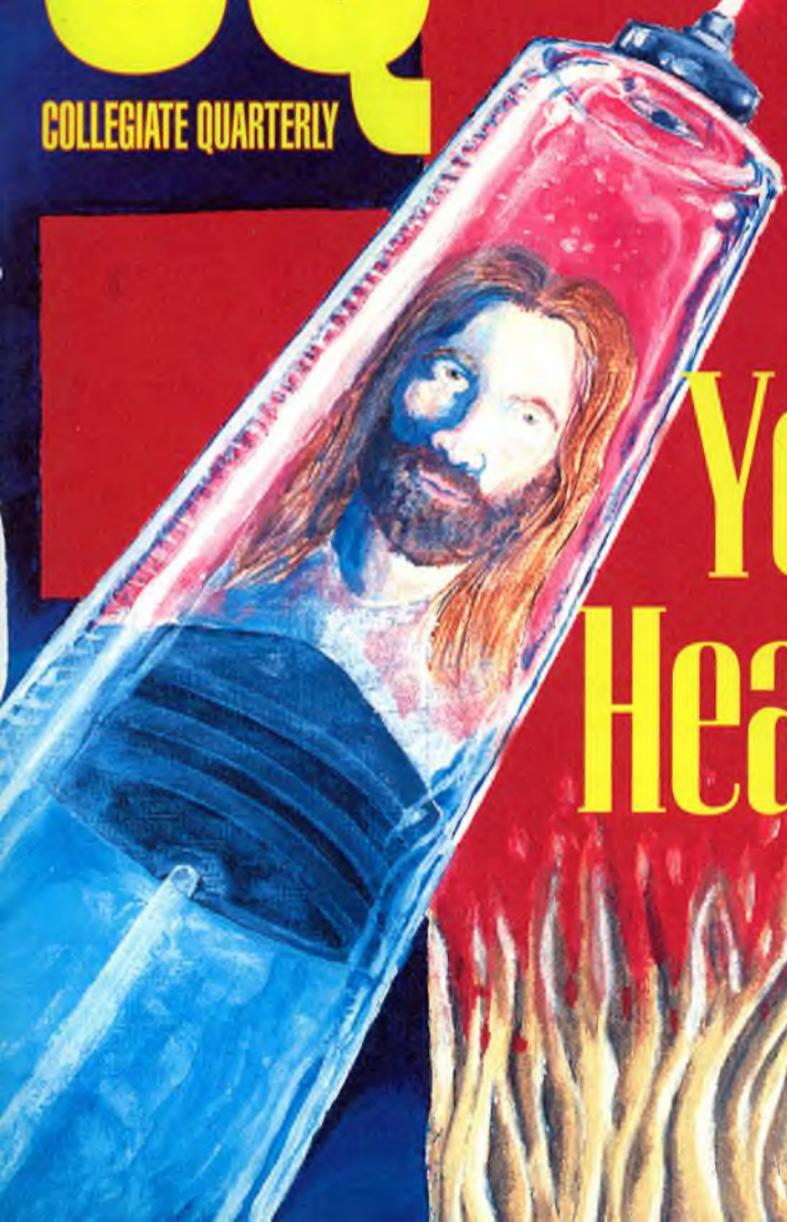


OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1997

CQ

COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY



To Your Health

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TO YOUR HEALTH

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1997

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Sabbath
School

TO YOUR HEALTH



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Welcome to *CQ*'s World!

The following pages represent the creative energy of a truly international group of Adventist young adults. The map above indicates the locations of the writing groups that have participated in *CQ*'s writing program for this quarter.

In producing this unique Sabbath School lesson quarterly, more than 300 individuals contribute to *CQ* each year. The wide variety—and occasional repetition—of the content reflects the great diversity of its contributors around the world as they respond individually to the subject under study.

Worldwide circulation of *CQ* is about 59,000. It is published in the English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Finnish languages.

Ever think about writing a Sabbath School Quarterly?

Why not! Each year 300 young adults from around the world participate in the *Collegiate Quarterly* writing program. CQ gives Seventh-day Adventist young people aged 18 to 35 a unique opportunity to grow spiritually, to share the benefits of their Bible study, to exchange ideas, and to contribute to the mission of the church.

You are the most important ingredient in our CQ formula because you can be the answer to our greatest need—the need for caring, committed contributing authors. If you think you'd like to participate in the writing of a lesson—and get paid for it—write us today:

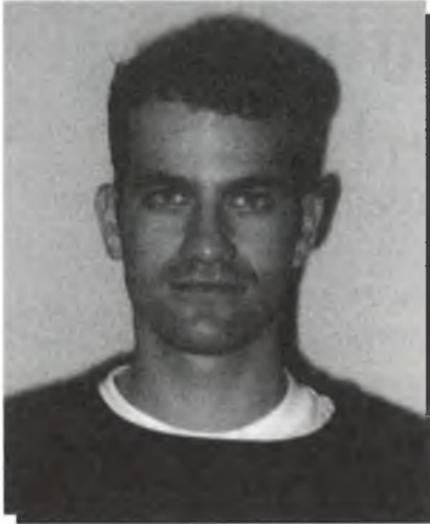
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CQ
COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

This Quarter's Illustrator



Twenty-three-year-old Brandon Reese, who resides in Vale, North Carolina, grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida, where he attended West Palm Beach Jr. Academy through the eighth grade. After graduating from Fletcher (North Carolina) Academy four years later, he attended The Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale in Florida, from which he received a degree in visual communications. He has worked with two Florida advertising agencies and is currently a freelance graphic designer and illustrator, specializing in painting, acrylics, and scratchboard media.

Getting the Most Out of *CQ*

Facts You Should Know

CQ is based on the conviction that the Word of God offers transforming power and that group study is one important way to tap into that power. *CQ*'s purpose is to provide Seventh-day Adventist young adults with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed each week in Sabbath School. Many who use the adult quarterly find that because *CQ* deals with the same topics as the adult quarterly it enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist young-adult groups work together in producing this quarterly. More than 300 individuals contribute to *CQ* each year. The wide variety—and occasional repetition—of the content reflects the great diversity of its contributors around the world as they respond creatively and individually to the subject.

Circulation of *CQ* is about 59,000.

Pointers for Study

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

2. The Bible passage on which each week's lesson is based appears in bold type in the "Logos" (Monday's portion of the lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

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

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

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

"Introduction" (Sunday) is designed to stimulate your interest 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.

"How-To" (Thursday) discusses what the abstractions in the lesson mean for day-to-day living.

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

CQ and the Church

CQ 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.*

THE CURE



“The whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all” (Luke 6:19, NKJV).

Faith, Belief, and Healing

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: John 5:6-8

Several years ago, a famous Russian composer became frustrated that his musical composition did not flow smoothly. He thought his talent in music was slowly leaving him. At that thought, he was afraid his fame would be leaving him too. He thought the recognition he enjoyed from the public would be gone, and he became very discouraged. He said to himself that if his talent, his fame, and the recognition from the public were gone, he did not want to live anymore. He could not eat or sleep. He became bedridden. He did not have enough strength even to get out of his bed, but he did not care, for he wanted to die.

When the Russian government discovered what was happening, it sent a psychiatrist to the composer's home, where he stayed for several weeks. Every morning, afternoon, and evening, the psychiatrist kept telling the composer that one day he would get well from this sickness and he would compose music again. The psychiatrist added that his first composition after becoming well would make

He did not have enough strength even to get out of his bed.

him famous, not only in Russia but around the world. Every day the psychiatrist repeated the same message of confidence and assurance to the composer.

After several weeks, the composer had an urge to compose again. He started to eat and was able to sleep until he regained strength to write music again. Amazingly, the very first composition he wrote after his sickness made him famous, not only in Russia but the world over. The title of the composition was *Piano Concerto Number 2 in C Minor*. The name of the composer? Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Jesus Christ is the physician who can help us from this sin-sick world. He told the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda, "Would you like to be made whole? Get up, pick up your bed, and go home!" Jesus Christ is the Master Physician, for He is the Creator and Healer, who can free us from this sinful world if we only believe in Him. If we would trust in Him, have faith in Him, and allow Him to take control of our lives, we would be healed from all sicknesses. Physicians treat patients, but God heals.

By Vimolwan Ratanataratorn, a radiologist at Bangkok (Thailand) Adventist Hospital.

The Mercy of the Saviour

LOGOS

Mark 2:1-12; Luke 9:1-9

The Only Hope (Mark 2:1-12)

In Capernaum lived a paralytic who had apparently lived a rather reckless life. As a result, he experienced mental suffering and physical pain. He had presented himself to the Pharisees and doctors, but he was disappointed when they told him that his case was hopeless. They felt that God was displeased with him for the way he had lived his life and that he had to suffer the consequences. The palsied man was in despair. He did not know who else to turn to or what else he could do to get help.

Then one day he heard the wonderful news about Jesus. He heard that others as sinful and helpless as he had been cured by this Great Physician. He wondered whether Jesus would be willing to heal such a wretched sinner as he or whether He would treat him as the Pharisees and doctors had.

Many thoughts must have run through his mind about how to meet Jesus. What did he really want from Jesus? Could it be physical restoration only? No, he wanted more than mere physical relief. He also wanted to be healed spiritually. "If he could see Jesus, and receive the assurance of forgiveness and peace with Heaven, he would be content to live or die, according to God's will."¹

He bade his friends take him to Jesus, who was teaching at Peter's house at the time. When they reached the house, they were amazed at the number of people crowded into the house and even outside. They tried without success to break through the crowd. Then the paralytic suggested they try the roof. Finally, they were able to lower him in front of Jesus, the Great Physician.

Jesus was full of mercy. Surely He was interested in sin-sick souls who needed help and relief. Mrs. White says, "While the paralytic was yet at home, the Saviour had brought conviction to his conscience. When he repented of his sins, and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, the life-giving mercies of the Saviour had first blessed his longing heart."² What a relief the man must have felt when Jesus spoke to him, "Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5, NKJV). The peace of forgiveness rested upon his soul. His physical suffering was gone. His whole life was changed just like the 10 lepers.

When Jesus gave the order for him to rise, he jumped to his feet full of life and strength. He found healing in Christ for both the soul and the body—first the spiritual healing, then the physical. Not only can Jesus create but He can also recreate life.

The First Missionary Tour (Luke 9:1-9)

In ancient times, there was in effect only one way of spreading a message abroad, and that was by word of mouth. Newspapers did not exist. There were no such things as television or telephone. That is why Jesus chose to send out the twelve on this mission. He was under the limitations of time and space; His helpers had to be mouths to speak for Him. They were instructed to travel light, to "take nothing for the journey" (Luke 9:3), so they could go fast and far.

"So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and heal-

ing everywhere” (verse 6). The more a man is cluttered up with material things, the more he is bogged down to one place. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21). God needs a settled ministry, but He also needs those who will abandon earthly things to adventure for Him.

The 12 disciples were assigned to go two by two. No one was to go alone. In this way they could help each other in encouragement, prayer, and counsel. What was their assignment? They were to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. Ellen G. White wrote, “During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy but to save.”³

On this first tour, the disciples were to go only where Jesus had been before them and had made friends. They were to go only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” If the Jews who rejected Jesus and His Messiahship would receive the gospel, God purposed to make them His messengers to the Gentiles. Therefore, they were first to hear the message. They were to accept the hospitality of those who were worthy, those who would welcome them as if welcoming Jesus Himself. Every time they entered a house they were to say, “Peace to this house” (Luke 10:5).

At Creation Jesus commanded the earth, heavens, plants, sea, living creatures—including humankind—into existence. “For He spoke, and it was done; He com-

“During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching.”

manded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9). He is a “life-giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Certainly Jesus came to this world to give humanity a better hope of life. “The effect produced upon the people by the healing of the paralytic was as if heaven had opened, and revealed the glories of the better world.”⁴ We can have the same privilege when we come to Jesus just as we are and give our lives to Him.

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 267.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 268.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

By Somchai Chuenjit, human-resource director, Bangkok (Thailand) Adventist Hospital.

Our True Healer

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Jer. 33:3, 6

The paralytic man at Capernaum, the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda, the madman at the synagogue, the woman who suffered 12 years with an incurable disease, the woman caught in sin, the leper, and many others were healed by spoken words of Jesus.

The people round about them saw an instant healing of their physical problems. But those who were made whole “found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. . . . [They all] needed health of soul before . . . [they] could appreciate health of body. Before the physical malady could be healed, Christ must bring relief to the mind, and cleanse the soul from sin. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’ The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can impart, would restore vigor to the mind and health to the body.”¹

Those who disregard God’s health laws are living apart from God’s moral law. They live far from a normal, healthful lifestyle and thus bring disease on them-

Those who disregard God’s health laws are living apart from God’s moral law.

selves. “By sin we have been severed from the life of God. . . . Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life.”² “It required nothing less than creative power to restore health. . . . The same voice that spoke life to man created from the dust of the earth”³ is speaking life to us today. Jesus Christ can heal soul and body. We need healing of the soul before we can fully desire healing of the body.

Thus “when sin struggles for the mastery in your soul, and burdens the conscience, look to the Saviour. His grace is sufficient to subdue sin. Let your grateful heart, trembling with uncertainty, turn to Him. Lay hold on the hope set before you. Christ waits to adopt you into His family. His strength will help your weakness; He will lead you step by step. Place your hand in His, and let Him guide you.”⁴

REACT

In what specific ways can we live daily such that we can request of God the “health and cure” we so much need?

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 77.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

By Soontharee Tantrarongroj, associate professor, department of clinical chemistry, faculty of medical technology, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Faith That Healed

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Mark 5:34

Many modern-day illnesses are rooted in the mind. Many people become sick from problems they are unable to solve. Others struggle under the stress they carry with them daily.

It is not surprising for patients to look for a physician who communicates well with them. In my medical practice, I frequently encounter patients who tell me they already feel better because they have had an opportunity to talk with me. This shows a definite effect of mental stress on the physical aspects of life.

Let's look at the example of our Great Physician. In the healing of the paralytic man who was lowered down to Jesus from the roof, Jesus told the man that his sin was forgiven. This was good news for him. Christ told him to get up, and with great faith he did so and was healed. The result was twofold. First, the mental stress that put him down for years was over. Second, his faith in Jesus, combined with the healing power of Christ, resulted in a marvelous work.

"There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' The burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find

Many modern-day illnesses are rooted in the mind.

no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can give would impart vigor to the mind, and health to the body."

In the healing of the woman who touched the gown of our Lord, Christ commented on the woman's faith. Without it, nothing would have happened. This incident showed that great faith brings great power.

In modern medicine, we still can see many patients who trust their doctors and adhere to their suggestions. But many times their physicians fail them in the most vital part of healing. They forget to point to the Source who can relieve them of the mental anguish that is the cause of the illness.

Christ is ever willing to lift the load that was the cause of illness. Our part is to trust Him and allow Him to remove this problem for us. It takes faith on our part to allow Him to do this work in us.

REACT

1. In what specific ways can we help others accept the true Source of healing and prevention of unnecessary illnesses?

2. In our contact with fellow Christians, how can we strengthen their faith in Christ, our Great Physician?

* *The Desire of Ages*, p. 270.

True Healer

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 15:29, 30

“He went up into the hills and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them” (Matt. 15:29, 30, NIV).

During Christ’s ministry on this earth, a big portion of His work was spent in healing the sick. His aim in healing them was intended to show the true Source of healing. He healed these people in order to bring them back to the Source of the divine restoration physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Many of the multitude, however, sought the Lord, not for the purpose that He had in mind. Many of them looked only for physical healing, not at the other dimension. But the Lord looked at these people with sympathy and healed them all. He did not reject them, even though He knew they would reject Him later.

For people who did not care for their bodies to seek supernatural healing is not unusual in this modern world. In the Far East there are sometimes people who claim to possess special power to cure the sick. Recently a monk claimed the ability to heal AIDS patients. Word spread like wildfire. People from all walks of life and places flocked to him. He had them drink an herbal extract, and he chanted a Buddhist prayer in the Bali language. Many wanted to be made whole, but they

Recently a monk claimed the ability to heal AIDS patients.

abandoned the treatment when they found out that the remedy was a false one.

Our Saviour, however, has something far better for everyone who comes to Him. His healing power is certain and sure. He wants us to follow Him and to be close to Him.

In today’s world, these promises still hold true. Following the guidelines and teachings of the Bible assures better health. In addition, we are privileged to have the additional light that Ellen G. White has given us. It is not a surprise that, in general, the Seventh-day Adventist is far better off than others in regard to health.

REACT

1. If physical and spiritual healing were so vitally connected in Jesus’ treatment of the sick, are we to assume that all physical illness results from spiritual roots? Explain your answer.

2. How can I, in my daily living, make others know the true Source of health and healing?

3. In what ways does the Adventist health message enable us to live a life that prepares us both spiritually and physically for Jesus’ second coming?

By Kittiporn Tantrarungroj, a general surgeon at Bangkok (Thailand) Christian Hospital.

Legalists and Health Promotion

OPINION

Key Texts: Luke 19:1-10; John 8:3-11; Matt. 9:10-13

Not too long ago a group of instructors from the training-and-development section of Thai Airways Corporation spent four days at our mission health-promotion center. On the second day, two women in the group were having serious headaches and could not get out of bed, because they needed coffee. Since this is a health-promotion facility, all kinds of addictive substances are prohibited, including coffee.

I was scheduled to give a talk that very morning on the harmful effects of alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, and coffee. I could have used those two women as a vivid example of the harmful health effects of caffeine, but I changed my mind. I asked a staff member to get some coffee for these two patients. They felt much better after having some coffee and were able to attend other health talks during the last three days. Before they left, many Thai Airways staff said they would cut down on their coffee drinking and cigarette smoking.

I have kept in touch with some of them and found out that a few months later many have reduced their coffee drinking and a few have quit drinking it altogether. Some have reduced the number of cigarettes they smoke daily and are confident they will quit smoking soon. I am glad to hear this good news but saddened to hear

I asked a staff member to get some coffee for these two patients.

that some on the hospital staff have accused me of compromising our health principles by allowing coffee to be brought into our health center for the two women.

Jesus Christ showed us how to befriend those who are sick and in need of friendship and understanding, but many Adventists are legalistic about our health principles. As we call ourselves Christians—which means Christ’s followers—we should show our love and understanding to others. I am glad that Jesus showed us an example when He said to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:11, KJV). I am glad that Jesus said to Zacchaeus, “Come down, for I will go to your house today.”

REACT

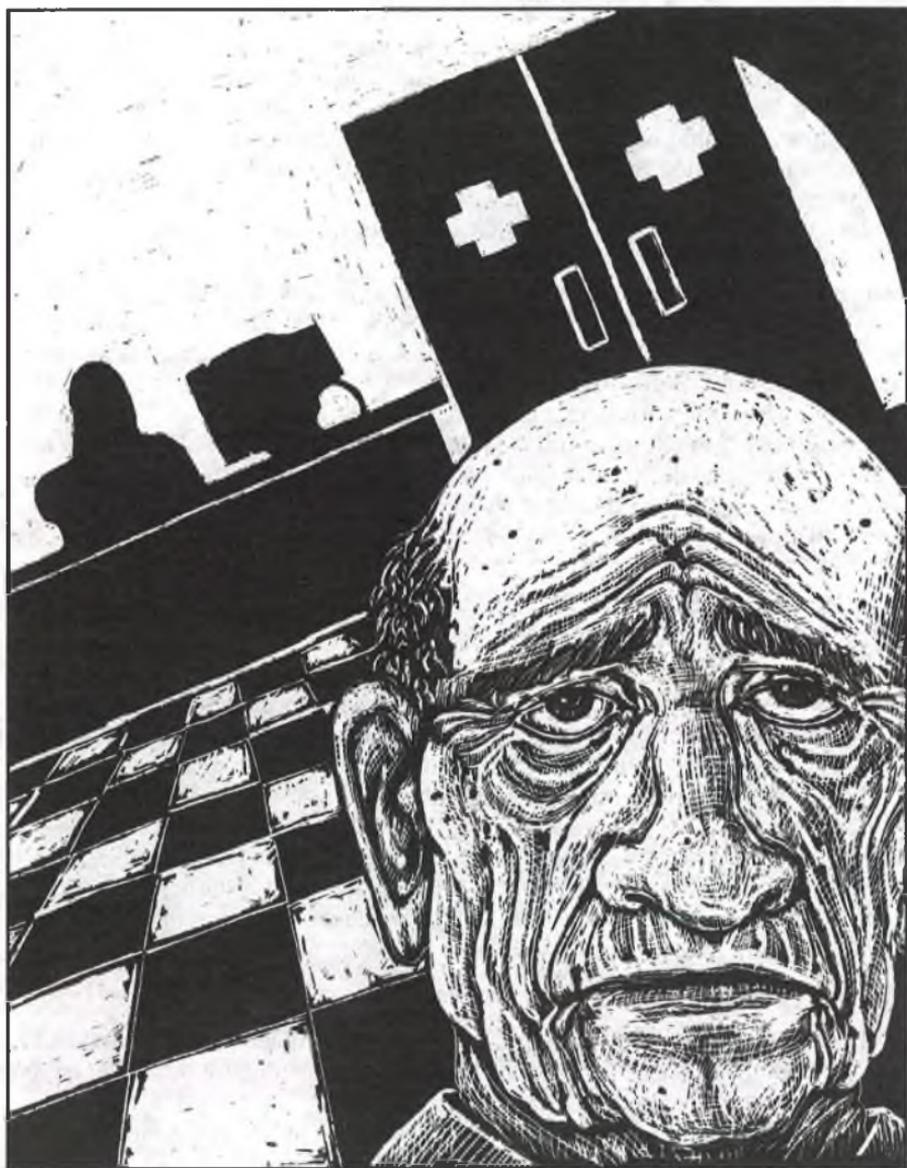
1. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn thee.” In practical terms, what is the difference between condemnation of a person and condemnation of that person’s sin?

2. Why do you think Jesus did not tell Zacchaeus to return the money he had taken from others *before* He would go to his house?

3. Why do you think Jesus decided to heal the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda on Sabbath when He could have healed him on any of the other days?

By Nithat Sirichotiratana, program director of the mission health-promotion center of Bangkok (Thailand) Adventist Hospital.

YOUR GIFT



“Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22, 23, NKJV).

Moved Through Compassion

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Lam. 3:22, 23

You walk through the front door with stooped shoulders, hearing aids, white hair, and wrinkles. I sigh when I see you coming. Another old person who wants something. Go away. I'm busy. We do God's work here.

I'm impatient. I don't want to understand you. Then you begin to explain. She died several months ago. You're on your own now. You were putting things in order when you found this money and a note—\$1,100 in 50- and 100-dollar bills. You sometimes gave her extra from your pension to get herself something nice. She would thank you and take the money but never seemed to spend it.

Now here it is. You place carefully folded notes into my hands. You tell me about her generosity, her kindness. You tell me about the two burial plots that you bought, side by side. I can feel the pain that shows through your eyes—you want to be there, lying next to her.

The money is for ADRA surgical teams, to help them save lives. You aren't an Adventist, but your wife was, many years ago. She could never forget. She prayed every day. Both of you went to church for a short while, but when you left, nobody missed you.

When you left, nobody missed you.

Now you're here alone. Your eyes are watery, voice shaking. You've lost everything you ever cared about, but you're still giving more. I hear a voice in the back of my mind: "I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me" (Matt. 25:43, NIV). Every word cuts away at my hard-fought-for veneer. I think of my cynicism, arrogance, and self-importance. I think of my job, which seemed so meaningful a few moments ago, of my studies, which suddenly don't appear so significant.

You are thanking me for a few worthless moments of my young life. You turn to me: "I hope she finds her God."

You walk away. My tears spill over, splashing heedlessly. It's as though a wrinkled hand has gently opened my eyes to a world crying out for help. In my youth and selfishness, I have given only what I could afford to give, helped only those who would help me in return. You and your wife gave everything you had, expecting nothing in return, and now you are helping me. You have taught me about God, shown me His love and compassion.

Someday soon your wife will meet her God. I'm sure of that. When she does, I believe you'll be standing by her side.

Willing to meet your God.

Holding her hand.

By Joanne Ferguson, a receptionist for the North New South Wales Conference, Wallsend, Australia.

