

THESE TIMES

JULY, 1982

**FOUR SECRETS
OF LENDING
A HAND**

**WHICH CHURCH
SHOULD I JOIN?**

**LEARN HOW TO
BE LIKE A CHILD**

Bonding

—the Bridge
From Womb to World





The transformation that accompanies the birth of a child creates a mother out of a woman and a father out of a man.

BONDING —THE BRIDGE



The hushed and precious moments immediately following birth allow the new mother and father to cuddle and hug their newborn child for the first time.

BY CAROLE B. DAVIS

FROM WOMB TO WORLD

The doomsdayers gloomily predict an end to the family unit as such. But other souls, more cheerful, claim the American family is stronger than ever. Medical experts suggest one way to assure strengthened family ties is to better understand the biological phenomenon of bonding at birth.

Bonding, of course, is not new. Long before the days of modern scientific technology birth involved major risks. Immediately after birth the attendant placed the infant on the anxious mother's chest. No one thought twice about this first contact between mother and newborn other than to determine whether or not a healthy child had been delivered.

Today, in one of medical science's most popular areas of research, studies are proving the importance of this initial meeting between parents and child. And this years-old custom has been given a brand-new name—*bonding*.

Bonding might be thought of as a bridge—a bridge in which mother and baby continue to be kept together, only externally instead of internally. It is a bridge built in the first hour of life, and its effects can last a lifetime.

During these minutes three individuals share in the exciting transformation that has just given each of them new roles in life. In these moments of unspeakable

joy, a woman becomes a mother, a man becomes a father, and as parents they embrace their new child.

These first impressions are so important and so buoyed up by the emotional high of birth itself that the time for resting can come later, say the medical experts.

Actually, bonding is but another small step in a series of giant leaps that have been taken for parenthood in recent years. In the not-too-distant past, which today's grandmothers may still remember with a shudder, medical experts were the sole voice of authority regarding childbearing.

The veil of medical mystique, if not overly popular, was certainly never questioned. For years fear of the unknown lurked in labor rooms, permeated the antiseptic atmosphere in that grimmest of all places, the delivery room, and stalked the halls of the old maternity wards. Babies were automatically whisked away to the nursery, and the drugged mother never knew until hours later whether she'd given birth to a son or a daughter.

It took nearly ten years, from 1933 to 1942, for Dr. Grantley Dick-Read to convince his colleagues that this fear created the tension that made birth a pain-filled experience.

It took World War II to trigger an experiment in a Johannesburg, South Africa, hospital that strengthened Dr. Dick-Read's theory. Right after the war, in 1948, a shortage of supplies and skilled personnel left the hospital

staff with no choice but to allow mothers into the nursery to feed and care for their own babies. Fearing the worst, for germs were considered more threatening than bombs, the amazed staff found instead no increase in infection, nor did the infant mortality rate rise as the doctors grimly predicted it would.

The doomsdayers were defeated here too.

This seemingly insignificant incident in a faraway hospital reached the ears of doctors in the United States. Some of them began to agree with Dr. Dick-Read. They reasoned that if mother and baby could be kept together constantly, with no worry from germs, maybe it wasn't as necessary to put the baby in sterile isolation as they once thought. Further, if keeping mother and baby together would reduce a laboring mother's fears and tensions, then quite possibly they should reconsider Dr. Dick-Read's theory of natural childbirth.

This new thinking opened the way for Dr. Dick-Read and others to actively promote natural childbirth during the 1950s and '60s.

And then came the explosive 1970s, when the women's movement began promoting a lot of new thinking. Among other things, women started to explore new patterns in childbearing, which led to the demand for a more active and humanizing participation in the births of their children.

Carole Davis, author of Special Delivery—Alternative Birth Centers and a member of the National Writers Club, is a free-lance writer living in Mountain View, California.
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In response, by the mid-1970s hospitals all across the nation began converting unused labor rooms into alternative birth centers. (Quite a few hospitals use the term family birthing centers.) These cozy, homelike rooms allow the birthing couple, their relatives and friends, to stay long enough to ensure baby's safe arrival before going home (usually within twenty-four hours) with the new family member.

Birth need no longer be a solo event. Training and education during pregnancy includes both parents-to-be and family members.

That beautiful word *family* . . .

Birth need no longer be a dreaded event either. A mother-to-be tells of the eagerness she and her husband feel about finally meeting "our baby." She also quickly states, "I'm not sick. I'm pregnant." She firmly points out something else too: "I'm *giving* birth," she says. "I'm not *being* delivered of a child."

After giving birth, the next gift the parents can give their child is the lifelong *bond* of love and affection. One nurse describes the bonding ceremony this way:

"The first thing we do after the baby is born is to put that baby right on the mother's chest for a great big hug. Then the mother and father touch hands. This is called *hands on*, and the father is encouraged to touch the baby. They have a chance to meet each other, and the baby can feel the mother's presence."

These hushed and precious moments allow the new parents to cuddle, caress, and hug their newborn child for the *very first time*. The standard procedures of the weigh-in, eyedrops, and the physical exam take a momentary back seat to bonding. This is prime time. Both the parents and the baby have been waiting for this meeting for months.

During bonding communication takes place in many ways. Nature has prepared the baby splendidly for the first meeting with his parents. Studies have shown a newborn to be alert and awake,

turning his head toward his parents' voices. Even before the placenta is delivered, with the infant placed face down on his mother's breast, there is immediate eye-to-eye contact. Contrary to what has been thought in the past, newborns *can* see. They can focus within a range of about eight inches, an ideal distance to clearly see the mother's face.

This touching and talking, this interfacing between three human beings, quickly establishes identity and a solid sense of belonging—all within minutes of birth. Warm hands, warm skin, warm smiles, soothing voices. Bonding forms a bridge that can never be severed and that will last a lifetime. With his safety and security thus ensured, baby can sleep, which he does, deeply, for the next three hours or so.

Modern science is discovering many benefits of bonding. Perhaps the greatest one is the strengthened relationship the baby will have with all other human beings. A curious reversal of this is true also—those present at the birth who witness the bonding become strongly attached to the baby from that moment on.

Ongoing studies reveal that bonded babies possess less anxiety as they grow and develop. Many feel that the sense of self is stronger in these children and that they tend to ask more questions and have higher IQs than children whisked away from their parents right after birth. The deep security formed from this instant and permanent attachment goes a long way toward eliminating future fears of *Who am I?* or *Who loves me?*

Thanks to today's more liberal attitudes that permit fathers to witness the birth, a bonded baby will know at once that the answer to the question of who loves him is not only his mother but his father too.

In the past, fathers haven't exactly been given star billing in the birth scene; it is only recently that his role in bonding has been understood. "We've never lost a father yet," is a tired, worn-out

joke. Nurses don't quote that old line anymore. Instead they reply (a bit wearily because people keep asking the same old question), "No, the men don't faint. They're too involved." And indeed they are, often without even being aware of their involvement.

