trusted." Only those who are motivated by a genuine love for all mankind will make it into the kingdom. The gospel of love to which Paul appeals regenerates the heart and allows the Christian to see another as a child of God.

1. *The Desire of Ages*,

p. 509.

2. *Ibid.*

---

Bernard W. Benn is the chairman of the department of English and communication at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Lesson 13, June 19 - 25

---

# Heirs Together

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28, NIV).



# Reunion

by Cliff Sellors

And God divided the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the light felt good. It traveled through the darkness, clear and beautiful. And the universe rejoiced in the light. Red smiled at Orange; Orange at Yellow and Green. Green thrilled while looking at Blue. And Blue beamed at Indigo and Violet, who were gazing intently upon the others.

Instantly popular, the light became much-loved in every circle. Huge suns glistened in the light's presence. Tiny planets whirled with delight and gratitude. Birds sang, and plants of every size, every color and shape, stretched gratefully toward the light.

And the darkness frowned, and looked across at Red, dancing through the skies with her new friends. Red smiled innocently back at darkness, who winked his eye. And Red blushed a little. She remembered God's warning, to stay with the other colors, so that together they could bless the universe.

It came at night. As Red was resting, a whisper broke the silence. Red started, and sat up.

"Red? You're having so much fun. Couldn't you share just a little with me? Just this once?"

Red thought hard. She would flee. The darkness took a hold of her.

"Red. Just once?"

Red left, confused. And the light traveled again, sprinkling color like star dust across the

masterful creation of the globes, shining even more vigorously than before. Her friends noticed Red's extra efforts, and all happily shone even brighter.

And the darkness wooed Red away from the light:

"Red, think how important you are. Your warmth tempers Blue's coldness, Red. None of them seem to realize that. Red, you're overworking, doing the work of the other six. Aren't you all supposed to be equal? Haven't you seen the way the others look at you? Perhaps it's your color. Maybe it's your politics. Maybe it's jealousy."

Dwelling on her deception long years ago, she hung her lonely head in shame. Each color had finally gone its own separate way, following her example. Bird songs had long since disappeared, and plant life had died in the dark silence. Huge suns and tiny plants now floated aimlessly through the empty heavens. And the darkness rejoiced!

A wave of interest, centering on a tiny spot on an insignificant planet, caught her attention. She found herself drawn to that place of a special birth. With eyes intense she watched a Boy grow into a Man, and hang in pain. And there she met her long-lost friends. There they saw their guilt, and in Him found freedom. There they joined together again and the light burned brighter than ever before. Once more the universe rejoiced. Equality reigned.

And it was very good.

## INTRODUCTION

Scriptures:  
Galatians 3:28;  
Philemon 5,6,8-10, 13-16, 20-25

Cliff Sellors is a second-year theology student at Newbold College, England.

# Free, United, and Equal

by Dr. Jonathan Gallagher

## LOGOS

**Theme:** When we become born-again Christians we join an international family that knows no favored nation, no superior nationality, race, or culture.

Enslaved, alone, and prejudiced. That's where we begin. Only the most myopic can't see that we are not free, that disunity and division exist at all levels, and that any idea of human equality is a joke.

You don't need to look abroad to see this happening—it's all there, right in your own back yard. Man's inhumanity to man, hatred and violence, prejudice and discrimination: on the basis of age, sex, color, race, nationality, religion—right on down to the name-calling in the school playground. We are all warped beings, fighting one another and desperately afraid inside, following the code of this world: Kick the other guy before he kicks you.

Think of just that name-calling for a moment. The way that human beings make each other less than human, and debase themselves in the process. Making people objects, things to be despised and hated. We use words to do that for us, like "enemy." You can do anything you like to an enemy, even kill. Because that person is no longer a real human being, but an object of hate.

Terms of derision and contempt: Dago, Whitey, Nigger, Pinko, Yid, Polack, Limey, Chink, . . . taking away the other's individual personality and generalizing about a whole mass of human beings in a way that disparages and brutalizes.

The "Aryan supremacy" doctrine was used by the Nazis to vindicate their hostility to the Jews, treating them as degenerates, animals—not humans, items to be utilized and then discarded.

So what makes a Christian different?

### 1. Christians Are Free

What did Jesus come to do? He announced His mission like this: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me . . . he has sent me to announce good news . . . to proclaim release for prisoners . . . to let the broken victims go free" (Luke 4:18, NEB). Freedom, that elusive quality that is the possession of the Christian. Jesus says again, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." "If the Son sets you free, then you will be really free" (John 8:31, 36, TEV).

