

THESE TIMES

August 1, 1979

Child abuse: it happens in the best of homes

How to cope
with loneliness

Don't blame God
for earth's heartaches

How to
teach moral values
to children under three



GOD'S WORD KNOWS



In an attempt to personalize the Bible for his people, lang Fuh Seng depicted characters from the Scriptures in Chinese dress and with Chinese features.

At age 12, Jesus in the temple (**above left**) discusses Bible prophecy with the religious leaders of His day. Nicodemus (**above**) discovers from Jesus the meaning of the new birth. A woman seeking healing (**below left**) reaches to touch the hem of His garment.



NO LIMIT

This Chinese New Testament, likely the only one of its kind in the world, placed me in touch with a former opium addict and drunkard who received healing from the message on its pages some seventy years earlier.

by Marye Trim

THIS is a story of several beginnings. I ask myself, marveling, "When did it really begin?"

Did it begin that winter day when the news that we had to move struck us with a chill colder than the air outside?

At that moment a despair more numbing than frost tempted me to question God's integrity and leading. Surely He wouldn't authorize such a needless expenditure of effort and energy!

Then, contemplating as I gazed through a thawing windowpane, I wondered whether perhaps Omniscience recognized those in a new neighborhood who needed me—or did I need them? Was this move, in fact, leading to a new and exciting experience in Christian living?

But perhaps this story within a story began soon after we completed our move, when my small son and I visited our new neighbor. My husband had previously met him. "You'll like the old gentleman," he had told me. "He's an individual. You'll find out why."

So son Billy and I stood at our neighbor's door. The garden we had passed on our way indicated care, for long-stemmed daffodils bobbed behind a border of primulas and other gay spring flowers. Yet the patio appeared cobwebby and unwept. We waited.

Then our new neighbor—a slightly stooped, elderly man of medium height, with silver hair and welcoming brown eyes—greeted us. "Hello," he said in cultured tones. "Welcome to this neighborhood."

We liked him immediately and stepped in. As we did, a wall motto caught my eye. Baffling words, they had been flamed onto a wood plaque. "PERHAPS TODAY," I read.

My neighbor smiled as I said the words, nodded with approval because they had caught my interest, and proceeded to explain.

"I have been a Christian and loved the Lord since I was a small boy." He smiled at Billy. "All my life I have served Him; and now that I am in my eighty-eighth year—living alone, for my wife is at rest—I am waiting for the Lord. Perhaps today He will come again. Or perhaps today He will take me in sleep. Whatever He does is right with me!"

We moved into his sitting room, where a similar motto again caught my eye. He continued, "I put these mottoes where my visitors see them so that I can speak for my lovely Lord. Perhaps today He will come! And until He does, I tell Him every morning, 'Lord, if You've got anything for an old fellow to do today, please show me.'"

We exchanged understanding smiles and passed farther into his house. That moment may have been another of the several beginnings to this story.

Was I destined to meet and know this Christian gentleman? to be fired and challenged by his motto? to share it with half a million others in

THESE TIMES, who in turn would pass it on to a million or two more?

Most certainly the move and the meeting brought me closer to what is probably the real beginning of this story within a story. I found it in my new neighbor's sitting room among the family photographs and various translations of the Bible that he read daily. "This is a remarkable book. I would like to show it to you." His voice grew warm; his hand trembled in eagerness. Intuitively I knew that I sat on the edge of discovery.

"It is a very old Chinese New Testament, written in the Mandarin dialect and published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in the last century. See how it opens—at the back, in the opposite way from English books. I am very privileged to own it. It may be the only one of its kind in the world today."

"Oh?" I asked.

"It is made unique by the artwork it contains, painted by brush and inserted by its original owner."

A visit to the past. My neighbor continued to display his Chinese New Testament and to tell further of its origin. As he did I stepped back into a past age via the mists of imagination.

The year became 1890, the scene—the young country of Australia. The first character to step onto the stage of my mind was a young woman named Mary Booth. "I am going to China," she told her friends, her face glowing with anticipation. "I am going with the pioneer party of Australians to join the China Inland Mission. I feel called to serve my Lord in this way."

Now the scene changed to the terrain and climate of the Orient. But who was this in Chinese dress and braids, eating, speaking, and living according to the customs of inland China? The same serene eyes and fair skin of scene 1 told me it was none other than Mary Booth.

One day she met a wealthy Chinese gentleman by the name of

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In spite of our heartaches, turmoil, and doubt, God can use our misfortune to bless others—if we will allow Him to work through us.

Iang Fuh Seng. He owned a large estate with many servants and coolies on his plantation and in his house. His tapestries were the richest, his dishes the finest, his food the most succulent. But through slit evil eyes he surveyed his world and mocked the efforts of the foreign devils from "Australlee." He was a drunkard and an opium addict.

Yet one day Iang Fuh Seng saw beyond the haze of opium and sensed the perfume that will always satisfy as he touched upon riches that are eternal. This understanding came through Bible readings and prayer meetings for his servants and friends. "Save even me, Lord Jesus," he finally prayed.

Eventually he entered Christian service and was ordained a Christian minister.

The Holy Bible suddenly became the blueprint of life for Iang Fuh Seng. He pored over its pages, seeing in it the Saviour for his race, for were not the Chinese people in the Book? Shepherds and nobles, traders and merchants, pilgrims and prodigals, blind beggars who led other blind beggars—all of these he recognized in the Chinese bazaar, joss house, streets, or fields.

So he illustrated a New Testament for himself, portraying the people of the Book as he saw them, in Chinese dress, of Chinese features, and with Chinese customs.

Mary Booth saw the artwork on fine oilpaper that Iang Fuh Seng had interleaved through his New Testament. "How vivid and beautiful it is!" she exclaimed.

Seng graciously inclined his head. "I will do the same for you," he promised, and he kept that promise. With tender care he applied his brush again to re-create the Chinese New Testament story: the angels' appearance to Chinese shepherds on an inland China hillside; Mary and Martha in fine Chinese gowns; Chinese disciples in Chinese fishing junks; an Oriental Christ in the

black garb of a teacher; a funeral scene with the professional mourner suitably attired in white and the son of the Woman of Nain in the appropriate burial color of red. Illustration after illustration testified of Iang Fuh Seng's faith and devotion.

Some seventy years later, on a spring afternoon a world away, all this opened before me in the hands of my new neighbor. Thus I, too, endured the heat of burning summer as Mary Booth trudged from village to village, flinching at the scorn of some and rejoicing at the transformation and salvation of others. I heard the flute and cymbal of oriental music with its own peculiar scales and harmony as evil Iang Fuh Seng existed amid his haze of opium.

Then I saw the born-again Iang Fuh Seng persuading his city that the foreign devils spoke true words of an Omniscient One who transcends race, culture, and geographic boundaries—Iang Fuh Seng's own Redeemer! In continued imagination I saw him ply his brush on these very pages now held in my new neighbor's hands.

In March, 1936, before her death, Mary Booth passed on the New Testament to Christian friends in Sydney, Australia, with whom she had furloughed several times, solemnly charging that it should continue to be used in Christian witness. Thus it came into my neighbor's possession.

In turn my neighbor fulfilled his end of the bargain. He used the New Testament as a Sunday School teacher in the Church of England, and he displayed it at various church conferences, including one at Kuala Lumpur in 1968.

And one spring afternoon, as daffodils, crocuses, and primulas shared their color and perfume, my new neighbor shared his New Testament treasure with me. As he did so my jigsaw of petty doubts locked together to make a perfect

pattern. One solution for our move—this story within a story that must be told—plus the important recognition that, for nations or individuals, God knows all; that what may appear to be turmoil and useless struggle can yet be used by Him as part of His overall plan.

The missing testament. I cannot help wondering where Iang Fuh Seng's own illustrated copy of the Bible is in today's awakening China. Was it long ago devoured by flames or rubble? Or is it hidden secretly away, or stored in memory yet? Where are the hearts who have known, and know, its power? How and when will they speak?

Of one thing I am sure, and that is God's promise that His word will not return unto Him void: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11).

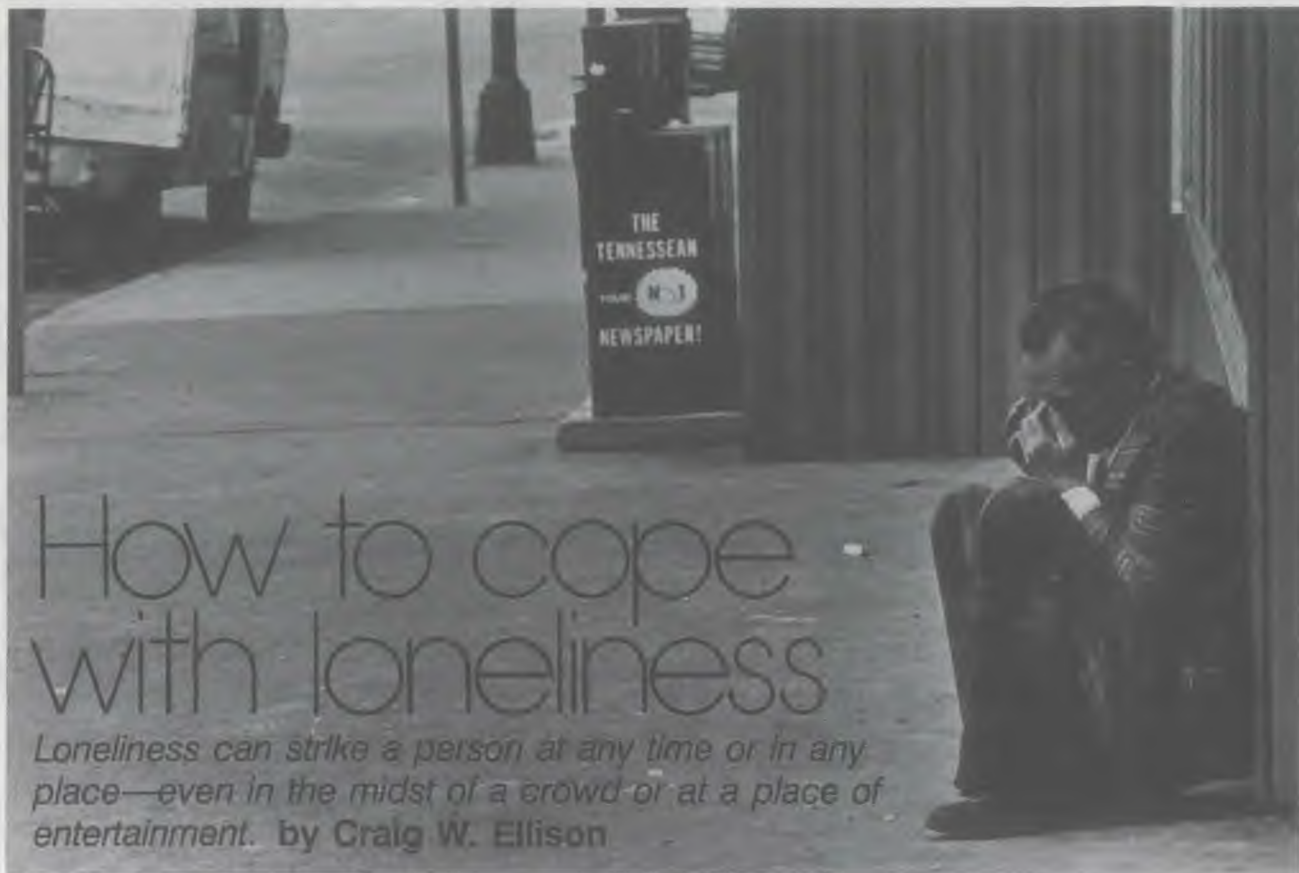
So, still today, in America, Australia, China, or anywhere, the power of God's Word transcends human ideology and ambition; saves from lust and slavery. Before the return of Jesus, in every land there will yet be many new beginnings—and stories within stories—as lives are led and transformed by the Author of the Book of life. For He is the Re-creator, the Mastermind of the new society that will be translated to heaven.