A husband who has taken required childbirth classes with his wife is trained and prepared to cope with just about everything except perhaps the depth of his own emotions. *Joy*, a word many new fathers use, is a simple yet expressive word. And that's progress, because our society has long deemed it unmanly for a male to express outwardly any deep emotion.

To *joy* can be added *wow!*—two small words that speak volumes, especially when they refer to paternal bonding. One father said, "Looking back on the birth, I can still get a high on it five years later. There aren't too many times in your life you have an experience so joyous you never forget it."

New fathers have amazingly similar reactions. During the *hands on* part of the bonding ceremony one father instinctively reached for his baby's hand. He reluctantly let go even for a few seconds to allow the nurse to wrap a blanket around his new daughter. Another father could only shake his head in disbelief at the sight of tiny fingers curled tightly around his thick first finger. All he could manage to say was, "Wow!"

Obviously birth has a far more powerful impact on men than has ever been suspected. Doctors have found an almost magnetic force drawing father and newborn together at the moment of bonding. "I took one look at our new son and I left the ground—I just left the ground!" one awed father commented.

Experts agree that if more male parents experienced bonding with their newborns, the tragedies of desertion, child abuse, and incest could be lessened. At any rate today's birthing couples are sold on the strong and lasting ties formed by bonding—that unique bridge from womb to world. **TT**

JUNE STRONG

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR BEACH BAG

It's interesting how each month has a particular personality all its own. December is all candles and carols, and we manage to sprinkle their magic over a full thirty-one days. March is the daffodiled gateway to spring, and September offers the poignant moment of our children's return to school. Every time we see the bright leaves blowing about a halted bus, even though our children are long grown and gone, we feel the old tug at the heartstrings. Those rascals clambering aboard, though they bear a stranger's genes, are somehow a little bit our own.

But July. What does July bear in her sultry, summer hands? Patriotic picnics and dark skies blossoming with firecracker flowers, I suppose. And beaches. Our vacation falls in late July, and like thousands of our fellow Americans, we often go tromping off to the shore. There's just something about the sound of water, whether it's lapping gently against rocks or breaking noisily over the sands, that soothes the raw wounds of our scuffles with life.

All intertwined with my seashore memories is a nostalgia for some delightful books. Even when the



children were small, I managed to read at the beach. There's no better baby-sitter than sand and surf with a few beach toys thrown in for good measure.

I never cared much for beaches strewn with bronzed bodies sizzling in suntan lotion. They always seemed lost to a kind of hypnotic stupor created by hundreds of portable radios competing with sea sounds. So we sought out private places where a little shade was not amiss and silence was broken only by surf and the laughter of children.

But I really wanted to talk with you about books, those books I carry to the shore in a canvas tote bag. (Of course, I always pack a yellow legal pad and some pens, too, but that's another story.) I take along a few books for their entertainment value (though most of them carry a message as well), a few for their educational content (usually books on nature,

writing, or literature), and then some books for the soul.

All year long when I hear of a book I'd like to read but can't squeeze into my busy schedule, I place its title on my vacation list. Sometimes I purchase the book and put it aside for those anticipated weeks. Sometimes I track it down at the last minute at the local library, but however it's acquired, I gloat over it as I tuck it into my bag.

And just in case you pack a shore bag, too, I thought I'd share with you some of the titles that have brought me real pleasure over the years.

The following is only the scantiest selection from my long list of favorites, but perhaps you'll find among them a gem or two for your own list.

Secular books

Laurel Lee's Journal, Christian Herald Books, Chappaqua, New York (a book of

exquisite courage).

The Honeycomb, Adela Rogers St. John.

One Whaling Family, edited by Harold Williams. (The journal of a woman who accompanied her husband on a whaling voyage in the mid 1800s. She bore two children at sea.)

A Walk Across America and *The Walk West*, Peter Jenkins. (No American should live out his life without reading these two books.)

The Singer, Calvin Miller. *Circle of Quiet*, Madeleine L'Engle.

Gift From the Sea, Anne Morrow Lindberg (or any other book by this author). *Special People*, Julie Nixon Eisenhower.

Any of Chaim Potok's rich tales of the Hasidic Jew: *Promise*, *The Chosen*, *My Name Is Asher Lev*, et cetera.

Spiritual books

The Bible—(somehow its mystic, personal qualities never bite into the soul anywhere quite as they do among the scenes of nature).

The Desire of Ages, Ellen White (my favorite on the life of Christ).

Hinds' Feet on High Places, Hannah Hurnard.

Yes, Ann Kiemel.

Steps to Christ, Ellen White.

The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (one of my favorites).

Jesus Rediscovered, Malcolm Muggeridge.

If you can't get to the beach, a spot of shade in your own backyard will do nearly as well. May you be disturbed by nothing more than the splashing of your children in their plastic pool.



June Strong, of Batavia, New York, is a lecturer and author of the books *Journal of a Happy Woman*,

Mindy, Where Are We Running? and *Project Sunlight*. She enjoys people, writing, gardening, and sewing.

ABORTION SURVEY OF AMERICAN WOMEN

Life (November) commissioned a survey among American women on the subject of abortion. Two basic questions are of special interest. "From your own personal point of view, do you feel having an abortion is morally wrong, or do you feel it is not a moral issue?" ("Morally wrong"—56 percent; "Not a moral issue"—35 percent.) "On the whole, do you agree or disagree with those who feel that any woman who wants an abortion should be permitted to obtain it legally?" ("Agree"—67 percent; "Disagree"—29 percent.)

Some other questions: "If an unmarried high school girl becomes pregnant, do you think her mother should suggest to her that she have the baby or have an abortion?" ("Have the baby"—44 percent; "Have an abortion"—20 percent; "Not sure"—36 percent.)

"Should Federal or State funds be used to pay for abortions for women who are eligible for Medicaid?" ("Should"—38 percent; "Should not"—53 percent.)

"Would you say you feel very strongly about the abortion issue, somewhat strongly, or not that strongly?" ("Very strongly"—48 percent; "Somewhat strongly"—27 percent; "Not that strongly"—21 percent.)

News items appearing in UPDATE represent current events of general interest to the readers of THESE TIMES and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions and views of the editors. Since the items come from a variety of news sources, the editors do not assume responsibility for inaccuracies beyond our control that might inadvertently be reproduced on these pages.

Christianity and Communism

The July-September issue of *Sparks* ("Religious News of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union") focuses on Christian experience in Communist countries. Anita Deyneka recognizes ("Cooperate, Criticize, or Confront") how difficult it is for Westerners to understand what life is like in East European Marxist society. "Even less can we presume to know what stance Christians living in these countries ought to take toward their Communist governments."