Compassion Without Boundaries

LOGOS

Matt 8:1-17; 9:4-6, 36-38; Luke 5:12-16; 9:12-17

Matthew 8 begins with Jesus getting out of the pulpit. He comes down from the mountain where He has just delivered the great “Sermon on the Mount” and follows it up with three miraculous healings (He heals a leper, a centurion’s servant, and Peter’s mother-in-law). The authority of God is manifest not just in His preaching but in His actions. I can hear God saying, “Go thou and do likewise” to those of us who can “talk the talk” but who don’t always manage to “walk the walk.” Coming down out of the pulpit and getting our hands dirty in meeting human need is generally not something we’ve been used to in conservative Christianity. We’ve been better at theological orthodoxy.

Compassion Versus Orthodoxy (Matt. 8:1-4; Luke 5:12-16)

Interestingly, it is the orthodox with whom Jesus deals in his first miracle, but He starts out in a very unorthodox way. To declare yourself a leper was like walking into a crowded room after you’d stepped in dog droppings. No one wanted to know you. You were sentenced to “dwell alone in a habitation outside the camp” (Lev. 13:46, RSV). In other words, you were quarantined; no one would touch you. So you were cut off from your fellow men and women, denied access to the temple, and cut off from God.

This, and the fact that the disease gradually spread, destroying sensation as it went, has made it a metaphor for sin in many writers’ minds. Sin separates us from God, desensitizes us to evil, and very often distances us from those around us. (The cynics among us would take it further and suggest that if our sin becomes public, the church won’t go near us either.)

When Jesus does the unthinkable and touches the leper, the metaphor is complete. God does the unthinkable and reaches out to us in our sin, and healing occurs. His compassion can’t be quarantined.

In doing this, Jesus does what Judaism and orthodoxy were never able to do, heal a leper. Jesus had just preached that He hadn’t come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17, 18), and here the fulfillment of the law is the climax of the story. “Go . . . show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them” (Matt. 8:4, NKJV). In other words, it is a testimony to the fact that what Jewish religious orthodoxy couldn’t achieve (to cleanse a leper), Jesus just did. It was a testimony that One greater than Moses was here and that He was the fulfillment of all that Judaism pointed to. The law was fulfilled by love that broke the quarantine laws of Jewish orthodoxy.

Compassionate Thinking Beyond the Box (Matt. 8:5-13)

It was one thing to heal a Jewish leper, but quite another to heal the enemy’s servants. This was approaching treason, clearly an unduly extreme application of His teaching on loving your enemies. How were you ever going to get rid of the Romans if you kept on healing them and/or their support staff? Clearly, Jesus had no idea about protest and underground resistance.

Apart from Jesus’ compassion beyond the boundaries of the chosen people, you can’t help being struck by the centurion’s compassion for his servant. To humble

yourself before an itinerant preacher from the lowest class of the conquered people you've been sent to control, and to do it on behalf of your servant (of all people), is a serious breach of convention. Jesus offers to come immediately, but the centurion blurts out, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed" (Matt. 8:8, NIV). Jesus is stunned by the profound faith that goes beyond anything on display in the remnant church of the day. This was the genuine article. This was what would characterize Abraham's descendants, and this was what would characterize the heirs to the promise of an everlasting inheritance, a "city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10). Paul would have described the scene this way: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6). The centurion's faith was expressing itself through love for his servant, and that counted with Jesus.

Compassion Close to Home (Matt. 8:14-17)

Fortunately, Jesus didn't seem to be into mother-in-law jokes, and He went ahead and healed Simon's mother-in-law anyway. It really is good news, because it can be easy for us to become carried away with saving the world and expecting

How were you ever going to get rid of the Romans if you kept on healing them?

the miraculous out there while forgetting about those closest to us. Jesus was as concerned with the health of those back at home base as He was with the crowds that moved Him to compassion.

Beyond Healing to Happiness (Luke 9:12-17; Matt. 9:4-6)

Both Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 and His forgiveness of the paralytic emphasize that Jesus' compassion extended beyond physical ailments. He wasn't interested in the crowd's hungering after righteousness to the exclusion of their physical hunger (some preachers might reflect on this at 12 o'clock). However, neither was He interested merely in lifting the physical burden or paralysis without lifting the burden of guilt that really crushed the paralytic. Jesus' love saw the most immediate need and dealt with that while seeing people's deeper needs, as well. Always, in all situations, "he saw the crowds, [and] he had compassion on them" (Matt. 9:36).

REACT

1. Why do you think Matthew included the story of the healing of Peter's mother-in-law?
2. In what specific ways can a person allow God's Spirit to infiltrate his or her life with compassion?
3. How does pseudo-Christianity inoculate people against its authentic form?

By David Kadd, a third-year medical student at the University of Newcastle, Australia.

Am I Willing?

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Matt. 9:36-38

“The tender sympathies of our Saviour were aroused for fallen and suffering humanity.”¹ Christ reached out to the untouchables (Luke 5:12-16), the paparazzi (Matt. 8:5-13), close friends and family (verses 14, 15), and was even capable of affecting entire villages (verses 16, 17) with His compassion mingled with divine forgiveness (9:4-6). He set us an example, and He has asked for our help (verses 36-38).

“If you would be His followers, you must cultivate compassion and sympathy. Indifference to human woes must give place to a lively interest in the sufferings of others.”² Often we have no problem reaching out to those close to us, but to extend compassion (i.e., sympathy with a helping hand attached) to those of a different social class or to social outcasts is too difficult, so we turn our attention to ourselves and those closest to us.

“A lively interest in the sufferings of others” scares me. It would suggest that I become involved in the experiences of these people. That would suggest demands on time, emotions, and personal communications. But I’m glad that Ellen G. White didn’t just leave it there. She goes on to say, “If you are looking to Jesus, and drawing from Him knowledge and strength and grace, you can impart His consolation

“Indifference to human woes must give place to a lively interest in the sufferings of others.”

to others, because the Comforter is with you.”³

It would be amazing to see the consequences of a “Compassion Campaign.” “Whole crowds of people and entire villages” (Luke 9:12-17; Matt. 8:16, 17) could end up basking in divine love as a result of hearts that radiate this awesome power.

REACT

1. For a Christian, what is the difference, if any, among sympathy, pity, and compassion?

2. How can I become actively involved in showing compassion to my community?

3. In what ways, if any, does “orthodox Adventism” militate against meeting human need?

4. What might be some reasonable boundaries beyond which church people find it difficult to extend compassion and love?

1. *My Life Today*, p. 230.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

By Andrea Amos, a registered nurse at Sydney Adventist Hospital, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

He Couldn't Help Himself

EVIDENCE

Key Texts: Exod. 34:5-7; Deut. 10:17-19; Matt. 9:35, 36

There is no doubt that Jesus' ministry of compassion was extraordinary. Evidently He spent more time healing people than He did preaching to them.* What is even more extraordinary is the ease with which Christ was able to communicate His loving concern to the needs of anyone who came for help.

His compassion fed large, hungry crowds (Luke 9:10-17), comforted close friends who had lost a family member (John 11:1-44), lifted individuals with low self-esteem (Luke 8:43-48), encouraged the socially outcast (Mark 1:40-42), and even accepted children (Mark 10:13-16).

It's incredible to think that Jesus shared with us His intimate knowledge of the Father, not so much in words, but in acts of kindness. If you were given the task of demonstrating God's character, would you spend most of your time visiting homeless shelters, setting up soup kitchens, and ministering to prostitutes and AIDS victims? We may not consider this approach to be high on our agenda as effective evangelism, yet these types of people to whom Christ ministered became His strongest followers.

Paul recognized that if we who profess to be Christians are to live God-filled lives, then we need to be saturated with "compassion, kindness, humility, gentle-

Compassion is not a natural attribute of our self-centered natures.

ness and patience" (Col. 3:12, NIV).

The trouble is that compassion is not a natural attribute of our self-centered natures. It has to come from the Spirit's indwelling. In Jesus' case, however, He had a heart governed by love, with Calvary being its ultimate demonstration.

During a conversation with God on Mt. Sinai, Moses asked what would distinguish Israel from the surrounding nations. God replied that Israel was to have exclusive access to God's glorious presence. When Moses asked for evidence of that glory, God chose to reveal it through His name. "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God" (Exod. 34:6).

In view of this description of God, it could be said that it was natural for Christ to be compassionate because He "became flesh . . . [And] we have seen his glory" (John 1:14, NIV).

For each of us who claims to have accepted God's Fatherhood comes a clear imperative: we must clearly and unashamedly demonstrate a life of love and compassion, as did Christ—not because it's our duty, but because we are Spirit-driven. In so doing, we, too, will show the world what God is really like.

* *The Desire of Ages*, p. 350.

By John Tompson, a registered nurse and director of the van ministry for the Greater Sydney Conference, Strathfield, New South Wales, Australia.

Compassion: A Serious Verb

HOW-TO

Key Text: Mark 1:41

I would like to think of *compassion* as a doing word, a situation in which someone feels moved enough to help another person. Jesus' genuine concern and compassion for others was so great that it puts us to shame. His reaction to people in need was instant. He saw what needed doing, and He did it.

I hear you say that things are different now from what they were in Jesus' time. People, however, have remained people; they still feel pain, hurt, and loneliness as surely as they did back then.

Jesus understood that every person has certain physical, social, and spiritual needs and that they should be met in priority. A person who is hungry needs to be fed before his spirituality is addressed. Jesus' work on earth demonstrates this, and out of love and respect for Him we are to follow His example (Matthew 10):

1. Be compassionate. Take time for people. Today we have such busy lifestyles—studying, working, or just surviving in the rat race, that we may not be observant of others. Therefore, taking time out to see other people and what they are going through is the first step. Even just a smile breaks down many barriers.

A person who is hungry needs to be fed before his spirituality is addressed.

We may not be miracle workers, but listening to a person helps in the healing process, no matter what the issue. Ensuring that someone is not lonely is also important. Invite them to lunch!

2. Expose his or her heart to Jesus. Once we make contact and help others to meet their physical needs, we are opening up an opportunity for them to see Jesus in us. Our actions are much louder than words. Take the opportunity and the challenge!

3. Take time to pray. In whatever we do, we need the assistance of the Holy Spirit to guide us. Therefore, stay in touch with God. Keep your sights on Him so He can help you to love others.

REACT

1. Should compassion be a conscious effort? Why or why not?
2. Is intending to be compassionate enough for God? Why?

By Natalie Potts, a registered nurse at Sydney Adventist Hospital, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

Compati

OPINION

Key Text: Heb. 4:15

Recently on 2BL radio (Sydney, Australia), a 23-year-old woman, called Jane, was interviewed about her diagnosis. She was facing the horrid prospect of having both of her breasts removed. This is rare for women of Jane's age. During the interview, Jane repeatedly expressed her isolation. She was desperate. She wanted to talk to someone who had faced the same personal tragedy. I felt inadequate. It made me wonder, *Could Christ know what Jane was going through?*

I had no doubt that Christ suffered while here on earth but was unsure whether this qualified Him to now have compassion for Jane. So I started looking semantically at the noun *compassion*, which, I discovered, had developed from the late Latin composite verb *compati*: *com-*, with, + *pati*, to suffer. With this in mind, I began to search the Bible, and I found that He had "suffered with" hurting people, prior to (Isa. 63:9), and while on earth (John 11:35); which had then led to a complete healing of their hurt. I was enlightened but still needed to know, "What about now?"

The book of Hebrews reveals that Christ, as our High Priest in heaven, still

Could Christ know what Jane was going through?

"suffers with" hurting people on earth (4:15; 5:2). God must then be suffering with Jane, but she does not know it. How is Christ now able to provide her with complete healing?

Not denying God's power, I realized that the onus was on me, a follower of Christ, to let her know that Christ is suffering with her and that He wants to heal her, with my help. But what is this healing? Again, I felt inadequate. Past exposure to pseudo-Christianity had probably inoculated Jane, like many other people, against its authentic form. This is a barrier to which we need to be sensitive. This kind of sensitivity comes only after I have allowed every aspect of my life to be changed—and healed—by Christ. Only then can I fully share in this process with another.

Healing is not corporate, but individual. It involves "suffering with" each person and being actively involved in his or her process of healing. Suffering with someone means to understand the way that person thinks, without imposing how he or she *should* be thinking. "Our charity must be real and costly love with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance, or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment."^{*}

^{*} Walter Hooper, ed., *Daily Readings with C. S. Lewis* (London: Fount, 1992).

By Joshua Florida, a graduate scientist currently studying arts/medicine at the University of Sydney, Australia.

JUST THE RIGHT TOUCH



“Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (Matt. 9:35).

We Couldn't Look Away

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Isa. 53:4, 5

We had already seen hundreds of beggars. They greeted us at the airport, waited for us at bus stops, and accosted us at stop lights. The location changed, but the message was always the same.

I don't know why we stopped in front of this one boy on the muddy canal bank, but I do know what caused us to stare. Decency demanded that we look away, but each time, our eyes were drawn back to him. This young lad, not yet in his teens, was the most grotesquely disfigured person I had ever seen. His looks were absolutely revolting.

Our translator told us that much of the way the boy looked was caused by his mother when he was but an infant. She had prepared him to be a more effective beggar by permanently dehumanizing his appearance. This was one of the reasons we were asked not to give money to beggars. We were there to help ADRA in a development project that was designed to bring lasting change. Giving money

She had prepared him to be a more effective beggar by permanently dehumanizing his appearance.

to beggars only helped exacerbate the problems that surrounded the begging industry.

Our hearts wanted to give money anyway, but our heads reasoned against it. A frustrated student in our group, wanting to help, sat down on the ground. He picked up that filthy boy and just held him in his lap. Suddenly, the boy began to weep. He told our translator, in between sobs, that this was the first time in his life that he had ever been touched with love and tenderness. Unwanted and unloved, he needed more than money—he needed the healing of touch.

Jesus broke through the social mores of His day. He reached out and touched many of the filthy outcasts He met. His tender, compassionate touch did more than provide physical healing—it brought wholeness of body, mind, and soul.

By Ralph Perrin, dean of students at Loma Linda (California) University.

Whole-Soul Therapy

LOGOS

Matt. 6:12-15; 9:27-31; 14:35, 36; Mark 10:13-16; Isa. 53:4, 5

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness” (Matt. 9:35, NIV).

Jesus was an HMO administrator’s dream come true. Everywhere He went, the lame threw away their crutches, the blind read every line on the test chart, and pain took a holiday. Pharmacies went out of business, doctors golfed five days a week, and the cost of medicine, as well as the social costs of disease, disappeared. The Bible says He went everywhere “healing every disease and sickness.”

Matthew used the word *therapeuo* when describing this healing rampage. Throughout the New Testament, this word is used to describe more than ordinary healing. It describes miraculous healing.¹ Jesus took on cases where all other therapy had proved futile. His therapy was supernatural. Such miracles had incredible impact on communities. People were shocked to watch those with no hope suddenly become whole. The ubiquitous throng of beggars who surrounded each city gate would vanish. Those shunned and avoided because of their illnesses quietly reappeared in synagogues, marketplaces, and employment lines. But there was nothing quiet about the results. Jesus was noticed.

The incredible part of this story is that even in the face of this awesome display

Healing came, not to create faith, but as a response to faith.

of supernatural power, some chose not to believe (John 10:22-42). You would think that a 100-percent success rate of healing would produce a 100-percent success rate in evangelism. Such was not the case. In reality, it was the other way around. The success rate of healing depended on the evangelism. Healing came, not to create faith, but as a response to faith.

An example of Jesus’ power to heal is given in Matthew 9:27-30. Two blind men follow Jesus, calling out for a miracle. Jesus is willing to heal them, yet He first asks a question. “Do you believe I have the power to do this thing?” The idea of the word *believe* here is one of faith. Matthew uses the word *pistos*, which is generally translated *believe* yet includes ideas of belief, trust, and faith.² Although Jesus appreciated the importance of healing the body, His first priority was always the heart. He was always looking for the heart of faith.

The human soul has many facets. Spiritual, physical, mental, and social are all parts of a single unit. Jesus approaches us spiritually. He is searching for our response of faith. Nothing else is as important as faith. The lame who Jesus healed eventually stopped walking, the blind eventually stopped seeing—all experienced pain again. But with faith, their hope never had to die. And the supernatural healing Jesus provided found a home in their hearts. The therapy had eternal results.

Whole-soul therapy begins and ends with faith.

REACT

1. If Jesus were coming to your community, what or who would you ask Him to heal? Why?
2. How would you answer Jesus' question "Do you believe I have the power to heal?"
3. How are we agents of whole-soul therapy?
4. In your own words, explain the following statement: "Healing came, not to create faith, but as a response to faith."
5. In what tangible ways can we be Christ's healing touch to the *minds* and *bodies* of those around us?
6. Why does God bother with healing here on earth when it is all temporary?
7. What does it mean to be "touched" by God?
8. In what ways has God touched you?
9. What are the effects of being touched by God?

1. Colin Brown, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976).

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 1.

By Randall Skoretz, associate pastor of the Loma Linda (California) University Church.

Healing Hands, Healing Heart

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Matt. 9:35

“The work of Jesus commenced when the first afflicted one was brought before Him. The supplicants were healed by a word from His lips or a touch of His hand.”¹

“His fame as the Great Healer spread throughout Palestine, from Jerusalem to Syria. The sick came to the places through which they thought He would pass, that they might call on Him for help, and He healed them of their diseases. Hither, too, came the rich, anxious to hear His words and to receive a touch of His hand. Thus He went from city to city, from town to town, preaching the gospel and healing the sick—the King of glory in the lowly garb of humanity.”²

“Jesus kindly received the sick, and disease and approaching death fled at a touch of His hand. He gave hope to the sorrowing and despondent, and lifted the burdens from the hearts of those who sought Him. The dumb, blind and paralytic went from His presence rejoicing in perfect soundness.”³

In the triumphal procession into Jerusalem, “no mourning nor wailing is heard. . . . Those who have once been blind, but whose eyes have felt the healing touch of the Son of God, lead the way . . . while one whom he has raised from the dead leads the animal upon which he is seated. Those once deaf and dumb, with ears

The Saviour whose touch killed death could not stay in Joseph’s tomb.

opened and tongues unloosed, help to swell the glad hosannas. Cripples, now with buoyant steps and grateful hearts, are most active in breaking down palm branches, and strewing them in his path, as their tribute of homage to the mighty healer.”⁴

After the crucifixion, “the sufferers who had come to be healed by the Saviour sank under their disappointment. The streets were filled with mourning. The sick were dying for want of the healing touch of Jesus. Physicians were consulted in vain; there was no skill like that of Him who lay in Joseph’s tomb.”⁵

But the Saviour, whose touch killed death, could not stay in Joseph’s tomb. We can look forward to a time when “In the great day of God all who are faithful and true will receive the healing touch of the divine Restorer. The Life-giver will remove every deformity, and will give them eternal life.”⁶

1. *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 181.

2. *Evangelism*, pp. 532, 533.

3. *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 25.

4. *The Youth’s Instructor*, vol. 7, February 21, 1901.

5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 776.

6. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 276.

By Polly Sprague, a student in the Loma Linda (California) University School of Dentistry.

Jesus Is Coming Soon! Meanwhile . . .

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Rev. 21:4

Delayed gratification is a mature virtue, or so I've been taught. The ability to wait, and by waiting enjoy a greater good—well, that is the best virtue of all. In a Christian sense, we experience this as we suffer the pains of this world, comforting ourselves that when Jesus returns, He will “wipe every tear” (Rev. 21:4, NIV).

But, if delayed gratification is a virtue, why did Jesus heal the sick? Why did He bother making people's lives a little better for a short time?

Ironically, many Christians believe the opposite is true. In the true monastic spirit, they believe that suffering, self-imposed or otherwise, is the path to spirituality. The founder of Christian monasticism was Anthony of Koma.¹ He followed Christ's advice to the rich, young ruler and sold all he had and lived a hermit lifestyle in the desert. He suffered greatly and believed himself tormented by demons. Yet there were many who imitated him. Their “ideal was that of the individual hero who had left all for Christ.”² The theme of waiting for abundant life was the melody that played out in their lives.

Delayed gratification ought not always to be considered a virtue. Often it is simply a necessity. The reality of sin in this world provides the burdens that we face, yet in the midst of those hardships, Jesus offers us a new life in Him. That

If delayed gratification is a virtue, why did Jesus heal the sick?

new life begins the moment we meet Jesus. The abundant life Jesus offers us is not the light at the end of the tunnel but rather the history, hope, and reality of our life with Him.

That life with Jesus begins with immaturity. When the disciples turned children away from Jesus, He retorted, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” (Mark 10:14, 15, NIV). Receiving the kingdom of God requires childlike qualities—simple faith, eager steps, and an overwhelming desire to be close to an adult. There is nothing that comforts, energizes, and calms like a parent's touch. As we go through life, we call out for our heavenly Father, and like a mother hen, He takes us in. Jesus is drawn to that immaturity. In the story in Mark 10, we find the story ending with the children in Jesus' arms receiving His blessing.

1. Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970, third edition), pp. 125-128.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

By Randall Skoretz, associate pastor of the Loma Linda (California) University Church.

How Can We Extend His Healing Touch?

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 9:35

As a student therapist, I have come to the difficult realization that regardless of how hard I try, many of my patients will never reach a complete recovery from their injuries. Many will remain confined to wheelchairs or will never again have use of their arms or hands. During my last internship, I was dealing with one such painful realization when my patient confided in me and shared the difference my fellow therapists and I had made in his life. "Before I came here, I wanted to give up and die, but you changed all that." In disbelief, I asked him how. His reply was simple. "You prayed for me, you became my friends, and you accepted me."

As I reflected on his words, I realized that as a therapist I may not be able to heal my patients physically, but through Christ and His example, I can touch and help to heal their spirit. Every one of us can touch the spirits of those around us in the following ways:

1. Pray for those around us. We are urged in James 5:16 to pray for one another, that each may be healed. Prayer can be a powerful tool, or weapon, when combined with faith. God has promised that He hears our prayers and that "what-

Many of my patients will never reach a complete recovery from their injuries.

ever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24, NIV).

2. Be a friend. Many in this world are lonely and desperately desire for someone to call a friend. In my first week at Loma Linda, I vividly remember the loneliness I felt. At the end of my first week, I remember crying myself to sleep, praying that God would send some friends into my life. That very next week, I met a few of the people who have since become some of my closest friends, and it has made all the difference in my life.

3. Accept the unaccepted. Max Lucado tells a story in his book *He Still Moves Stones* about a man who was approached by a beggar asking for money. The man referred to the beggar as "brother" and apologized for having no money to give. The beggar was thrilled and replied that being called "brother" is worth as much, if not more, than any money the man could give. Being accepted was all his spirit needed.

REACT

1. Describe an experience in your past in which you can remember a time when God used someone to heal your spirit.
2. Who in your daily contacts needs to feel His healing touch?
3. How can you fill that need?

By Darby Parkhurst, a senior occupational-therapy student at Loma Linda (California) University.

A Different Kind of Touch

OPINION

Key Text: Matt. 14:36

He was lucky to be alive. Six of the people in his vehicle had been killed by an oncoming truck, and he hardly had a scratch. He was in the hospital for observation. I couldn't speak his language, but I was touched by his circumstances. Traumatic events are always life-changing. I spoke to him through a nurse who interpreted, but my words seemed to bounce around the room without a place to settle. As I talked, he continued to look into the horizon, over the white sea of sheets. I wanted to end his discomfort, which was a projection of my own, so I devised a plan to terminate the visit. I would touch his hand, say goodbye, and then leave.

It seemed easy. I reached down onto the white sea and took his hand. His fingers began to move until my own hand was engulfed by his. I felt the rough tenderness of a father who had lost six children, all within the space of seconds. I felt the powerful weakness of a man who could do almost anything except give his children new life. I felt a hand that was tired of wiping tears yet had more grief to share, a hand that was full yet incredibly empty. His eyes left the horizon and

Six of the people in his vehicle had been killed by an oncoming truck.

stared into mine. The white sea disappeared. I began to see a human being like myself, with like feelings and fears and sorrows. Somewhere deep in my soul, I began to feel his grief, and I was as a mute child in his presence.

Soon thereafter, I left his room, but I haven't been able to say goodbye. I still feel his rough hand around mine, and I am reminded that I was changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Through the years, I have met with God. I have watched and followed, like a traveler who plays peek-a-boo with the setting sun. I admire the beauty and marvel at the movement of One so powerful and consistent, yet ever-changing. But there are times when His fingers begin to move and I feel His hand engulf mine. In those moments, I see Him and understand Him in ways that are impossible at any other time. Somewhere deep in my soul, I am touched by the Divine. Those are the moments that change my life. And I always wonder: *If I were more open, less busy, and less insistent on my own desires and perspectives, would He touch me more?* If so, then I am at risk for profound loss—or a most indescribable joy.