How are we free? From what are we freed? The slavery of sin, the subjection of our own selfish desires, the tyranny of all forms of repression and the devil's brainwashing. No longer are others seen as enemies to be hated. No longer do we have to follow slavishly "the lust of the flesh," unable to escape from these vices. "Freedom is what we have—Christ has set us free!" (Gal. 5:1, TEV). God has the power to set us free, so that we are free to choose Him and His love for us.

That may sound strange when we look at the story of Onesimus.

---

Jonathan Gallagher is pastor of the Norwich, England, church.



---

Here was Paul sending him back as a slave. Why? What about their new relationship as Christians? Slaves are forced to obey their masters. Free men choose. In that sense Onesimus chose to return to his master, ready to fulfill his responsibilities, confident in Paul's assurance to Philemon that "he is not just a slave, but much more than a slave: He is a dear brother in Christ" (Philemon 16, TEV).

*Put yourself in Paul's place. If you really believed in freedom through Christ, why didn't you tell Philemon to set Onesimus free?*

## 2. Christians Are United

Jesus prayed for His disciples—and for us as Christians. "I pray . . . that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20, 21, NIV).

Unity, that great characteristic of the true combined body of Jesus Christ, the church. Of course the real tragedy is that for so much of the history of the church it has been very *dis*united. But the truth behind Jesus' words is that we now belong to a worldwide community of believers who are not divided by color or language or nationality—or any other mark of distinction. We are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NIV).

Whatever particular nationality, or position, or sex—these are no longer any barrier to us. We are now to have that bond of unity that sets us apart as being very different from the world, is based on Christ's instructions without exception, and is the proof to those looking in from the outside that we belong to God.

Paul writes to his friend Philemon: "My prayer is that our fellowship with you as believers will bring about a deeper understanding of every blessing which we have in our life in union with Christ" (Philemon 6, TEV). He stresses this tremendous sense of closeness and togetherness. We are all part of one family. We are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). All those things that used to divide and separate us are now submerged under this new identity as Christians, true followers of God together with all others who trust in Him.

*If we're meant to be united as Christians, how is it we spend so much time fighting one another?*

## 3. Christians Are Equal

"You are all brothers," Jesus told His followers (Matt. 23:8, NIV). Accepting Jesus means accepting others: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26, NIV). For we can be free, and united—but that doesn't necessarily mean that we are equal.

But if we follow that wonderful God and accept the priceless gift of Jesus and if we realize that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor

---



---

free, male nor female" (Gal. 3:28, NIV), then we are compelled to the position that because we are brothers and sisters together, God has no favorites, and no more should we. We are "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

Peter had some learning to do on this point when he visited the Roman Cornelius, one of the hated foreign oppressors (see how the words still hurt?) But after this experience he said: "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis" (Acts 10:34, TEV).

Under God we are all absolutely equal, sinners saved by grace. God may be able to use some more than others, but that depends on how we respond to Him. And there can be no inequality in the Christian's mind as he deals with others: "If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes . . . have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:3, 4, NIV).

Only in Christ can we gain freedom, that real freedom to live in the way that so many people dream. All human experiments that attempt to bring about the "Brotherhood of Man" are doomed to fail, wrecked on the rocks of our fallen human nature. But God frees us, unites us, and makes us all equal under Him as His chosen people, dedicated to demonstrating the truth about our wonderful God.

*In what ways do we as Christians show partiality?*

*How can we really show to the world that we treat "all men as brothers," and that there is neither male nor female even in this?*

---

**THIRTEENTH SABBATH OFFERING, June 25**

The overflow offering will be used to build jungle chapels in Papua New Guinea.

Plan to give a liberal offering.

---

# Approaching the Center

by Joyce Samuel

As we consider the question of equality and the Christian, Ellen White not only provides us with some helpful insights but gives us a glimpse of just how God views all mankind:

"The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God."<sup>1</sup>

"Christianity makes a strong bond of union between master and slave, king and subject, the gospel minister and the degraded sinner who has found in Christ cleansing from sin. They have been washed in the same blood, quickened by the same Spirit; and they are made one in Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

"Then as the children of God are one in Christ, how does Jesus look upon caste, upon society distinctions, upon the division of man from his fellow-man, because of color, race, position, wealth, birth, or attainment? The secret of unity is found in the equality of believers in Christ. The reason for all division, discord, and difference is found in separation from Christ. Christ is the center to which all should be attracted; for the nearer we approach the center, the closer we shall come together in feeling, in sympathy, in love, growing into the character and image of Jesus. With God there is no respect of persons."<sup>3</sup>

"No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free."<sup>4</sup>

## REACT

To what extent do we as Christians express or live this attitude of oneness in Christ?