Deyneka points out that Christians have adopted different postures. Some (Protestants in Hungary, all denominations in Yugoslavia) have chosen to cooperate, generally claiming "that the degree of religious liberty in their countries provides sufficient latitude for the church to fulfill its mandate and comfortably coexist with the government."

Bulgarian, Romanian, and Russian Orthodox churches have chosen to cooperate almost totally with their governments, perhaps in order to survive. "Such collaboration has cost. . . . Often, especially in international contacts, Orthodox officials must acquiesce to becoming Soviet propagandists."

"Some denominations—such as the Catholic Church in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, as well as the Lutheran Church in East Germany—have generally strived for coexistence with their Marxist governments. At the same time, these

church bodies have refused to relinquish the right to criticize their governments if compelled to do so by Christian conscience, adopting a position of 'critical solidarity.'"

Deyneka pays tribute to the many Christians who have "openly confronted Marxist governments, have acted with courage and conviction, often losing their freedom and, in a few instances, their lives." But she also notes, "These merits do not mean, however, that Christians who confront their Marxist governments are always superior to those who choose other courses."

France Opens Airwaves to the Gospel

In thirty years of television broadcasting, the people of France have never seen an evangelistic program. Since the inauguration of Mitterand's socialist government this year, sweeping changes in the media, promised in his campaign, have begun. More than three hundred independent radio stations have been established in France since the new government took office.

Jean-Pierre Barry, founder and director of Euro Media Productions, a Christian enterprise, believes that "the time is now ripe for Christian broadcasting in France." The new law, which became effective in January, allows any nonprofit, nonpolitical group to apply for a license for available FM frequencies. Already the government-

controlled TV network, TF 1, is buying programs from Euro Media and other Christian groups.

Television Boycott Worries Top Advertisers

With rare candor major advertisers meeting in San Francisco recently admitted the boycott threats of the Coalition for Better TV and Moral Majority have had significant impact on advertising planning and their TV programs. Al Hagen, corporate manager of Toyota Motor Sales, believes the influence has been profound. He admitted that the Toyota advertising agency had reviewed all programs in their \$50 million budget for possible offensive material.

Officials of General Foods, Ralston Purina, Revlon, and Gillette said they too had been looking over their shoulders at the pressure group activity. "There are a lot of people who share the concerns of the Moral Majority," noted GF's Kent Mitchel.

A Look at 1982

The biggest threat to American evangelicalism is not humanism but materialism. We love money and the pleasure it buys. We do whatever we can to get more. The apostle Paul predicted that in the last days people would be lovers of money, lovers of self. Yet we do exegetical acrobatics to accommodate materialism into our theology of living. Will we ever fight this foe with the same fervor we use against evolution or immorality or abortion?



How would Martin Luther have responded to the marketing of Christian favors conducted by TV preachers today?

Calling Martin Luther

As many know, Martin Luther was the sixteenth-century monk who helped launch the Protestant Reformation after his famed run-in with Tetzel, the ecclesiastical official who sold indulgences (promises of spiritual reward) to help raise money to restore St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. William Petersen, editor of *Eternity* magazine, recently wondered how Luther would respond to some of the fund-raising gimmicks employed today.

Petersen quotes a computer letter sent to lapsed contributors by a prominent TV preacher. "Dear So-and-so," the letter reportedly says, "Last week I knelt at the prayer altar to pray for every member in the Prayer Key Family Book, and I wanted to pray for you. . . . But your name was not there."

Appeals from other TV figures ("replete with prayer towers, promises of spiritual reward, and of course material abundance") are similar, Petersen says, and then quotes a new book entitled *Prime Time Preachers*: "Not since Vatican officials sold papal indulgences—written protection from the wages of sin—has there been such a public marketing of Christian favors." Adds Petersen plaintively, "Martin Luther, where are you now that we need you?"

Soviet Jews Favor U.S. Over Israel

Israel, the Promised Land, is being spurned by increasing numbers of Jews—most notably Soviet immigrants whose freedom Israel helps to win. About 80 percent of the 8,700 Jews released by the Soviet Union so far this year have settled

in the United States and other Western countries, avoiding Israel.

Israeli immigration authorities have accused the U.S. Government and Jewish groups in the United States of encouraging "dropouts" among Soviet emigrants who, at least on paper, are bound for Israel. The dropouts are an emotional issue in Israel, especially after last week's report that from all sources, Jewish immigration to Israel—considered the country's lifeblood—is the lowest since 1953.

What Makes Strong Families?

Most studies of family life focus on problems. Nick Stinnett, University of Nebraska, decided to give the flip side equal time. According to the *Washington Post*, Stinnett conducted a national survey of "strong" families and found six common strengths.

1. Appreciation. Family members tried to make the other members of the family feel appreciated and good about themselves.

2. Ability to deal with crises in a positive manner. These families could take a bad situation, look for the positive, and focus on that.

3. Time together. In all areas of their lives, they structured their schedules to spend time together.

4. High degree of commitment. Families promoted each person's happiness and welfare, invested time and energy in one another, and made the family their number one priority.

5. Good communication patterns. These families spent time talking with one another. They were good listeners.

6. High degree of religious orientation. Not all belonged to an organized church, but they considered themselves highly religious.

Life in These Times

Ernest Campbell on permissiveness: "The answer is Yes. Now what's the question?" Children to parents: "You gave us roots, now give us wings." Robert Moses: "If the end doesn't justify the means, what does?" Exploding a cliché: "If it's neither here nor there, where is it?" Mark Twain: "Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?"—*Campbell's Notebook*.

Bumper sticker: "Nuclear War . . . When You've Seen One, You've Seen Them All."—*New York Times*.

Richard McCormick, S.J., Catholic ethical thinker: "Abortion is a matter that is morally problematic, pastorally delicate, legislatively thorny, constitutionally insecure, ecumenically divisive, medically normless, humanly anguishing, racially provocative, journalistically abused, personally biased, and widely performed.

"It demands a most extraordinary discipline of moral thought, one that is penetrating without being impenetrable, humanly compassionate without being morally compromising, legally realistic without being legally positivistic, instructed by cognate disciplines without being determined by them, informed by tradition without being enslaved by it. . . .