By Carla Gober, assistant professor in the faculty of religion and coordinator of spiritual-care nursing programs, Loma Linda (California) University.

HEALING THE SPIRIT



“[The Lord] forgives all your iniquity... [and] heals all your diseases” (Ps. 103:3, RSV).

The Power of Healing

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Ps. 147:3

The appeals of his children, wife, and friends were of no use. After a life of disregard for the laws of health, Adolph contracted lung cancer. Only then did he realize what a fool he'd been. He consulted doctors, who made him feel more depressed as they reminded him that this disease was a result of his addiction. Although it was hard for Adolph to live with the physical pain of the disease, it was ever so much harder for him to live with his mental anguish.

One day a well-known doctor came to his town. Adolph had heard many wonderful things about him. Everything he heard was so good that he convinced his family and friends that if he could only consult this doctor he was sure he would be healed.

After many tries, they were able to make an appointment. The examinations were made and treatment started. Not once did this doctor condemn Adolph for his disease, and Adolph regained his peace of mind.

When we are ill, we encounter several types of people:

- our family and friends, who tirelessly seek ways of bringing healing to us.
- our neighbors, who don't even know we are ill.
- supposed friends, who don't miss a chance to point out the part we played in bringing the disease upon ourselves.

He consulted doctors, who made him feel more depressed.

- professionals, who are able to bring us healing.

The Bible gives us a clear example of this situation. Do you remember the paralytic, who was brought to Jesus while He preached in Peter's house? His friends took him to see Jesus. His neighbors were among the crowd, hardly aware of his existence. His supposed friends were the Pharisees and doctors who rejected him because they believed his disease was a direct result of his life of sin. Jesus was the professional, able to bring him healing.

Which type of person are we when we come into contact with people who are physically or mentally ill? The Pharisees and doctors should have been able to bring healing to those around them who were experiencing physical and mental suffering, yet they did not.

Today we are called upon to present to the world the Source of healing, the One who pardons freely everyone who comes to Him. As a church, it is our duty to make a difference in the lives of those around us. We may not always be able to provide physical healing, but spiritual healing certainly gives new hope to the person who does not know where else to turn.

By Viviani Prego Fragoso and Izamar Magalhães, secretaries for the education department of the Instituição Adventista Paranaense de Educação e Assistência Social in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil.

The God of the Impossible

LOGOS

Mark 2:1-12; Ps. 147:3; Isa. 35:3-6

We spend our entire lives within the narrow limits of our capabilities. Those things that are beyond our capabilities and talents we simply don't do. We stay away from anything and everything we feel incapable of doing. We do only those things we think we can do. We're afraid of taking risks.

This means we live in such a way that we don't need God. If we do only those things we are capable of doing, we don't need God's unlimited power! We don't believe that God can indeed do everything.

The great truth, however, is that our God is the God of the impossible! The angel said to Abraham and Sarah, "To God nothing is impossible." Jesus said, "Everything is possible to him that believes." Keeping these promises in mind, I ask you: What would you do if you were sure God would intervene in your favor? What would you ask God right now if you were sure He would perform a miracle?

This is the same God who made sure the stone hit the giant Goliath between the eyes. The One who parted the Red Sea. The One who made the walls of Jericho come tumbling down. The One who, with 300 men, won the battle against 135,000 soldiers. He is the God of the impossible!

What seems impossible to you? To have peace in your home? To overcome bad

We live in such a way that we don't need God.

habits? To be a different person? To be a better Christian? What miracle would you like to happen in your life just now?

In the story of the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum, God performed two impossibilities. First, He gave the man spiritual healing. Jesus said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." Second, He gave the man physical healing. Jesus said, "Rise, get up and go home."

The paralytic knew he was helpless and didn't see any hope of being cured of his disease. He was desperate and had lost all hope of having his health restored. His suffering was a result of his life of sin, and his guilt-ridden conscience made his suffering more difficult to endure.

He heard about the wonderful things Jesus did. He heard that other sick people had been cured. His friends encouraged him to believe he could be cured if he were taken to see Jesus. But, because of his sinful past, he feared that Jesus would not be willing to see him. He cried in a loud voice, "Oh, if only I could come into His presence!"

He was anxious to receive more than just physical healing. What he desired was to be relieved of the burden of sin. So he asked his friends to take him up to the roof of the house and lower him to where the Great Physician was standing. We don't know whether they asked the owner of the house, Peter, whether this was OK with him. The fact is that sincere faith never asks permission and never retreats when faced with obstacles!

That man's faith was rewarded! No one who sincerely goes to Jesus comes

away without His blessings. The story goes that when Jesus saw the man's faith and sincere repentance, He freely gave him what he needed: divine forgiveness for his sins. Once forgiven, the paralytic no longer suffered under the burden of despair and guilt. He felt the peace of forgiveness! He radiated Heaven's peace.

The greatest miracle of his life had just taken place, but he still needed another blessing. Jesus always has as many blessings as we have needs. The Source of divine blessing has no limits. That's what happened to that forgiven sinner. And that's what happens to everyone who believes in God. The psalmist says, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Ps. 147:3, RSV).

The man was completely healed when God forgave him. Yet Jesus did not command him to get up right away. Why not? It was so that He could prove His divinity and power to those unbelieving and critical Pharisees. So Jesus told the man to get up in front of everyone. What a scene! This is the love of Christ as it reaches out to heal the guilty sufferer. And this same love is still available to us today.

Jesus healed the paralytic to demonstrate His power to heal the physical body and His authority to forgive sins. Because he was forgiven, the sick man was now capable of receiving the blessing of healing. Jesus is just as willing to heal the sick today as He was when He came to this earth in person. The God of the paralytic is the same God who is with us today. He can do impossible things for you, for He is the God of the impossible! We need only to trust Him.

By Pastor Artur Elias Marski, youth director for the East Brazil Union, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro.

The Most Important Cure

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Mark 2:5

In Jesus' time the Jewish people generally believed that sick people had been cursed by God—because of their forefathers' sins or because of their own sins. Even the Pharisees, who should have been of support to sufferers, treated them as if they were under divine wrath and thus increased their suffering. "The Pharisees regarded affliction as an evidence of divine displeasure, and they held themselves aloof from the sick and the needy."¹

The paralytic of Mark 2:1-12 was weighed down not only because of the disease but also because of his psychological guilt of knowing that his disease was a result of a sinful life. His greatest discomfort was the psychological pain of seeing his body degenerated because of his acts against God. "His disease was the result of a life of sin, and his sufferings were embittered by remorse."²

What is more important, physical healing or forgiveness of sins? Most people would want health and then forgiveness of sins, because they think for physical healing a miracle would be needed, whereas for the forgiveness of sins repentance would be enough. But for the sinner who feels the pain of being removed from God, the important thing is to be near Him and obtain forgiveness for his sins so that

What is more important, physical healing or forgiveness of sins?

he feels healed in mind. The pain of remorse is deeper than any physical pain, and separation from God causes an inward emptiness that only God's presence can fill.

"Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5, NIV). When Jesus spoke these words, the paralytic did not think of his physical pain but felt spiritually forgiven, and that was what mattered. "The burden of despair rolls from the sick man's soul; the peace of forgiveness rests upon his spirit, and shines out upon his countenance. His physical pain is gone, and his whole being is transformed. The helpless paralytic is healed!"³

After going to every place he could think of to be cured and hearing the spiritual leaders say that because of his sins he was not worthy of receiving divine blessings, the words of Jesus filled the paralytic's heart with contentment and rejoicing. "It was not physical restoration he desired so much as relief from the burden of sin. If he could see Jesus, and receive the assurance of forgiveness and peace with Heaven, he would be content to live or die, according to God's will."⁴

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 267.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 268.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

By Elmar Stork Borges, a member of the Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) Central Church and speaker for the musical group "Carisma."

Love, Jesus' Perfume in Me

EVIDENCE

Key Text: James 5:11

Jesus is phenomenal! Imagine how great is His love for us. He made us in His image and after His likeness. We sinned, and our forefathers were expelled from the Garden of Eden, but God did not abandon us. On the contrary, He promised a Saviour would come—His own Son! Christ lived and walked on earth, suffered more than we suffer, experienced difficulties such as no human being can imagine, yet He still showed love and compassion.

The most fantastic thing is that He loved us, loves us, and will always love us. It's wonderful to have this assurance in the world we live in. I can say I'm a real princess! And my Father is preparing a beautiful home for me, where everything will be perfect! But who? Me? Sinful? Wicked? Full of defects and bad habits? It's mostly this that God wants from us: that we seek Him every moment of our lives. He wants and is willing to heal us, free us, and save us.

When Jesus was here on earth in person, disease was considered to be a sign of divine punishment. This was another trap Satan set out.

The priests, ever ready to bring Jesus down, could not understand why Jesus cured the lepers (leprosy being a totally repugnant disease at that time), paralytics,

God would not be a God of love if He allowed this.

the blind, etc. From childhood we have been taught that God is love. The only thing He wants is for us to become close to Him. It isn't difficult to feel His hand upon our head, loving us, and with our head against Him ask that He forgive us and cleanse our hearts!

Some people today still believe that disease is evidence of divine punishment. Wrong! God would not be a God of love if He allowed this. Imagine that our life is a beautiful, clear crystal ball. If we throw this ball on the ground, it will obviously break. Then we'd look up and ask, "Why did it break?" When the ball falls to the ground, it suffers a number of consequences of the laws of nature, such as the law of gravity. Our life works more or less the same way. Certain laws must be obeyed. If there is a car accident or some brutal killing, we usually ask, Why? The fact is that we live in a sinful world, where we are subject to misfortune. Usually we also ask, Where was God when this horrible thing happened? Well, I'll tell you: at the same place He was when His Son died—at the foot of the cross, crying!

REACT

How do you react to AIDS victims? Do you believe that it's a punishment from God?

By Keily Archanjo Mansor, a journalism major at the Estácio de Sá University, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Jesus, My Physician

HOW-TO

Key Text: Mark 2:1-12

The Bible story recounted in Mark 2:1-12 reveals certain types of people:

1. The critics or Pharisees—who judge. They claim that disease is an evidence of divine displeasure. Because of this, they treated the afflicted with scorn and humiliation.

2. The paralytic—who had lost all hope of restoration. His disease revealed his sinful life. He sought out the Pharisees and doctors, hoping for relief from his mental and physical suffering, but all they could say was that his disease was incurable.

3. Friends—who encouraged him by telling him about all the sick people Jesus had healed. They gladly took him to where Jesus was.

4. The multitude—who crowded Peter's house to hear Jesus. So dense was the crowd that it was necessary for the paralytic to be let down on a rope from the roof of the house.

5. The Great Physician—who manifested His power to forgive sins by performing the miracle. Jesus, who imparted life to man, restored the physical and spiritual life of the paralytic.

We live in a world filled with physical and spiritual paralytics.

History hasn't changed. Today we still have the same groups of people. We live in a world filled with physical and spiritual paralytics. Everywhere we turn we see the hungry, the diseased, the criminal, the desperate—all humiliated by society and without hope of a better world.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men” (Matt. 5:13, NIV). No doubt Jesus is telling us in this story that as Christians we should belong among the friends of the paralytic. At the club, at the university, at work—in other words, everywhere we go—we will find spiritual paralytics and people who need help. As Christians (friends of the paralytic), we must help encourage and tell all about the wonderful things Jesus has done and can do in our lives. We must lead the modern-day paralytics to the Great Healer.

Many times we position our church in the place of the multitude. We hear everything but do nothing. Sometimes we position our church in an even worse place—that of the critics or Pharisees. We criticize the pastor, the elder, and the entire work of the church. And so taking sinners (paralytics) to the Great Physician is left to the minority. What is lacking in us? Could it be that we ourselves are in need of spiritual healing?

By Ezequias Rodrigues dos Santos, engineer and systems analyst at the East Brazil Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro.

Take Up Your Cot!

OPINION

Key Text: Mark 2:5

We know practically nothing about them, not even their names. All we know is that there were four of them and what they did. It wasn't easy taking their paralytic friend to Peter's house where Jesus was. Maybe they arrived at the house already tired from carrying the paralytic and his cot all the way there, only to find the house filled to the point where they couldn't even hear the Master's voice. They could have said, "We've done our part. Now it's too difficult to go on. Let's leave." But they didn't. They were persistent, and they used their intelligence and physical strength to let their friend down through an opening in the roof.

Jesus knew that the friends had faith, as much as did the paralytic, in His healing power. "He saw *their* faith" (Mark 2:5, NIV, italics supplied). Their kindness was motivated by their faith that Jesus would somehow take care of the problem.

Because of our sinful nature, it is much easier to doubt than to believe. It's much easier to do things our way than to have faith that God will somehow intervene in our favor. We must believe that God has power to heal our bodies and our minds.

Our duty is to testify to this healing power, for through the Holy Spirit, Christ

We know practically nothing about them, not even their names.

can be successfully introduced to people who, with faith, will plead for the forgiveness of their sins and for healing.

Look around you. Find a friend and take him to Jesus. If you yourself have not yet experienced the restoring power of Christ, ask a friend to help you get closer to Jesus. "Christ's servants are His representatives, the channels for His working."¹

Place your life in God's hands. He will give you His renewing power and will enable you to communicate this power to others. "The peace which He alone can impart, would restore vigor to the mind, and health to the body."²

REACT

1. What would you do if a friend who'd been sick for a long time asked you to take him to a church service to be cured?
2. How would the story have been different if the paralytic had had no friends?
3. In practical terms, what does it mean to act according to your faith?
4. If the church is likened to a human body, describe in detail how it could be afflicted with "spiritual paralysis."

1. *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 823, 824.

2. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 77.

By *Silvia Renata de Souza Marski*, a dental-school student at the *Fluminense Federal University, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*.

LEAP OF FAITH



“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. . . . Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb. 11:1-6, NIV).

The Act of Faith

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Mark 5:21-43; 9:14-29

The stories were marvelous—lay people using butter knives to perform painless surgery, scars healing in a matter of hours, appendicitis cured by laying on of hands, tumors regressing. All this in the name of God. But these accounts weren't coming from our missionaries, and the images flowing through my mind as I continued reading were of scams, charlatans, and impostors.

Faith healers of my youth came in three varieties. They could be the tools of the devil, whose goal was to provide "false gods." They could be frauds out to make a fast buck as best exemplified by Steve Martin in his 1992 movie, *Leap of Faith*.

Or they arose from the mission lands. And although everyone always "praised the Lord," an undercurrent of skepticism always seemed to be present. At best, it was something that seemed to happen "over there"; rarely here in America where it might actually mean something to any of us.

But something about these new stories kept bothering me. It wasn't that they were from a non-SDA denomination; God can work through many types of believers. I thought for a while to try to do enough research to prove the truthfulness

Faith healers of my youth came in three varieties.

of them, but then realized the only proof I'd believe was to see it with my own eyes, and that wasn't possible.

What I finally recognized was the similarities between these healings and those revealed in the Bible. And what troubled me was the revelation that if I had lived in Jesus' day and heard about the woman who touched His robe or the centurion whose daughter was brought to life, would I also think scam, charlatan, and impostor?

An additional 20 years of life finds me still believing in Jesus. And for me, it's that simple statement I continue to hold onto. My faith doesn't reside in what Jesus does but lives because of who Jesus is. I don't love my dad because he played baseball with me or my mom because she made my lunch for school. I love them because they are my parents. And because they are my parents, they loved me and took care of me.

I've had no occasion to prove to myself that healing through faith exists. But I do know that if the circumstance arises where my loved ones were in need of healing, I would be praying to my God—not because of what He might do, but because of who He is.

By Jeff Emery, vice-president of MIS for an international phone company, Denver, Colorado.

It Is Not “Great” Faith That Saves

LOGOS

Mark 5:21-43; 9:14-29; Matt. 8:5-13; John 5:1-8, 14

Mark 5:21-43

Note some characteristics of the people who receive the healing touch of Jesus in these stories about a suffering woman and a dying girl. . . .

1. *They are “outsiders.”* The people of Jesus’ society regard women and children as less valuable than adult men. Further, the religious establishment views affliction as evidence of God’s disfavor. Offended by such barriers, Jesus crashes through them to minister to the dying girl and the suffering woman. The girl and the woman are linked by a coincidence of time—the girl is 12; the woman has been sick for the same twelve years the girl has lived. Now the two are linked by the powerful touch of Jesus.

2. *They need, they ask, they receive.* A synagogue ruler—a member of the religious establishment—ignores the formalities of his religion to beg an itinerant teacher for a gift of healing. Jairus comes not with a demanding attitude, with money, or with arguments for Jesus’ attention. His only claim is his desperate need. The woman with the uncontrollable bleeding dares not even face Jesus. Years of shame have decimated her self-esteem. The hand secretly extended to touch Jesus’ cloak represents her final hope for rescue; this silent expression is rewarded just as completely as Jairus’s spoken request.

3. *They simply believe.* Both Jairus and the woman see that the power is in Jesus. They see love there, too, and their response of Spirit-inspired faith turns the switch that allows the power to flow. Look at the words of Jairus in verse 23. See any doubt? Compare this with the thoughts of the woman in verse 28. See any hesitation? In both you see faith at its finest—simple, uncomplicated reliance upon the Saviour and a desperate expectation of blessings from His hand. Those who doubt the viability of such faith must hear the words of Jesus to the woman: “Your faith has healed you.” We talk about “great faith,” but these stories demonstrate that it is not great faith that saves but simple faith in a great God.

4. *They are not without fear.* We think of faith and fear as inherent enemies. In fact, fear may be the precise opportunity the Spirit seeks for the rise of faith. Look at these stories again. After Jesus heals the woman and pierces her veil of secrecy, she falls at His feet “trembling with fear.” And consider Jairus. At the message “Your daughter is dead,” this father must be seized with horror, for Jesus gives the immediate response: “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

5. *They respond differently from the people around them.* Notice the contrast between the simple faith of the woman and Jairus and the response of the people in general. When Jesus’ power connects with the woman’s secret touch, the disciples giggle at the concept (verse 30). When Jairus’ friends bring news of his daughter’s death, they say, “It is too late—don’t bother Jesus anymore” (verse 35). When the mournful crowd hears Jesus say the dead child is asleep, they laugh at Him (verse 40). And when the dead child obeys the call of Jesus and rises, the people are astonished (verse 42). We may respond to Jesus’ claim of healing power in one of two ways. We may question it, doubt it, ridicule it, and disbelieve it. Or we may

simply accept it in spite of our fears, and, like the woman in the story, go in peace, freed from suffering.

Mark 9:14-29

The healing of the boy with an evil spirit clarifies the nature of transforming faith:

1. *Faith is not taking Jesus' power for granted.* When the disciples do that, Jesus calls them an “unbelieving generation” (verse 19, NIV). Faith is an active, prayerful commitment to the mind and will of God (verses 28, 29).

2. *Faith is not blithe presumption that “everything will be all right.”* Faith is an active choice to trust Jesus even while acknowledging our struggle with unbelief (verse 24).

Matthew 8:5-13

In the previous story (Mark 9), Jesus is astonished at peoples' unbelief. Now here's a twist—He's astonished at someone's *faith!* Notice there is nothing complicated about the centurion's faith; it is a simple just-say-the-word attitude toward the sovereign power of Jesus. The quality of the faith is the measure of the blessing (Matt. 8:13).

John 5:1-8, 14

The poolside paralyzed man is a sinner, and his paralysis is in some way related to his sinful life (John 5:14). He does not seek Jesus; Jesus seeks him. He does not ask Jesus to make him well; Jesus makes him well anyway. This story is a caution

We think of faith and fear as inherent enemies.

to our putting Jesus in a box, thinking that because the Healer acts in a certain way most of the time, that is the way He is always bound to act. Yet here, too, we find the critical connection of faith. When Jesus says, “Get up and walk,” the man does not say, “You're kidding. I can't—I'm paralyzed. And anyway, it's the Sabbath and I can't be healed today.” He gets up. He walks. His situation appears hopeless—38 years of physical and spiritual paralysis—but it is nothing an act of faith in Jesus can't fix.

REACT

1. It is easy to find excuses for distrusting the healing power of Jesus. (“It's not the same today as it was in Jesus' time.” “What if I'm not healed—then what will happen to my faith?”) Based on the above Gospel stories, what are the reasons to trust His healing love and power? Are these reasons sufficient to overcome objections?

2. How do we separate faith from credulity?

3. After reading Mark 5:21-43, do you think it is a denial of faith to take an antibiotic for an ear infection? Or have surgery for “plugged” arteries of the heart?

By Ed Gallagher, associate pastor at Denver (Colorado) South Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Faith of the Faithful

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Ps. 34:22

“The consistent course is to commit our desires to our all-wise heavenly Father, and then, in perfect confidence, trust all to Him. We know that God hears us if we ask according to His will. But to press our petitions without a submissive spirit is not right; our prayers must take the form, not of command, but of intercession.

“There are cases where God works decidedly by His divine power in the restoration of health. But not all the sick are healed. Many are laid away to sleep in Jesus. John on the Isle of Patmos was bidden to write: ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.’ Revelation 14:13. *From this we see that if persons are not raised to health, they should not, on this account, be judged as wanting in faith. [Italics supplied.]*

“We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers, and are tempted to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or comes in an unlooked-for form. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. And because we can trust His wisdom and love, we should

“If persons are not raised to health, they should not on this account be judged as wanting in faith.”

not ask Him to concede to our will, but should seek to enter into and accomplish His purpose. Our desires and interests should be lost in His will. These experiences that test faith are for our benefit. By them it is made manifest whether our faith is true and sincere, resting on the word of God alone, or whether depending on circumstances, it is uncertain and changeable. Faith is strengthened by exercise. We must let patience have its perfect work, remembering that there are precious promises in the Scriptures for those who wait upon the Lord. . . .

“When we have prayed for the recovery of the sick, whatever the outcome of the case, let us not lose faith in God. If we are called upon to meet bereavement, let us accept the bitter cup, remembering that a Father’s hand holds it to our lips. But should health be restored, it should not be forgotten that the recipient of healing mercy is placed under renewed obligation to the Creator.”*

* *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 230-233.

Healing of Faith

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Mark 5:21-43

Is faith any less important in the healing process today than it was 2,000 years ago?

If you were to make a search of the scientific medical literature of the past 15 to 20 years, you could find hundreds of epidemiological studies that have attempted to evaluate the effects of religious faith on the reparative process of disease and injury. These studies were conducted in a variety of settings; from acute-care units to outpatient clinics, where patients were followed over extended periods of time. Most of the investigative studies were designed to compare groups of patients who had a religious faith to similar groups of patients who expressed no religious belief, so as to determine what role, if any, faith played in the process of physical healing.

In almost every published study there were statistically significant differences. The "religious faith" groups were found to have had a more rapid therapeutic response and shorter periods of convalescence and disability than the non-"faith" groups. In general, the "faith" groups regained their original level of health sooner, had fewer complications and, over all, made a better adjustment to chronic medical problems than the control groups.

Seventh-day Adventists have a lower overall mortality rate than comparable age groups.

Similar mortality studies have been reported on groups of Seventh-day Adventists in the United States and Northern Europe, in whom religious faith has influenced lifestyle choices. Each study has shown these SDAs to have a lower overall mortality rate than comparable age groups.

Since it has long been recognized that emotional stress, resulting from anxiety, fear, or depression, can suppress the normal immune and hormonal response to a variety of illnesses, ranging from the common cold to cancer, it is easy to understand how an active faith and trusting relationship with God could displace anxiety and diminish the fear that usually is associated with major illness, incapacitating disease, or serious injury. When fear, anxiety, and depressed-mood states are relinquished to the care of a loving God, it would seem apparent to most that the unimpaired physiologic processes of repair and healing could more rapidly and efficiently take place.

An active faith is just as important in the ordinary course of our daily lives as it is in the process of physical restoration. Without a vital, confident sense of assurance and trust in God's purpose for our lives, we are at risk of becoming overwhelmed by the same attitudes of doubt, cynicism, despair, and fear that prevail in our social environment.

By Walter Ordelleide, a retired professor of family medicine from Denver, Colorado.

A Crisis in the Act of Faith

HOW-TO

Key Text: Mark 9:24

A sudden loss of employment. The death of a loved one. A serious illness, or some other event that elicits a complete loss of control.

How often we perceive that we have control of our lives. But then comes an event that leaves us grasping in desperation for the hand of God. Perhaps we have separated ourselves from God. Suddenly we wonder where our faith went. Do we have any at all?