In Greek terms the Bible describes Jesus Christ as the Alpha and the Omega—the A and Z of our English alphabet. The Chinese language does not translate this directly as it does not use an alphabetical system, yet the implication is the same. As Iang Fuh Seng and Mary Booth would have read, and agreed, Jesus is *kai tsi* and *joong jieh*,* the First (Commencement) and the Last (Conclusion) for anyone, anywhere. ☉

*The first and last, in time, in Mandarin would be: "jueh hsien de" (the first), and "jueh joong de" (the last).



Even the dead received life (above at top) from the Incarnate King of the universe. At the Last Supper (left) Jesus met with His disciples for a farewell dinner the evening before His crucifixion (above) between two thieves.



How to cope with loneliness

Loneliness can strike a person at any time or in any place—even in the midst of a crowd or at a place of entertainment. by Craig W. Ellison

MILLIONS OF AMERICANS know from experience what it means to be lonely. Singles' bars, encounter groups, hot lines, quasi-religious groups, singles' apartment complexes, special magazines, and computerized dating services have sprung up in response.

One survey found that 26 percent of the people questioned had felt very lonely at some point during the preceding few weeks.¹ Another found that 27 percent of unmarried women and 23 percent of unmarried men expressed feelings of intense loneliness.² Almost three fourths of the widows over fifty years of age living in one large American metropolitan center indicated that loneliness was a major problem in their lives.³

People of all ages and descriptions apparently experience loneliness. It is not clear whether children and adolescents experience it differently from young adults and the elderly, or singles differently from the married.

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Characterized by intense emotional pain and anxiety, loneliness is closely related to depression. Grief and loneliness also seem similar though distinct. As in grief, the lonely person is highly motivated by his emotional pain to seek out a desired or lost relationship. (At the same time, because of societal norms, he or she may behave in ways that overtly deny this need.)

Loneliness and aloneness are not the same thing. People can experience intense loneliness when they're with others. Some people, on the other hand, seem to be able to entertain themselves satisfactorily without needing other people around as much.

Psychologist Robert Weiss suggests that there are at least two basic forms of loneliness: emotional isolation and social isolation.⁴ Emotional isolation involves the lack or loss of a highly intimate relationship with a special person. General companionship with others doesn't meet the need. Social isolation refers to the lack of a more general supportive network of accepting friends. In both cases, there is a desire for missing relationships.

A third kind of loneliness stems from a sense of separateness from God and from meaning in life. We have found that loneliness and spiritual well-being are negatively related: more lonely people have lower spiritual well-being.⁵

The lonely person is temporarily or chronically unable to initiate and continue significant relationships, unable to gain emotional satisfaction from relationships, or has had a significant relationship broken.

Underlying causes. Two basic dynamics seem to underlie loneliness. The first is a *lack* of the sense of *belonging*, a lack of assurance that one is really wanted. Not being chosen or included by others makes one feel isolated and worthless. Cornell psychologist Uris Brofenbrenner recently asserted that the basic core of alienation was a feeling of not belonging, of rejection.⁶

Loneliness seems to involve both the wanting of another and the experience of not being wanted by another. Anyone who has sat alone in a bustling cafeteria has momentarily experienced the intertwined twinges of loneliness and wanting to be

wanted by someone.

The second dynamic is the feeling that *no one understands*. The lonely person lacks relationships in which he is able to share intimate concerns with another person who responds with interest, empathy, and appropriate overtures.

These dynamics suggest that loneliness may be experienced by married people, as well as singles. Married people who become too busy in separate spheres of activity, restrict communication on deeper levels for fear of being hurt by their partner, or fail to encourage constructive intimate communication will likely be lonely.

Some people suffer from long-term or chronic loneliness. This includes but is not limited to those with severe emotional difficulties. Others suffer from more short-term or acute loneliness, which is generally associated with some kind of temporary situation involving lack of close relationships.

Basic needs of children. Three fundamental needs must be met during childhood development, or chronic loneliness will be experienced. These are the *needs of attachment, acceptance, and acquisition of adequate social skills*.

R. A. Spitz first showed that satisfactory physical care of human infants was not enough for proper development.⁷ More than one third of an institutionalized group that did not also receive adequate cuddling died within two years. The children who survived were drastically retarded in mental, motor, and social skills.

The formation of affectional bonds begins within the first weeks after birth. Children as young as one month pay selective attention to a mother rather than to a stranger, and show positive affection only toward her.⁸ Some psychologists have suggested that an important cause of crying that appears during the first three months of life is loneliness. This kind of crying promptly stops when the infant is picked up and cuddled. Crying from physical need does not.

Disrupted attachments caused by death, illness, or separation severely affect children one to two years old. Upon meeting the mother after separation of ten days or more the child

may remain emotionally distant and detached for some time. When attachment behavior is finally resumed, the child is generally much more clinging. He apparently is afraid that he will lose his loved one and experience separation again.

Long-term effects of disrupted attachment are slowly being understood also. British psychologist John Bowlby has suggested that many psychological difficulties—including psychopathic personality and depression syndromes—seem to be associated with severe and long-lasting disruption of attachment. It seems highly likely that such disruption leads to chronic feelings of loneliness, as well.

Much additional research needs to be done to understand how to compensate for such disruptions that might be introduced by death, divorce, or out-of-home child care during childhood. In 1974, parents of more than one million children were divorced, and the figure is rising. The long-term effects of typical institutional child care, or shifting a child from one baby-sitter to another, need to be seriously explored.

Need for acceptance. A second developmental need, if chronic loneliness is to be avoided, is *parental acceptance*. Acceptance of a child is shown by (1) meeting basic needs without lengthy delays; (2) holding, caressing, and talking; (3) appropriate and nonharsh discipline; (4) spontaneous affection and mutual interaction, such as in play.

Negative feedback received from those who are most significant in the child's life forms a foundation of self-doubt and insecurity. The rejected child feels as though he's not good enough to be wanted by anybody. He is afraid to initiate interactions for fear of further rejection.

Persons with low self-esteem feel isolated and unlovable. They are less open interpersonally and more likely to have their feelings hurt. Either they assume that nobody would want anything to do with them because they don't have anything to offer, or they exaggerate who they think they are in ways that come out as interpersonally repelling.

Loneliness involves both the wanting of another and the experience of not being wanted by another.



The photos reproduced here (and at the beginning of the article on page 6) were taken by three THESE TIMES staff members (two from the art department and one from THESE TIMES editorial).

Their assignment was to portray loneliness with a camera and film. We thought you'd be interested in the results of their efforts.





The third factor important in understanding chronic loneliness is the *failure to acquire adequate social skills*. Children from homes with socially atypical interaction, children with low self-esteem, and those with disrupted attachments find it difficult to develop social skills necessary to form and maintain close relationships.

Results of rejection. Subsequent rejection by peers may cause the person to concentrate on the production and possession of things, rather than on relationships. Attempts to gain acceptance may focus on achievement and acquisition. The end result is further isolation and loneliness, because self-esteem based on social comparison is inevitably competitive.

Up to this point we have focused on conditions that are more individual-centered. We also need to look at sociological conditions that form the backdrop for a common socialization and living experience to explain the mass loneliness marking America today.

Within the American experience, *production and profit* have been major concerns. This has resulted in people's being valued on the basis of how efficient they are and what they can produce or contribute to an employer, a community, or society.

In addition, Americans value the things that give them comfort and that make living convenient. This valuing of efficiency, convenience, and comfort is carried over into human relationships, and these relationships inevitably become more superficial and shallow. Deep relationships take time, effort, and pain to develop.

Bureaucracy brings isolation.

Specialization decreases communication possibilities between persons who are not specialists in the same thing. Understanding decreases and loneliness increases. Along with specialization comes bureaucracy and impersonal norms. Interaction becomes depersonalized and prescribed according to roles and rules. People begin to feel as though no one really understands their situation and their personal needs.

In addition, *television* has fostered separation. There is little talk and vir-

tually no play between family members in millions of homes. Relationships inevitably deteriorate, if they were there in the first place. When this kind of noninteraction prevails in most of the 96 percent of American homes that have TV sets, massive loneliness is to be expected.

Further, some recent studies have shown that heavy TV viewers tend to have distorted pictures of social reality and are more distrustful, more fearful of others. Both advertising and program content tend to present interaction styles that promote interpersonal separation. Those who are rewarded are those who are the most sophisticated, scheming, unattached, competitive, and coolly ruthless. These are hardly the characteristics that establish deep, trusting relationships.

Urbanization also contributes heavily to society-wide loneliness. People are living physically closer together than ever before but seem to be more isolated and lonely. The urban environment introduces suspicion and reluctance to interact because it is difficult to know what the intentions of the other person are. Also, simply noticing other people is emotionally arousing. In midtown Manhattan, for example, there are potential contacts with more than 220,000 other people in a ten-minute radius.

In order to cope, people give less time to each interaction and establish highly impersonal norms. People are related to only when necessary, and then according to specific roles. Related to urbanization is widespread mobility. It has been estimated that forty million Americans change their residence once a year. The average person will move at least fourteen times during his lifetime. Between 1970 and 1975 almost half the people in America moved. Mobility tears up existing friendships and makes people more hesitant to try to develop new intimate relationships.

Finally, urbanization has facilitated a decreasing consensus of values. In addition to being highly secular, metropolitan areas are international centers. People from countries and cultures with widely varying values come together. Tolerance of the

Existential loneliness can never be fully overcome until God and the person are reconciled.

pluralism doesn't cover up the inability of people to understand one another at intimate levels of value commitment.

On the other hand, in America at least, there does seem to be agreement about the *Renaissance-derived values* of independence, individualism, freedom, and competitiveness. Unfortunately, the individualistic or freedom ethic creates a world of one, and the competition ethic fosters loneliness because of the suspicion and self-defense it generates.

A fundamental emptiness. Even under ideal developmental, biological, and sociological conditions, people experience loneliness. It may come at the point of crisis, in a moment of solitude, or at the point of considering one's death. Much of the current love affair between Americans and Eastern religions seems to reflect the desire to overcome existential loneliness by finding unity with the Divine.

An adequate understanding of existential loneliness begins in the Creation account. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'" (Genesis 1:26, RSV). God is interpersonal. The interpersonal nature of human beings is basic to being created in God's image. Further evidence of this is found when "the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (2:18, RSV). Loneliness reminds the human being of a fundamental emptiness in his life.


From the point that Adam and Eve chose to violate their relationship with God, they became self-centered and narcissistic. They blamed and became defensive. They were no longer able to communicate trustfully with one another on the deepest levels. Just judgment became perverted. The standard of judgment became the violation of self-centered personal rights, and the path toward emotional intimacy was marked by sensitivities and hurts.

God's answer to loneliness. The removal of God as the center of relationship was the precursor of today's secularization. In order to cope with sin,

without repentance, modern humanity has tried to get rid of God by pronouncing Him dead.

However, the irony is that the removal of God plunges secular man into the depths of loneliness and despair without remedy. Instead of turning to God in repentance and having life's most fundamental relationship restored, the secular person casts about for substitutes. Drugs, alcohol, sex, marathon encounter experiences become part of the search, as do countless semireligious, semi-psychological trips.

The person who denies his sin is consistently shocked by the selfishness of those he thought he could trust. Attempts to become transparent are frustrated when openness is met by hurts of misunderstanding and rejection. The essential of unconditional regard is humanly possible only within the confines of a carefully controlled, role-defined, therapeutic setting, or between nonintimates. The agape love of God that makes such an intimate union possible is foreign to the person who rejects God.

Ultimately, existential loneliness cannot be overcome until God and the person are reconciled. At the point of redemption and reconciliation we become the adopted children of God. We belong. In the ultimate act of overcoming loneliness God sends His own Spirit to be actually one with us by living in us. Because we don't lose our humanity we still need to experience belonging and understanding by others. However, even if that fails, we are not cast into utter panic and despair, as are those who do not have this sense of belonging. 