"Abortion, therefore, is a severe testing ground for moral reflection, probably a paradigm of the way we will face other problems in the future. Many of us are bone-weary of the subject, but we cannot afford to indulge this fatigue." Agreed. Step one for recovery: throw away all bumper stickers on both sides.—*Commonweal*. **TT**



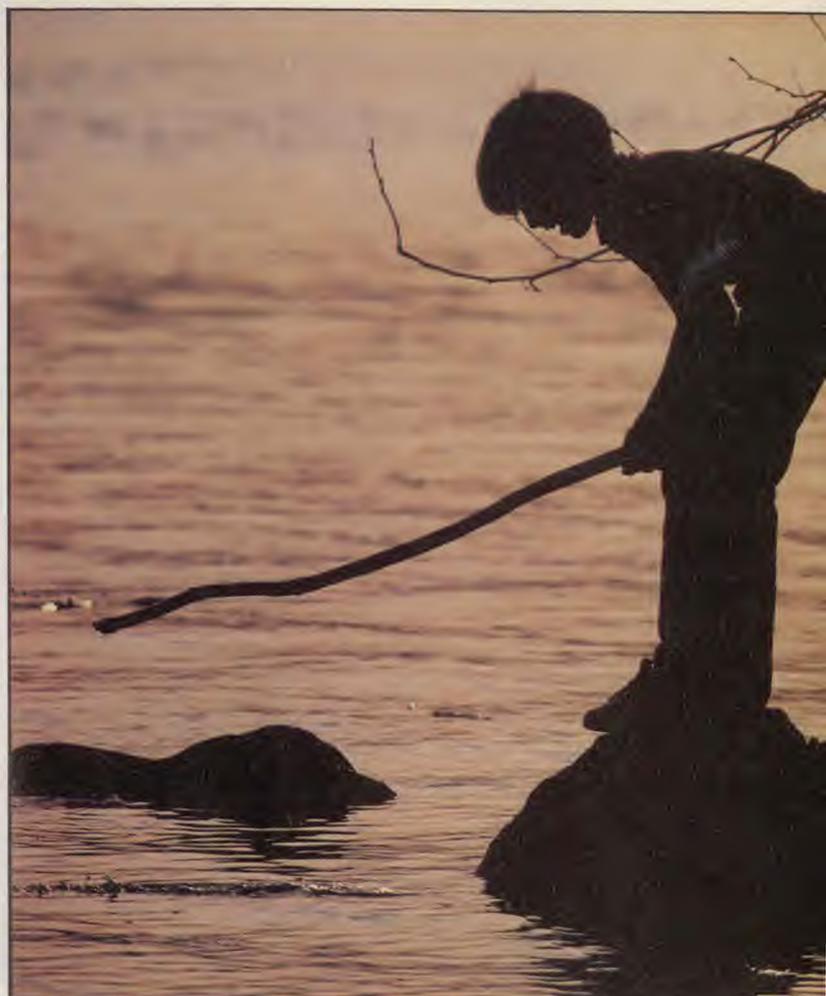
Learn How to Be Like a

Learn from children that the magic elixir for perpetual youth lies hidden within each one of us. We have to discover how to let it grow and blossom.

It seems that many of us are searching for the "fountain of youth"—the magic secret that will enable us to live a full and long life. With happiness and longevity as a goal, we place emphasis on special diets, supplements, exotic foods, or exercise.

Yet few seem to have looked deep enough to understand that the secret to living a quality life full of aliveness and satisfaction comes from within: through our

Susan Smith Jones is a fitness and health instructor to students, staff, and faculty at the University of California at Los Angeles. She travels nationwide as an in-demand television and radio guest and professional speaker. © 1982 by Susan Smith Jones.



Child

BY SUSAN SMITH JONES

personal relationship with the Lord and through our attitude, our expression, our thoughts, and how we view ourselves and the world around us.

Often we find someone whom we respect, look up to, and whom we may aspire to emulate. It is my belief that next to Jesus, the most fully involved and highly functioning people in this world are young children; they are forever my inspiration and teachers.

Children have qualities that I feel are the key ingredients necessary to experience life to its fullest. I am reminded of this when reading the words of Jesus: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever



shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10:15).

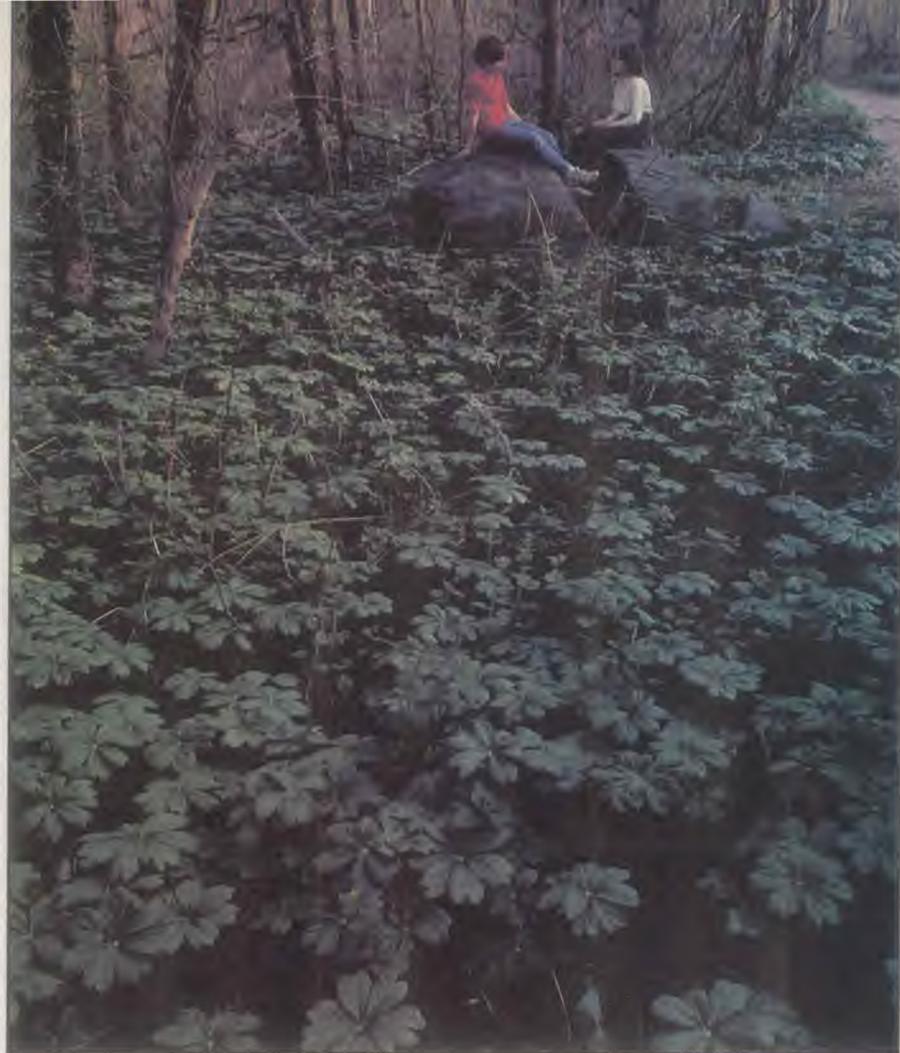
Children represent and typify total aliveness, the joy of living. The precious moments I've had to spend with young children have brought me more valuable lessons and wisdom than any books I have read or classroom situations I have experienced. The richness of these lessons has made my life full and exciting. The qualities and characteristics of children are ones that I am often working to emulate every day.