Satan would like for us to doubt God's ability to work miracles in our lives. Even the smallest request answered is a miracle. A crisis in our faith can be very painful and debilitating. Here are some ways to approach this crisis:

1. "Help Thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). A simple heartfelt prayer is all that is necessary to begin. "As you come to Him, believe that He accepts you, because He has promised. You can never perish while you do this—never."¹ Continue fervently to request that God remove your unbelief.

2. Look to the place where you last saw the light. Most people can look back on a time when God has clearly led in their lives. Often we are able to see His leading only in hindsight. This is particularly so in our most painful experiences. "When temptations assail you, when care, perplexity, and darkness seem to sur-

Even the smallest request answered is a miracle.

round your soul, look to the place where you last saw the light. Rest in Christ's love, and under His protecting care. When sin struggles for the mastery in the heart, when guilt oppresses the soul and burdens the conscience, when unbelief clouds the mind, remember that Christ's grace is sufficient to subdue sin and banish the darkness. Entering into communion with the Saviour, we enter the region of peace."²

3. Spend time in God's Word. Seek His specific promises. During a particularly difficult transition in my life, I prayed desperately for God's leading. After several minutes of seemingly no response from God, I turned in the Scripture to Hebrews 11. My eyes quickly scanned the beginning of each verse in the chapter. The repetition of the initial words of each verse was quite striking: "By faith . . . By faith . . . By faith . . ." I received the message loud and clear and felt much more at peace. Very impressive are the examples given in this great faith chapter in the Bible. In addition to these examples are numerous promises God has given to strengthen us in times of crisis.

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 66.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

By Betty McMillen, a licensed clinical social worker from Denver, Colorado.

Faith Is a Choice

OPINION

Key Text: Luke 8:48

We have two choices. We can place our faith in God, who is eternal, or we can place our faith in self. Either choice will be reaffirmed on a continual basis.

Faith in God will be reaffirmed by a growing, strengthening, vibrant life as we daily see Him direct our lives. Faith in self will be confounded by a succession of shattered dreams, misplaced goals, and a sense of impending failure as we recognize our human frailties.

Today we are aware of the role that our state of mind plays in our physical, as well as mental, well-being. Healing and strength come from the confidence gained by faith in the Eternal One. Sickness and despair come from the realization that without God we are eternally lost and all our dreams will be very short-lived.

In Matthew 8, the Roman centurion's faith was an inspiration and a blessing to all who witnessed it, including Jesus and the generations who have heard about it since.

In John 5, when Jesus found the healed man from the pool of Bethesda in the synagogue, He admonished him not to return to a life of sin lest a worse thing come upon him. Was this a threat from Jesus? Of course not. It was a statement of the fact that as surely as a life of faith can make you whole, a life of sin (faith in self/separation from God) will destroy you.

We are aware of the role that our state of mind plays in our physical well-being.

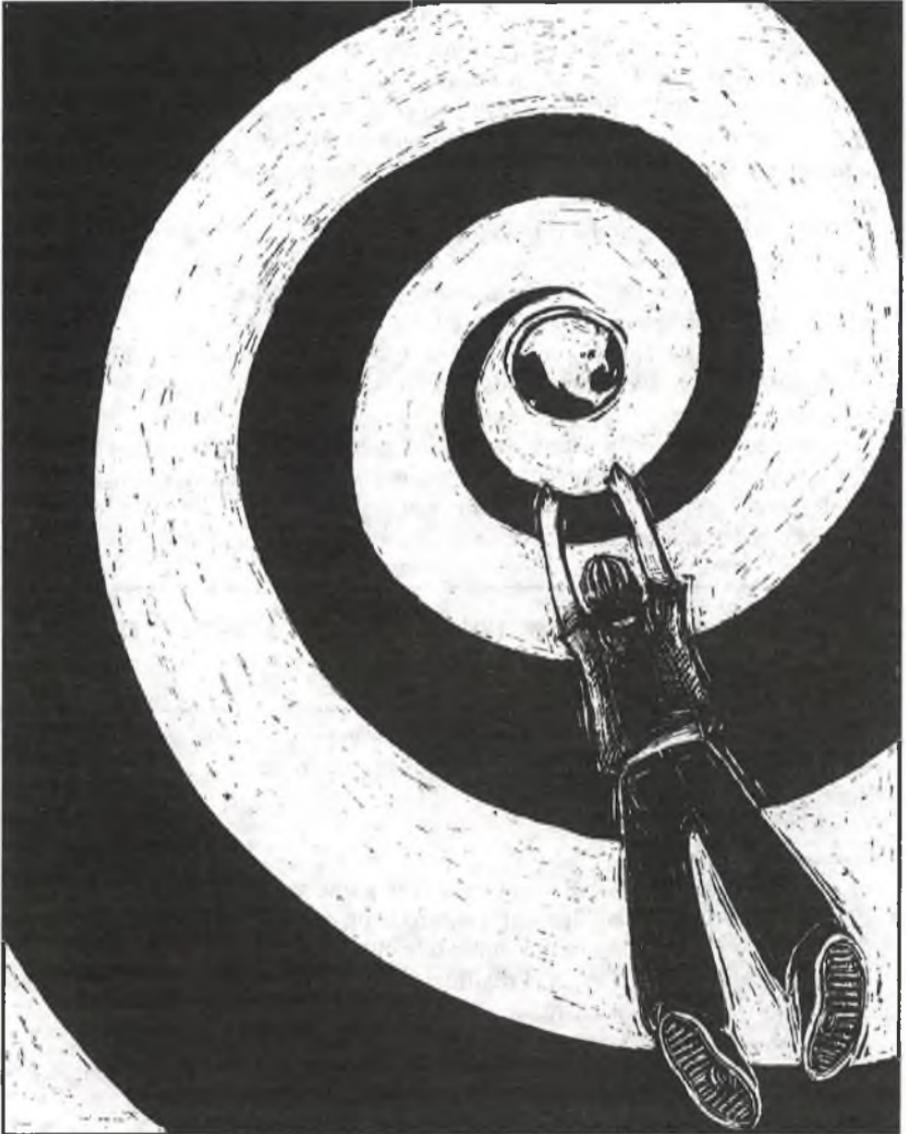
The choice is ours; a life of faith, which leads to peace fulfillment and ultimate salvation or a life of self, which leads to disappointment, despair, and ultimate failure. What will your choice be?

REACT

1. How do you think the Roman centurion gained such a level of faith?
2. If a life of faith, as we know it, leads to happiness, fulfillment, and ultimate salvation, why do so many fail to make this choice?
3. If the choice of self leads to disillusionment, disappointment, and ultimate destruction, why do so many make this choice?
4. What steps can we take to ensure that we make the right choice?
5. How do we blend the work of faith with the medical expertise available to us?
6. When faced with a terminal illness—having prayed for healing—is it a lack of faith to put our earthly affairs in order? Why or why not?

By Darrell F. Schuler, a dentist in Aurora, Colorado.

MODERN DEMONS



“Casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:7, 8, NKJV).

Between Heaven and Hell

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Matt. 24:24; Luke 4:33-37

Saint Antonius, the founder of Christian monasticism, was born around A.D. 250. Though born of Christian parents, he did not accept Christianity until he was 20 years old. At this time he was so touched by a sermon on Christ's parable of the rich, young ruler that he distributed his earthly goods and sat by a tomb and devoted himself to pious stories. But memories of the pleasures of the world disturbed him; satanic delusions, darkness, seductive demons afflicted his mind. So he fled to the desert, where he lived in a cave for 20 years. People sent him a ration of bread twice a year, just enough for him to survive.

I read this story as I visited an art exhibition called "Between Heaven and Hell," whose aim it was to trace today's often grotesque images, which can be seen in our modern youth culture, back to its historic and religious grounds. Is there any doubt that Satan and demonic powers have from the very beginning of earth's history frightened and intrigued people? Unfortunately, we can see a tremendous increase of demonic influence in today's society.

The experts in this area are talking about something they call a "psychedelic" effect, a term that describes something that exposes and uncovers the human mind.

Some even describe a feeling of being united with some kind of god.

It makes the human mind passive and ready to receive whatever impressions are there to impact on it. People who have gone through this experience describe it as a period of deep anxiety, depression, fear of death, demonic visions, and a sense of separation from time and space. Some even describe a feeling of being united with some kind of god. Normally we hear about these things in connection with drugs, destructive music, grotesque art, mysticism, etc. It is easy to conclude that others are at risk of falling into Satan's traps, but not me. No way!

But is there any doubt that we are *all* living in a psychedelic world today? Because of our sinful natures and a world fallen in sin, we are all exposed to subtle demonic attacks. Satan is doing all he can to make our minds receptive to his messages. He is very selective in choosing the best way to reach you and me with whatever he can find to make us receptive to him (Matt. 24:24).

When we are afflicted by Satan, we can always turn to our friend, Jesus, who gives us the bread of life. He fills our minds, in themselves defenseless against sin, with Himself. This is what gives us life and hope in a world filled with modern demons.

By Claes Lundström, youth director of the Swedish Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Stockholm, Sweden.

Come Near to God

LOGOS

Matt. 4:24, 25; 17:14-21; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 4:33-37

Ever since the fall of humanity, Satan has tried to trick humankind (Gen. 3:1-5). This work will continue until Christ's second coming. We are surrounded by sin. Through the years, Satan has used modern tricks to deceive us.

The first sin started when Adam and Eve hid from God (Gen. 3:8). Satan is trying to make us hide from God, but the texts for this week's study show how people were saved when they reached out to God (Matt. 4:24; 17:14, 15; Mark 5:6; Luke 4:33).

Taking the First Step (Matt. 4:24, 25)

Jesus worked on this earth 2,000 years ago, but His approach is modern, and we as Christians have a lot to learn from it. When He was here on earth, He did not stay in "His church" waiting for people to come to Him. He "went throughout Galilee, teaching in *their* synagogues, preaching the good news (Matt. 4:23, NIV, italics supplied). He went to the people in their surroundings in order to understand them and to give them hope.

When people came near to God (James 4:8), they could cast all their burdens upon Him (1 Pet. 5:7). No matter what disease or burden they had, God's power can reach anyone. He helped the people in their need, so He also could touch their hearts with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Self-reliance—or Lack of It (Matt. 17:14-21)

In this passage Jesus is condemning a satanic "demon" that has been active through all ages—the demon of self-reliance, or maybe lack of self-reliance. Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy and said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation. . . . How long shall I put up with you?" (Matt. 17:17). Since sin came into this world, people have belonged to the "unbelieving and perverse generation." Satan makes us believe that we must rely on ourselves. When the disciples had too little faith, they trusted more in themselves than in God's healing power. No one can produce anything spiritual. To unite humanity with spirituality is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Even Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit in order to heal people (Acts 10:38). Jesus was more sad than angry that His beloved disciples were afraid to rely completely on God's power through the Holy Spirit.

He was not addressing the father of the boy when He spoke. The father had faith. He relied totally on God's power and came "near to God" (James 4:8) with his burden. And God healed the boy.

Too much self-reliance is believing that we can do God's work without the Holy Spirit. Faith is a gift from God. We can't do anything by ourselves. But if we cast all our burdens upon Him, He will fill that empty place with faith, with the Holy Spirit.

To Run Toward Jesus (Mark 5:1-17)

"There is reason to believe that demon possession, in the restricted sense of the gospel writers, was far more common during the time of Christ's personal min-

istry on earth than it is today.” During Jesus’ ministry, Satan chose a different way to approach people from what he does today. He possessed them with demons. Today he is using more deceptive ways in his approach. He works more in our thoughts, minds, and feelings. This is why it is so important to come near God and to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom. 12:2).

The man with the unclean spirit ran toward Jesus, perhaps to attack Him or maybe to seek help. But he came to Jesus. Jesus took the man’s burdens away and gave him peace (Mark 5:15). When we are coming to Jesus with our sins, “[He] will again have compassion on us; [he] will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).

To Be Delivered From Evil (Luke 4:33-37)

In the last text for this week’s study, a man with an unclean spirit was in the synagogue. When Jesus came and spoke with power to the people (Luke 4:32), the evil spirit cried out and attacked Jesus (verse 34). In the presence of God, Satan is shaky, and he tries to put God in a bad picture.

What Jesus does here is an act of love toward the man. The man was not evil, but Jesus delivered him from the evil that possessed him. The man came to God in “God’s house,” and Jesus could help him with his burdens. In the presence of God, there is no room for Satan.

It is not enough just to be in Christlike surroundings. Christ must come into

Jesus was more sad than angry that His beloved disciples were afraid to rely completely on God’s power.

our hearts. We must meet Him personally and get to know Him (Hos. 6:3). Then we can fight the modern demons together with Him.

The healing power of God is as powerful today as it was during Jesus’ time. He is willing to fight the modern demons as He did then. But the most important thing is to “come near to God” (James 4:8) and cast your burdens on Him (1 Pet. 5:7, 8). Let Him anoint you with His Holy Spirit, then nothing in this world will be impossible for you and God together.

REACT

1. What kind of “modern demons” can you see in the church today?
2. Have you met Jesus personally? When and how? Share your experience with someone.
3. How can we be anointed by the Holy Spirit?

* *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 577.

By Anna Tegebo, pastor and chaplain at Hultafors (Sweden) Health Center and Hospital.

Demon Worship in Modern Times

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 1 Tim. 4:1, 2

“The Spirit clearly says that in latter times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron” (1 Tim. 4:1, 2, NIV).

“Modern spiritualism, resting upon the same foundation, is but a revival in a new form, of the witchcraft and demon-worship that God condemned and prohibited of old. It is foretold in the Scriptures, which declare that ‘in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.’ 1 Timothy 4:1. Paul, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, points to the special working of Satan in spiritualism as an event to take place immediately before the second advent of Christ. Speaking of Christ’s second coming, he declares that it is ‘after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:9. . . .

“2 Peter 2:1, 2. Here the apostle has pointed out one of the marked characteristics of spiritualist teachers. They refuse to acknowledge Christ as the Son of God. Concerning such teachers the beloved John declares: ‘Who is a liar but he

“Spiritualism, by denying Christ, denies both the Father and the Son.”

that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.’ 1 John 2:22, 23. Spiritualism, by denying Christ, denies both the Father and the Son, and the Bible pronounces it the manifestation of antichrist.”¹

“Spiritualists are increasing in numbers. They will come to men who have the truth as Satan came to Christ, tempting them to manifest their power and work miracles, and give evidence of their being favored of God, and of their being the people who have the truth. . . . The only safety for the people of God is to be thoroughly conversant with their Bibles, and be intelligent upon the reasons of our faith in regard to the sleep of the dead.”²

“The apostles of nearly all forms of spiritism claim to have power to cure the diseased. They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, the so-called ‘sympathetic remedies,’ or to latent forces within the mind of man. And there are not a few, even in this Christian age, who go to these healers, instead of trusting in the power of the living God and the skill of well-qualified Christian physicians.”³

How can we see what is truth and what is false?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 686.

2. *Evangelism*, p. 604.

3. *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 15, 1914.

By Roland Kip, computer-education teacher, Nyhyttan Health and Rehabilitation Center, Nora, Sweden.

Why Are Demons So Popular?

EVIDENCE

Key Text: 1 Pet. 5:7, 8

“Casting all your care upon him.” Isn’t that a beautiful promise? “Care” in Greek is *merimna*. *Merimna* can mean “distraction,” “to part.” Care could mean everything that could take your interest away from things of eternal value, however harmless they seem.

Why is Satan pictured as a lion? Why is a lion roaring? In the animal world, the roar demoralizes the victim. Isn’t this the spirit of the modern world, the modern philosophers? Since 1945 people don’t really expect much for the future. What is our job in modern society? Though we see what is coming over the world, we can be vigilant and share the atmosphere of hope and love that surrounds God’s people.

In the religions of the ancient world, and in the many modern religious and spiritual movements, we find much evidence for the activity of demons. Why have their ugly faces always attracted and fascinated people? There is real evidence of supernatural power. Demons promise existence after death, even if they don’t promise life. Why are we not able to present more powerful evidence for the much more attractive Christian hope?

Demons promise existence after death, even if they don’t promise life.

Why is the Bible telling us so little about demons and Satan? We are God’s soldiers. Shouldn’t we study the enemy and his techniques? Or is it a subject we ought to stay far away from? Could he scare us even with his roar?

We meet people who have desperately looked for healing through spiritual *healers*. Some have been scared to death of what they have experienced. The same people search for the atmosphere of prayer and faith, find peace of mind and rest in our company at a health institution. God has given us an important work.

Some years ago it was questioned whether the people in the Gospel stories really were possessed. When evil has been more arrogant, everybody knows that things like this happen. Be careful, though, not to accuse fellow Christians as being possessed. Christ did this only once. Is it the person who is addicted to drugs, to music, to meditation?

To be able to discern spirits is a special gift. The Holy Ghost may help us. And beware of the everyday demons you may meet when you watch a cartoon or solve a computer game. Without magic it is impossible.

Humble yourself is the message we get when these things are mentioned. Put all your care on Him.

By Kenneth Sandström, general-practice physician at Nyhyttan Health and Rehabilitation Center, Nora, Sweden.

God Is Mightiest

HOW-TO

Key Texts: Matt. 17:14-21; Luke 4:36

If Satan cannot convince us to follow him, he wants us to fight him. This is no problem for him, for he knows that he and his demons are stronger than we are. We cannot conquer Satan—only God can. We have to let God take care of that struggle. Our struggle is to stay on God's side and to keep close to Him. Only at God's side can we be successful in helping others.

The disciples in Matthew 17:14-21 had tried to cast out a demon. They had no success because they did not know God well enough to trust Him. That is what Jesus means by "unbelief" or "little faith." They struggled on their own.

They also lacked the overall perspective of the great controversy. Paul gives us that in Ephesians 6:12. He describes for us in Ephesians 6:13-18 what aids are available to us when we have to deal directly with evil—"The full armor of God" (6:13):

- Truth (includes the truth about myself and frankness);
- Righteousness (includes a clean conscience);
- Readiness (the opposite of laziness and lethargy);

If Satan cannot convince us to follow him, he wants us to fight him.

- Faith (to trust God and His might, Luke 4:36);
- Salvation (and the assurance of salvation); and
- The Word of God (includes the Book that tends to collect dust too often).

Paul stresses that we are to use these six together with the seventh: prayer. If we do not have good contact with our General, we are easily conquered.

REACT

1. What would be the consequences if I fight evil on my own, apart from God? (Eph. 2:2).

2. If you suspect demonic influence on someone you know, what should you do?

3. What can the church do to convince the world of Satan's real power?

Modern Demons on Holy Ground

OPINION

Key Text: Luke 4:33-37

In the time of Moses people worshiped demons as a kind of idol (Deut. 32:21). We can see almost the same situation in our world today. People living in the 90s often live an unhappy life. They are constantly trying to reach something they do not have. They have no peace of mind. One could perhaps call it a “demon of restlessness.” Other demons we have around us today are *money*, *material possessions*, and *stress*.

Today we must learn to recognize demons, repudiate them, and keep them at a distance. If we don't do that, it will eventually become more and more difficult to separate good from bad. It is only from the fruits of our actions that we can separate the two forces from each other.

If we as Christians cut down on prayer and say we have no time, we can be obsessed by the “spirit of indifference.” We must remember Ephesians 6:12, 13, which tells us that we in God's armor can be victorious over Satan. We must be persistent. God has given us His supernatural strength through His Holy Spirit, who wants to live in us.

Today we must learn to recognize demons.

During the past year of my work, I have met a lot of different people. Many have been completely exhausted, and they have been in doubt about whether life is worth going on. One young woman I met had a family, a job—in fact she had everything she could think of that would make her life a happy experience. She was active in local society and had a lot of friends. But one day she broke down. She collapsed completely and was not even able to continue her work. Finally she understood that the cause of all this was her wish to do everything herself. She bitterly experienced the fact that such an attitude of life could not last in the long run.

All she needed was to let Jesus take care of her problems. She made a change in her life and began to trust Him, who is willing to keep us, to hold us, and who always is willing to give us the very best (1 Pet. 5:7, 8).

Pray and be patient. He is coming soon!

REACT

1. In what ways can we see modern demons operating on “Holy Ground”?
2. How can the fasting be of help fighting eventual demons in our lives?

By Linda Gustafsson, a youth worker at Nyhyttan Health and Rehabilitation Center, Nora, Sweden.

THE SABBATH AND HEALTH



“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 2, NKJV).

Sabbathing Therapy

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 3 John 2

“At our last appointment,” Therapist said, “you reported that you were considering divorce. You had ‘grown apart’ and you ‘didn’t have that spark anymore.’ However, as an initial attempt to rekindle love, you each agreed to complete an assignment. Your assignment was to compile a short list of sabbathing activities.

“Here’s my list,” said the husband in quick staccato.

“And yours?” Therapist looked to the wife. She took a neatly folded piece of paper from her purse, unfolded it, and handed it to Therapist.

His List

- Go to church—and don’t be late
- Don’t watch TV
- Don’t read the newspaper
- Don’t go to the university basketball game
- Don’t buy gas for the car
- Don’t answer my business phone line

Her List

- Go to church—and concentrate!
- Clean the house on Friday—after I get home from work and before sundown (Yeah, right!)
- Don’t go shopping
- Don’t listen to political commentary by Rush Limbaugh on the radio

Your assignment was to compile a short list of sabbathing activities.

Therapist leaned back into his chair as if to formulate his reply carefully. Then he leaned forward and began to speak in measured words.

“This is very sad. Sabbathing has little to do with a list of trivial dos and don’ts. Sabbathing that doesn’t respond from love, from compassion, from . . .” His voice trailed off. “I’m getting ahead of myself.”

Therapist looked into their eyes, and it was as if the hoarded love of eternity¹ filled the whole room and pervaded every pore of their being. Then He continued.

“Sabbathing exemplifies My therapeutic goals for you—
a restoration of mind, body, and soul.

Sabbathing is preserved for uplifting communion.

Sabbathing is preserved for relationship-building.

Sabbathing is preserved for relationship healing.”²

The tension in the room was gone. There was an air of expectancy, anticipation, and even glee. It felt like the instant just before a new birth—that brief moment in a labor-and-delivery room just before the first breath of a new life.

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 37, adapted.

2. *Education*, pp. 250, 251, adapted.

By T. Orvin Fillman, vice-president for behavioral medicine services at Castle Medical Center, Kailua, Hawaii.

Spiritual Immaturity Challenged

LOGOS

Matt. 12:8-14; Mark 1:21-27; Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6

The following briefly summarizes key points relating to three of Jesus' Sabbath healings.

Sabbath Healings	<i>A Healing of the Body</i> The man with withered hand (Matt. 12:9-14)	<i>A Healing of the Mind/Spirit:</i> The man with an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-27)	<i>A Healing of the Mind/Spirit/Body:</i> The woman with Satan's spirit that crippled her for 18 years. (Luke 13:10-17)
Place of healing	Synagogue	Synagogue	Synagogue
How Jesus was confronted	Jesus was asked whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath—as a specific situational trap to accuse him.	The demon accused Jesus of coming to destroy.	Jesus was criticized for working (healing) on the Sabbath.
How Jesus responded	* It is lawful to do a good thing for a person on the Sabbath. * A person is what's valuable.	* Jesus had compassion on the man (GC 516). * Jesus rebuked the <i>demon</i> in the man—not the <i>man</i> with the demon.	Hypocrisy was denounced—hypocrisy that would condone Sabbath “work” for lowly animals but would condemn healing an exalted woman.
The results	* The man's hand was restored. * The Pharisees sought to kill Jesus.	* The man's mind and spirit were restored to the freedom of self-possession (MH 92). * The people were amazed at Jesus' new teaching—a teaching that had certainty and authority.	* The woman's spirit was healed and her crippled body responded in kind. * The accusers were put to shame. * The crowd rejoiced in the wonderful things Jesus did.

Jesus' Sabbath Healings Confronted Trivial Tradition

Jesus' Sabbath keeping flagrantly challenged religious traditions of His day. His Sabbath healings, right in the synagogue, were deliberately contrary to the prevailing assumptions of piety. He challenged a legalistic pettiness that would place contrived rules above human need. His Sabbath healings compassionately responded to human needs, even when those very actions brought reproach to Himself from His own congregational leaders. “By sweeping away the senseless restrictions of the Jews, Christ honored the Sabbath, while those who complained of Him were dishonoring God's holy day.”¹

Jesus' Sabbath healings prompted spiritual maturity.