¹N. Bradburn, *The Structure of Psychological Well-being* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

²R. Maisel, *Report of the Continuing Audit of Public Attitudes and Concerns* (Harvard Medical School: Laboratory of Community Psychiatry, 1969, mimeographed). Cited in R. S. Weiss, ed., *Loneliness: The experience of emotional and social isolation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1973).

³H. Z. Lopata, "Loneliness: Forms and Components," *Social Problems*, 1969, 17(2), 248-261.

⁴R. S. Weiss, ed., *op. cit.*

⁵C. W. Ellison and R. Paloutzian, "Assessing Quality of Life: Spiritual Well-being and Loneliness." Paper presented at American Psychological Association annual meeting, Toronto, August 29, 1978.

⁶U. Bronfenbrenner, "The Roots of Alienation," in N. B. Talbot, ed., *Raising Children in Modern America* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1976).

⁷R. A. Spitz, "Hospitalism: An Inquiry Into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood," *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 1945, 1, 53-74.

⁸L. J. Yarrow, "The Development of Focused Relationships During Infancy," in J. Hellmuth, ed., *Exceptional Infant* (Seattle: Special Child Publications, 1967), Vol. 1.

DICK JEWETT

TODAY I had a look at a different kind of problem. Ellen, sixteen, and a high school junior, came in to visit and sort of get acquainted. She was positively vibrant in her glowing account of the family as I asked about her parents and brothers and sisters. You could tell in just a few minutes her genuine joy in family recollections and current family relationships. The father, a college professor, and a dynamic personality-plus mother created an atmosphere of love and freedom for the children to express themselves as individuals. All told, the children could reasonably be included in that select company "most likely to succeed."

I suspect Ellen will turn out all right. The problems she mentioned included things like not being able to get everything done she wanted to. And not having enough friends—close or otherwise. When I inquired about her grades, I discovered an almost perfect student. Yet she worried about her weight, which she complained was about five pounds too much.

I looked at Ellen with my eyes while my ears listened to what she was saying. What I saw differed from what I heard. How could this attractive young lady with an appealing personality, I asked myself, not have enough friends? And why would

A self-imposed straitjacket



being five pounds overweight bother her? And how could an A student not get enough done? I mean, how much better than A can you get?

Then she began to cry. Not with her voice. But her eyes welled up and began to spill quiet tears, catching me by surprise. Why the tears?

It had to relate to her family. We were talking about it when the tears came. But what? Some deep, dark skeleton in the closet? Some big interpersonal conflict or family communication problem? Further questioning only increased my quandary. She was so proud of her family that it seemed to hurt. Why? How are you supposed to help someone from a perfect home?

The light began to dawn slowly.

socially aggressive person. Nor will she probably choose her father's profession to carry on the family honors in that way. The way things now are, she will always feel unfulfilled or unsuccessful until or unless she "measures up" to the family pedigree. Which means she is trying to be as socially popular as her mother and as career-conscious as her father. It is tearing her apart to live up to two people so different from each other.

Because the home is such a good home, Ellen feels a success-compulsion. She feels duty bound to make her parents proud of her. I don't imagine her parents demand so much. They probably are unaware of the magnitude of the pressure Ellen has assumed and would want to be the first to comfort her with loving attention and assurance that they make no such demands, nor do they have unrealistic expectations regarding her future.

So what resolves the enigma?

How can we convince Ellen she is a successful person? Intelligent. Attractive. Has strong faith in God. Has, in fact, everything going for her—*unless she spoils it by trying to become someone who will always be a stranger to her.*

At some point in this adolescent crisis Ellen has to realize she is a beautiful blend of her mother and father. Thus she doesn't have to become like either of them. It is not a denial of filial loyalty. Rather more likely a complement. Each parent can with loving joy realize that in their marriage they have truly become "one" in the merged reflections of themselves they can see in the beautiful and talented daughter. And the daughter is thus free to be what no one else has been: the one-of-a-kind Ellen!



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Those wishing to submit youth-oriented problems or problem situations for possible inclusion in this column, or for a personal response, please write to Dick Jewett, THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, TN 37202.

NEWS

Nearly half of children from one-parent homes

SOME 45 percent of children born last year in the U.S. may live part of their childhood with only one parent because of the rising divorce rate, according to a Census Bureau prediction.

Census analysts Paul Glick and Arthur Norton said 43 percent of black youngsters are already growing up in one-parent households. Their predictions appeared in the current issue of *American Demographics* magazine.

Because of the high divorce rate in the overall population, "we have estimated that 45 percent of all children born in 1978 will become members of one-parent families, for a while at least, before they reach the age of eighteen years, if present circumstances continue," they said. "That is indeed a very large minority and the subject of concern for many about the potential damage to children and future society."

Men's liberation next, family expert predicts

A professor of family studies at Purdue University has predicted that the women's liberation movement will be succeeded by a men's liberation movement. Dr. Wallace Denton, who also directs the Marriage and Family Counseling Center at Purdue, made the prediction at the seminar on family life held in Orlando, Florida, by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I expect men to become increasingly aware of the ways they need liberating," he said. "In fact, I think we could mount some rather cogent arguments to the effect that men need liberating as much as women—and more so in some areas. The culture has burdened us down with heavy loads of what it means to be a man—emotionally,

financially, sexually, physically, psychologically. Most of these expectations ultimately doom us to a sense of failure."

The family specialist asserted that "a two-fisted world has never appreciated the compassionate, gentle,

patient, weeping Jesus. Somehow He comes across as weak and effeminate. . . . Perhaps this new and liberated generation of men will achieve a level of masculinity that Jesus achieved two thousand years ago."



Jewish cemeteries vandalized in New York

Some three hundred tombstones lie toppled at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Flushing, New York, following recent overnight vandalism at the Jewish burial ground.

Following similar incidents

later at other Jewish cemeteries in New York City, police have announced that helicopters equipped with powerful searchlights are now patrolling the graveyards each night.

Moscow permits printing of 20,000 Bibles

Soviet authorities have now given the permission for the production of twenty thousand Bibles and twenty-five thousand hymnals in Russia. According to Alexej Bichkov (Moscow), general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, who telephoned the news to the executive committee of the European Baptist Federation, the Bible in the Soviet Union is "more popular than ever" among both Christians and non-Christians.

He said he was trying to get permission for the production of one million Bibles. In late 1978 the United Bible Societies had legally shipped twenty-five thousand Bibles and five thousand concordances to the Soviet Union at the initiative of the Russian Evangelical Christians-Baptists. According to the institute East West Information Center, all those buying a Bible have to register at the local authorities. Russian Christians estimate that altogether about 70 million Bibles are needed.

Missionaries restricted in Peru and Columbia

New and proposed visa limitations in Peru and Colombia could cripple missionary activities there. The Peruvian government ruled in January that evangelical missions can't increase their number of missionaries and that new visas will be approved only for missionary replacements on a one-to-one basis. Now Colombia has announced plans to actually reduce the number of missionaries there by giving only one new visa for every two missionaries who leave the country.

Abortions worldwide number 30 million

More than 30 million legal abortions are performed worldwide each year, with more than one million of them in the U.S., according to a report by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, an affiliate of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court ruling liberalizing abortion, more than five million U.S. women have obtained legal abortions in 3,000 cities, hospitals, and physicians' offices, the report said.

The number of legal abortions in the U.S. has increased from about 745,000 in 1973 to 1.3 million in 1977. In recent years U.S. women have terminated almost three out of ten pregnancies by abortion.

"U.S. women obtain legal abortions at a somewhat higher rate than women in Canada and Western European countries," the Guttmacher report said, "but at a considerably lower rate than do women in Cuba, Japan, the Soviet Union, and most Eastern European countries."

Marijuana use expanding rapidly

"A University of Michigan study indicates that marijuana may become a permanent recreational drug. More young people now use it, fewer associate detrimental effects with its use, and fewer now disapprove of its use," reports *USA Today* (February). The ongoing study, which annually surveys seventeen thousand high school seniors across the country reports, "By 1977, 56 percent of the high school seniors had at least tried marijuana, an increase of about 9 percent over the three years." Some



Turin shroud researchers meet to exchange information

The U.S. team of researchers who made detailed tests on the Shroud of Turin during its exhibition last October held a two-day meeting in Santa Barbara, California, but refused to

other findings of the University's Institute for Social Research:

- The majority of high school seniors claim their personal use (or nonuse) of marijuana would be unaffected by decriminalization.
- Regular marijuana use receives disapproval from about the same proportion as the regular use of alcohol and cigarettes.
- About 36 percent of the seniors report having used a drug other than marijuana without medical supervision. Stimulants (used by one in four students) were most popular, followed by tranquilizers (one in five), sedatives (one in six), hallucinogens (one in seven), inhalants and cocaine (each tried by one in ten), and heroin (tried by one in fifty).
- About 20 percent of both sexes are active daily smokers by the end of high school. The majority of seniors (60 percent), however, still feel that smoking carries a great risk, and over 40 percent

disclose any findings. The scientists had agreed earlier not to discuss any preliminary findings until after all the tests are completed and a final report prepared. This is expected to take about a year.

Ken Stevenson, an IBM data processor from New Orleans and spokesman for the research team, said, "There is a strong sense that we're dealing with a potential impact that is incredible." The Shroud of Turin is believed to be the linen in which Jesus was wrapped after He was taken off the cross. The cloth bears the back and front image of a man fitting the Gospel description of Jesus at His death. (See *THESE TIMES* article in May issue for more details.)

believe smoking in public places should be prohibited by law.

Family is "basic place to stand," says First Lady

Declaring that providing help for families "may well be the most significant service" that churches, the state, or individuals can render in our time, First Lady Rosalynn Carter called on Christians to "meet the challenge" facing the family.

In a telephoned address to the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission in Orlando, Florida, she noted that the nation "is being altered in unprecedented ways," including international instability, economic uncertainty, and the specter of nuclear war. "In all this tumult," she said, "the family alone provides the basic place to stand."

Mrs. Carter said that in spite of the demands on her own and her husband's time since he decided to seek the

Presidency, "we have tried to create spaces for our children. We've tried to give our children a sense of stability and belonging. We are a close family."

United Presbyterians losing seminarians to other schools

Increasing pressure on candidates for the ministry to attend United Presbyterian seminaries is causing serious debate in that denomination. Presently 45 percent of United Presbyterian seminarians now attend non-Presbyterian schools, particularly Gordon-Conwell and Fuller. The recent Report on Pluralism presented to the 1978 United Presbyterian General Assembly predicted that "unless there is a significant change in enrollment patterns, within ten years the majority of United Presbyterian clergy will be graduates of non-Presbyterian seminaries" (*Evangelical Newsletter*, March 23, 1979).

Six Christian women honored

Six women have been selected as "living Christian heroes worthy of recognition" by the editors of *Interchurch Features*, an informal association of nine U.S. and Canadian church publications. The women are Mother Theresa, Dorothy Day, Barbara Ward, Corrie ten Boom, Lee Tai-Young, and Annie Jagge. They were selected from a list of more than fifty women who have made a marked effect on the world through their faith in God.

An article "Six women: Images of Christ" has been prepared as a joint effort by *Interchurch Features* and was offered for simultaneous appearance in the April issue of member publications. ☉

Child abuse: it happens in the best of homes

Child abuse, experts claim, is the major killer of youngsters under five in our country. Here's how you can detect its occurrence and halt its progress—before it's too late.

by Laura Hayes Gladson



HEADLINES across the state carried Marsha's* name. A policeman who was called to the Brown home early in the morning found a nude female about four years old lying dead on a pallet that had been soaked with water. Arrest, trial, and conviction of murder followed quickly for Marsha's mother and stepfather.

According to the court records, the stepfather had become angry when Marsha had asked for a drink of water. He beat her brutally, then gave her a drink—a fiery mixture containing Tabasco sauce and hot pepper. After further mistreatment, the child was stripped of her clothes and made to sleep on the floor. The man responded to her continued pleas for a drink of water by pouring water over her.