Think for a minute about your experiences of being around very young children. How have you seen them? Weren't they cheerful, alert, eager, trusting, and open? Weren't they energetic, caring, sensitive, friendly, and inquisitive? And weren't they also quite enthusiastic, playful, expressive, spontaneous, and natural? Weren't they incredibly lovable and innocently loving? From my point of view, these natural childlike qualities are the true essences of life; they're magic, and essential for total aliveness.

As children grow older they often fall under the neurotic influences of modeled adulthood and society. They become literally programmed by outside influences that tend to suppress their naturally beautiful and special qualities. Yet I've observed that most very young children are still unfettered by cultural impositions and are able to handle everyone and every situation with a sort of magic—a magic of involvement, enthusiasm, and spontaneity!

In fact, I believe that a "child" lies dormant in every one of us and that the normal and intended state of each person is to be healthy, magical, and childlike. As it says in the Bible, be "as a little child."

Think back to your own childhood for a moment. Do you remember those magical moments when every day seemed like a lifetime, when every day and situation seemed exciting and wonderful? As a child, weren't you totally fascinated and involved with your present moments, not only in your world outside but the



Do you remember those magical moments as a child when every day seemed like a lifetime, when every situation possessed a magic all its own?



myriad of worlds created within you as well?

Weren't you so spontaneous, curious, and focused on each new event taking place before you that you were often oblivious to what transpired an hour earlier and rarely thought about what might transpire an hour or so later? In a way, didn't an hour seem almost like a lifetime away?

Actually, each moment was a rainbow because you made it just that way. You had the magic ability to let go of pressures and potential problems, approaching each one of life's hurdles by giving yourself permission to experience, to enjoy, and to become totally involved—to just *let go!*

I believe that we are "as young as we think," as the saying goes, and that this fountain of youth lies within each of us. All we have to do to get in touch with this fountain is simply to let ourselves shine each and every day as children do. This is not to say that we have to give up our adulthood in order to stay young and alive. Blending both the child and the adult together is the real magic. It's a matter of experiencing a new, fresh attitude about life and yourself in order to integrate both the child and the adult within you.

One way of achieving this blend is to spend more time around young children. If you don't have any of your own, find a way to be with some at least once each week. You might do volunteer work or choose to baby-sit in order to share those special moments with children. Children have a way of revealing much to you about yourself if you allow yourself to be open to them. They're like mirrors, reflecting back to you many, many things.

Children are excellent teachers, too. Oftentimes when I am at a gathering of both adults and children, I prefer to spend most of my time with the children. Have you ever felt that way? (And what about this issue of senility? Maybe senility comes about when older people get tired of acting so old and begin to act like children again. Then everyone thinks they've gone crazy.)

Seven roads to childlikeness. I would like to share with you seven roads to the fountain of aliveness that I experience in children as pure magic and which I aspire to emulate. See how each one of these seven roads fits in with your attitudes about yourself and about life:

1. *Being all that you can be.*

To me, this is the greatest gift we can give to each other, and children illustrate this principle effectively. Being all that you can be means to be real, sensitive, honest, willing to express feelings, and vulnerable. When we're being who we are, we don't wear masks of pretentiousness and artificiality.

Children exhibit this quality when they meet a new friend. In about five minutes, children relate like lifetime friends—honest, open, and real with each other.

Compare this approach to when you meet someone new. How do you respond? Are you untrusting, cool and reserved, pretentious, nervous, doubting, or suspicious? If you are suspicious or untrusting toward others, realize that this probably relates to your own suspicions and doubts about yourself. Children and adults reflect their individual attitudes and feelings about themselves. The ability to trust lies in your mind and is expressed through your attitude. If you think the world is rotten, your world *will be* rotten. If you think everyone is out to get or use you, that's exactly the kind of people you will attract to yourself. Our thoughts have an influence on our circumstances.

2. *Ability to dream creatively.*

Creative dreaming is a healthy experience for both children and adults. Creative dreaming, while being kept in perspective, provides a practical escape from the pressures of everyday living; it precludes boredom and enhances creativity. Dreaming can create your reality, because, in actual fact, all your present realities started with thoughts and dreams.

Children have that magic ability of no-limit thinking and dreaming. Anything and everything is possible to those who believe, and

children know this better than anyone! They possess limitless dreams and goals and express their aspirations fully.

It saddens me when I hear parents telling their children that it's silly to make up fantasies about their friends, about animals, or about their special trips out of the universe, when this process is such an important part of their youth and future success in life.

3. *Living the moment.* This principle is quite different from living *for* the moment, and living the moment is one of the incredible qualities I observe in young children all the time. It's amazing to me that children allow themselves to get totally involved and focused in every situation. Granted, their attention span might not be that long, but they are still able to center on whatever is taking place in their lives at the moment. If they're eating, they are involved with that; if they're talking of playing with a friend or a toy, their mind focuses completely on that. They are able to make whatever is happening to them at the moment OK.

Because children don't expect too much, they aren't often disappointed. Eager, enthusiastic, energetic, and playful, they have the ability to make even the most mundane chore or task incredibly exciting and special. Children, too, are especially accepting. Their curiosity, flexibility, and inquisitiveness aid in their enjoyment of the moment.

When you've been around children, have you noticed that they're willing to try anything at a moment's notice, and even though they might have experienced that same task before, they'll express wide-eyed excitement and wonderment nonetheless? This phenomenon stems from the fact that children don't use a yardstick comparing this time with the last time they played the same game. Each event is new and exciting.

Children are spontaneous; this is a quality adults too quickly repress. Don't plan your calendar minute by minute. Stop being obsessed with perfection and orderliness and leave room for flexibility in your life. Be

spontaneous again. Permit yourself to experience the excitement of discovery and the ability to learn from everything and everyone. Play at the game of life!

4. Being afraid of making mistakes or failing. Failure is only a word and has no power other than that which you may give it. Children, still young, haven't really learned the adult meaning of the word *failure* and thus have the desire to "go for it" most of the time. They take risks in life because they intuitively know that to risk is to learn and grow. The greater the risk, the greater the benefit.

It is this lack of fear in children that shines in their spontaneity, curiosity, and ever-present enthusiasm. This freedom from fear of failure in children rubs off on their magic gift of not needing approval from others. I see many adults who live their lives to please other people, thus never experience true aliveness.

Have you ever watched children learn to ride a bike? They try again and again, falling, getting up, and starting over, no matter how many times it takes, because they are not trying to prove anything to anyone else. They don't need others' approval for the most part and aren't afraid of failing repeatedly in order to accomplish their goal.