Jesus' Sabbath healings highlight the restoration of body, mind, and spirit. As such, the Sabbath experience is divinely appointed to promote the wholeness of spiritual maturation. Leland Kaiser, psychologist and health-care futurist, notes the following: "Maturity refers to the condition of our four vehicles: (1) physical, (2) emotional, (3) mental, and (4) spiritual. Lack of patience, constant hurrying, poor health habits, loss of emotional control, fuzzy thinking, and an underdeveloped spirituality are common signs of immaturity."²²

Jesus' Sabbath healings demonstrated true compassion.

The instructions associated with Jesus' Sabbath healings challenged the assumption that it was good and proper to tend to the needs of mere animals and the associated financial concerns of their owners, while neglecting human care. Rather, "The gospel places high value upon humanity as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and it teaches tender regard for the wants and woes of man."²³

REACT

1. Relate some of the Sabbath-keeping customs or practices you have observed. If Jesus were to visit your church on Sabbath, which, if any, of these would He challenge?

2. What comes to your mind from reading the following statement: "It is the service of love that God values. When this is lacking, the mere round of ceremony is an offense to Him. So [it is] with the Sabbath."²⁴

Jesus' Sabbath keeping flagrantly challenged religious traditions of His day.

3. Describe any medicinal properties of the Sabbath you personally have experienced during the past year.

4. Describe how the Sabbath could promote spiritual maturity in your life. How does the Sabbath relate to your ability to excel in your chosen career or in your regular weekly activities?

5. Does Jesus lower the standard for keeping Sabbath holy by reframing Sabbath from a rules context to a relational context? Explain your answer.

6. Power of language: What difference is implied by the terms *keeping Sabbath* and *keeping Sabbath holy*?

7. In the commandment's phrase "keep it holy," the word *holy* (*le-kadesh*) is the same term used to describe the consecration, betrothal, or engagement of a woman to a man. What implications does this have for the relational purpose of keeping Sabbath holy?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 287.

2. Lee Kaiser, "Self-Actualization," *Health Online*, May 5, 1996.

3. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), p. 304.

4. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 286.

By T. Orvin Fillman, vice-president for behavioral-medicine services at Castle Medical Center, Kailua, Hawaii.

Out of Order

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Matt. 11:28

“The Sabbath bids us behold in His created works the glory of the Creator.”¹

The Sabbath was instituted as the celebration of a perfect creation. There was no disease or distress connected to Sabbath. It was part of a perfect cycle. “The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power.”²

Humanity, as free moral agents, had a choice of being inside or outside that perfect order. In choosing to live outside God’s perfect synchrony, human life became out of order and out of control. The Sabbath time of contemplating God’s perfect order in nature—juxtaposing ourselves to it and to the Creator of order, promotes healing of our out-of-control, out-of-order, lives.

God created all things in nature to please the nervous system and senses of humanity. The gentleness of the breeze, birds singing, waves upon the sand or trickling waterfall, patches of bright flowers scattered about on the landscape, soothe and delight human beings. Even the ocean bursts with beautiful colors—fish, coral, and the water itself. “Life in the open air is good for body and mind. It is God’s medicine for the restoration of health.”³

“In the minds of the children the very thought of the Sabbath should be bound up with the beauty of natural things.”⁴ “There is health and happiness for him in

Human life became out of order and out of control.

the study of nature.”⁵

I live in a beach community where artists frequently display their attempts to capture on canvas the beauty of our surrounding nature. As I look at their paintings and then glance about me at the “real thing,” the canvas seems starkly flat in comparison. The Sabbath is time for us to “behold in His created works the glory of the Creator”⁶—not of another’s interpretation, but of God’s interpretation through the nature that He surrounded us with from the beginning.

“The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’ Matt. 11:28.”⁷

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1. *Counsels on Health*, p. 165.
 2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 51.
 3. *Counsels on Health*, p. 166.
 4. *Education*, p. 251.
 5. *Counsels on Health*, p. 178.
 6. *My Life Today*, p. 140.
 7. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 289.

By Ramona (Grant) Fillman, a homemaker living in Kailua, Hawaii.

GODS4U

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Matt. 12:5-14

If the Sabbath were an ambulance and Jesus were the driver, the personalized license plate would read: GODS4U. Such a message would communicate Jesus' principal Sabbath instruction as conveyed through His Sabbath healing encounters. The Sabbath is a life-saving, life-enriching benefit; it's not a test of endurance!

Virtually the entire thrust of Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath was GODS4U. In the Gospels, of the 50 references to "Sabbath," 25 relate to Jesus' Sabbath healings. Fourteen pertain to picking and eating grain on Sabbath—where Jesus, once again, liberated the Sabbath from burdensome rules. (The remaining 11 references, including narratives of Jesus' death, Sabbath-rest-in-the-tomb, and resurrection events, contain no other teachings of Jesus.) Clearly, the Gospel account of Jesus' Sabbath teachings confirms that Jesus sought to liberate the Sabbath experience from its human-inspired oppression.

To illustrate the Sabbath benefit in another way, the power of the photographic artist emerges from the ability of the photographer to select a particular viewpoint, to frame the subject, and to optimize the use of light. Likewise, Jesus used the power of healing to frame the Sabbath in the glow of genuine love.

"He had come to free the Sabbath from those burdensome requirements that

The Sabbath is not a test of endurance!

had made it a curse instead of a blessing. For this reason He had chosen the Sabbath upon which to perform the act of healing at Bethesda."¹

As a health-care worker in an Adventist hospital, I've pondered the following: "You will frequently be called, upon the Sabbath, to visit the sick, and may be obliged to make it a day of exhausting labor. Such labor to relieve the suffering was pronounced by our Saviour a work of mercy and no violation of the Sabbath. But when you regularly devote your Sabbaths to writing or labor, making no special change, you harm your own soul."²

REACT

1. In developing business policy, some would dismiss the relevance of Jesus' Sabbath healings because now "health care is a business." How can we avoid eroding the holiness of Sabbath for financial reasons while being true to Jesus' relational framework?

2. How would a relational framework for keeping Sabbath holy be applicable to other infrastructure/safety-net needs such as police, firefighters, electricity generation, water treatment, etc.?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 206.

2. *Counsels on Health*, p. 368.

God's Care Plan

HOW-TO

Key Text: Mark 2:27

“To make comfortable” was the care plan for nursing-home residents five years ago. The residents were bathed, fed, entertained, and medically treated. It was maintenance—as life slowly ebbed. For their protection and control, it was common to restrain them in chairs and sedate them with medications. Bedsores were common because of poor circulation. The result: deterioration and weakness.

“To restore to optimal health” is the nursing-home residents’ care plan today. Not confined to beds and chairs, nor restrained by chemical or physical restraints, they are up and moving about, preventing bedsores. With individually designed therapy programs, some residents improve remarkably and even go home. The result: health and restoration.

“Rigid Sabbath observance” was emphasized by the rabbis in Jesus’ day. With a list of 39 types of labors not to be performed on the Sabbath and a multitude of hairsplitting regulations, they bound the Jews in slavery to a hollow—not hallowed—Sabbath. The result: deterioration and atrophy of the spiritual person.

“Restoration” is God’s Sabbath care plan for us. He wants to restore His own image in us. He made it a day to bless us with physical, mental, and spiritual health. The result: strength and restoration.

It was maintenance—as life slowly ebbed.

Following God’s care plan:

1. Come apart. The fragmented life of multiplicity destroys our spirit. In this age of information overload, we are weighted down, not only with our own cares but with the world’s problems as well. God’s design is for us to come away from the world’s focus and meditate on His blessings.

2. Release the restraints. God’s purpose today, as it was with the Jews, is to set the Sabbath free from burdensome regulations. It is a gift, not a penance.

3. Bring an appetite. Is there enough spiritual hunger in us to gain the value of a whole Sabbath, or do we muffle the demands of our spiritual nature with distractions? We can become so stuffed with secular and even church responsibilities that we sense no need. This is a day to come, empty of ourselves, for God’s fulfillment.

4. Rest. On the Sabbath, we repose from everyday labors and enter a holy rest and communion with our Creator. Just as we’re refreshed and replenished with a good night’s sleep, we’re also invigorated by the Sabbath rest. By lingering with God, we keep the spiritual person from shriveling and becoming feeble.

REACT

Describe a restorative Sabbath.

By Charlie and Judy (Cheney) Harris, long-term-care administrators, Kailua, Hawaii.

Healing Our Crippled Attitudes

OPINION

Key Text: Luke 13:10-17

In the healing of the woman who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years, Jesus knew that without addressing her spiritual health, physical healing alone would be only a temporary bandage. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all, yet the synagogue rulers said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

Over and over, Jesus demonstrated that the Sabbath is a time for healing—and that the church is a place for healing. In our churches, Jesus sees beyond the quiet, obedient behavior, appropriate dress, and potluck attendance to the inner crippling spirits of low self-esteem, abuse, hatred, anxiety, family separation, self-righteousness, legalism, pride, and loneliness. Have we limited our view of how God wants to spend the Sabbath with us and wants to work through us for the healing of those around us?

Healing is a function of the Sabbath. It is a time to come apart and restore our relationship with God. It is a time to realign our priorities, values, and purpose, a time for an attitude adjustment. Jesus is able to release us from our negative, crippling spirits, our negative view of Sabbath thou-shalt-nots, and to refocus on the thou-shalts of meaningful Sabbath worship and healing in our relationship

Healing is a function of the Sabbath.

with God.

Approach the Sabbath in prayer, seeking God's guidance for enhancing the quality of your Sabbath experience. Be open to His leading. He may surprise you. We risk viewing the Sabbath as the Pharisees did when our focus shifts from our Creator to the inanimate marker of time, the day itself. The Pharisees did not understand the experience of healing that Christ has in store for us. The woman may have been physically crippled in spirit; however, of much greater significance were the crippled attitudes of the Pharisees.

REACT

1. What can be done to realign our worship and relationship with Christ on the Sabbath?
2. What transforms the Sabbath from a mindless habit to a thoughtful choice?
3. What are the "crippling spirits" in my life that prevent me from experiencing a Sabbath of healing?
4. How can I fully experience a Sabbath of spiritual healing?

By Linda Pribyl, director of Castle Home Care of Castle Medical Center, Kailua, Hawaii.

UNCONDITIONAL HEALING



“Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people” (Matt. 4:23, NKJV).

A Doctor for Free

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Matthew 4:23

At some point in your life you probably have felt some physical discomfort because of something you ate or did that caused you harm, but you didn't think it would hurt you. Someone had to show you which medicine to take or how to care for the problem. If this would happen again, whom would you choose to help you, someone with a reproachful eye condemning you for your actions or a loving person who could help you through the problem and would counsel you on how not to make the same mistake?

Sometimes pain is not felt in the muscle or bone or any other part of the physical body. You feel it in your soul. We call this sorrow, or sometimes we call it grief. This can be the consequence of losing a loved one or maybe the sorrow that comes with repentance. The reality is that we feel it. It makes us suffer, and we need someone to help us overcome that pain.

Whom would you choose to help you overcome this kind of pain? Maybe you would be more demanding in your selection. This pain is deeper, more intimate. You need a specialist who is able to treat the pain in your soul. You would not only choose him for his professional degree but because you can sense his ability to comprehend your problem and put himself in your place to help you through it.

Sometimes pain is not felt in the muscle or bone or any other part of the physical body.

Would you choose someone who asks you for your bank-account statement before treating you? Or someone who discriminates, based on the color of your eyes, hair, or skin? Surely not!

The previous questions are easy to answer. Now consider something a little more difficult. Have you ever had someone ask for your help because they were sad, alone, sick, or distraught? What was your answer? Maybe you thought, *I would do it, but not right now, or here, or under these circumstances*. It's difficult to give unconditional help!

Thank God, we have the Divine Doctor's example, who was and is able to heal with unconditional love all our physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. He invites us to experience the joy of service and promises to enable us to help with love. Can you accept the challenge? Are you willing to help without wanting something in return?

By Elida Irirarte Dupertuis, a professor of molecular and cellular biology in the school of medicine, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

Health for Everyone in the Year 2000?

LOGOS

Mark 7:24-30; Matt. 4:23, 24; Luke 7:1-10, 36-50; 8:40-56

In 1978, in the city of Alma Atta, Russia, the World Health Organization (WHO) held an important meeting. The health authorities and governing entities of the world adopted a motto, a goal to be reached: "Health for everyone in the year 2000."

Now, about two years away from the target date, the health authorities of the world have conceded that this motto will be humanly impossible to attain.

The Word of God teaches us that total health for everyone, the complete restoration of physical, mental, and spiritual health, will occur at the second coming of Christ. At this time: "All the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:30, 31, NKJV).

"For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:52, 53).

"Health for everyone when we meet Jesus face to face": this could be attained in the year 2000. Only God knows the exact moment, but we have this assurance: "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37).

When Jesus was here on earth, a good number enjoyed total health when "they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, . . . and He healed them" (Matt. 4:24).

"Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character."¹

"During His ministry, Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. . . . His voice was the first sound that many had ever heard, His name the first word they had ever spoken, His face the first they had ever looked upon."²

"The Saviour made each work of healing an occasion for implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings, that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the gospel of His grace."³

"He accepted their invitations, attended their feasts, made Himself familiar with their interests and occupations, that He might gain access to their hearts, and reveal to them the imperishable riches."⁴

During His earthly ministry, Jesus revealed to humanity God's power and wisdom as much as His love and mercy. He touched the leper to heal him from a disease considered divine punishment for sin. He raised the paralytic, whose sickness really was caused by sin. He opened the eyes of the man blind from birth, whose ailment was not the direct result of his own sin or that of his parents.

Jesus not only healed "all disease and pain" but also forgave the sins of those who came to Him with faith. Those who came to Jesus with their sickness and sin

could find in Him one “who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases” (Ps. 103:3).

Jesus was invited to a feast at the home of Simon the Pharisee. Seated to one side of Jesus was Simon, who had been healed of leprosy by Jesus; on the other side was Lazarus, who had been resurrected from the dead. At the feet of Jesus, trying to go undetected, was Mary, “a woman in the city who was a sinner” (Luke 7:37). Mary truly loved Jesus. She was filled with gratitude toward Him. The Saviour had liberated her from the power of the demons and had forgiven her sins.

Mary’s sins were well known in the city. However, all those surrounding Jesus were also sinners and some worse than Mary. As she felt embarrassment and fear when the perfume attracted everyone’s attention to her, when her love for Christ could not be concealed and the critical comments and stares reached her, at that moment she heard Jesus say, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much” (verse 47). Then Jesus turned to her and said, “Your sins are forgiven. . . . Your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (verses 48, 50).

We are also sick with sin, yet Jesus loves us as much as He did Mary, Simon, and Judas, because His love is unconditional. He doesn’t love us because we do not sin. Jesus loves us because we need to be cleansed from sin. He doesn’t love

“He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character.”

us because we are good or because we keep His commandments but because we need Him to make us good. Only when we accept all His love in our lives will we keep His commandments.

REACT

1. Since God’s love is unconditional, why do some accept it and others do not?
2. If we are sick or feel guilty, what right do we have to ask God to heal or forgive us?
3. What is our only valid argument to ask favors of God?
4. Am I praying for the spiritual or physical health of anyone?
5. For myself, what things should I ask more of from God: humility, love, or faith?

1. *Gospel Workers*, p. 41.

2. *Ministry of Healing*, p. 19.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

By Pedro Tabuenca, dean of the school of medicine, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

From Death to Life

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56

I have heard many times of people being robbed and saying, “Take whatever you like from the house, but don’t hurt my children.” Most parents despair when their children are at risk from accidents, aggression, disease, etc. Jairus’s case was different: “This elder of the Jews came to Jesus in great distress, and cast himself at His feet, exclaiming, ‘My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.’”¹

When He heard Jairus, Jesus understood him, feeling the same concern and love as a father whose child is in danger. When Jairus’s daughter died, grief overwhelmed this father’s heart. However, Jesus said something interesting: “Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well” (Luke 8:50, NKJV).

Jairus’s house was in mourning. When Jesus said, “Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping” (verse 52), there was great doubt. For those gathered in the house, the situation looked bleak, but Jesus had a definite purpose—to give life. Together, with the girl’s parents and three of His disciples, they came near her, and there the promised Messiah provided a miracle. “The eyes opened widely as if from sleep, and the maiden gazed with wonder on the group beside her. She arose, and her parents clasped her in their arms, and wept for joy.”²

Jesus had a definite purpose—to give life.

Although it may be hard for us to comprehend how this miracle of giving life can be accomplished, we accept it as a divine act. Christ is life. He is just as much physical as spiritual life for us. Can there be spiritual resurrection? Can a person go from spiritual death to spiritual life? You may find the answer by reading John 5:24 and Romans 6:23.

“Our Saviour’s words, ‘Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him.”³

REACT

1. Can you recall a biblical promise that has given you confidence in Jesus’ willingness to help you through a problem in your life?
2. Can you think of a biblical incident that tells of a spiritual resurrection?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 342.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 343.

3. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 115.

By Milton Mesa, a student in the school of medicine, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

Intercessory Prayer Works Through Faith

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Luke 7:1-10

Who was this man who impressed Jesus in Luke 7:1-10? He was a Roman centurion, a captain who commanded 100 soldiers. When the Jewish leaders told Jesus about the centurion's request, they recommended him, saying, "For he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue" (verse 5, NKJV).

It's obvious that this man loved God and had allowed Him to transform his life. He was not a proud, cruel human captain. He loved his sick servant, cared for him, and wanted his recovery. But the servant's disease was grave. In his account of this story, Matthew mentions the diagnosis: the disease was paralysis (Matt. 8:6).

The outcome of severe paralysis can be death. This means there must be some destruction of a vital area in the nervous system. Today we know that destroyed neurons cannot be restored. Only the creating power of God can restore a destroyed nervous system. The healing of several paralytics throughout Jesus' earthly ministry is a demonstration of His undeniable divinity.

Could the centurion have perceived Christ's divine evidence, so that he could trust Jesus' healing power?

He was not a proud, cruel human captain.

This man, born of paganism, educated in idolatry, and trained as a soldier, had heard about Jesus, His wisdom, His power, and His love of humanity. The centurion's faith was born in his heart and grew so much that he felt impelled to ask for a favor only God could provide.

Besides his love for his servant and his faith in God's power, the centurion was humble. Contrary to the opinion of the elders, who said that "the one for whom He should do this was worthy" (Luke 7:4), the centurion sent this message to Christ: "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof" (verse 6). Jesus "marveled at him" (verse 9).

God is pleased when He sees the loving response of humanity to the love of the Creator. "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" (15:7).

"And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick" (7:10).

Jesus answered the centurion's intercessory prayer. That prayer came from a humble heart, growing from love to come to the presence of Jesus through faith.

Should we not, as Jesus' disciples did, plead with Him: "Lord, teach us to pray" (11:1) and "Lord, increase our faith"?

Then we will be able to elevate our intercessory prayers to God with humble hearts. He will marvel at us and will certainly answer, because "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

By Blanca Iturbide, a professor in the school of nursing, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

Follow His Example

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 10:7, 8

“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:7, 8, NKJV).

I would like us to think about the precious responsibility we have. Do you see it? Jesus healed unconditionally because He loved unconditionally. He left us His example to be followed: “While He ministered to the poor, Jesus studied also to find ways of reaching the rich. He sought the acquaintance of the wealthy and cultured Pharisee, the Jewish nobleman, and the Roman ruler. He accepted their invitations, attended their feasts, made Himself familiar with their interests and occupations, that He might gain access to their hearts, and reveal to them the imperishable riches.”*

The Bible teaches us that to restore physical health to a person also means to give the opportunity to that person to understand and accept the gospel. In Luke 8:43-48 we find the story of the woman who touched Jesus’ robe to be healed. She was healed not only physically but spiritually, as well, when Jesus told her: “Daughter, be of good cheer, your faith has made you well. Go in peace” (Luke

Jesus healed unconditionally because He loved unconditionally.

8:48).

How can we be ready to follow Jesus’ example?

1. Having close communion with Christ. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

2. Seeing Christ in every person. “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40). We will be able to love everyone as a consequence of Christ’s love in us.

We can love others as Jesus loved them only when His love for us fills our lives.

* *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 24, 25.

By Karen Carvalho, a nursing student, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

Without Boundaries

OPINION

Key Text: Mark 7:24-30

Why are we in need of Christ's redeeming grace? How can we receive His saving grace?

The authors of this week's lesson show us that many are not able to understand or live by the grace of Christ. We see it, for example, with the disciples in Mark 7:24-30. They were not able to understand completely Christ's actions with the distraught pagan woman pleading for her demon-possessed daughter. We see it in the Pharisees who wanted to convince Christ that the centurion was worth His attention because of social and political merits he had achieved.

But the true heroes understood that one needs only to believe to reach Christ, and He restores health and gives salvation. We all have the immense privilege and great opportunity to "eat of the Bread of Salvation" not only satisfying ourselves with its crumbs.

Regardless of apparent rejection, the Syro-Phoenician woman persisted in her approach to Jesus because she came with faith and perceived that Christ did not discriminate with His love but gave it freely to everyone. "The same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall

"God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another."

be saved'" (Rom. 10:12, 13, NKJV).

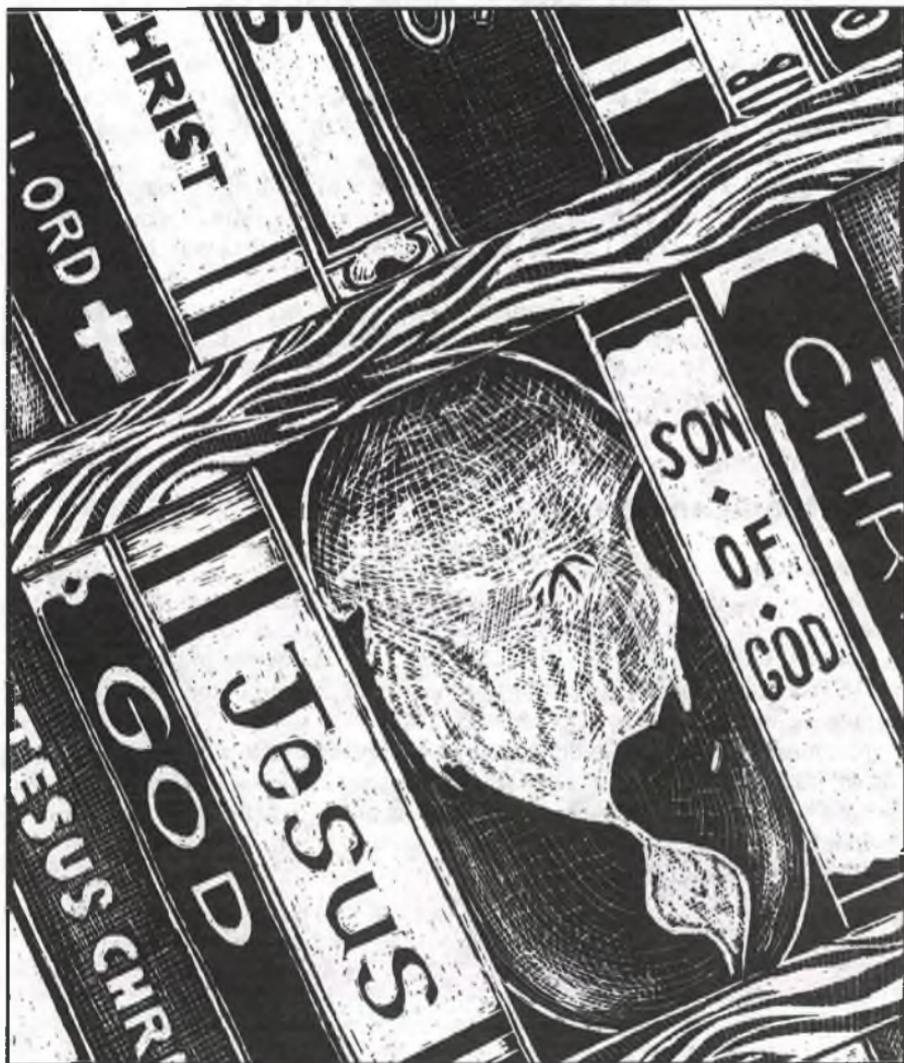
Can we see that "God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another"? If that is so, we can see with how much prejudice we treat those around us, acting just like the disciples, limiting God's love. Without a doubt, looking into our selfish hearts, Jesus repeats those same words uttered at the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It is hoped that we can understand that we are all able to receive the grace of Christ, not because we are worthy of it, but because we need it. The Lord, in His infinite mercy, seeing the human need, gave us the gift of His grace, forgiveness, and healing; without any merit on our part. In daily communion with the "Divine Doctor," we can learn to love as He loved us.