## TESTIMONY

Key text:

Ephesians 6:9

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 191.
2. Ellen G. White in *Review and Herald*, Dec. 14, 1911.
3. *Ibid.*, Dec. 22, 1891.
4. *Ibid.*, June 17, 1915.

---

Joyce Samuel is a second-year theology student at Newbold College, England.

# It Shall Not Be So Among You

by Dr. Michael Pearson

## EVIDENCE

Key text:

Matt.20:24-28

*Equal* is one of those popular flash words, like *natural* and *free*, which is often used to evoke a positive response to an idea or a product. Yet, like so many of these words, it is found, on close inspection, to be devoid of meaning in itself. One must say in what respects the two things or people being compared are equal. If by *equal* we mean "same," then the claim that "all men are equal" is patently false because we all vary so much in appearance, temperament, ability, and function. Indeed, the fact that we are different is surely one of the crowning glories of the creation that lends dignity to our creatureliness.

Equality is not a prominent concept in the Biblical tradition. Certainly we enjoy equality of access to God, who is "no respecter of persons;" there is "neither Jew nor Greek, . . . neither bond nor free, . . . neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). But the Bible says little about equality at the level of our societal arrangements. Indeed, it refers a great deal to all kinds of authority structures that demand the willing acceptance of human differences, viz. monarchy, priesthood, diacnate.

"But it was not so from the beginning." Hierarchies and authority structures have had to be erected to guard against the excesses of man in his natural state. The writings of Enlightenment philosophers and various declarations of rights provide an eloquent justification of that view. The very fact that we have to legislate for equality is an acknowledgment that our human relationships are faulty. We have artificially or formally to defend the rights of human beings; human-rights talk is the talk of fallen people, for it points to a freedom being wrongfully denied.

The Bible offers us a concept superior to that of equality: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Unity organically realized, rather than equality mechanically imposed. Unfortunately, even in the church, those structures erected for our benefit are abused. Differences of prestige and influence attach to various offices. Sometimes we use our position in the structure to exploit, patronize, and manipulate one another.

"But it shall not be so among you" (Matt. 20:26). The Christian community must be a place where those who occupy positions of authority willingly renounce those prerogatives which normally attach to those positions. Paul was asking Philemon to do precisely this when he requested that Onesimus, the runaway slave, not be punished with the severity that the law permitted. Christians must not "lord it" (Matt. 20:25, NEB) over those junior or somewhat unequal to them, as is common practice in the wider society.

And lest we think the principle applies only to those in formal leadership positions, we must remember that we all at times find ourselves in a position of advantage in our relationships. Those who truly follow the Lord Jesus are not in the habit of exploiting that advantage.

---

Michael Pearson is a lecturer in religion and philosophy at Newbold College, England.

# Hallmarks of Equality

by Helen Pearson

**HOW TO**  
**Key text:**  
**Philippians 2:5**

Equal relationships are difficult to create. Our uncertainties, our fears, our social training, the thoughtless habits of a lifetime, lead us into hierarchical relationships. To succeed we either take an excessive amount of power or allow others to deprive us of our rights and responsibilities.

The book of Philemon shows Paul moving toward the cultivation of an equal relationship with Philemon. In the introduction to the letter we see that in equal relationships there is room for everyone. Paul creates for himself and his friends a world in which there are places for all of them and for "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Equal relationships demand that we populate our psychological world with people for whom there are places. To give people place is to recognize their qualities as people and as workers, to relate to them as spiritual beings—whole people in God's family. Indeed, Paul's request for Onesimus is "Welcome him as you would welcome me" (verse 18, NEB). In a community that gave respect to the Lord Jesus Christ there was to be a place for Philemon and, he hoped, for Onesimus. How did Paul create space for Philemon?

1. He recognized Philemon's unique qualities and especially his contribution to the life of the church. What is more, he said so. Equal relationships are marked by open affirmation.

2. Paul prayed for Philemon. He knew his weaknesses, his needs and his strengths, and that knowledge was rooted in a realistic prayer life. Paul prayed for his friends, and he told them so.