5. Acceptance of the world just as it is. What we resist in life, we draw to ourselves. Since children don't usually resist, they experience just what they want to most of the time. Children are incredibly accepting and have the unique ability to take things as they come, dealing with them according to what seems to be appropriate or what makes the most sense at the time. They change what can be changed.

In adulthood, we face many challenges that we wish might be different—things like world hunger, environmental pollution, and high gasoline prices. We can get involved, and often do, but many times, no matter what we do, things don't change fast enough. But the key here is to get involved while trying to keep a

clear perspective of the situation. Do this without getting angry at the world or situations for having difficult challenges associated with them. As the saying goes, "Lord, give me the strength to change those things that can be changed, the patience to accept those things that cannot be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Too many adults take themselves so seriously that they've forgotten how to look at the bright side of life.

Children seem to have a natural understanding of this.

6. Happiness, laughter, and smiles. Children are the happiest people I know, and I just love to be around them. Think about the adults you like to be with the most and I'll bet they are genuinely happy, positive people.

Children are special in this way. They intuitively realize that happiness is an attitude they create. That's why children often act silly and cheery. They frequently make jokes. They know how to cultivate a sense of humor, which, from my perspective, is one of the most important qualities of aliveness and health.

Too many adults take themselves so seriously that they've forgotten how to look at the bright side of things. As Norman Cousins says in his excellent book *The Anatomy of an Illness*, "Laughter is the best medicine." You don't always have to be orderly, rigid, serious, and "adultlike." Learn to laugh, especially at yourself! Learn to have fun and be a little silly and crazy. In other words, lighten up. When you do this, the whole world will seem brighter and more beautiful. Children know this well.

7. Unconditional love. This principle ranks right up there at the top of the list; to me, it is the most precious quality within all of us. A child's love is the perfect example of this magical, God-given quality. Love is an unlimited source of energy in this world and serves as the basic

foundation of all life. It's the thread through which we are all connected, children and adults alike, around the world. Along with love come the beautiful gifts of softness, tenderness, and forgiveness.

Have you noticed that children quickly forget their anger and forgive others if they've been hurt,

letting go of grudges? Children accept you totally for your good points, and not-so-good points, too. They don't care about differences in people—about different races, religions, or backgrounds. They just love. And in exchange, they are lovable, for that's exactly what they attract to themselves. We attract to ourselves the equivalent of that which we express. Children are prepared to accept people as people, and even if offended or hurt, children will come back to forgive and love over and over again.

I feel that in a world where so much conflict exists between people of different religions, races, and backgrounds, the best bridge to understanding and peace is laughter and love. And children know this better than anyone in this world. Just watch them. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14).

So if you want the fountain of youth, the kingdom of God, play at the game of life, let the child within you blossom, and give yourself permission to experience life to its fullest. Remember how to dream, strive to conquer the fear of failure, and learn to accept certain things about the world. Laugh a lot, and love unconditionally. Learn from the children that the magic elixir for perpetual youth lies within every one of us. Let children teach you that each day is a brand new rainbow full of love, happiness, and wonderment.

THE INITIATION



BY WILLIAM G. JOHNSON

As Jimmy entered the dingy workroom of the Los Angeles winery he saw the gun and the dagger lying crossed on the long wooden table. Thirty men stood around the table; thirty pairs of eyes focused on him as he took his place. He had come for the initiation.

The men joined hands. One of them began to recite the rules in a Sicilian dialect. Jimmy could not

understand the words, but he knew well the code of silence they enjoined. As a member of the group, he would be bound for life, and any breach of secrecy would bring death at the hands of one of his colleagues. Then the dagger was taken from the table; Jimmy's finger was pricked. He kissed each of his new brothers on the cheek—now he was one of them—a "man of respect," a member of La Cosa Nostra.

The rites of that pleasant

evening in 1948 launched Jimmy Fratianno on a Mafia career spanning three decades. Gambling schemes, business rackets, murders on contract—his conscience seemed passionless. He alternated between prison terms and periods of freedom during which he rose steadily in the Mafia hierarchy. Federal investigators knew him as Jimmy the Weasel. But in 1977, after learning about a contract on his own life, he sold himself to the Government for

protection. Self-interest prevailed over the code of silence sworn to in the Los Angeles winery.

In one form or another the ceremony that initiated Jimmy Fratianno into La Cosa Nostra has a host of parallels, both ancient and modern. In England, famous public (that is, private) schools subject new boys to fagging, which means that they act as servants to the upper classmen. In the United States hazing practices induct new students into school life. Entry into organizations such as the Freemasons calls for submission to secret rites that reach back to medieval times.

Anciently the initiation marked the turning points in the course of life. The onset of puberty, the achievement of status as a warrior, marriage—each was accompanied by ceremonies fixed by the tribe or the culture. In modified form these rites survive in the *bar mitzvah*, the debutante party, the coming-of-age celebration, the graduation (still called the "commencement"), and, of course, the wedding ceremony.

Jimmy Fratianno entered that dingy room as one person; he left as another. His identity was modified in a particular way: the initiation gave him a group personality in addition to the personality he had brought that evening. He had new rights, new privileges, access to new information—and new obligations and responsibilities.

Initiations always change the individual in such ways. We come to the club, the school, the marriage altar a single person; we leave with a corporate identity as well as an individual one. Perhaps that is why initiation ceremonies in the past involved pain and hardship.

Ceremonies of religion. Not surprisingly, many religions have prescribed initiation rites for those who would seek to gain entry.

William Johnsson wrote his Ph.D. dissertation at Vanderbilt University on "Purgation and Defilement in the Book of Hebrews." He is presently associate editor of the Adventist Review, Washington, D.C. He is author of The Great Physician, Religion in Overalls, and In Absolute Confidence. © 1982 by William G. Johnsson.

They have set forth ceremonies that lead the devotee into a new standing with Deity and give him fellowship among those who have attained this standing.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, several such religions invaded the Graeco-Roman world. Originating in the East, they led the seeker through ceremonies at times lasting several days and calling for purification, fasting, meditation, contemplation of colorful scenes and passionate dramas depicting the dying and rising again of the god with the changing seasons. Often, as in the case of modern cults such as the Moonies or the Ananda Marga, the initiate was given a new name. These religions, known collectively, as the "mysteries," demanded strict secrecy on the part of those who had passed through the rites.

The "mystery" religions were Christianity's biggest rival for the allegiance of men and women during the first few centuries of our era. But Christianity itself, while differing substantially from the "mysteries," also prescribed an initiation. Would-be followers of Jesus Christ were called to participate in a distinct, public ceremony that was the gateway from the former life to the new relationship with Christ. The ceremony followed a defined form, centering in a public confession on the part of the person wanting to become a Christian and a particular act.