During the night Marsha died from shock and exposure.

Mrs. Brown had sat watching, taking no steps to prevent her husband. Both had been convicted of abusing Marsha before. In fact, he had served time in jail for it. Yet, in spite of this, the courts had ordered Marsha removed from her foster home and returned to her parents.

This tragedy typifies what is happening in today's society. Marsha's death prompted an investigation into the state's procedures with abused children. The number of children taken into that state's custody alone rose from 19,000 in 1976 to 27,000 in 1977.

These startling figures certainly should not surprise us. For one reason, reporting is more accurate today. People admit more readily this type of offense than they did a few years ago. Child abuse is coming out of the closet! More people have become aware that many children are endangered both physically and emotionally by their parents or relatives, and that accounts for some of the increase in reports.

Experts close to the problem admit that child abuse has dramatically increased in recent years. The number

of cases in the United States is currently thought to range from a low of 700,000 to a high of 4 or 5 million a year; a more realistic calculation is that 1.6 million children are abused each year, and 2,000 of these die.

Definition of *abuse* might differ from one person to another, since society generally accepts physical punishment for disobedient children. But any injury requiring medical treatment is certainly outside the range of normal correcting of a child. "Any punishment that involves hitting with a closed fist or an instrument, kicking, inflicting burns, or throwing the child obviously represents child abuse regardless of the severity of the injury sustained as a result," state Drs. Margaret McNeese and Joan Hebel in *Clinical Symposia* (Vol. 29, No. 5, 1977).

Doctors and nurses in emergency rooms are more knowledgeable and alert today to the typical signs of the battered child. Injuries that do not fit the given explanations—old bruises, odd-shaped burns such as those from a cigarette, X rays showing old fractures—all wave a red flag to medical personnel. Present laws require that any suspicious case be reported to the police.

One mother brought her three-year-old girl to the hospital to have a broken arm set. The child had fallen from her crib, the mother insisted, but X rays exposed a spiral fracture, one resulting from twisting the arm. Additional evidence pointed to abuse, but the mother still kept custody of the little girl. Eventually, in a fit of unreasoning anger at the child's frightened crying, she smothered it.

Society had failed that child.

Some agencies estimate that parents kill more children than do leukemia, cerebral palsy, or other diseases. Indeed, child abuse is "the major killer of youngsters under five in this country," affirms Judith Crist in *TV Guide* (October 1-7, 1977, p. 9).

In a three-hour period the United States will experience 159 robberies. But in that same period of time, more than 340 cases of child abuse and neglect will occur. No longer limited to racial or economic groups, this crime cuts through every strata of society. Upper-middle-class parents are just

as likely to abuse their child as the poor family in the ghetto.

Neglect is yet another way in which children suffer. Headlines in a paper read "Dead Boy 1 of 6 Malnourished" (*The Index-Journal*, Greenwood, South Carolina, November 26, 1977). A six-year-old boy died in the hospital, "all skin and bone," one of six youngsters who apparently had been fed little more than a salt solution for at least a month. Police said the children may have been victims of a religious rite to ward off demons.

While thousands of children in our country suffer from physical neglect, no one can compute the large numbers who grow up without love. Not only are they themselves deprived, but they in turn cannot give love to their own children. The husband and wife beaters and the child abusers grew up, in most cases, in unloving or violent homes.

Still another type of cruelty—verbal abuse—while not physically apparent, scars children for life. Many parents express horror at the shocking reports of physical abuse but inflict verbal damage upon their children without giving it a second thought. Comments such as, "You'll never amount to anything," "You can't do anything right," "Why are you so stupid?" leave a child stunned and with a poor self-image. Many people remember their parents' negative remarks much more often than their positive ones. A hand may never be raised against a child, yet he cringes defenselessly from a vicious tongue and angry words.

For every reported case of physical assault in 1975, there were two instances of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse refers to any sexual activity between an adult and a child. Such victims are most frequently the school-age or adolescent girl. Some place this crime as high as 300,000 cases a year, though incest and sexual abuse are concealed much more than other offenses. Dr. Larry Brown of the Colorado-based American Humane Association says that incest is virtually a closeted institution in the United States: "*I think that fathers who fool around with daughters are the number one child abusers of our time*" (*The Index-Journal*, November 26, 1977, italics supplied).

*All names have been changed.

Laura Gladson, Collegedale, Tennessee, is a family and marriage counselor, housewife, and mother of two children. © 1979 by Laura Hayes Gladson.



Some agencies estimate that parents kill more children than do leukemia, cerebral palsy, or other diseases.



Understanding why. I could continue to cite case after case with all the gory details, but I think we all realize that child abuse in its varied forms does exist to a terrifying degree in this country. Admitting a fact is one step, understanding the "whys" and learning how to stop it are next. We must go beyond the fact.

Research has shown that most abusive parents are the victims of an abused childhood. They may have never learned better ways of handling frustrations. As adults they are often insecure in their job, marriage, or relationships with other people; frustrations build up, and the children receive the brunt of their parents' emotions. Resentment against an estranged spouse can explode with abuse to the children.

Parental expectations too high for the child or inconsistent with his developmental age cause many instances of abuse. For example, one mother expected her *eight-month-old infant* to understand verbal commands to be toilet trained and to be quiet. When the baby did not "obey,"

she viewed the behavior as intentional disobedience and punished it.

During the recession of 1975 reported cases of child abuse rose significantly, especially in areas where unemployment skyrocketed. Loss of a job and financial worries can cause an individual to lose control of himself and strike a child, when he wouldn't think of doing so otherwise.

Bobby became one of the statistics. His mother's boyfriend beat him so badly he died. The man stood trial and received only eleven months and twenty-nine days of imprisonment. Just how much is a human life worth, especially if it belongs to a defenseless child?

Misunderstanding of a child's behavior can, in some instances, lead to child abuse. Dr. Albert Gary, psychologist, recently described three separate cases in which children were beaten, one to the extent of needing hospitalization. In each instance, the parents tried to alter or stop the child's bizarre or hyperactive behavior by spanking. The punishment only aggravated its behavior, which led in

turn to more severe beating.

Each set of parents were advised, with the next episode of such behavior, to show love and affection to the child. The undesirable behavior diminished as a result. Psychological testing and subsequent medication soon had all three children under control. The parents, once they recognized the behavior was not directed toward them, learned to cope and thus to give the children the security of affection they needed.

I hesitate to use the word *average* in reference to child abusers, for each person is different. Most people sincerely love their children. They experience deep guilt and are baffled by their inability to control their feelings. They realize they need help but either do not know where to seek it or hesitate to admit their need.

Still others refuse to ask for help because of their social position, a reason for fewer reported incidences in middle- and upper-class societies. They have more to lose by the admission, besides having the means to cover up their actions.

What happens when you report? A concerned individual came to me about some neighbors. The father, a leader in their church, repeatedly beat his three children severely. In fact, the Human Services Department had questioned the children but had been forced to drop the case for lack of evidence. The children refused to talk, for their father had threatened: "If you tell, I'll kill you!" The mother refused to do anything, fearing to damage the father's standing in the community and the church.

I advised the individual that under most state laws he was responsible to report any suspected child abuse. Failure to do so could result in a fine or imprisonment. States protect the confidentiality and immunity of the one reporting.

The juvenile courts, police departments, and Human Services departments work together in handling any reports. Contrary to the belief of many, they do *not* automatically snatch the child from his parents unless there is a real danger to his life. Being separated from people he knows adds to the trauma of mistreatment.

The goal of these agencies is to preserve the family unit. Aid can take the form of temporary financial help, professional counseling and testing, or advice on family budgeting. At times agencies assign a temporary homemaker to the home to ease the pressure on the mother until she is able to cope. The most effective aid for the child is to relieve the family stress and to rehabilitate the family.

Obviously the state becomes involved in the severe cases in order to protect the child. The borderline or hard-to-prove situations, however, are of concern also. Drs. McNeese and Hebeler report: "The consequences in families who do not receive support are dire: To date, abuse recurs in approximately 50 percent of cases when intervention is not instituted. In 35 percent of these cases, a child will be severely injured or killed" (*Clinical Symposium*, XXIX, 1977, 3).

Some studies suggest an increased amount of abuse in several groups: families with financial problems, members of fundamentalist religious groups or other people who believe that God expects them to vigorously punish their children that they may be raised correctly, and personnel on military bases. While the Bible certainly contains admonitions for a certain amount of discipline, we must place beside them the commands to love one another. "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged," says Paul, in Colossians 3:21, Revised Standard Version.

Anger, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy, resentment, disappointment—all are common to each of us. Throughout life, we seek better ways of handling situations and coping with life. A child should not have to suffer from his parents' emotional upsets.

Marsha Brown is dead. Nothing can change that.

All the money flowing into the Marsha Brown Memorial Fund won't bring her back to life. Nevertheless, future tragedies wait to be enacted. Whether we are concerned citizens, interested neighbors, or potential abusive parents, the responsibility of preventing further atrocities belongs to each one of us.



How to stop abusing your child

WHAT DOES A PERSON do when he realizes that he is an abusive parent? The following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Admit that you have abused your child. Sometimes the acknowledging helps in itself. Realize that you are not alone in this, but you must take steps to stop.

2. Ask forgiveness. Go to your child if he is old enough to understand. Try to explain your actions. Wounds will heal if you dress them with love. From Scripture you know you have forgiveness the moment you ask for it. "If we confess our sins, he is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong" (1 John 1:9, NEB*).

3. Prayer and meditation will do wonders for your spirit—and your child's. Some time alone each day with God gives an inner peace. You will become calm where once you reacted violently. "Righteousness shall yield peace and its fruit be quietness and confidence for ever" (Isaiah 32:17, 18, NEB).

4. New values. An active, sincere religious life will bring you a deeper sense of value, both before God and in fellowship with others of like belief.

5. Ask for help! If your child is driving you up the wall and you fear you will lose control, call an understanding friend or relative. Or get a baby-sitter while you get away from the situation for a while.

6. Parents Anonymous, set up along the lines of Alcoholics Anonymous, is designed for parents who have abused their children. Among the warm group support, you can exchange suggestions and take courage that you can change.

7. Talk to your minister, rabbi, or priest, and ask for his sympathetic encouragement as you start a new life.

8. See a professional counselor or psychologist, especially if abuse resulted in serious injury or death. You **must** seek professional assistance if sexual abuse has been involved.

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DON'T BLAME GOD

The father, his eyes brimming with tears, stood on the empty beach and wondered how God could take the life of an eighteen-year-old son who had so much for which to live. **by Judie Noorbergen**

THE BEACH at first seemed void of any living thing. Nothing moved except a tiny flickering beam of light that steadily flashed from a lighthouse far out in the ocean. Even the wispy blades of grass that grew out of the sand stood still. A bright full moon hung low in the sky, and its shimmering rays pierced through a multitude of little clouds, shining down on the black

waters below. Shadows from the summer cottages at the brow of the beach spread across the sand like misshapen fingers, enveloping everything in their path.

A lone figure of a man could be seen silhouetted against the crisp April sky. Motionless, with misty eyes, he stared out at the deep, mysterious water, searching for answers, for reasons—for anything that would lighten the burden of his soul. The waves roared in and seemed to shake the whole shoreline, causing tiny pebbles to

snap up in the air and fall back in the sand. It was as if an invisible hand guided each and every wave as it thundered onto the shore and ebbed slowly to meet the frothy curl of the next oncoming breaker.

But no matter its power, the precision of the raging surf could not blot out the thoughts racing through his mind . . . the thought of seeing only hours before the lifeless body of his teenage boy lying cold and alone on the sand.

David, drowned while experimenting with an aqualung, was an eighteen-year-old boy, handsome, sweet tempered, full of love, with the challenges of life just ahead of him. His father had looked down at the body of his dead son that afternoon, and in anguish had cried out, "Why, why did this have to happen? Why have you been taken away from me when you had so

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much to live for?"