3. Paul didn't pull rank on Philemon. Although he seems to have been tempted to do so, he resorts, not to his apostolic prerogatives, but to his needs as a basis for his appeal. Paul used his internal authority, his authority as a human being. Touched by the Spirit of his Master, who did not think to snatch at equality with God, but made Himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave (see Phil. 2:7), Paul spoke to Philemon as a brother. Equal relationships do not ignore the hierarchical values of human society; they transcend them.

4. Paul shared in the search for meaning with Philemon. To give people a place is to believe that the twists and turns of fortune in their lives are not without direction. It is to participate with our friends in their search to find that direction.

5. Paul is willing to suffer when, in the course of his search, Philemon seems to have lost his way. Most of us feel that we have trouble enough on account of our own mistakes. The spirit of Jesus, the spirit of equal relationship, will move us both to struggle and to suffer with others.

## REACT

1. Was Paul living up to all these ideals in his letter to Philemon? Do we detect in verse 8 and verse 19 a slightly manipulative quality?

2. What other cases can you remember where Paul either lived or failed to live up to these ideals?

---

**Helen Pearson is the public-relations director and lecturer in journalism at Newbold College, England.**

# Truly Free

by Dr. Andrea Luxton

## OPINION

Key text:  
Philemon 16

"All animals are equal

But some animals are more equal than others."\*

This may not be the conscious philosophy by which we all live, but as I look around, I must conclude that this is the unconscious philosophy many of us adopt. It appears a fact of life that the way to the top is easier for a Philemon than for an Onesimus. And try as we will to suggest that all are equal, the company director will still encourage more people to bring out their best china than will the doorman. So where do we, as Christians, begin to practice equality? I would suggest we must begin with a respect for ourselves and others that springs from a recognition of who we and they are in Christ.

Christ continually encouraged those who had little self-respect to believe that they were important and valuable people. The lepers, the old, the crippled, the children, the women, and the Gentiles—all proved worthy of His respect, and by His respect He showed them the way to self-respect. Even Christ's words to the woman caught in adultery and His gentle reproach to the woman at the well led each to a sense of self-worth. Past sins and past heritage became insignificant in light of their awareness of who they were.

Christ also showed those who did value themselves that their value system was misconceived. The disciples vied for the best position in the kingdom; yet time and again Christ showed them that they perceived value wrongly. They looked for external position and power; Christ saw what they could be as people empowered by Him. Similarly, the rich young ruler thought he was worthy. In his way, he was, but Christ showed him that he had only just begun to be what Christ could see him being.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). In Christ a Philemon and an Onesimus may perceive their value. And in Christ each can see how laughable any sense of superiority becomes. While we argue about who is worthy, Christ tells us that all are of illimitable value in Him, for we have not begun to dream of what we can be. How then do we dare to assume the right to judge another's value? "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," (Luke 6:31) counsels Christ. When we value ourselves rightly, we will begin to understand how to treat others equally.

\* In George Orwell's satire, *Animal Farm*, all animals unite together to overthrow the humans. Their slogan is: ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL. But the pigs are natural leaders, and soon power goes to their head. One morning the animals wake to find their slogan changed . . .

---

Andrea Luxton is chairperson of the English department at Newbold College, England.



# Next Quarter's Lessons

## Study of the Doctrines—Part I

For readers who have not yet received a copy of COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY for third quarter, 1988, here is a summary of the first three lessons.

### Lesson 1: The Holy Scriptures

*Scripture:* 2 Tim. 3:16, 17

*Theme:* The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history.

### Lesson 2: The Trinity

*Scripture:* Deut. 6:4,5

*Theme:* There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.

### Lesson 3: The Father

*Scripture:* John 14:7

*Theme:* God the Eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.

To order your personal copy of *Collegiate Quarterly*, contact your Adventist Book Center, or write:

Pacific Press Publishing Association  
P. O. Box 7000  
Boise, ID 83707

#### Prices:

U.S.A.: One-year subscription - \$7.95

Single copy - \$2.25

Outside U.S.A.: One year subscription - \$9.50

Single copy - \$2.75

# LOVE



## Even in the world's largest Adventist hospital

Love cannot be defined by words alone. It is best understood through demonstration. Love is patient. Love is kind. It always trusts. Always hopes. Always perseveres.

A hospital is high-tech equipment. Sophisticated facilities. Knowledgeable physicians. But without love, all this is nothing.

Christian nurses and doctors at Florida Hospital demonstrate love through the gentle touch. The tender moment shared. The empathetic conversation. They define it by allowing God's gentleness to reach their patients through word and deed.



**FLORIDA HOSPITAL**  
Orlando, Florida