* *Steps to Christ*, p. 53.

By Ivana Tonetto, a student in the school of medicine, Universidad Adventista del Plata, Villa Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

THE MANTLE OF HEALING



“As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick.... Freely you have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:7, 8, NIV).

Everlasting Life

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: John 20:30, 31; Isaiah 53

The apostle John was right! Can you imagine if all of Jesus' miracles had been written down? (John 20:30, 31). John thinks that if everything Jesus did "were written down, . . . even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (21:25, NIV).

In John's view, Jesus' miracles are a special asset to His messianic mission. Jesus performed miracles because He was God's Son. He performed many miracles, for He couldn't stand the sight of a sick person. How could He who made man and woman perfect see His children now disgraced by the results of sin? No wonder the commentary is made that everywhere Jesus passed by, the villages were cleared of sick people. The few miracles we have written were recorded that we "may believe that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah], the Son of God" (20:31).

But John does not want merely to assure us of Jesus' messiahship. He goes on farther by letting us know that if we believe in Him we will have life. Jesus' healing mantle will give us health [salvation]. His promises are that though today you may be lying in bed with leukemia or any other terminal disease, "by believing you may have life in his name" (verse 31). As Jesus passes by our home and sees our

"The whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

sorrows and griefs, He understands, for He Himself was "despised and rejected by men" . . . "a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering" (Isa. 53:3). "He was oppressed and afflicted" (verse 7). "He was wounded . . . bruised" (verse 5, KJV). "We esteemed Him stricken," (verse 4, NIV) but "with his stripes we are healed" (verse 5, KJV). "Yet he did not open his mouth" (verse 7, NIV).

He bears it all! Oh, wonder of wonders! Why? So that the mantle of His healing, of His love, of His mercy, and of His pardon could cover you and me and we all could enjoy life now and forever and enjoy it more abundantly. For "this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3, NIV).

Maybe what was said above does not mean much to you right now because you feel that you are too far away from Him and that His healing mantle cannot reach you. Please, don't despair. Just give Him a chance!

By Jaime Cruz, professor and director of extension schools and academic interchange, Montemorelos University, Nuevo León, México.

Spreading the Healing Mantle

LOGOS

Matt. 10:1-8; 25:34-40; Luke 4:16-19; John 4:7-29; Rom. 12:15; James 5:14, 15

The disciples of John the Baptist drew near to Jesus and asked from Him a request from their teacher: "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matt. 11:3, NIV). Jesus made no arguments, He simply said, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (verses 4, 5).

Jesus' gospel was clearly defined from the beginning of the history of fallen humanity. The nature of His healing, the restoration of fallen creation, was marvelously revealed to the prophets of the Old Testament. Isaiah depicts the essence of Jesus' ministry with indescribable words. Jesus Himself made His mission known when publicly He declared that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Luke 4:17-21).

Jesus' ministry is well defined. It is His constant desire to relieve the pain and sorrow of humankind, sometimes lovingly responding to the pleas of the helpless who beg for healing. At other times He actually goes ahead of their desires, as it happened on that memorable Sabbath with the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda,

John's gospel does not say that the paralytic asked for help.

where we find a man lying on his pallet of pain and desperation. He was tired of asking without being heard. He was left there, forgotten.

John's Gospel, where the story is recorded, does not say the paralytic asked for help. It was Jesus who, moved by mercy, said, "Do you want to get well?" (John 5:6, NIV). The man does not even understand what is happening. He tries to give an explanation of his sad condition but does not make a concrete petition. Jesus' glance penetrates to the core of his being. His mercy covers him everywhere, and there are no more questions, only one command: "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk" (verse 8).

It was only later, when his life had marvelously changed, after 38 years of misery, pain, and loneliness, that he has a second encounter with Him, and at this time Jesus declares unto him the key to his liberation: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

With the same clarity with which Jesus' mission on earth was defined, He took the necessary care to define the mission of all those who would claim to be His followers. The gospel and the letters written by the apostles show that the pillars of religion that illuminated the world are a constant prayer service and a living testimony of hope for sinners, sufferers, and the helpless (Matt. 10:7, 8).

Jesus promised power to those who are faithful in the fulfilling of His mission toward those who suffer. He gave them the assurance of His presence and providence in all the circumstances they were going to confront. He gave them power

to help the helpless, but He warned them of the difficulties and dangers they were going to encounter. He warned them saying: "Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:3, KJV). Yet, beyond all adversities lies the security of God's power conferred on all His followers for the fulfillment of the preaching of the everlasting gospel (Matt. 10:1, 7, 8).

REACT

1. What should be our attitude toward those who suffer pain and sicknesses caused by their bad habits and their life of sin? (Rom. 12:15).

2. Can you think of any biblical promises that back up Jesus' command to preach the kingdom of heaven through the health message?

3. If you are not in the medical profession, what opportunities are there for you to bring liberation, restoration, and peace to those who are bound by sicknesses?

4. How do I react when people tell me they feel sick? Do I avoid them or try to be supportive?

5. What words of testimony can I share with someone dying of lung cancer? With someone who has the flu?

6. How can we be sure our works of kindness and charity result from a change of nature through Christ?

By Eduardo Enríquez, professor in the school of medicine, Montemorelos University, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México.

At Jacob's Well

TESTIMONY

Key Text: John 4:10

We have the message. We have the true principles of good health. Therefore, we want to apply what we have in the area of health reform, the healing ministry. Everyone as a Christian is a health reformer.

But sometimes we are narrow-minded, extreme, judgmental, critical, or insensitive to others, especially on the matter of diet. We hear that someone died of cancer. "Oh, that's because he or she was a meat eater," we say. And if we don't come right out and make this comment to others, haven't we thought it? I have.

"When those who advocate hygienic reform go to extremes, it is no wonder that many who regard these persons as representing health principles, reject the reform altogether. These extremes frequently do more harm in a short time than could be undone by a lifetime of consistent living."¹

"It is of little use to try to reform others by attacking what we may regard as wrong habits. . . . In His talk with the Samaritan woman, instead of disparaging Jacob's well, Christ presented something better. . . . than she possessed, even living water, the joy and hope of the gospel."²

"Oh, that's because he or she was a meat eater," we say.

"In all our associations it should be remembered that in the experience of others there are chapters sealed from mortal sight. On the pages of memory are sad histories that are sacredly guarded from curious eyes. . . . Those who are fighting the battle of life at great odds may be strengthened and encouraged by little attentions that cost only a loving effort. To such the strong, helpful grasp of the hand by a true friend is worth more than gold or silver."³

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2, NIV). The law of Christ is the law of making man whole—including us!

"All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to His service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power."⁴ "For these God will do great things. He will work upon the minds of men so that, even in this world, there shall be seen in their lives a fulfilment of the promise of the future state."⁵ We begin to share the heaven realized on earth, "for we are to God the aroma of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15).

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 324.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 157.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 158.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

By Seiji Matsumoto, professor of medicine and school of public health, Montemorelos University, Nuevo León, México.

Helping Hands

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Matt. 25:34-40

Since 1950 the world population has increased from 1.5 billion to 5.6 billion today, including 4.4 billion in developing countries.

More than one-fifth of the global population lives in extreme poverty.

One smoker in two will eventually die because of a cigarette habit begun in adolescence.

Despite gains in overall life expectancy, rates will drop in the next five years.

Half the world's population still lacks regular access to treatment of common diseases and to most-needed essential medicinal drugs.

More than twelve million children less than five years of age die in the developing world every year, most from a combination of preventable causes.*

And this information is just the tip of the iceberg! Let's face facts for a moment. We are about nine to ten million Seventh-day Adventists in the world today. We have 148 hospitals and sanitariums and 354 clinics and dispensaries—and we are called to “heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils” (Matt. 10:8). Ten million to minister to 5.6 billion. This is a challenge!

I can imagine how surprised the people on Jesus' right hand will be when the king invites them to inherit the kingdom. They will have no recollection of hav-

More than one-fifth of the global population lives in extreme poverty.

ing done anything special to deserve it. They were just acting naturally. Giving a helping hand for them was part of their own nature, as it was also obviously different. One group could give something they had; the other group just did not have anything to give. “Freely ye have received, freely give” (verse 8).

Let's consider our own sphere of influence. What have we freely received and are invited to share with others? To start with, what about the knowledge of the importance of a good diet, exercise, rest, sunlight, water, temperance? What about our knowledge about the proper use of money and time? There are so many things we have freely received that many times we take them for granted.

Many people in the world today feel the need to help humankind. There are many humanitarian organizations in the world, working to achieve very laudable goals. We are not just another simple humanitarian organization. Our mission goes far beyond that point. We have the privilege—by ministering for other needs—to point their eyes to the One who cannot only take care of their present necessities but who can offer them salvation for eternity. He is the biggest gift we have freely received.

* 1995 *World Health Report*, prepared by the World Health Organization.

By Alejandro Gil, academic coordinator of the medical program, faculty of health sciences, Montemorelos University, Nuevo León, México.

“NEWSTART”

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 10:1-8

Jesus sent His disciples out to “drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness” (Matt. 10:1, NIV). For those in the medical field this may not be hard, but what about the rest of us, the ones who can’t even stick a bandage on straight? There are three areas in which even those who are not health professionals can help anyone around them:

1. Physical healing: Even someone with no medical background knows when a friend or neighbor isn’t feeling well. Often just talking to others and allowing them to express how bad they feel or how worried they are about their illness helps immensely. Offer to make doctor’s appointments, give them rides to the doctor’s office. It may be as simple as calling “Ask-a-Nurse” or picking up a prescription.

2. Spiritual healing: A sick person who also feels guilt is miserable. In any illness, and especially in terminal cases, hope for the future is the most valuable treatment we can give. Remember that physical discomfort creates mental and spiritual unrest. Even sick friends who are Christians will appreciate a reminder that God is personally concerned about them.

What about the ones who can’t even stick a bandage on straight?

3. NEWSTART: It is time to begin using the eight natural remedies in our own lives, then in our testimony to everyone around us:

Nutrition. Healthful, balanced meals three times a day will diminish the risk of disease and make you feel better.

Exercise. A brisk 30- to 40-minute walk at least three times a week improves physical condition, raises energy level, and gives a brighter outlook on life.

Water. The minimum we should drink is eight glasses a day; 10-12 glasses are better, and a daily shower, ending with cold, is invigorating.

Sunlight. Thirty minutes of exposure each day increases vitamin production in the skin and gives you better physical defenses.

Temperance. We should abstain from harmful things and use beneficial things in moderation.

Air. Breathe deeply of fresh, pure air to eliminate carbon dioxide; oxygenate your brain, enabling it to think more clearly all day long.

Rest. The body functions best with six to eight hours of sleep every night, especially in the hours before 2:00 a.m.

Trust in Divine Power. Without Jesus, life has no aim, hope, reason, or consolation. Make Him your closest friend.

By Diane Duncan, a medical intern at La Carlota Hospital, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México.

The Prayer of Faith

OPINION

Key Text: James 5:14-16

We find in the Gospels that a very important part of Jesus' ministry was to cure the sick and preach about redemption.

It is interesting to notice how the apostle James encourages us to develop our faith. He tells how we must pray for those who are sick, giving us the assurance that "the prayer of faith shall save [heal] the sick" (5:15).

James goes beyond the physical healing when he mentions that "if he has sinned, he will be forgiven" (verse 15, NIV). This is a clear example of the close relationship that exists between the ministry of prayer and the ministry of healing, the relationship between spiritual and physical health.

For years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has done its share to accomplish its mission to preach the gospel, but it seems that it has also done its part to heal the sick through the many hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries. We frequently act, however, as if this matter of health is the sole responsibility of physicians, nurses, and other health personnel.

There are two important issues I would like to emphasize: First, all Seventh-day Adventist members should be health promoters. They can do this by living and

All Seventh-day Adventist members should be health promoters.

teaching the principles of health reform. They will not only help to prevent and alleviate the chronic degenerative diseases that strike humanity today but can also help others personally to enjoy more healthful lifestyles of their own. Second, every Seventh-day Adventist person can be a channel through whom the Lord can send His healing touch. The sick person could be healed when the faithful member prays the prayer of faith.

As a Christian physician, I have learned that scientific human knowledge and all the technological advances of modern medicine are only secondary to God's miracles in the physical and spiritual health of His creatures.

REACT

1. What can I do so that the Lord will utilize me as a channel that brings physical, as well as spiritual, health to a person?
2. Why doesn't the Seventh-day Adventist Church practice the greater emphasis on healing by prayer that some other denominations seem to promote?
3. Are hospitals today more confident in modern technology than in "the prayer made by faith?" Support your answer.

By Abel Carpintero, medical director of La Carlota Hospital, Montemorelos, Nuevo León, México.

HEALERS IN NEED OF HEALING



“We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Cor. 4:7, NIV).

Before Burnout

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 2 Cor. 4:7

Burnout has quickly become a permanent part of our everyday vernacular. In my own career as a health-care professional, I experience almost daily the emotional strain of caring for patients and their families. At no time was this more apparent to me than during a recent experience with one of my pediatric patients.

Sarah had been diagnosed as having a recurrent brain-stem tumor. With her bouncy, cooperative personality and stable condition, she was a pleasure to care for. As one particular day progressed, however, I noticed that she had lost her perky disposition. Although Sarah had already been through two surgeries, radiation, and chemotherapy, her tumor was inoperable at this time. That night I quickly mentioned Sarah and her family in my prayers.

The following day Sarah appeared comfortable as she slept peacefully with her dolls. My assessment, however, confirmed that she was semicomatose. After an exhausting hour of medical and nursing procedures, I was unprepared to see Sarah's father, a source of unwavering strength, weeping uncontrollably as he slumped to the floor. I sat down next to him, trying to console him without breaking down myself. Later I visited Sarah again, realizing this might be the last time. As I left the family, I tearfully stated, "I'm so sorry. Take care. God bless all of you."

My assessment confirmed that she was semicomatose.

Even though I was emotionally drained that night, I still attended my weekly small-group meeting to study and pray with Christian friends. As we discussed our week's highs and lows, my spirit lifted as my friends listened to my fears and offered me their perspectives and advice on dealing with this difficult stressor. Because my friends were genuinely supportive as we prayed communally, I felt my burden begin to lighten. On Sabbath, as I fervently prayed for the Lord to be with Sarah, her family, and me, I realized the limits of our own well-intentioned though often-fruitless attempts in medical science. Sarah's life, I recognized belatedly, had *always* been in God's hands.

On Sunday morning, I entered Sarah's room expecting the worst—only to find her chatting enthusiastically to her dolls. The doctors could only offer, "Miraculous," as they stared dumbfounded at Sarah. Only then did I recognize firsthand the healing power of Christ.

My profession dictates that we heal patients through science and caring, but as a Christian healer, I believe that before we can assist others we must be in optimum physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual condition ourselves. Before reaching burnout, we need to ask for God's healing touch to be placed on us as we apply our limited resources to others.

By Miranda Vermeer, a registered nurse in the neurosurgery-and-trauma program at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Ontario.

All Things Through Christ

LOGOS

Isa. 53:4-6

More Than Our Own Power (Rom. 3:23; Isa. 64:6)

Apart from Jesus, the Bible does not record that anyone was perfect. Enoch walked with God, but the Bible doesn't say he was perfect. Adam? Noah? Abraham? What about John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, or John the Revelator? After all, these were people whom God used to tell the world about the plan of salvation through their lives, their teaching, preaching, and visions. And what about Ellen White? She was not afraid to tell others where they were wrong in their lives, so she must have been perfect, right?

Obviously the answer to these questions is No. None of these people were perfect, and they probably would have been the first ones to tell you that. Our texts in Romans and Isaiah show that everyone is a sinner, no one is perfect. In short, we all need healing from the disease of sin. On our own, in our own strength, we are hardly in any condition to go to a world in need of this same healing and heal them.

Where It All Begins (1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 2:2)

As a Christian there are times when I wonder whether I will ever be an effective witness. I see so many hurting people, so many within my own circle of influence (let alone the world) who need physical and spiritual healing, and I wonder whether I am just a hypocrite. As a Christian, I am expected to be able to offer them some sort of healing that has made me into this "wonderful, happy, perfectly adjusted" person they perceive me to be, but in reality I need healing as well. The phrase "Physician, heal thyself" comes to mind. How can the world expect me to heal them when I am in need of healing also?

Healing starts with a realization that Christ has already forgiven me, if I will accept it. That doesn't mean that I am perfect or that I will never sin or that I have found out how to be a perfectly adjusted human. What it does mean, however, is that when I feel as though I can't go on, as though I will never be fit to help others, I have the assurance that Christ offers me spiritual healing through His death on the Cross if I just accept it. Once I understand that Christ died so that I won't have to, that because of His wounds I will live forever, a huge sense of relief floods into my soul. This is spiritual healing at its core: simply understanding that Christ has taken away my sin, loves me unconditionally, and offers me eternal life. With those assurances to guide me, I can then begin to help others.

A Cure That Works (Heb. 4:15, 16)

Have you ever asked someone for help, only to discover that the person you thought could help you had no experience in that area and could not relate to your problem? When we look to Christ for healing and help, it is comforting to know that He understands us and can be patient with us as we struggle with our "sickness." More important, it is comforting to know that because He has experienced everything we are going through, He has a "tried, tested, and true" cure for us. It is a cure we can trust.

In Hebrews, Paul assures us that Christ can understand all the temptations and sins we experience, because when He was here on this earth He was tempted in every way we are. On top of that, I would guess that after seeing 6,000 years of sin on this earth, there are no highs or lows Christ has not seen. Because of that, He knows what we need most when we call out to Him for healing. He is not testing some new and unused trial remedy—He knows exactly what we need.

Receiving the Power (Phil. 4:13)

Who better to turn to when I need help than Jesus? He knows what I am going through, loves me despite my failures, and *He* offers to heal me and make me whole in heaven some day. He has never promised that this life would be easy, but He is always ready to help us and give us strength when we need it, and quite often that is the kind of healing we need the most. If we were all perfect, we would have no idea how to reach out to those around us. Christ uses imperfect sinners like you and me to tell other imperfect sinners about the permanent healing He offers us.

I can do this, however, only because He gives me the strength every day. Every day I need to connect with that “Higher Power” and find a new healing for that day,

Healing starts with a realization that Christ has already forgiven me.

before I can go and help to heal a world dying because of sin. That healing comes through the knowledge that He understands me, is ready to help me, and is coming soon to make all things new.

REACT

1. Who are the people around me who need healing? (Be specific.)
2. How can I minister to a leader in the church?
3. Why does God use sinners like us to minister to others when He could come and do the job much more quickly and simply? Does God need us? Explain your answer.
4. How do we experience healing from Christ?
5. What kinds of things hinder us from leading balanced lives?
6. What are the risks and benefits of seeking Christian confidantes?
7. How can we allow church leaders and caregivers regular respites from the routine of church responsibilities?
8. How can we allow them to have personal space—room to grow and time to attend to personal challenges?

By Timothy Dunfield, youth pastor for the Willowdale Seventh-day Adventist Church, Toronto, Ontario.

Healed to Serve Humanity

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Isa. 49:8, 9

Mrs. B was a vibrant 70-year-old woman who took care of two mentally challenged adult sons, was a hospital volunteer, and painted in her spare time. She was in the hospital with chest pain again, the third time in three weeks. Only five years after her first bypass operation, tests showed that she had narrowing of all the major arteries to her heart and would not be a candidate for surgery this time. If she didn't have these arteries opened, she would be unable to care for her sons or enjoy any of her regular activities and would almost certainly die within months. The only option was a risky medical procedure, and her odds of survival were only 50 percent. But what if she didn't survive? Who would take her place to care for her sons and brighten the lives of others in the hospital and her many friends?

This is the story of a woman who needed physical healing so she could continue her own healing ministry to those around her. As God's covenant people, we are the recipients of His healing grace, and with this healing we are energized and empowered to overcome the bonds of sin that weaken us. Why does He provide this healing for us? Most important, His arms reach out in love to rescue us from our sinful state—to set us in a safe place where we can find peace and rest from

Tests showed that she had narrowing of all the major arteries to her heart.

this world's troubles. But we are also healed so that through us Christ can reach out and heal others. "With all who are seeking to minister in His name, He waits to cooperate. He is in the midst of us, to heal and to bless, if we will receive Him."¹

The process of being healed by Christ is not a passive one for us. It is only natural that we should want others to experience the same sense of healing we have received. "The mystery of ministry is that we have been chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited and unconditional love of God."² When we experience God's healing power, we are eager to use our newfound strength to reach out and draw others to our source of strength, Yahweh.

REACT

1. How did Jesus use physical healing to empower His followers to minister to others? Could they begin their ministry without being of sound body first?

2. What will happen to our own healing process if we don't seek to bring a healing ministry to others in need?

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 107.

2. H. J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), p. 44.

By Andrew Vermeer, a resident in family medicine at the University of Toronto, Ontario.

An Uneven Route to Salvation

EVIDENCE

Key Texts: Acts 10, 12

Being healed and being saved are closely related in the Bible. Verses such as Matthew 9:21, "I will be healed" (NIV), if literally translated from the Greek would read "I shall be saved." Peter is an example of a person who was great in faith and works but who still needed to experience repeatedly the saving (healing) grace of God.

The Acts of the Apostles describes the expansion of the fledgling Christian church out from Jerusalem. Much of this work was done by Peter, although he concentrated almost exclusively on converting the Jews.

Acts 10 relates the story of Cornelius the centurion. Cornelius was told in a vision from God that he should send men to Joppa to bring Peter to him. Peter, who was a leader of the church in Jerusalem, still followed the Jewish ceremonial law. It is likely that Peter would have declined this invitation, since Cornelius was a Gentile, and Peter would have considered it unclean to eat with him.

Before the invitation arrived, Peter saw in vision a great sheet from heaven full of birds and animals. This vision taught Peter that he should not consider any man common or unclean because of whether they are Jew or Gentile. In Acts 10:34, 35,

Being healed and being saved are closely related in the Bible.

Peter says, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (NIV).

During the reign of Herod Agrippa I, Peter was imprisoned in Jerusalem. After his miraculous escape, he left Jerusalem for his own safety. James, the brother of Jesus, then took over the leadership of the church in Jerusalem, largely composed of Jews who still meticulously observed the Law, as did its leader James.

While outside Jerusalem, Peter at first associated with the Gentiles; but when certain men arrived from the Jerusalem church and claimed to represent its leader James, he withdrew from the Gentiles and refused to eat with them (Gal. 2:11, 12). Apparently he felt that his fellowship with the Gentiles endangered his position with the Jerusalem church.

At Antioch, Paul publicly challenged Peter and rebuked him for his inconsistency. Peter humbly accepted this criticism. Later he defended Paul's position and agreed to the council's vote that the Gentiles should be exempted from all requirements of the ceremonial law.

In the history of Peter's association with the Gentiles, we see the story of a man who reached out to heal others, who occasionally became misguided, but who continually allowed himself to be corrected by God and thus ultimately found himself growing in grace.

By Sam Mathi, a software engineer at the IBM Toronto Software Lab, Ontario.

Peace for a Troubled Soul

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 11:28-30

Everywhere I turned, I seemed to be faced with people who wanted me to listen, understand, solve problems, accomplish tasks—at work, church, with friends and family. As each new demand arose, I piled it onto my plate, promising to take care of it, wondering whether, and when, I would ever get to it. I craved solitude and relief from all my responsibilities. I desperately needed physical, emotional, and spiritual regeneration.

Sometimes we forget we are only the instruments through which God heals. “We are not the healers, we are not the reconcilers, we are not the givers of life. We are sinful, broken, vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for.” When we no longer attempt to shoulder the responsibility for healing others, we can pause and turn to the Great Physician for healing in our own lives.

1. Seek healing in God. God is our ultimate source of healing and strength; however, we often sacrifice our quiet time with God in our attempts to meet others’ needs. Healing begins when we seek healing in communion with God. Christ, our example, withdrew from the crowds, from the teaching, preaching, healing, and ministering to spend time alone in prayer. We need to talk with God regularly, to seek healing and comfort in His presence.