A young priest, hastily summoned to the scene, had supplied an answer. "It is God's will," he blurted out, placing a reassuring hand on his shoulder. "You must understand; it is God's will."

The distraught father, his face distorted with grief and anger, raised his eyes to the sky and shouted, "God, if You could do this, if You could take my only son from me, then I don't want any part of You! Ever!"

The beach lay empty now.

Everyone had gone. And he was alone—his heart heavy, eyes brimming with tears. As he stood trying to collect his thoughts, he remembered playing on that very shoreline fifty years ago as a child. Later, because of an overwhelming passion for the sea, he had joined

the coast guard and climbed through the ranks from boatswain's mate to commander of a ship that patrolled from Greenland in the North Atlantic to the Massachusetts coast. He loved the ocean, but look how it had rewarded his devotion!

Hiding his face in his hands, he found his thoughts racing ahead to the twenty-mile drive to Boston and his home, where his wife awaited his return.

"How can I tell her that our son, our wonderful son, is dead? How will she understand that his drowning was the will of God?"

The truth. But *was* it God's will? That is precisely the misguided and erroneous idea Satan wishes us to accept. "He [Satan] will bring trouble upon others," comments Ellen G. White, "and lead men to believe that it is God who is afflicting them. . . . In accidents and

calamities by sea and land, . . . Satan is exercising his power" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 589, 590).

We must realize that this earthbound master of deception with all his cunning and cruelty has claimed this planet as his own, but his proprietorship is only a temporary one. God has not forgotten us. And even though at the moment He must permit Satan to vent his fury on the earth, we know as Christians that our Lord is of tender mercy.

"His heart of love is touched by our sorrows," counsels E. G. White, "and even by our utterances of them. . . . Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul,

no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 100).

But God, inexhaustibly patient with His children, must have rejoiced when one day many years after the accident, while David's mother was reminiscing with a friend about the good times she had had with her son, she suddenly recalled an incident that jolted her into a stark realization of the true force behind the drowning of her only son.

Two months prior to his death she had received an excited phone call from her sister-in-law.

"I know a woman who tells fortunes!" Eleanor exclaimed. "She's the best. Everyone says so. Come on, Marjorie," she insisted. "Let's go see her!"

Reluctantly she agreed.

Together they located the fortune-teller in a rundown office building in Boston. Eager to hear what the divinator would predict for her future, Eleanor decided to be first. Laughingly she emerged a short time later from a small office.

"It's your turn now, Marjorie," she urged. "Go on in; she's waiting for you," and she gently shoved her through the doorway of a sparsely furnished, dimly lit room.

Seated behind a wooden desk was a sallow-faced, bespectacled woman, who in silence motioned Marjorie to sit down in the chair opposite her. With long slender fingers, she began to lovingly caress the crystal ball directly in front of her.

After the fee changed hands, she lowered her head over the glistening orb and furrowed her eyebrows in deep concentration. The stillness of the room was nearly overpowering, and what were mere minutes seemed like hours to Marjorie. Suddenly without warning the woman jerked upright in her chair, her face twisted, and from her mouth came a low moan, which gradually became louder and louder.

"Oh, no!" she wailed mournfully. "It's horrible, so horrible. I see water . . . lots of water . . . and Easter lilies." Her body became rigid. "I can't tell you any more. Leave me now," she shrieked. "Leave! Leave! . . . Please!"

Visibly shaken and confused,

Satan's goal is for the Christian to blame God for all his troubles and eventually to give up his faith.

Marjorie bolted from her chair and quickly fled the room.

This nightmarish incident was all but forgotten until that afternoon years later, when the mist surrounding her son's tragic death on *Easter Sunday* suddenly lifted, and for the first time it became clear that *Satan*—not God—had taken her son from her. Knowing of the family's weekend trips to the Cape, he had planned the drowning. Then made it happen!

Explaining the influence of Satan in the affairs of man, Ellen White has often pointed out that "all the woe that has resulted, he charges upon the Creator, leading men to look upon God as the author of sin, and suffering, and death" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 24). And because it is the natural inclination of humanity to blame God for our misfortunes and suffering, the prince of darkness is quick to step in and use our human frailty to his advantage through the aid of the psychics, fortune-tellers, and mediums.

He is ensnaring multitudes through the lure of spiritualism and "its pretended power to draw aside the veil from the future and reveal to men what God has hidden. God has in His word opened before us the great events of the future—all that it is essential for us to know—and He has given us a safe guide for our feet amid all its perils; but it is Satan's purpose to destroy men's confidence in God, to make them dissatisfied with their condition in life, and to lead them to seek a knowledge of what God has wisely veiled from them" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 686, 687).

Satan's goal is for the follower of God to become so discouraged that he will blame God for all his troubles and eventually give up his faith.

It happened to David's father. Unable to overcome his grief, he secured an immediate transfer to Miami in an effort to eradicate the

painful memories of that tragic day. But he remained nevertheless an embittered and dispirited man until the summer of 1976 when he was rushed to a hospital with what later became a terminal disease. Lying in bed with ample time to analyze and recall both his accomplishments and shortcomings, he began to think of God and the guiding role He plays in our lives.

"Do you think there is anything to all this Christianity?" he queried a faithful visitor. "Do you really believe all those things written in the Bible?"

The apostle Paul writes, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3), and this is precisely what God gave to David's father that evening. And he received it. The power of the Holy Spirit slowly began His re-creative work in his life, and His presence was evident, for one day he said, "Tell me more about Christ."

In the ensuing conversations throughout the following weeks, he began to realize after twenty-two years that there was indeed a loving God who was "abundant in goodness" and who cared for His children.

One day, late in the afternoon as his visitor was leaving the hospital room, he called him back and softly, yet somewhat hesitantly, asked, "Will you pray for me?"

The bitterness was gone, and I am sure all was forgiven.

Six days later the coast guard cutter *Shoal Water* slowly moved out of Miami harbor. Its destination: a specific area beyond the three-mile limit. On board lay a steel, lead-weighted casket bearing the body of my father, Lieutenant Commander Gordon P. Hammond. His last request was to be buried in the ocean he loved and had sailed for twenty-seven years. I carried out his final wish and stayed with him until the sea, that once had been so cruel to him, embraced him lovingly.

There, on the ocean floor, he now rests peacefully, until in that great day of the Lord the sea and earth will give up their dead, and my father and brother will be reunited in a land where God will wipe away all tears and where there will be no more death, sorrow, crying, or pain.

I long for that day.

JUNE STRONG

THIS YEAR I turned fifty. I thought forty was the dividing line between youth and age, but now I know it is not. It's only a pleasant plain between the flower-filled meadows of thirty and the bouldered wilderness of fifty. My hair is graying at the edges (there's no time in my busy schedule for sitting around at the hairdressers with purple goo trickling down my forehead, though I envy the results). My neck has wrinkles, and when I sit too long my joints rebel at any sudden movement.

Once in a while someone I went to school with dies. That startles me a bit.

Yes, I feared my fiftieth birthday settling over me like a threadbare old cape from which I struggled to be free. But a few months have passed, and surprisingly, I'm getting used to its scratchy texture.

I can still work hard, but just not quite as long as I used to. Those fourteen-hour days are gone forever. To be honest, I never cared much for them anyhow.

I can't jog, as do some of my contemporaries, at least not very far, but I *can* walk, briskly and endlessly, over hill and dale. Always could. I no longer care that I've never hiked in the Himalayas or seen Paris in the spring. I know there's more beauty in the five-mile square I circuit on foot or bicycle than I can absorb in a lifetime. Enough beauty, in fact, in a stalk of Queen Anne's lace to last me for many a mile.

Fifty candles on my cake!



Sometimes at social gatherings I find myself working hard at being the gracious lady—smiling and chatting, holding things together. Lately I dare to believe that it is not my duty to solve *everything*, that I do not always have to pick up the dropped stitches of every situation. So I relax and am still and listen. It is restful. (Perhaps my friends will say a hearty amen to that!) It has taken me fifty years to stop trying to please everyone in every circumstance—one of the pluses of growing older.

Age has also taught me I cannot be responsible for my children's mistakes any more

than I am responsible for their successes. I have given them all I have to give, and I love them. Out of the scraps of their childhoods they must build their own life-styles, separate and free of me. And I must learn to be separate from them—maybe the most difficult lesson of my life.

And just as I am learning to be separate from my children, I am also learning that I *cannot* be separate from God. For years I have struggled with sin—or, more specifically, with *sins*. I have known temporary progress, only to have the bitterness of failure overtake me again and again. I have tried, with little success, to *make myself* ready for heaven. In the process I

have shed tears of despair and shaken my fists in frustration. *How come I can't control my own actions?* (Paul said it differently: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?")

At last, I have given up. I have said to God, "I give to You my power of decision, my motives, my ambitions, my appetite, my emotions, my desires. *You* run my life." Ah, what rest! For thirty years I'd thought "dying to self" meant struggling with one's sins, while all the time it only meant teaching "self" to *stand back* while God struggled with the sins. A little plant called *faith* has shot up out of this new experience, and I'm nurturing it more tenderly than any houseplant. It seems to thrive on prayer and Bible study.

Finally, I'm becoming able to look at myself more objectively. I read a little book which described the four types of human beings and found I fit perfectly into the melancholic slot. It said some nice things about this type of person, and then it listed the less nice characteristics.

For instance, the melancholic temperament is critical and hard to get along with. *Hard to get along with? Me?* That's what the book said. And the rest of the description fit so well that I could not in honesty cross off this ugly indictment. It's very humbling to be labeled "hard to get along with." I shall keep it in mind as I head into the last half of life.

Yes, you heard me right. I'm aiming for one hundred or the return of Christ, whichever comes first. And with God at the helm, I'm looking forward to every minute.



June Strong, of Batavia, New York, is a lecturer and author of the books "Journal of a Happy Woman," "Mindy," and "Where Are We Running?" She enjoys people, writing, gardening, and sewing.

Illustration by Tim Adams

The Fatherhood of God

How can the omnipotent God of the universe also be Father to earth's millions of inhabitants? by Gerald Wheeler

BETTY ATKINS scanned the display of greeting cards, her gaze pausing at the "Father" section. Smiling at the woods scene on one card, she opened it to read the verse inside. Memories of long-lost summers tumbled through her mind like racing puppies. She remembered her father taking her and her sister on walks through the nearby patches of woods that still defied the encroaching subdivisions. Betty's mother had fixed the two girls little lunches, and their father took them by the hand to find a pleasant spot for a picnic. Now he took her children for walks among the trees on their country property.

George Matterly brushed past Betty at the card rack. His glance swept past the word *father*. He was not interested in greeting cards for a father. He had never known one. His had deserted his family shortly after George's birth. A father was something other children had. The longing for one had died years ago, and the word above the rack of cards meant nothing to him now.

As Betty Atkins waited at the checkout, Ron Samuels fidgeted behind her. He noticed the word *Father* on her card and unconsciously grimaced. *Father*: the word held no happy connotations for him. Thoughts of fear and pain and hatred and physical abuse nibbled at the edges of his memory. He angrily thrust them away. The

scars of childhood always ache.

Three people—three different reactions—three different concepts of a father.

What is a father? What is he like?

The disciples once asked Christ what His Father was like. "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied," Philip said (John 14:8*). Christ's followers, like so many human beings, had a misconception of the Father. Like Ron Samuels, many thought of Him as a cruel tyrant. They viewed God as a being of bloodshed and unbending justice.

Sadly Christ replied, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9).

The early Christian church continued to struggle for an understanding of the Father's character. Marcion, a heretic of the second century, reacted so strongly against the way he felt the Old Testament portrayed God that he rejected what he called the inferior Creator-God. Discarding the writings of the Old Testament and much of the New, he set up his own Bible. It consisted of the epistles of Paul and a gospel patterned after Luke. To counteract Marcion's heresy, the Christian church began emphasizing the Fatherhood of God in its developing creeds.