What was this rite of initiation into early Christianity? We know it as baptism.

For many people today baptism has very little significance. It is no more than an act growing out of church tradition and administered to infants, who have no comprehension of what is happening. Thousands of men and women who as babes were held by a priest or minister and sprinkled with the water of baptism derive no particular meaning from their experience. They had passed through a formal rite, nothing more.

But baptism meant much to the early Christians. It served as a public witness to a conscious,

deliberate decision to step out from the pagan environment and identify oneself with the little band of Christians who worshiped Jesus, the crucified One, as the Messiah.

The rite itself was simple but distinctive. It required that the person desiring baptism renounce all other gods, probably by making the public confession, "I believe that Jesus is Lord." This is why Paul wrote to the Romans: "If you confess . . . that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).^{*} Following the confession, the initiate was totally immersed in water as the minister proclaimed the threefold name—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—over him.

Thus, early Christian baptism clearly was an initiation. It initiated the man or woman, boy or girl, into fellowship with Jesus; it initiated him into a new way of life in the world; it initiated him into the body of like believers, the church. The apostle Paul wrote: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

So the first Christians didn't consider baptism a casual ceremony or an optional one. Jesus Himself had set His seal on the importance of the rite by entering into the baptism of John the Baptist—even though the latter protested that the roles should be reversed (Matthew 3:13-17). Further, the risen Lord had given His disciples their "marching orders": "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Accordingly, when the crowds

Those who receive baptism according to the New Testament pattern pass through an initiation that opens up a future without end—eternity.



in Jerusalem who had come for Pentecost heard the preaching of Peter and, cut to the quick, cried out, "What shall we do?" he replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:37, 38). This pattern—preaching, conviction, repentance, baptism—was repeated over and over in the book of Acts. For had not the Master, Jesus Himself, declared: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)?

The data from the New Testament seems inescapable: baptism was the initiation into Christianity. It was a prescribed ritual, consciously entered into, marking one's public decision to throw his lot behind Jesus, the Messiah. Not that the rite in and of itself had special power—the water in which one was immersed possessed no regenerating influence. Already,

before presenting oneself for baptism, the heart had been convicted of sin, and faith in Jesus as the Saviour of the world had been awakened by the Holy Spirit. But baptism *was* important—for the individual and for the onlooking Christians. It made outward and public what so far had been inward and private. It opened the door to new life in Christ and in the church.

Nearly 20 centuries have rolled by since Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, presented Himself at the Jordan for John to baptize Him. During those centuries the rite of baptism, once the initiation into the religion of Jesus, has largely been eclipsed. As Christianity has become popular and people are "born" as Christians, the rite of passage into Christianity has degenerated into a form.

But no one is really "born" a Christian. Each true Christian is born *again*, or he is no Christian. God has no grandchildren—only children!

That is why, in these days, many men and women are rediscovering the rite of baptism. They want to enter into it deliberately, consciously, like the early Christians. They want to be immersed, as Jesus was. They want their religion to be more than a form—they want to be active, Spirit-filled followers of Jesus Christ.

Jimmy the Weasel saw the gun and the dagger. He joined hands with the other thirty. He heard the code of silence. His finger was pricked with the dagger. He kissed each man present. He was initiated—into three decades of crime!

Those who are baptized according to the New Testament pattern also pass through an initiation. But for them opens up a future—not thirty years, not fifty years, but an eternity—of new life, joy, and fellowship. **Tr**

* The texts in this article are from The Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973.

When tragedy strikes, many people feel uncertain what they should do to help the bereaved. The advice given by this author will provide some new insights in what to do.

BY VIRGINIA EVANSEN

4 SECRETS OF LENDING A HELPING HAND

"Let me know if there's anything I can do to help." How often have you said those words to someone bereaved, ill, or in trouble? Has the response been a Thank you and silence? Have you then watched friends and relatives

Virginia Evansen is a free-lance writer living in Mountain Home, Arkansas. She is co-author of Organizations, Clubs, Action Groups. Her articles have appeared in such periodicals as Home Life, Scholastic, Healthways, and Young World. © 1982 by Virginia Evansen.

struggle through a bad situation while you stood on the sidelines thinking, Perhaps I could help if they would only tell me what to do? Maybe what you need is to learn how to lend a helping hand.

A few months ago an elderly man I know suffered a concussion and chest injuries in an automobile accident. His retired son arrived the next morning, spent a few hours assuring himself that his father was going to recover, then

left for his home two hundred miles away after saying, "Let me know if there's anything I can do to help."

The injured man lived alone and raised pigs because he wanted to keep active. His neighbor, hearing about the accident, arranged for the animals to be fed morning and evening. Then she went to the hospital to assure her friend that he need not worry about his pigs, that they were being fed.

1 LOOK FOR THE IMMEDIATE NEED

This neighbor's action demonstrates the first secret of lending a helping hand. She looked for the immediate need, in this case someone to feed the pigs, and took care of it without being asked. The immediate need can be caring for animals, children, or aged parents living in a home where tragedy strikes. It can be as complicated as finding shelter for a

family whose home has burned or as simple as the act of answering the telephone in a house where a death has occurred.

A friend of mine told me that upon arriving at the family home the day after her father-in-law had died suddenly, she was appalled to discover that her distraught, grieving mother-in-law was trying to cope with a constantly ringing

telephone, even though other relatives were in the house. The daughter-in-law immediately took over the telephone, explaining to callers that she would relay their messages. She kept a careful record to give the widow later.

Shortly after moving into a housing development in California, I discovered I was pregnant. A few weeks later my

doctor ordered me to bed in an attempt to prevent a miscarriage. A neighbor learned from our children that I was ill. She rang the doorbell, introduced herself to my husband, and asked about our problem. My husband explained the situation and said he was trying to find household help without success.

"Give me a key," the neighbor answered. "I'll bring lunch, look in a couple of times a day, and keep the children after school. Your wife can phone me if she needs help at any other time." I haven't seen that woman for a number of years, but I'll always remember the cheerful smile on her face as she brought my luncheon tray. I'll always be grateful that she recognized our need for immediate help and that she gave it, even though we were strangers.



"While you're in the hospital, I'll look after your animals."

2 FILL THE NEED

The second secret of lending a helping hand is to look for and fill the downstream need. All too often we send flowers and cards, bring funeral meals, pay calls, and supply transportation to friends and neighbors immediately after they have suffered a tragedy. We tend to forget that they may need help a few days, weeks, or even months, later.

When the neighbor of the elderly man discovered that his injuries included several broken ribs, she ordered a load of wood delivered to his door. She knew that he cut the wood himself for his stove, his only source of heat. Realizing that his injuries would prevent him from doing this, she took care of a downstream need.