2. Seek balance in your life. A balanced life means getting enough sleep,

Sometimes we forget that we are only the instruments through which God heals.

exercise, fresh air, and nutritious food. It means allowing yourself “down time” for relaxing and time for play. It is often difficult to carve out personal time, and this may mean prayerfully reviewing your schedule and delegating or canceling some tasks. People who are emotionally, physically, or spiritually “running on empty” have nothing to give, and they need to allow themselves time for rejuvenation. Try giving each day to God, asking Him to order it according to His plan. Ask Him to prompt you to do the things He wants you to accomplish that day, and be assured that He is taking care of the rest.

3. Share with believers. Start a small prayer group or select a trusted friend to share your burdens and pray with you. Christian community is about nurturing and caring for each other. Some issues, however, may require the assistance of a trained professional; if this is the case, approach your pastor or a Christian counselor.

Our heavenly Father awaits us with open arms: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. . . . You will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:28, 29, NIV).

* H. J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 43.

A Simple Thing

OPINION

Key Text: Matt. 11:28

He slipped quietly into the last pew and shared a quick smile with his wife as their five-year-old son scrambled into his lap. For months they had waited—no, yearned—for this one day.

The deep tones of the organ rolled through the church, washing over him in a soothing wave as his voice joined the others in the congregation. The hymn was familiar, but today the phrases sparkled with fresh promise.

He tensed slightly as the main speaker moved to the microphone. What sort of message could this middle-aged layperson deliver? Could she even fill the allotted 40 minutes? His momentary doubt soon faded as her vivid portrayal of real-life experiences captured his attention. The theology may have been simple, the presentation a bit halting, but her sincerity and joyful conviction left an impression that lingered in his mind. Yes, her fellow elders had chosen her well for this morning's role.

On the way out of the church, several members briefly passed on wishes for a happy Sabbath that he knew were genuine. He wasn't detained for long, and his car was one of the first out of the parking lot.

At home it took only a few minutes to pack up the picnic lunch items that had been prepared earlier. The balmy afternoon fulfilled its glorious promise as he

He tensed slightly as the main speaker moved to the microphone.

ambled down placid country lanes, quietly chatting with his wife and assuring his son that the horses they encountered would nibble the strands of grass offered without gobbling his whole hand.

As they watched the sun set from their perch at the crest of a hill, the words of the morning's hymn drifted back into his mind:

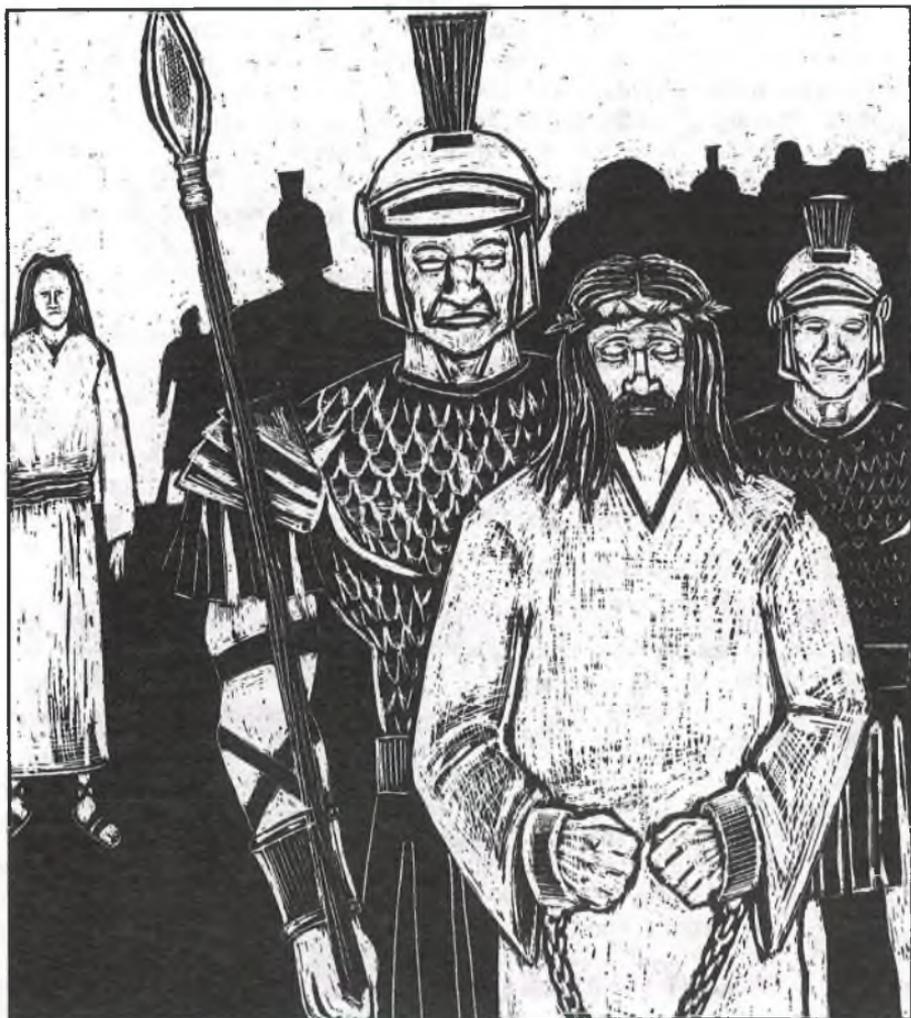
“There is a quiet place, far from the rapid pace
Where God can soothe my troubled mind.
Sheltered by tree and flow'r,
There in my quiet hour with Him my cares are left behind.
Whether a garden small, or on a mountain tall,
New strength and courage there I find;
Then from this quiet place I go prepared to face a new day
With love for all mankind.”

And once again, the rested and refreshed pastor thanked His Lord for the priceless gift bestowed that day by his loving family of church members.

* Ralph Carmichael, *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1985), p. 503.

By Shelley Nolan, managing editor of the Canadian Adventist Messenger, Oshawa, Ontario.

CHOICE AND LIBERATION



“If, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17, RSV).

The Choice

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: John 8:32, 36

Imagine with me, if you will, that you are sitting in a dark, cold, damp cell in a Roman dungeon. You can't sleep, you can't eat, you can hardly even breathe for the storm of thoughts that crash through your mind as you contemplate your situation. You're a liar, a cheat, a murderer, and a blasphemer. You've committed all manner of indescribable crimes, but most important, you've turned your back on God, and in a few hours you are going to die.

As you hear the sound of soldiers coming toward your cell, you realize this is it—it's time to pay for your crimes. Rather than drag you to the courtyard, though, they bring you to the balcony overlooking it. From there you hear a mob screaming, "Crucify Him," but they don't mean you.

Then you see Him, over on the other side of the governor. You've heard the rumors. Could they be true? Many people say He is the promised One, the Messiah. In Him, they say, is power over the weather and even over death. When you

This is it—it's time to pay for your crimes.

see His calm serenity, in the midst of this chaos, you know it is true. This One they call Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

You know you're doomed when Pilate asks the crowd whom he should release and whom he should give them to crucify. Their answer still rings in your ears as the soldiers throw you out the door and tell you to watch yourself, because you won't be so lucky next time.

As you watch in awe, God takes your beating, carries your cross, is nailed to it, and dies in your place. That is love, that is sacrifice, and that is your ticket to freedom from the chains and bondage of sin.

Now you have a choice. You can go back to your life of sin and crime, joining the mob in crucifying your Saviour, and you will eventually face the consequences. Or you can choose to leave your life of sin and "take up His cross and follow Jesus."

It is my prayer that we will choose the latter. That we will choose to carry His cross and not nail Him to it. That we will choose Jesus and the work of sharing His love. The choice is ours. The pay isn't much, but the benefits are out of this world, and we are free.

By David Collins, a first-year student at Kettering (Ohio) College of Medical Arts.

Free to Choose

LOGOS

Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 15:11-24; John 3:16, 17; 5:2-9

They had heard that He could work miracles. Nothing short of a miracle would do.

For months, maybe years, they had wandered the countryside, scavenging for food, sleeping outdoors, clinging to memories of families they would never see again. Their health continued to deteriorate as their loathsome disease took its toll. They were probably already missing their toes or perhaps their noses. Leprosy is a hideous disease that maims and disfigures. Fear and the cultural norms of the time made these sufferers nothing more than outcasts. Laws stated that they could not come within a walled city. So that no one would come too close, they were compelled to cry out and warn those who passed by.

On this day, the crowds had gathered to hear the young miracle worker. His ministry was rumored to have helped and healed many people. What did these lepers have to lose? Defying social convention and proper decorum, they thrust themselves into the path of Christ as the crowd scurried to shelter themselves from the intrusion of the lepers. Their plea was simple but eloquent: "Lord, if You want to, we know that You can heal us. Jesus, the sound of Your voice can take away the pain, the shame, the loneliness. Your will can alter the course of our lives."

"We really would rather have the Nazis and the Gestapo rule over us."

If You want to, You can unite us with our families, restore our diseased bodies, give us hope. All we need is Your touch."

So goes the story in the New Testament. This man has been unable to walk since birth. This woman has a disease that none of the doctors can cure. This man has never seen the light of day. This girl is dead. Jesus brushes past the irrelevant questions: "Who sinned, Jesus, this man or his parents?" He bypasses attitudes of disbelief, dismissing the mourners who refuse to hope. He incorporates methods that—to say the least—were sometimes bizarre. Yet, whatever He does, however He does it, He touches the life of the person whose only hope is trust in Him, and suddenly, without natural explanation, all is well.

In any war there are two issues: liberty and sovereignty. The first is a prerequisite for establishing the second. In World War II, Hitler's forces rolled over Europe. The conquered nations were no longer free to choose their leaders. That had been done for them. Only when the victorious forces of the Allies gave them their liberty were they free once again to choose their own government. The greatest war in the history of the planet is currently being waged. Jesus' victory at the cross of Calvary sets us free from the bondage of Satan and makes it possible for us to choose the ruler of our lives. Would it not have been the irony of history if the French, the Dutch, the Polish, and the Austrians, after the sacrifice of thousands of lives, had said, "Now that we are free to choose, we really would rather have the Nazis and the Gestapo rule over us?" Yet, even as the armored tanks

rolled through town to the welcoming shouts of citizens everywhere, there was little question about which government the people would choose.

At the Cross, Jesus set us free. He freed us from sin, as well as from the consequences of sin. He took away all guilt, all shame, all the pain that sin had brought to the world. He freed us from our fears, anxieties, and cares. We are liberated. We are now free to choose. The process is as simple as ABC.

Accept the forgiveness Jesus brings by way of His death, burial, and resurrection. As we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, so that He forgives our sins and cleans us up.

Believe that there is no power in heaven or hell that can separate you from God's love and mercy. Believe that although you are not worthy of His love and sacrifice, *because* of His love and sacrifice you are worthy.

Claim His promise of liberation and freedom as your own. Jesus did not die just to save the world out there. He died to save *you*. He is interested in your success, your desires, your aspirations. You are not only healed. You are commanded to get up and walk. Liberation is just the first step. Living under the rulership of Christ is the joy of a lifetime.

REACT

1. Why do so many of the people who have been liberated by Christ apparently choose the devil as their sovereign ruler?

2. How can I open up my life to the rule of my Liberator, Jesus? Am I allowing myself to communicate with Him daily?

The Healing Ministry of Jesus

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Rom. 5:17

Much is recorded about Jesus' miraculous healings. Many times He said, "Your faith has healed you." Healing requires faith.

My question is this: "Why do we not see more miraculous healing today?" Can we not have the same faith as people did back then? Jesus says in Matthew 17:20 that if we would have faith even the size of a mustard seed that we could move mountains. Why do we need hospitals? Why don't we just go about like Jesus, healing miraculously?

Others have asked this too. Ellen White's reply to the last two questions was, "Suppose we were able to do this in all cases; how many would appreciate the healing? Would those who were healed become health reformers, or continue to be health destroyers?"¹

We can't expect God to heal us if we don't care enough to do our part. God can bless those who do their honest part in taking care of their bodies, not indulging in appetite and intemperance. "[Our faith must be made perfect by works.] . . . When we do all we can on our part to have health, then may we expect that the blessed results will follow, and we can ask God in faith to bless our efforts for the

We can't expect God to heal us if we don't care enough to do our part.

preservation of health. He will then answer our prayer, if His name can be glorified thereby."²

Jesus and His disciples went about healing miraculously. Why do we not go about healing as they did? Ellen White writes, "We cannot now work in this way; for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God's servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

"For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people are to carry forward a work of physical healing combined with the teaching of the word."³

We may not heal or be restored through miraculous means, but we can have the full assurance that we will always be restored completely to the family of God. If we are on a deathbed, we can be completely forgiven and given the free gift of salvation. For when He comes again, we will also be changed in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51). We will be completely healed because we will be given new bodies. All the scars of sin will be removed. Let's make it our goal to teach the good news of salvation as we also minister to our brother's physical needs.

1. *Medical Ministry*, p. 13.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

By Tina M. Segur, a nursing student from Kettering (Ohio) College of Medical Arts.

Jesus' Health Club

EVIDENCE

Key Text: 3 John 2

John is near the end of his life, advanced in age, the survivor of persecution, imprisonment, and the normal aging process. He is writing to a much-loved friend who was no doubt a leader of the early church. His first wish for his friend Gaius is that he will enjoy good physical health to go along with his sound spiritual health. It is Christ's desire that we not only enjoy the benefits of His redemption spiritually, but physically, as well.

In the ancient world, particularly among the Greeks, there was a notion that the spiritual and the physical belonged to separate realms. The soul, or spirit, or the shadow life, was the important aspect of man's being, while the physical was seen as transitory, worthless, and cumbersome. Man's goal was often seen as escaping the physical universe and discovering reality in an existence that lay beyond what man could see. This naturally led to a disdain for the physical aspect of human existence.

Jesus never taught this radical dichotomy between physical and spiritual. His approach was a holistic view that taught the oneness of our existence and the redemption of the complete person: body, mind, soul, spirit. Thus physical and

Health reform was made for man and not man for health reform.

emotional health was never separate from spiritual well-being. Indeed, spiritual well-being was known to contribute to physical health. "A cheerful heart does good like medicine" (Prov. 17:22, TLB). Jesus is indeed Lord of the complete person. He is interested in our complete health. Jesus is the ultimate health reformer.

We must never forget, however, that health reform was made for man and not man for health reform. Any time that taking care of our health becomes a way for us to prove ourselves to God, it has become an end in itself. For Jesus, it is not an end in itself. The purpose of healthful living is that we may enjoy the full benefits of salvation and thus more fully glorify God. Jesus wants us to prosper physically, just as we prosper spiritually. Seen this way, our physical prosperity is a privilege of living in Christ, not a burdensome list of dos, don'ts, and other miscellaneous requirements necessary to make the grade and satisfy God.

REACT

What can I do now to be a health reformer rather than a health destroyer?

By Dan Solis, chaplain at Kettering (Ohio) College of Medical Arts.

Faith, Prayer, and the Temple of God

HOW-TO

Key Text: James 5:16

How does faith relate to Jesus' ministry? It has been my experience in studying the Bible that faith is the single most important factor. In every incident in the Bible in which Jesus expressed His healing power, faith was most important.

How is prayer involved with faith? James 5:16 answers that question without any doubt. Jesus wants His followers to express their faith through prayer. Worry is a sickness that can lead to other health problems, but with prayer you can lay all your worries and sickness at the feet of Jesus.

How are faith, prayer, and the temple of God interconnected? The human body is the temple of God. If the temple of God were a building, there would be periodic maintenance and preventive maintenance for the upkeep of the building in order for it to last. The human body is much the same in that we are to eat right and exercise to maintain a healthy temple.

It does not end there, however. It has been said that Christians are healthier than non-Christians, because of worship, prayer, and the fellowship of churchgoers.

Put a fresh coat of paint on your temple of God.

Faith, prayer, and interaction with other Christians is preventive maintenance for the temple of God. Smile and put a fresh coat of paint on your temple of God for others to see.

Wake Up!

OPINION

Key Text: 1 Cor. 1:30, 31

When Jesus invites us to come unto Him, He promises new spirituality. When someone suffers physically, that is not necessarily a reflection on his or her Christian experience.

We experience three phases in our Christian walk: justification, sanctification, and glorification. The first two take place while we are on earth. Justification comes when we are justified by the perfect life Jesus gave us at Calvary. Because He paid our penalty of death, He can give His perfect life to us to claim as our own. Sanctification is the trend we take after accepting Christ into our lives. As we commune with Him, His perfect nature begins to “rub off” on us so that we start to desire what He desires. But it is when He comes in the clouds of glory that we experience glorification. Prior to His coming, we are justified and sanctified (I am not saying necessarily that we are perfect in character before He comes, but the state of surrender is there). It is when He comes that we are glorified, meaning that we are given new healthy bodies and taken home to live with our Creator.

I don't see why sickness should be any major shock to us.

At the present time, I don't see why sickness should be any major shock to us. If we experience an illness, then it is simply part of this sinful planet we live on. It doesn't necessarily mean we are doing a poor job of being a Christian. If we think that whenever an illness befalls us we are not doing enough as Christians, then perhaps that is why we become ill. Jesus still allows sickness to befall those who become independent. If we are trying to do good things in order to be saved, then we are being independent. Focusing on Christ is the only thing we have to worry about, and the rest is God's responsibility.

Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. Therefore, if we abide in Him, then He will cover the rest. He will work in us good works. We rest in Him, and He works in us. So if it takes sickness to wake us up to see our condition, then hallelujah! If He had to wake us up by allowing sickness to befall us, then that means we must have been asleep and thus in the dark. It is in times of peril we see our helplessness, and so, rather than doubting our Christian experience, we should praise God for keeping us awake and resting in Him. Remember, He wants you to be happy. He will give you your new body when He comes to take you home!

REACT

Does Jesus use sin to accomplish His work? Explain.

By Jeremy Arnall, a theology major from Kettering (Ohio) College of Medical Arts.

CHRIST, THE GREAT CONNECTOR



“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matt. 5:13).

Bondmaker *par excellence*

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Matt. 4:19, 20

What biblical character would you choose as an example of being able to create links or bonds? After a review of the most outstanding Bible characters, I don't think you can doubt for a single moment: Jesus is the bondmaker *par excellence*, the supreme example of the capacity to link quite different things.

In this lesson we are trying to answer the following questions:

1. What or whom does Jesus bind?
2. What is the method He uses to make these bonds?
3. What is the goal of the bond that Jesus offers us?

Above all, Jesus binds quite different realities in their essence: Divinity and humanity, God and man. Jesus is the natural link, the joining bridge (the genuine high priest) between eternal and ephemeral, between the divine and the human.

But Jesus also binds humans among themselves, no matter their social condition or circumstances. He gave us examples of this during His earthly ministry. By asking us to be the salt of the earth, He is asking us to make a bond, a link among all human beings, as salt does to food.

The life and the ministry of Jesus encourages us to be more connected with

The ministry of Jesus encourages us to be more connected with one another.

one another through compassion and love. This is the method Jesus used to bind human beings: the bond of love.

The goal of the bonding work of Jesus, with divinity as well as among ourselves, is our own salvation. The results of salvation through Christ are not manifest only in eternal life, but even in this life we can enjoy the happiness of being saved.

By Jorge Pamplona-Roger, a physician and chief editor of Safeliz Publishing House, Madrid, Spain.

The Great Connector

LOGOS

Matt. 4:18-20; 11:19; Luke 10:29-37; Acts 16:23-34; Phil. 2:1-8

A Basic Need

Anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists agree that one of the basic human needs is to bond to a group. It could be said that every human being needs to find a balance between maintaining individuality and being a member of a collective in which individuality is empowered. The defense of individuality can take a person to the greatest sacrifices and heroic acts, although, through history, those who give their lives for the group have been especially honored.

The individual is integrated into a group as a consequence of being born in a certain territory, of sharing the same language or race, of having common beliefs or ideals, of being part of a family or tribe, of choosing similar spiritual goals, or even of having the same material needs, tastes, or habits. The more elements bonding an individual to a group, the stronger and more lasting the union. The more common characteristics among the members of the group, so much greater the cohesion of the collective and its possibilities of survival.

The Deformation of the Original

By the Divine Word, we know that this need for bonding is a poor reflection of the natural union that existed in the beginning between the Creator and the created (Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:25). The Fall disconnected the creature from the Creator (Gen. 3:14-19). The ecological balance designed by the Creator was broken. In nature the big fish now eats the smaller and the stronger survives.

That we are children of the same Father establishes the strongest bond possible (Acts 17:26-28). So firm and powerful was the bond that only a being as intelligent and cunning as Lucifer could find a way to break it. He seduced Adam and Eve to fall to the temptation of the creature who wants to supplant the Creator (Gen. 3: 4, 5).

The disruption of the bond with the Fountain of Life brought self-destruction. When the creatures found themselves defenseless, they searched for an artificial unity, constructing great and costly human replacements, physical and spiritual, that they hoped would free them from the consequences of sin without their having to accept salvation by grace (Gen. 3:15; 11:4). To avoid greater evil, the Creator fragmented humanity into collectives that would maintain a kind of balance of conflicting interests (Gen. 4:6). He broke the linguistic unity, since nothing binds a human being so much as language.

Humanity naturally resists the only truly lasting solution, to reconnect with God. Everyone is subject to the temptation to be "like gods." Every human being wants to restore unity by accepting common ideas and actions, instead of re-establishing the original balance based on the fact that we all are children of the same Father, and therefore brothers with identical rights and duties (John 1:12).

The Great Connector Made Creature

The creature by itself cannot reestablish its links with its Maker (Jer. 13:23). The Creator is so superior to the creature that, beclouded by sin, the creature is

incapable of understanding what it would take to restore the lost relationship. Thus the Creator decides to become a true creature, with all its limitations (Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Cor. 15:45).

And this Creature gives us an example of how to reestablish the true bond between equals, so by seeing this is possible, we comprehend and accept that the reconnection with the Creator is not a theory, but it may be an actual reality (John 13:33, 34; 1 John 2:7-11; 3:14; 4:7-10).

The Methods of the Connector to Rebind Us

Because of His divine origin and His ability to overcome the deformity and confusion caused by sin, Jesus, the Connector, knew where to begin. He began with what some would consider to be the last: “‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’” (Matt. 4:19, NIV). The first invitation recorded in the Gospel was to enroll God’s followers in a human fishing company. “To fish” for humanity, as Jesus showed through His life, didn’t mean that we would be forced to join a group. For Jesus this fishing consisted of creating an attractive lifestyle in a coherent human group that would respect the additional need for individuality. This human collective had to be so admirable that people would be willing to forsake everything else to be part of it.

Though this is an ideal, it is not unattainable. All Jesus’ teachings are ideals, but they always bind limited human capabilities with the infinite power of the Great Connector. Jesus unites with those who have no hope of righteousness to

That we are children of the same Father establishes the strongest bond possible.

demonstrate the great transforming power of renewing the relationship with Divinity. True religion (James 1:27) binds us to the pain and suffering of other creatures who are in a worse situation than ourselves. To this, Jesus dedicated His greatest and best efforts.

When Christians take responsibility for the poor physical, mental, social and/or spiritual health of other human beings, they bind themselves even with the death of Jesus—and with His resurrection! (Rom. 6:3-5). In the renewed and reconnected earth, then, we will feel completely integrated into the same group. The entire group, all of humanity, will be completely bonded to the authentic ecological balance (Rev. 21:4; Isa. 66:17, 18; 11:6-8). Christianity will have triumphed through the reconnection with the great and eternal Connector.

REACT

1. What binds or unites human beings the most: pain or pleasure; sadness or happiness?
2. In what way can the gift of healing bind us to people?
3. In what sense are religion and connecting the same? How are they different?
4. Why is it necessary to link with God before I can connect with other human beings?
5. How can I connect with sinners without consenting to their sin?

By Francisco X. Gelabert, an editor at Safeliz Publishing House, Madrid, Spain.

Diffusive and Aggressive

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Matt. 5:13

Whether in public or in private, Jesus' words present a constant appeal. He was able to speak in such a captivating way because He felt a real interest in saving each person He met. The followers of Christ may also link with the people through our zeal for restoring souls to a relationship with God.

Ellen White declares the following in her commentary of Matthew 5:13: "The savor of the salt represents the vital power of the Christian—the love of Jesus in the heart, the righteousness of Christ pervading the life. The love of Christ is diffusive and aggressive. If it is dwelling in us, it will flow out to others. We shall come close to them till their hearts are warmed by our unselfish interest and love. The sincere believers diffuse vital energy, which is penetrating and imparts new moral power to the souls for whom they labor. It is not the power of the man himself, but the power of the Holy Spirit that does the transforming work."¹

Even in trying to persuade our friends to accept Jesus, our approach will never be offensive if we exhibit the love that Christ feels for us. True love is diffusive; it cannot be imprisoned. It wants to expand. It is aggressive because the disciple of Jesus feels a motivation that overcomes his or her shyness and prejudices.