Even today many Christians feel uncomfortable with the Father. They mentally contrast the Gospel picture of a loving, kind Jesus with the Old

Testament descriptions of God. The Old Testament portrait of God they find hard to reconcile with the New Testament image of Jesus. They have no fear of praying about their problems and troubles to Jesus. But they are not sure of how the Father would react to their prayers. Yet Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9).

The Fatherhood of God was one of Christ's greatest themes.

Throughout the Gospels we find Him constantly stressing it. The Gospels mention God as Father twice as many times as the rest of the New Testament. The Book of John alone contains over one hundred references to the Father.

But Christ did not introduce a new doctrine. God's role as Father of His people also appears in the Old Testament (see Deuteronomy 1:31; 8:5; 14:1; 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7; 103:13; Isaiah 1:2; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:6; 3:17). God talked of His people in the language of the parent-child relationship: of rearing and bringing them up, of disciplining them, and of pitying them. The Lord told David to cry to Him, "'Thou art my Father'" (Psalm 89:26).

Unfortunately, the Jews had concentrated on the sterner side of the father-child relationship and had forgotten that a father is also loving and protecting. They had let their experience with imperfect, sometimes cruel and thoughtless, human fathers color their image of the heavenly Father. Christ had to

Gerald Wheeler, associate book editor at Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee, is author of "The Two-Tailed Dinosaur," "Is God a Committee?" "God's Catalogue of Gifts," "Who Put the Worm in the Apple?" and "Deluge." © 1979 by Gerald Wheeler.

* All Bible quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

show the Father as One who tenderly cares for His newborn infant or toddler. He demonstrated affection toward children (Mark 10:13-16).

Christ presented the Father as a God of love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus' whole life exemplified love, and all that He did fulfilled His Father's loving will (John 5:30). That is, whatever Christ did, the Father would have done had He physically been there on earth.

God is approachable. Jesus also reminded man that he could confidently approach the Father. God the Father was not stern, impatient, with His children, ready to find fault with them at the slightest opportunity. Rather, He was always accessible. In the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) Jesus taught us to come to the Father with our needs and requests. Our heavenly Father anxiously awaits and listens for our petitions.

A human father feels great joy when his children happily come to him to meet some need. The divine Father also wishes to bestow good things upon us (Matthew 7:11; John 16:23). Unlike some human parents, God is not distant and unconcerned about us. He seeks to be close to each of His children. Our relationship with Him should be as intimate—even more so—than that between a human father and child.

The Saviour stressed the fact that we should relate to the Father as a

child to a loving parent. In Mark 14:36 He addressed God as "Abba, Father." *Abba* is a transliteration of an Aramaic word used in intimate address, perhaps similar to the modern English "Daddy." It was not flippant, but revealed great love and trust between the Father and the Son. Paul employed the word in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6 to depict the intimate relationship of the Father and the Christian through Christ.

Christ held up His relationship with His Father as the example of the kind His followers should have with the Father and with each other. He prayed "that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:11) and "that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (verse 23). The human father plays with his children, participates in their activities. God the Father wants to be just as immersed in our lives.

A Father in two ways. God is our Father in one sense because He created us. Hence He is the Father even of those who reject Him (Matthew 5:45). Sin caused a change in man. We rebelled against our divine Father and chose another, Satan (John 8:44). We need to be reborn into the family of God. Thus God is our Father also through re-creation—through the process of spiritual rebirth. As Christ said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). To some who had not been born anew, He stated, "If God were your Father, you would love me" (John

8:42). God was not the Pharisees' Father because they had not experienced spiritual rebirth and thus refused to accept Christ as their Elder Brother.

By believing in Christ we become children of God. "But to all who received him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12). God adopts us and we receive the Holy Spirit. "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:15-17). Such adoption is possible because Christ redeemed us (Galatians 4:5-7).

Those who have become sons of God will reflect the Father's likeness just as a human child exhibits character traits of the parent (Matthew 5:16; Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2). As the world had the opportunity to see the Father through the Son (John 14:9), so it should observe both reflected in the Christian's life.

Humanity has either not known the divine Father as George Matherly never knew his human one, or it has formed a distorted conception such as Ron Samuels had of his parent. But to the Christian the word *father* can evoke the same kind of response of love that Betty Atkins had toward her father. Her father took her on little picnics in the woods near her childhood home. Our heavenly Father will one day invite us to sit down with Him at a banquet in heaven with God's children of all times (Matthew 8:11).



How to teach moral values to children under three

The two keys to teaching Christian values to young children are proper parental examples and the development of decision-making skills.

by James R. Becraft

CALL HIM JOEY. He's blond. A bit short. Muscular, athletic—very handsome. He's two-and-a-half-years old. Joey's an adorable child. At least his parents think so. Besides, he's well behaved—their opinion.

What makes such a child lovable—and well behaved?

It's obvious. "Us," say his parents. "We gave him his genes. We provide the training. He's ours, and we've got a good program of child training going."

A big challenge, however, they realize, is to keep that program going.

But whether they realize it or not, to a great extent they have *already* taught and bequeathed to him the values and attitudes that will benefit—or plague—him his entire life.

Powerful words. Powerful truths, according to experts in child development, who increasingly stress the importance of prenatal, neonatal, and infant stages of child development as crucial not only to the child's physical development but also to his or her overall pattern of values, attitudes, and methods for coping with the problems the world will bring later on.

Without doubt, this area of "value" and "attitude" development in these early stages of human growth is an open area for research; its importance to society, "unquestioned."

Every parent must ask, "How can my children best be given a head start in character development? How can they be taught 'values' before age three—or five? What methods for teaching them are best? And who can say which values are 'best'?"

Hard questions, with no clear answers. Though self-proclaimed authorities on child-rearing abound, there are no *real* experts on teaching children proper values. Raising children is a puzzle to everyone but those who don't have any.

But even though child-rearing is a puzzle of great complexity, responsible parents *do* pick up bits of information and guidance from others, who, like themselves, are coping—or have coped—with the challenges of the crib, cradle, and toddlers. Without doubt, babies have a tendency to grow up. Parents have to transmit *something* to their progeny, and *responsible* parents plan what values, attitudes, and choices they desire for their children's moral development.

Kay Kuzma, a professor of child development at Loma Linda University and an author of books on child development, says, "You're like your child will become." Although not absolutely true, the aphorism contains more than a kernel of truth.

At this stage in life the child is almost totally dependent on the parent and surrounding adults. He or she is immersed in the environment, the life-style, of the parent and other adults who feed and nurture it. As such, the infant

reflects the same values and attitudes of the parent or care-giver. If their lives are disjointed and in turmoil, their parenting practices will likewise be haphazard. The results, of course, will be mirrored to a great extent in the child.

Prenatal influences. Dr. Kuzma, the mother of three, earned her doctorate in early childhood education at UCLA. She said that a mother literally influences her baby in the womb in all aspects of development: thus, a mother's care for her baby should begin before it is born—even before pregnancy.

Studies have shown that a mother who smokes while pregnant increases the baby's chances for low birth weight and associated problems. Other studies increasingly demonstrate the deleterious effects of alcohol consumption by the mother upon the child in the womb.

In short, if the mother smokes, imbibes alcohol, and is in a state of emotional upheaval during pregnancy, this may not only influence fetal development but also can no doubt contribute to the infant's mental frame of mind and a sense of insecurity.

A need for love. Of profound importance for the emotional development of the child is the establishment of a warm, loving relationship between mother and child. Studies have shown that physical and visual contact between mother and child at the time of birth are basic needs for optimal development; thus, "bonding" must take place if mother and baby are to grow together in love and appreciation of each other—basic human values.

According to Dr. Kuzma, the baby must be loved "unconditionally." The infant needs security and confidence in the family and

James Becraft, a writer-photographer specializing in health care and anthropology, or cultural studies, lives in Loma Linda, California. © 1979 by James R. Becraft.

By consistently putting into your own life the qualities you want your child to have, you go a long way to seeing him or her attain these qualities.



Dr. Kay Kuzma is professor of child development at Loma Linda University in California. She is the mother of three children and the author of several books on child development.

environment; if not loved unconditionally, his growth is "short-circuited" emotionally. The baby soon discovers parents can't be trusted.

Babies need to be picked up, cuddled, and rocked to sleep in a loving manner. If a baby is messy, hungry, and cranky, and is unlovingly tossed into bed, he gets a message: "I'm not loved." Ultimately he absorbs such attitudes and hostilities.

Dr. Kuzma sees character-building as the "end process of decision-making." This decision-making begins before a baby is born as the mother makes proxy decisions for the person to come. She continues to make decisions for the child in the neonatal period. Soon the father and other adults become involved in this decision-making process. Gradually the child begins making the decisions. Only as children learn to make their own decisions *soundly* can they develop their own *healthy* values and attitudes.

Growth in decision-making skills is like learning to speak, but it takes longer. As a baby can be given opportunity to make decisions in the playpen, so the child can be given privileges in the backyard to exercise growing decision-making skills; later, after a long process of growth, the adult must exercise

decision-making skills in the rough-and-tumble of life.

Making their own decisions. Laying the foundations for effective decision-making is not easy for the child—or parents.

"You have to give them information in a way they can understand, so that they can weigh the options, and then let them gain experience in making the decisions. You have to make sure the choice is appropriate to their developmental level; then you have to hold back and let them live with the consequences of that decision."

She laughed and told a story about her daughter: "We were in an Orange Julius, a refreshment shop. My daughter wanted a strawberry drink, not an orange. I said, 'OK! But drink all of it. If you don't, next time I'll have to choose for you.' She didn't drink all of that strawberry concoction, so next time I said, 'Sorry! I'm choosing for you.'"

The consequences of decisions can taste great, or they can taste awful. Realizing that is part of learning and developing values—even for a two-year-old.

Marilyn Beach, MA, director of the preschool at Loma Linda University's College of Arts and Sciences, agreed with Dr. Kuzma on the importance of teaching the young child to make decisions as part of learning values early in life.



Marilyn Beach, MA, is director of preschool at the Loma Linda University College of Arts and Sciences.

"It's a very slow process with the tiny tots, but oh, so important! Even two-year-olds can learn good decision-making skills. One mother came to our preschool, saying to her daughter, 'Share!' Then she grabbed her toy and gave it to another girl. The child was only two. Sharing, we find, is not in their vocabulary at this age. What we do here is to have two phones, two buggies, etc. We say, 'Here are two, why don't you give one to Johnny?' This way we encourage decision-making—and values development."

Mrs. Beach went on to tell about a mother who complained, "My girl is so selfish. She always grabs such things as dolls from the other girls." But that same day the wee girl was observed doling out a Kleenex to a tear-smitten friend.

"What we try to do at our preschool," Mrs. Beach said, "is to help parents build on their children's positive traits. They can stress these at home."

Teaching values to children. The main things parents can do, in her opinion, to help children develop good values before age three center on emphasizing "decision-making" and "example."

"By consistently putting into your own life the qualities you want your child to have, you go a long way to seeing him or her attain those qualities. Children learn social and moral patterns from their models first of all. Make your modeling good."

"A child before age three determines what is right or wrong by the *big person* or the *important persons* in his life, who say, in effect, 'This is right. . . . This is wrong. . . .' They take what is said as irrefutable fact. James Fowler, of Emory University, has worked with the very young child. One question he asks them is, 'How do you know when you have done something bad?' The child says, 'Because my daddy says so.' Then he queries, 'How does your daddy know?' The classic answer: 'Because someone bigger than him tells him.' So it's

always the important or the big, either physically big, or physically important, or importantly big. These were three- and four-year-old children."

"Mainly the little ones can be taught by example and doing. Children don't learn very much by being told but by watching someone else and then doing it themselves. Sometimes you walk them through the activity. For instance, actually moving their hands to teach them to brush their teeth. You don't tell them how at this age. You move the toothbrush up and down. You hold their hands and make the motions yourself."

Joyce W. Hopp, PhD, who teaches in the department of health education at Loma Linda University's School of Health, is a specialist in "values clarification" methods as they relate to health science teaching. She is author of textbooks for children and a mother of two teenagers. She sees values as "principles that guide your life."

According to her, children develop values early, but "even though nine or ten years old, these values by and large reflect parental values. They're not their own until freely chosen for themselves. In order to be of value they must be made by personal choice, not by coercion. But that doesn't mean that children don't have values. Those they have are largely reflections of parental values during these years."

"Parents create the environment in which the child develops values through experiences provided. They can best promote the child's development of values by providing him with a variety of experiences while at the same time giving him opportunity to discuss the meaning of those experiences in an atmosphere of inquiry and dialogue with themselves. There needs to be family time for discussion. It doesn't need to be a long time, but both parents should be available as much as possible, paying attention when the child wants to talk. Even two- or three-year-olds can take part. With the younger ones, concepts must be

very simple, but nevertheless the talking time gives meaning to the child's experiences."

Dr. Hopp elaborated on the welter of informational experiences children have today in a society where TV makes the world a global village, where vicarious experiences of any variety almost can impinge on a child's senses and affect him for life.

Parents concerned about the value development of even the under-two-year-old children need to channel the tube carefully and provide them with more doing, learning, touching, smelling, experiences, rather than the passive TV variety.



Joyce W. Hopp, PhD, teaches in the department of health education at Loma Linda University School of Health.

"Parents are spending less time with their children, not listening, not helping them process the masses of information bombarding them. If we're going to have such masses of information hitting us, we've got to provide more family time in which the data are discussed and processed so that children can have a framework into which they can fit their experiences, and the experiences can be meaningful. Otherwise all they will get will be a big gob of incomprehensible data with an inadequate values-framework."

In her estimation, every parent

should do several things to help provide the toddler—older children, too—with a family environment conducive to values formation:

1. **Experiences:** "Include the family, not just vicarious experiences, but spend time with them in planned activities in which they will learn to reason and make decisions."

2. **Discussions:** "Take time for talk. Even a few minutes with them while tucking them in at night is good."


3. **Exercise of choice:** "Start them out early making decisions. Now that doesn't mean giving them free choice in everything, but give them the opportunity to choose between, for instance, healthy foods—not between milk shakes and banana splits."

4. **Freedom:** "They need to learn right from the beginning that when they make a certain choice, they've got to live with the consequences."

5. **Evaluation:** "Without learning this skill, no progress, no real learning takes place."

Don't forget God. Values can reach their highest expression not only in day-to-day relations with man but in one's relationship to God, believes Bailey Gillespie, PhD, a professor of religious education at Loma Linda University's College of Arts and Sciences. It's true not only with adults but with small children. But, he, as with others interviewed, sees the child's behavior as largely the reflection of the values and attitudes of the adult. At every stage of development a child's ability to communicate, to comprehend, should be carefully evaluated by parents. Above all, parents should be sensitive and should talk with the little ones regarding the "simple, basic themes: love, the family, sharing, prayer, and trust in God."

Every one of these themes is comprehensible to a child—even under age three. They're expressed in behavior and trust in both parents and in God Himself.

And who said, "Except ye . . . become as little children . . ."? 

EDITORIALS

SCIENTIFIC credibility suffered a crippling blow last March 28 with the Three Mile Island nuclear-reactor accident, the worst nuclear energy crisis in United States history.

For years engineers had assured us that the odds of a serious accident at a modern nuclear-power plant are infinitesimal. Then, suddenly, Americans woke up one morning to face the fact that it *can* happen here, and it *did*—at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Repercussions from the Pennsylvania accident rippled around the globe, bringing investigators from Japan, West Germany, and France. They wanted to know how the highly sophisticated machinery of a modern nuclear reactor and its elaborate backup-safety system could fail so utterly. They also wanted to know how to prevent a similar accident from occurring in their own fifty reactors.

Other experts from all over America converged on the scene to study the problem and offer solutions. They quickly recognized two terrifying possibilities. The runaway radioactive core could "melt down" and drop into the water coolant at the base of its chamber. This would create an instantaneous steam explosion that could rupture the four-foot-thick concrete walls of the building and release a lethal radioactive cloud into the atmosphere. Or the molten core could burn through the concrete floor and pass deep into the earth (as presented in the movie *The China Syndrome*). But none agreed on either the outcome or the solution.

In fact, for days following the event confusion and fear continued to spew from the damaged reactor (along with large quantities of radioactive steam and gas). Nuclear

engineers quibbled on national television and before the press on how to regain control of the runaway reactor, on how to release the tremendous pressure built up by the highly volatile bubble of hydrogen gas in the top of the reactor's core, and on whether taking action to release the pressure or failing to take action offered the

greatest risk of creating a nuclear catastrophe.

Baffled by the conflicting opinions of the nation's leading experts, laymen could only ask wonderingly, "Which scientist can we believe?"

This same question has been raised on several other occasions the past few years. Scientists have battled with

each other over the potential dangers of genetic engineering, warning that creating new life-forms (from existing life-forms) in the laboratory could endanger the delicate balance of life on earth or could release a new Andromeda strain of bacteria that could destroy mankind.

They have also fought over the effects of supersonic jets and aerosols on atmospheric ozone. They have labeled as cancer-causative everything from saccharin to flame retardants in children's pajamas.

They haven't even agreed on whether large doses of vitamin C can help prevent a cold or assist someone with a cold to a quicker recovery.

It reminds me of what one sometimes faces when he visits doctors to obtain two medical opinions. One surgeon may tell him that he needs surgery. The other may confess that it's dangerous, and besides, it won't do much good.

These and many similar conflicts between the experts, the people with the final authority, should flash a caution light before everyone who has been conditioned to accept the word of a scientist as truth—no matter what.

And if what I have said applies to the seen—nuclear reactors, aerosol spray, supersonic jets, saccharin, flame retardants, and surgery—think of its implications regarding the unseen—like evolution, for example.

If they can't agree on the issues of today's life, I'm certainly not going to trust them to explain the greater issue of how life began. If scientific pronouncements cannot be faithfully trusted regarding the known, why should we trust them regarding the unknown?—R.B.

Lessons from Three Mile Island



LETTERS

Praises for the Daniel and Revelation issue

CONGRATULATIONS on this superb special on prophecy. It is arranged, edited, and illustrated in a way not only to capture the attention and interest but also to drive home the great truths presented. Best of all, its interpretive positions are in line with the best Seventh-day Adventist scholarship.—Robert M. Eldridge, New Johnsonville, Tennessee.

They say that "one picture is worth a thousand words." Well, when I glanced through your special issue of THESE TIMES on the amazing prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, I was sure of this statement!

Seeing the written word in black and white can become boring after a bit, but when the words come to life and you can see what you are reading about, it is a bit hard to put the booklet down. The pictures of the animals described and the actual antique articles used by those people of old make for fascinating study.—Shirley Tegyi, Pennsylvania.

Something left out?

I received your last publication on Daniel and Revelation and am wondering what happened to chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation. I would like your explanation of those two chapters.—Buford Stockard, Graham, Texas.

As we explained in the introduction of that issue, due to space limitations we could not cover every passage of Scripture in the two books and fit it into an eighty-four-page magazine. Hence we selected the major prophecies of those books, five from Daniel and eleven from Revelation, for use in that special issue. We're sorry if we skipped something of special interest to some of our readers.—Editors.

I recently saw a copy of THESE TIMES—your special issue on Daniel and Revelation. It was great! It really had super visuals and a tremendous layout. I'd like very much to obtain a copy of that issue. Please tell me the price for one copy of that issue.—Tommy Thomason, Mesquite, Texas.

Single copies are available at US\$1.00 each, plus 5c a copy for postage (Canadian and foreign postage higher). You may order them from "The Amazing Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation," P.O. Box 22365, Nashville, TN 37202.—Editors.



We appreciate the gift

We have been receiving your magazine for over two

years and enjoy it, but did not subscribe. If it is a gift, would you please send us the name and address of the giver so we can send a note of thanks? We would appreciate it very much.—Maria Norris, Hinesville, Georgia.

An astonishing magazine

Your March issue of THESE TIMES came and has been read with the greatest relish. All the articles spoke to me, but particularly "Welcome Home, Mother!"—I suppose because that is something we may be facing soon. We had already decided that if the Lord gives us the strength and means, our parents will not go to nursing homes, so others' experiences are encouraging. Thanks for printing it.

Actually the magazine continues to astonish me with its good looks and inspirational material.—Mrs. Joe D. Griffin, Portland, Tennessee.

Bristling with anger

I am bristling—BRISTLING! At first I saw red when I read Mrs. Maxon's letter (March, 1979) spitefully poking fun at the THESE TIMES article "My Journey Into the Occult" (September, 1978). But then my anger turned into pity and concern for the letter writer because, obviously, she

doesn't know what many of us unfortunate "un-volunteers" of the occult know.

I too was once skeptical of the occult the way she is. In fact, I went to a lecture (at a respectable college, no less) on "Ghosts and Haunted Houses." Why? Just for the ridiculousness and a night of laughs. But as a result of my comments, I was the only one out of forty who gave "testimonies" at the meeting who was asked to see the lecturers afterward. To make a long letter short, from that moment on, I became another victim of the occult.

Mrs. Maxon, I learned that my skepticism was one of the biggest mistakes I've ever made, and I learned the hard way. You see, I had already opened myself to Satan just by being skeptical! I had no defenses, because I didn't believe there was a war! People kept saying it was a "gift" from God—but no one told me what the Bible said, not even my non-Adventist minister. But I have never known such pure terror as those few years I spent wrapped up in the occult. And pure terror is not a gift from God.

THESE TIMES didn't insult me, Mrs. Maxon. It was THESE TIMES that saw me through my terror. And it was two Seventh-day Adventist ministers, Pastor Dick Tibbits and Pastor Bill Warcholik, whom God sent to tell me what His Word really said about the occult. Today I praise God that I am at last free from bondage.—Leila Haddad, Willimantic, Connecticut.

Address all correspondence for this column to Letters to the Editor, THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, TN 37202. Items selected for publication may be edited for clarity and length.

Quiet acts of kindness



Three quiet acts of kindness brought peace and happiness into our lives at a time when we needed them most.

by G. Roger Schoenhals

A BOUQUET OF PANSIES greeted us when we returned from the store. There was no note, and we had no idea where they had come from.

We had moved in only two days before. The town and 99.9 percent of

the people were new to us. Someone, knowing how we must have felt, slipped in and left a friendly bouquet.

We mentioned it later to some friends, and they said, "Oh, that was an elderly woman at church, a retired missionary. She's always doing things like that."

It happened many years ago, but the fragrance of the deed remains fresh in our memories.

A similar memory dates back to the time we lived in a cottage on the eastern slopes of the Washington Cascades. Money was scarce, and our home was quite rustic. A wood stove was the only source of heat.

With winter coming on, I had managed to acquire a truckload of wood. It lay in a large pile near the back porch. My wife's folks were coming from Michigan for a visit, and we wanted to have the place looking good. However, with me in school and my wife working in town, we found no time to stack the wood and do several other clean-up jobs around the yard. The day they were due we hurried home, thinking we could get a few chores done before they arrived.

Imagine our surprise when we drove into the driveway and noticed the wood stacked neatly beside the house. And the yard was tidy.

Our neighbor from down the road, a busy woman with four children, had come over during the day to do the whole job. She left no big sign telling us whom to thank, nor did she run over to brag of her deed. We simply knew it was she because that's the kind of person she is. Later, when we backed her into a corner, she confessed.

When I was in seminary a group of us went to a town in Missouri to

hold a weekend missionary convention. The church placed us in different homes for lodging and meals. Two of us stayed with the pastor.