Our approach will never be offensive if we exhibit the love that Christ feels for us.

"When love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not because of favors received from them, but because love is the principle of action. Love modifies the character, governs the impulses, subdues enmity, and ennoble the affections. This love is as broad as the universe, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. Cherished in the heart, it sweetens the entire life and sheds its blessing upon all around. It is this, and this only, that can make us the salt of the earth."²

1. Ellen White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 36.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Jesus' Approach

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Matt. 4:23

Jesus connected well with people. The best evidence of this is that people of His time followed Him, forgetting their families, their jobs, even their meals. The record tells us that on occasion the number of followers was about "five thousand men, not counting the women and children" (Matt. 14:21). The secret of His success among the common people was based on several factors.

Jesus' appearance was kind, attractive, and majestic. His demeanor gave confidence even to children. His look was clean and gentle.

Another form of His power to connect with those surrounding Him was His words. "They were astonished at his words" (Luke 4:22). "Never has any man talked like this one" (Luke 7:46).

His strategy, His method for influencing the mind and the heart of the people was extraordinary, without doubt the best. The Gospel says: "And Jesus went through all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all sickness and suffering of the people" (Matt. 4:23).

Jesus connected well with people because He gave them what they needed: He taught, preached, and healed.

Jesus connected well with people because He gave them what they needed.

Jesus was a teacher. People of His time lacked teachers to instruct them in truth and justice. There was a thirst in the people for these two virtues.

Jesus was a preacher of good news. The preachers of His time demanded burdens on the people that they were not able to bear. Jesus Christ offered hope of a better world, offered salvation, offered love, offered understanding.

Jesus was a healer. At the same time He was giving solution to the mental and spiritual needs of men, Jesus did not forget His own bodily needs. He revealed His love and compassion, healing every disease and physical suffering.

The evangelists, the leaders of the church, should ever seek the best form of communicating with people. It is difficult to evangelize today. If our offer coincides with what the world needs, however, the connection will be successful.

As followers of Jesus, we also have been called to be teachers, preachers, and healers (Luke 9:2, 6). In our time people have the same needs as then. When a disciple of Jesus adequately combines these three activities, he is using the method of Christ, and the success of contact and communication is assured because we will be satisfying the most critical needs of those around us.

Today as then, the world needs to see in us unselfish love, hear the truth, hear justice, hear hope, and above all they need a healthful lifestyle. That was the secret of the success of our Saviour, and it is evident it can and should be ours.

By José Rodríguez Bernal, general manager of Safeliz Publishing House, Madrid, Spain.

“Atheist Christians”?

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 22:37-39

An interpreter of the law approached Jesus with the intention of creating problems for Him. He asked Jesus to answer the question “What is the greatest commandment a believer should obey?” He knew this question would be difficult to answer. But Jesus is the true master, and He accepts the challenge: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment” (Matt. 22:37, 38, NIV).

Without doubt, this answer would make theologians happy. But Jesus always surprises us and goes beyond our expectations. Because of this, He expands His answer. The enriching simplification may address the opposing problem—superficiality. To answer, Jesus feels the need to add something more because He knows that human beings, even when they are attempting to follow the good purposes of the love of God, are capable of committing barbarities (human sacrifices, persecutions, holy wars, intolerance). So He continued, saying: “And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (verse 39). The word *like* is significant. It is a synonym for “identical,” “similar,” “akin,” “same.” Jesus did not separate the love of God from the love of humanity.

Atilano Ataiz calls people like this “atheist Christians.”

This goes so far as the judgment of the nations (see Matthew 25:31-46). The love of a neighbor will be a determinant for salvation. At the time of judgment, many will remind the Lord that they fulfilled the “first and greatest commandment”: “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?” (7:22, 23). Then it is not only believers, but active believers. However, Jesus will tell them something disconcerting: “I never knew you.” This is because Jesus does not recognize those lacking love. The essence of God is love, and the absence of this gift disables us to live an eternity in an environment in which love is so important. The disciple John tells us in a graphic way: “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death” (1 John 3:14).

The identification of believers is not a guarantee of salvation, if it is not together with the fulfillment of the second commandment. Atilano Ataiz calls people like this “atheist Christians.” This describes those who want to dissociate the love for God from that for the neighbor.

By Luis Gonzales Soriano, an editor at Safeliz Publishing House, Madrid, Spain.

Bus-Stop Witness

OPINION

Key Text: Matt. 28:19

A few days ago, a young man in his twenties approached me at a bus stop and asked: "Are you interested in Jesus?" I must admit I was caught totally off guard, but I recovered quickly and answered positively.

After a couple of subsequent meetings with my new friend, I discovered his main goal in life was to bring as many people to Christ as he could. This experience has since caused me to wonder:

- Is this what Jesus really wants us to do as His disciples?
- What about more immediate needs, i.e., money, food, health care, etc.?
- What does it mean to be "the light of the world"?
- Is being a good example enough?
- How many people have I brought to Christ?

I suddenly realized that I needed a restructuring of my spiritual values, and fast. I started to think how selfish we can become, by just going to church every Sabbath, doing activities with our friends from church, even volunteering for ADRA projects. I am not saying that any of these is wrong, on the contrary; they all are a necessary part of the life of a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. We need

A young man in his twenties approached me at a bus stop.

to realize, however, that these activities by themselves will not bring people to Christ. We must not forget our mission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19, NIV). My friend at the bus stop taught me that it is not that difficult to share with others the Saviour who has changed your life and, if they let Him, may change theirs.

Is this what being a witness really means? I have never seen a witness on the stand just sitting there "showing" good testimony. The witness always *says* something, usually the truth of what he thinks really has happened. We cannot be silent witnesses, we have to let others know what they are missing out on: real freedom through Christ.

I have decided to ask Jesus for help. I want Him to give me courage to be like Him. Otherwise, how is the world going to find out He is their Saviour if we don't tell them? Remember that we will get to heaven only when everyone has had a chance to hear the good news. Make it your goal that they hear it from you.

By Benjamin I. Galindo, who works in the production and systems department, Safeliz Publishing House, Madrid, Spain.

ETERNAL RESTORATION



“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

Conversion Without Study

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: 1 John 5:11-13

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13).

Saranak sat in the Toyota van with me. “If the Viets come through the east gate,” I told him, “I will charge through the west gate—floor-boarding.”

He nodded. It had been a tough night. Very rough. I was the only doctor for 1,000 beds in Khao-I-Dang, the Cambodian refugee camp of 140,000 people. The Vietnamese had wiped out border camps and would arrive by night, sending 60,000 refugees they had scattered by tank, plane, and artillery fire. As luck would have it, it was our turn to pick night duty.

I prayed with Saranak, a handsome commander of a Cambodian gunship who had lost his right arm in an earlier salvo.

We had treated the cases that poured in—shrapnel, hemorrhage, shock, sundered limbs, gaping wounds. Exhausted, at 4:00 a.m. we revved up the Toyota as

I was the only doctor for 1,000 beds in Khao-I-Dang.

the Viets began to circle the camp. But amazingly, they stopped and withdrew. We never learned why. My prayer was answered.

Later Saranak told me, “I gave my life to God that night because of your trust in God and your prayer.”

There had been no time for a study on even one of the 27 doctrines of our church—just a prayer and a smile as I turned the ignition key. The studies would come later. He and his beautiful wife received the assurance of eternal life offered by God and were baptized. Since then, Saranak has translated Bible studies into Cambodian, is an elder of the Cambodian SDA church in Oregon, and prospers as the owner of a computer-accounting firm.

We can trace the Saranak story back to God’s gift to the remnant people, the health message. It is the astonishing story that began with Ellen White’s comprehensive health vision in 1863. It is the story of Battle Creek Sanitarium, of Loma Linda University, and of the current worldwide thrust of Adventist medical institutions whose soul-winning work staggers the imagination.

By Bert Dunlop, a general practitioner at Hong Kong Adventist Hospital.

Eternal Longings

LOGOS

Isa. 65:8, 9, 17, 21-25; 66:22, 23; 1 John 5:11-13; Rev. 21:1-5; 22:17

The news headlines struck with a sickening sense of hopelessness and helplessness; "228 Killed as Mystery Blast Blows US Airliner From Sky." It was Friday morning, July 19, 1996, Hong Kong time. It was less than 48 hours before the start of the summer Olympics; one week before my family's departure to the United States for annual leave. An enormous explosion had wreaked its deadly destruction on TWA Flight 800 on its way from New York to Paris.

The same issue of the paper reported the rape of a 12-year-old in Hong Kong and, sadder still, that of a five-year-old Thai. There were pictures and stories of massive flooding in China and Pakistan, civil strife in Sri Lanka, famine in North Korea, and enslavement and torture of POWs in Russia.

Unfortunately, such events are not limited to a single news issue. They are daily occurrences in a world gone berserk. How often does the cry ascend skyward, "Where is God?" or "If there is a God, why doesn't He do something about this mess?"

New Beginnings

The good news is that God *is* doing something. When we hurt, God hurts too. He who watched His only begotten Son die a cruel and torturous death on Calvary is not blind to global suffering or to our own individual hurts and pains. The message of the Cross is that God understands. Eternal restoration is but the culmination of the work of the gospel. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:4, 5).

Our loving heavenly Father goes even a step further. Not only will there be new heavens and a new earth, but "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

I like that: selective amnesia. God will remove from our minds all memories of the pains, the hurts, the tears, the sickness, the abuse, the crime, the misery, that too often afflicts even the innocent in this world of sin.

Redevelopment Architects

Often our focus on heaven is limited to what God is going to do for us: glamorous mansions in the New Jerusalem (John 14:2; Rev. 21:2), streets of gold (verse 21), gates of pearl (verse 21), eating from the tree of life (2:7), wild beasts that have been tamed (Isa. 65:25). Yes, an eternity of passive bliss and tranquility. But eternal restoration is not a point in time but a process.

True, at the Second Coming we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:51, 52), but this change pertains to our mortal bodies taking on immortality (verse 53). Once that takes place, heaven will provide plenty of opportunity for growth, to participate in the creation process. We will build houses, we will plant gardens (Isa. 65:21), we will travel to other worlds to tell the story of redemption, and from Sabbath to Sabbath we will come together to worship (Isa. 66:23).

What's the Delay?

If God is so anxious that an end be brought to pain and suffering, why the delay? The story is told that one day Jesus and the angel Gabriel took a walk together through that section of heaven reserved for the saints. As they walked along, they reached a ridge that overlooked a valley beyond description for beauty. Animals of every description frolicked upon a multihued carpet of fragrant flowers. Overhead meadowlarks, robins, and other birds filled the air with their melodies.

At first Gabriel was speechless; everything was in such harmony and beauty. At last he turned to Jesus and asked, "Master, this is one of the most beautiful spots in heaven. When are You going to go and get the people for whom You made this place?"

The Saviour made no reply but continued the walk. Presently they came to another spot that was even more glorious than the first, if indeed that were possible. Again Gabriel posed the same question. Again his inquiry was met with silence.

At last they reached the New Jerusalem. Resplendent in reflecting the glory of Christ, Gabriel could not contain himself. "Master, nothing You have created is so dazzling in all its splendor. But all these mansions are empty. Master, when are You going to go and get the people for whom You've made these homes?"

And then Gabriel noticed the tears streaming down the Master's face. They were tears unlike anything he'd seen since Christ had cried over Jerusalem two

"If there is a God, why doesn't He do something about this mess?"

thousand years earlier. Then regaining His composure, Christ looked into the eyes of Gabriel and responded, "Gabriel, don't they want to come home? Don't they want to come home?"

"Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own."*

Yes, Christ is waiting for me and for you. What will be your response?

REACT

1. How do what I eat and drink, my exercise program or lack of it, temperate living, and other health habits affect my preparation for eternal restoration?

2. If I am really serious about preparing for Christ's soon coming, what changes do I need to make in my own lifestyle?

3. If you found out that through your Christian lifestyle someone came to know Christ, how would you react?

4. Imagine yourself being among people who have never heard of the name or work of Jesus Christ. What personal testimony could you give to show them God's love and care?

5. What does everlasting life mean to you personally?

* *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

By William C. Andress, director, health promotion/wellness, Hong Kong Adventist Hospital.

Telling It as Christ Told It

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 1 John 5:11-13

God had a plan to redeem humanity from sin long before the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden. John 3:16 shows how God opens salvation and eternal life to everyone. It is the duty of every follower of Christ to make this plan known to unbelievers. Whenever we receive good news in life, we normally do not hide it but share it with our friends and loved ones.

The gospel is the good news that we need to tell to everyone. When Christ was on earth, He performed many miracles in the presence of His disciples. These miracles strengthened the belief of the disciples in Christ and testified of Him as the Son of God (John 2:11, 12; 20:30, 31). Christ is calling on you today to carry the good news to all the world (Matt. 28:18-20). He promised that the Holy Spirit would help us in this duty. He is the only Son of God and the only testimony of eternal life. Our duty is to walk in His footsteps.

The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins (1 John 1:7). What a lovely statement, to know that Christ gives salvation to all who accept Him as their personal Saviour. "Today He is standing at the altar of mercy, presenting before God the

Jesus has promised to restore us to the original state of existence.

prayers of those who desire His help. He turns away no weeping, contrite one. 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."¹

Sometimes we seem either to ignore or to fail to respond to God's call, "Come . . . take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Yet Christ's words to come unto Him (Matt. 11:28) "are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills."²

Jesus has promised to restore us to the original state of existence as it was supposed to be. If you know of anyone who is tired of life in this sinful world, I encourage you to tell him or her of the love of Christ. What prevents you from sharing the good news with your friends, relatives, or anyone else you know?

1. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 90.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

More Truth Than Poetry

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Isaiah 65, 66

Originally God's intention was that had Israel cooperated by being obedient, they would have become a utopian exhibit of health and prosperity to the world, and as such they could have led the world to trust and worship God. What did God really desire them to do? To reveal to "all nations the character of the King of kings, and to teach them to reverence and obey Him." But the failure of Israel made impossible the fulfillment of these original prophecies.

Keep the following few observations in mind as we read these Old Testament prophecies that refer to the Messianic kingdom: (1) These prophecies talk about a heaven-on-earth utopian world, but not completely unaffected by the ravages of sin. A person still died, but "he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth" (Isa. 65:20, NIV). (2) One of the great engines or energizers of life is hope. God loves nothing more than to dispense hope. Notice this Messianic prophecy, "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with cane in hand because of his age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there" (Zech. 8:4, 5). For the Jews this would have been utopia.

The poetry allows us to visualize the hereafter.

(3) So what shall we do? Throw out the prophecies of the Messianic kingdom because Israel failed? Fortunately, later prophets use many of these "heavenly" descriptions and apply them to the final "new heaven and new earth." (See Revelation 21, 22.)

And the poetry does allow for us to visualize the hereafter through an active imagination. I love Isaiah's comment that "the wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox" (65:25). In an earlier chapter (35:9) he notes that there will be no lions there. So will there be lions or no lions? Where is the truth in this poetry? Simply this: the Messianic kingdom would have been a wonderfully safe place to live, and will heaven be any less so?

REACT

1. Most of us have inhibited our imaginations. For a few minutes, re-create for yourself a personalized "new heaven and new earth."

2. Compare and contrast the descriptions of the Messianic kingdom of the Old Testament with descriptions of the final "new heaven and new earth."

3. What responsibility is mine to inform the unwarned of the glorious end of this sinful world?

4. How can I face daily conflicts and vexations in the light of God's promises to move in with me?

**Conflict and Courage*, p. 195.

By John and Connie Ash, radio broadcasters for AWR-Asia Chinese programming, Hong Kong.

Thinking About Home

HOW-TO

Key Texts: Isa. 65:9, 25; John 10:10

In each of my five years at our academy in Northeast India, the MV (Now AY) camp was the highest point. We felt its pleasant effects on our lives throughout the month preceding the actual date.

1. Anticipation emptied our minds of negative thought and imagining. We never considered the possibility of rain or thunderstorm, of having a cough, a sprained ankle, or a mishap in the mountain stream. Our hearts warmed with the images of tents under trees, of being lulled at night by crickets and fireflies and awakened by cicadas; of hillsides resounding with laughter and singing, and the director's whistle; of fun games and activities, and food as delicious as it was special. And, of course, the campfire. We thought only of going to camp. No complaints. No worry. No stress. No headaches. No sleepless nights. No ulcer pains.

2. Anticipation helped us to have a happier and more peaceful coexistence. With the camp coming in the fall after the third quarter, the thought of leaving the campus thrilled us. We knew the camp was going to be good for all. It became the center of everyone's conversation. There was neither time nor desire for jealousy or self-pity, for tribalism, subtribalism, or clanism.

The camp on God's "holy mountain" will be our eternal home!

3. Anticipation changed our attitudes toward regular life. Classes were a bore no more. Aches and pains were no longer magnified to get the nurse's stay-in certification. Study was not tedious anymore, and work ceased to be joyless. We even looked forward to the task of carrying equipment and materials from the road to the campsite. In high spirits we ran and swam, practiced our songs, skits, marches, and activities in anticipation of enjoying the camp in the fullest possible way.

When time at camp finally came, it was great but so short-lived. The camp on God's "holy mountain" will be our eternal home! There, He has prepared things that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Cor. 2:9). There, we His chosen campers will be eternally restored. What an effect anticipation of such a camp must have on us now.

REACT

1. Since we are going to be restored sometime soon, what is the rationale for exercise and living a healthful lifestyle?

2. How should my excitement over where I am bound influence the kind of relationship I have with those about me?

3. If many people are thrilled about the same thing, how and why do they live out their excitement in different ways?

By James Warjri, a teacher of English at the Hong Kong Sam Yuk Secondary School.

Go, Make a Footprint!

OPINION

Key Text: Rev. 21:3

Just a thought. Harbored, cherished, it took hold.

He thought, I'll be "like the Most High" (Isa. 14:14, TLB).

Some six millennia later: All four, five, six billion persons that people the earth are sick. Can anyone truly say he has never had an ache?

Imagine the mass of deep red, seething, twisting, crawly live worms the vendor at an Asian pet market spoons out for live food for bird or fish. The whole surface of the earth is covered with such a mass—of sick humans. Shivers up and down your spine? Preflood conditions (Gen. 6:5) exist again in pre-Second-Advent times.

But there is hope! Isaiah 65, 66 and Revelation 19-22 stir the imagination. Soon "one pulse of harmony" will beat throughout the universe, and God Himself will live with us. With redemption accomplished, He does not move on to other affairs of the universe; rather, He moves in with us, with me!

What energy I expend getting ready for the God of the universe to move in with me!

But you cannot be married and go on the honeymoon all by yourself.

You cannot be married and go on the honeymoon all by yourself.

Discipleship with the Master is described as a marriage. Can you imagine at the end of a perfect wedding ceremony, the beautiful bride blows her husband a kiss and sets off for the honeymoon with little intention of meeting her husband for the rest of her life? "I have provided everything for her enjoyment, you see," he says in justification. Marriage implies constant fellowship that grows dearer and more precious with time.

Tall, well-proportioned, handsome, mild mannered, the atheistic teenager confesses to his Christian teacher his compelling attraction to reading the Bible. He is awed by the power that draws him so strongly to the Bible and constrains him to read it without regard to time or the original purpose of his visit.

Over several meetings the teacher friend describes the great controversy between Christ and Satan (he understands the Romans 7 experience in his own life) and the plan of salvation made before we felt our need. "This is so wonderful!" the teenager responds. "Why-why-why- aren't Christians all over the place telling us about the Lord Jesus?—I forgot. Satan is around!"

Put another way, You cannot serve God and hang on to the world.

Go, make your footprint for the Master.

* *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

By Emil G. Fernando, associate professor of arts and sciences at Hong Kong Adventist College.

Next Quarter's Lessons

1 Corinthians

If you have not yet received a copy of *CQ* for first quarter 1998, here is a summary of the first two lessons:

Lesson 1: The Gospel Invades Corinth

Scripture: Acts 18:1-18; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; 16:1-24.

Theme: The success of Paul's mission to Corinth convincingly demonstrates the power of God's grace. To the citizens of this important city, the good news about Jesus Christ came with the same transforming vigor that is available to us today.

Lesson 2: Divided Loyalties

Scripture: 1 Cor. 1:10-17; 3:1-23.

Theme: Paul grew concerned when he received a report that factions and quarrels were developing among the Christians at Corinth. His remedy called for fresh attention to the realities that bind Christians together and for his readers to lay claim to all the blessings God has provided.

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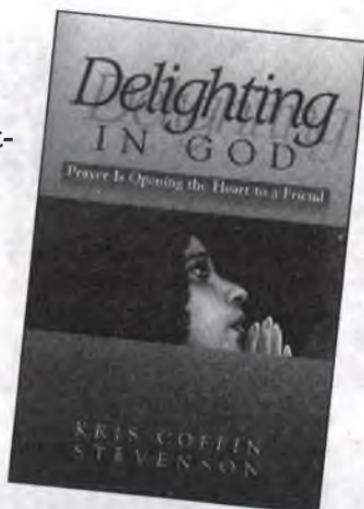
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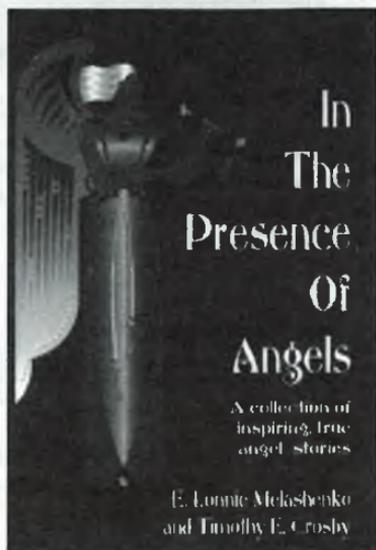
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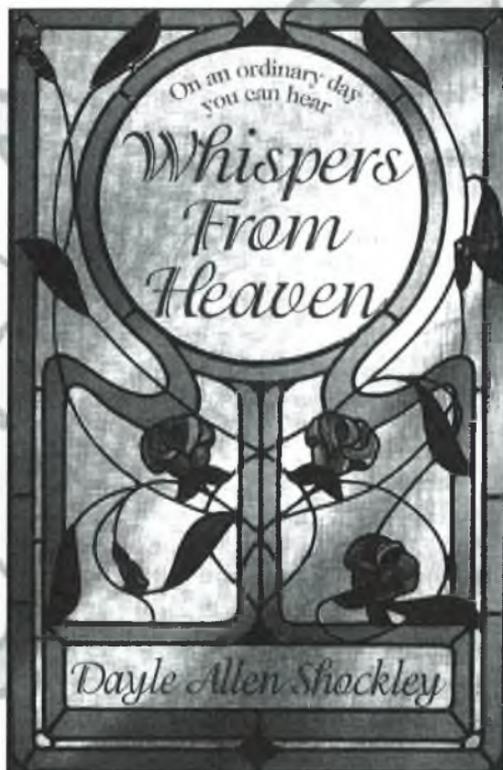
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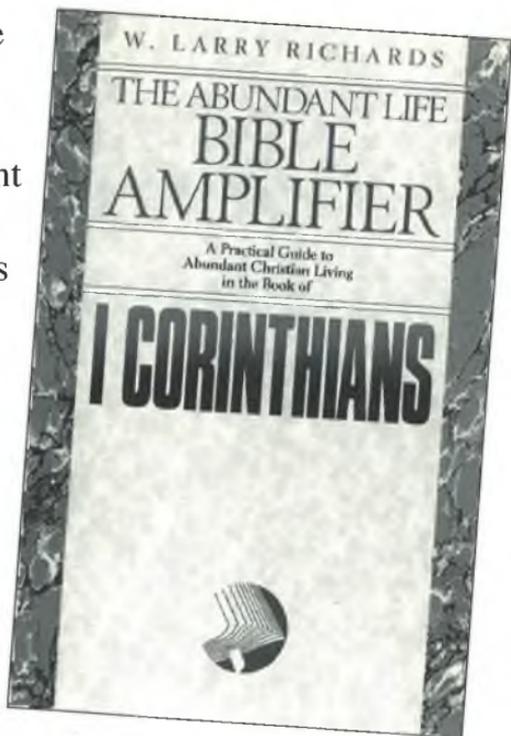


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