Following the Saturday evening service my friend and I drove with the pastor and his wife to their home. Rain pelted the car as we drove. Running from the car to the house, I muddied my shoes. Not wanting to soil their carpet, I took my shoes off at the door and carried them into our room. They would dry during the night, and I could clean them up the next morning.

I awoke to the smell of frying eggs and jumped out of bed, hoping to take a quick shower before breakfast. After we ate I planned to shine the shoes and make them ready for the day's activities. As I dressed I glanced over to see the mud-caked shoes. They were gone!

I looked under the bed and in the closet. I accused my roommate, but he pleaded innocence. He seemed as surprised as I was.

I finished dressing and started out the door to report the missing shoes. And then I found them—sitting neatly outside my door looking as shiny as the day I bought them.

I finally got the pastor's wife to tell me what happened. During the night, while we slept, her husband had crept into our room and had taken the shoes to clean and polish.

"But why?" I asked. "He's got enough on his mind, and I know he's tired."

"Well," she said, "that's just the kind of man he is."

Acts of kindness. Posies, a woodpile, and shiny shoes. Three quiet acts of kindness. They remain vivid in my mind. Pleasant memories. And I recall the lift I received when each discovery was made. They made me feel important, valuable. They blessed me.

I'm sure the deeds also brought joy to the hearts of the doers. Not that they did those things to gain a

blessing but because that's just the kind of people they are. They remind me of those people Jesus told about who were surprised at the judgment when reminded of the many kind deeds they had done in this life (Matthew 25:31-40).

When's the last time you did a little quiet deed of kindness? Here are some ideas:

1. Send a note of appreciation to the church organist or to the head usher.

2. The man who mows our lawn brought a gift for each of our children one day. No reason, just a simple act of kindness. Is there a child in your neighborhood or at church whom you could surprise with a toy?

3. Flowers are always welcome. How about an elderly person or someone who is ill?

4. I looked out the window one day after a snowstorm and saw my neighbor shoveling my driveway. I'm healthy. I could have done it. But he had finished his, and he just wanted to help me out. Is there a chore you could do for someone?

5. Usually we think of the women when it comes to making cookies or pies. On several occasions a single male friend of ours has supplied us with baked desserts. And they were good! Everyone likes treats from the oven, so why not show a little kindness by giving someone the fruit of your culinary skills?

6. Offer to baby-sit, to take someone's children for a special outing.

7. Read a good book lately? Why not give a few copies to persons who might also enjoy the book?

Really, the possibilities for showing acts of kindness are endless. All it takes is a little creativity and the desire to share God's love with others.

Why not do some thinking and praying about it right now? Decide on a plan of action and make whatever preparations that are necessary. And then, in the name of Jesus, do it—quietly.

Roger Schoenhals is editorial director, *Light and Life Press*, Winona Lake, Indiana. He has had three hundred articles published in over forty periodicals. © 1977 by Light and Life Press. Adapted and used by permission.

FRANK ANSWERS

I have always been taught that the Bible never contradicts itself. Can you explain what I think is a contradiction? Matthew 27:5 says that Judas "hanged himself." But Acts 1:18 says that as he was running he fell and "burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." In other words, he didn't hang himself.

The four Gospels and Acts give us brief eyewitness accounts of the acts and sayings of Jesus and the apostles. Like many eyewitness reports they are brief, and consequently incomplete. To us who live many centuries later the accounts may appear at first to be contradictory, when in reality they supplement or complement each other like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

One can argue that these two reports are contradictory, but this is not a necessary conclusion. Most Bible students see Peter's statement as supplementary to Matthew's account. In the first place Peter does *not* say that Judas fell "as he was running." This is a mental picture you have inadvertently injected into Peter's account. Generally, the Greek expression in Acts 1:18 is translated, "and falling headlong, he burst asunder" (cf RSV, NASB, NEB, TEV).

The two accounts easily harmonize to give us this

Contradictions in the Bible?

picture: Judas in his anguish of mind left the scene of Christ's trial and hanged himself. Peter completes the account by implying that the weight of his body broke the rope or sash that he had tied around his neck and that his body broke open when it struck the ground. Perhaps Judas purposely jumped from a branch of the tree to which he had tied his rope in order to give more force to his body weight, and he may have fallen upon jagged rocks or stones.

Please give me some clarification on the matter of confession and restoration. To what extent do these relate to such things as cheating in school or damage to an employer's truck? Oversensitiveness on this could be quite a drag, couldn't it?

The matter is not as difficult as it may seem if as Christians we choose to view matters as God does. The substance of the Christian religion—as far as ethical behavior is concerned—is summarized by Jesus into a twofold principle: supreme love toward God and impartial love toward our fellowmen. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. . . . This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). The latter command therefore involves the Golden Rule also: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

With such love implanted in the heart by God's Spirit, the penitent is naturally drawn to confess his sins to God (1 John 1:9). Likewise he is led to confess to his neighbor his faults or wrongs that have hurt him (James 5:16), a confession that may involve restitution—to the extent he is able to do so (Ezekiel 33:16). Jesus taught: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee [because you have in some manner wronged him]; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24). In other words, the Christian seeks as far as he is able to make all things right between himself and God and between himself and his fellow human beings. And he seeks by the grace of God to maintain this position. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

How, then, should a Christian face these matters in

the everyday routine of life? If a Christian accidentally breaks a neighbor's window, he would apologize and replace it. An employer would naturally expect a certain amount of wear and tear on his trucks. But if a Christian driver accidentally locked up the air brakes and tore up the tires, it would certainly be the Christian thing to explain to the superintendent what had happened. If one knew he had cheated in the past, it would be the Christian thing to confess to the teacher involved. If such a person could not be reached or the name was forgotten, then the offender could only confess to God and leave it at that.

Confession is not merely some attempt to balance accounts. It has to do with spiritual health and genuine conversion. God changes the attitudes of the mind through His grace; He implants His love in the heart. The result is that the Christian views God and his neighbor in an entirely different light. He loves them, and love always seeks to heal and to restore broken relationships. Through the processes of confession and restoration, God leads His children to remove the guilt and remorse and anxieties we tend to bury in our subconscious, only to have them trouble us later.

Cleansing comes not only through forgiveness but also through confession. Apologizing, confessing, and restoring to what degree one can may be humiliating to the pride, but it makes stronger, sturdier, more compassionate and understanding Christians.

The apostle Paul's example on this question is a safe one to follow: "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16).



In this column Pastor Frank B. Holbrook answers questions about spiritual truth, ethical behavior, and Biblical understanding.

Write to him c/o THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Names are confidential. If a personal answer is desired, please send an addressed envelope. Only questions of general interest are published.

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THIS TIME

MARYE TRIM'S superb article on the inspiration of the Bible reminds us once again that the Word of God is a most remarkable book. We recall that Charles Dickens' vote for the most pathetic story in all literature was that of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). When Samuel Coleridge received a request to name the richest single literary passage of all time, he chose the first sixteen verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew. Someone once asked Daniel Webster what in his mind was the greatest legal digest, and he replied that it was the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

No one has equaled David for poetry, Isaiah for vision, Peter for holy zeal, Apollos for fiery oratory, Paul for logic, John for his statements on sanctified love, and, of course, Jesus for moral and ethical teachings.

The Bible has been called "a window in this prison world, through which we may look into eternity" (Timothy Dwight), "one mighty representative of the whole spiritual life of humanity" (Helen Keller), and "the best gift God has given to man; . . . but for it we could not know right from wrong" (Abraham Lincoln).

We simply can't say enough good things about the Bible. Its greatest contribution, of course, is what it says about God Himself. Ellen G. White puts it this way:

"The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy intelligences, all waiting to do His will. Through channels which we cannot discern He is in active communication with every part of His dominion.

"But it is in this speck of a world, in the souls that He gave His only-begotten Son to save, that His interest and the interest of all heaven is centered. God is bending from His throne to hear the cry of the oppressed. To every sincere prayer He answers, 'Here am I.' He uplifts the distressed and downtrodden. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. In every temptation and every trial the angel of His presence is near to deliver" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 356).

If you haven't read Marye Trim's "God's Word Knows No Limit," page 2, get ready for a real treat.

Kenneth J. Holland



GOD'S LOVE

is in His creation

Wonderful are the miracles and mysteries of the natural world. Even more wonderful is the presence of love in the handiwork of God. **by Sanford T. Whitman**

THE Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Psalm 87:2).

These words are special. As used here, *gates* suggest a city, and that city is named Zion, the gates of Zion.

To have meaning, gates must be hinged to walls. Walls are clearly implied in the following passage: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks" (Psalm 48:12, 13).

The word *Zion* has strong spiritual connotations. The Bible speaks of Zion, but not for political reasons. It is not mentioned because of its powerful financial district or glittering social life. It is not a vast military or industrial complex. Zion is a spiritual as well as a literal city, and it is the one as much as it is the other. Not two cities near together. Two cities in one and the same package. A literal city with a spiritual treasure.

Among other things we learn that Zion is "the city of God," that it is "the joy of the whole earth" (Psalm 48:1, 2). It is the place where God dwells (Joel 3:21). God's temple is in Zion (Joel 2:15-17). The knowledge of God's law (love) will go forth from Zion (Isaiah 2:3).

In the New Testament we find that the redeemed of earth will one day come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). In the closing chapters of the Bible

we learn that the heavenly Jerusalem is also called *New Jerusalem*, that among other things this city contains the throne of God, the tree and river of life (Revelation 21:2; 22:1-3).

The purpose of our text is to emphasize the preeminence of the spiritual over the material in the mind of God. To compare Deity with humanity, however, would be out of character, in bad taste, less than convincing. Like comparing infinity with zero.

Basically the comparison is between the earthly riches of Israel and the spiritual glory of God's character and kingdom. But for added power and beauty, the direct comparison is between "the dwellings of Jacob" and the "gates of Zion"—both temporal values.

Compared to the wealth of a great nation, the gates of a city are less than peanuts. By choosing the peanuts, God indicates His overwhelming preference for the spiritual. I would rather have the gates of My city Zion, He says, than all the material abundance of Israel. Why? Because these gates are near to My treasure, guard My treasure, are associated with My treasure. For this reason they are more to Me than the glory and wealth of empire.

Why is God so opinionated about this? Particularly, why is love so important in the cosmos? We find it all made plain in Psalm 87:7: "All my springs are in thee."

Springs, we are told, may also be translated "sources of satisfaction."

As far as substance, shape, and operation are concerned, God can speak a universe into existence. He can make all things excellent visually and mechanically. But this is not the

limit of His ability. This, to Him, does not attain desirability. God has something else that makes the physical creation incomparably better. That something is *love*.

Wonderful are the miracles and mysteries of the natural world. Even more wonderful is the presence of love in the handiwork of God—the splendor of sunrise, the cresting of a wave, the whisperings of the wind, mother love in the wild. These are parameter blessings.

What are the treasures of Zion's heartland? The ability and willingness to forgive. To suffer long and be kind. To endure all things. To love justice. To be merciful when mercy is not deserved. To be always gracious. Even to die for an enemy.

Unless love is resident and operational in the lives of men, unless it is integrated into every moment of time, every atom in space, the gigantic forces and myriad forms of nature become a monstrous and headlong vehicle of fear, suffering, and death. With good reason God appraises even the gates of Zion as more valuable than any possible accumulation of material treasure.

It is love that makes life so precious. It is love that makes of earth an Eden. It is love that makes earth and sun and galaxy so compelling both as a homeland and a way of life. It is love that kindled a star of hope in earth's awful night of sin. It is love, in absolute control of the will, that swings wide the gate to man's ultimate attainment and maximum fulfillment. It is love and love alone that makes all things, animate and inanimate, worthy of eternity.

"There are three things that last for ever: faith, hope, and love: but the greatest of them all is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13, NEB*).

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Sanford Whitman lives in the Tualatin Valley south of Hillsboro, Oregon. He counts writing as his hobby. His philosophy: God has given you a corner and a candle. Tend both faithfully. © 1979 by Sanford T. Whitman.



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