Sometimes we can lend a helping hand by simply listening. Giving a friend the opportunity to talk freely about a tragedy or problem can help assuage that person's pain.

Jan, a close friend of mine, lost her 7-year-old son, Peter, when a



"You're the only one who will let me talk about Peter," Jan said, her eyes watering.

bus hit the bike he was riding. A number of the neighborhood children, including my own, witnessed the accident, and it was a tragedy for all of us. Both before and after the funeral, friends and

neighbors did everything they could to help the family.

Several months later I dropped by to have lunch with Jan. She started talking about the children. She recalled the hours we'd spent at the pool watching Peter and my same-aged daughter learn to swim. "Remember, we thought they'd never get across the pool? Their arms and legs went seventeen different directions," she said with a laugh. Her smile turned watery. "You're the only one who will let me talk about Peter," she continued. "Everyone else changes the subject when I mention his name. It's as if they think I should forget that he ever lived. That makes his death even worse."

I realized that Jan's downstream need was to talk about her dead son. She wasn't morbid, and she didn't dwell on the accident, but she yearned to keep his memory bright by recalling events resulting from his quirky sense of humor and uncoordinated arms and legs.

3 LISTEN FOR AN APPEAL

The third secret is to listen for an indirect appeal for assistance. All too often the words, "I'll be all right; I can manage," can mean, "I sure could use some help, but I don't want to ask for fear you'll think I'm imposing on you."

My elderly friend's son returned for a visit four days after the man's release from the hospital. Both drivers had been given citations after the accident, and the father had to appear in court. He explained this to his son, adding the date and time.

"Maybe I should go to court with you," the son answered. "Let me know if there's anything I can do."

"He wouldn't have said 'maybe' if he'd meant it," the father said later in a bitter voice. "I told him the date and time. He should have known I'd have liked him with me. Besides, he knew my truck had been totaled and that I needed transportation."

Later the son said to his father's neighbor, "I'd do anything for Dad, but he won't let me help him." Obviously, there was a



"He knew my truck had been totaled and that I needed transportation."

breakdown in communication. The father's pride in his ability to live independently prevented him from making a direct appeal for the moral support he'd have

welcomed during his court appearance. However, the son should have recognized the unspoken plea.

4 BE SINCERE

Sincerity is the fourth secret of helping. Too often we use the "Let me know" phrase as a sop to our own conscience. After all, we've offered to help. It's not our fault if pride or fear of imposing prevents our friends or relatives from asking for aid.

If the offer doesn't come from the heart, it might be better to say, "I'm sorry to hear of your misfortune," rather than mouth an empty platitude. If we sincerely want to lend a helping hand, then we should look for immediate and downstream needs and listen for indirect appeals for assistance. **T**



Too often pride and fear of imposing prevent our friends or relatives from asking for the help they need.



“Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep . . .” —Heather’s Story

Heather Brobeck didn't choose to go to sleep. What she chose that Monday afternoon in September, 1977, was to ride her banana bike. But a freak accident tore her from the bicycle and sent her crashing

Some people shrink from the thought of little Heather and her odyssey. Others call it a tragedy. As her father, I have a different viewpoint.

headfirst to the concrete.

An ambulance rushed the unconscious 8-year-old girl to the hospital, where she underwent brain surgery.

No one predicted that she would make it through that first night. But when the next morning came, Heather had made it. She was still unconscious, but sleeping peacefully. She continued to sleep.

Some people shrink from the

David Brobeck is a free-lance writer living in Santa Ana, California. © 1982 by David Brobeck. Reprints of this article are available by writing to American Tract Society, P.O. Box 402008, Garland, Texas 75040.

BY DAVID BROBECK

thought of Heather and her odyssey. Others call it a tragedy. As her father, I have a different viewpoint. To me, Heather's story is a triumph.

An eventful Saturday. The Saturday before the accident two things happened that became especially meaningful.

That day we went on a family excursion to the San Diego Zoo . . . a delightful time. It was a treasured day we will never forget.

The second event centered around a couples' meeting in Newport Beach. The speaker was one of the survivors of that terrifying crash of two jumbo jets in the Canary Islands.

Nearly six hundred persons died in that runway collision. In the midst of all the death, fire, and explosion, this man, a Christian, remembered praying, "God, I stand on Your Word. I stand on Your Word."

When he finished telling his story that night, he added: "Everyone has a date with tragedy. For me it was a plane crash. For you it will probably be something else. But when that 'plane crash' comes into your life, as a Christian remember to stand on the promises of God."

We were all impressed with his story. I acknowledged his words with a nod. However, it was hard in that comfortable living room to feel threatened. Especially for me. Everything had always gone right for me. As a youngster growing up in Los Angeles, I had just about everything.

In high school I was senior class president. Then it was on to the University of Southern California, fraternity life, and competitive skiing.

A sense of emptiness. However, I ended that freshman year dissatisfied. A strange void invaded my life. I knew I desperately needed some direction.

I realized that I was a sinful being, because the Bible says, "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).^{*} The Bible goes on to point out that "the wages of sin is death, but the

gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "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).

Realizing this was God's provision for my life, I prayed to God, confessing that I was a sinner, and I asked Jesus to come into my life. He did. He covered my sins as a result of His death on the cross long ago.

Suddenly things began to happen in my life. I changed my major and headed for law school.

And I met a very special girl. We dated for a couple of years, became engaged, and then were married.

Back when I met her, she was Miss Newport Beach. Later she became Miss California runner-up.

She did some part-time acting and also a number of TV commercials. Residuals from those commercials put me through law school. And along the way we had three beautiful kids. Holly came first. Three years later came Heather. And another three years after Heather came David.

So while the man's words that night at the couples' club made sense to me intellectually, I never would have believed our "plane crash" was only two days away.

A sudden change. The next Monday started routinely for me. While making arrangements for relocation to a new office, I picked up the phone as always and called Gay at home to see how she and the kids were doing.

While we were talking, I suddenly heard a voice in the background. I didn't recognize the voice, but the words were chillingly clear. "Heather's been hit by a car."

It seemed like a bad dream. I couldn't believe it was happening. Next I heard the sound of sirens over the phone.

I raced out of the office and jumped into my car. As I headed my car down the freeway toward the South Laguna Hospital, where I knew they'd take her, I felt sure it was more than just a broken leg.

While trying to deal with this new rush of emotion, suddenly it

hit me: This is our "plane crash."

Before long the thought entered my mind: I've got to stand on God's promises. I began remembering some special verses from the Bible reassuring me of God's presence no matter what came into my life.

Suddenly I had a peace and clarity that I would have thought impossible in such a crisis situation. In a few minutes the ambulance pulled up, and the attendants lifted Heather, unconscious, out of the vehicle.

Shortly, a neurosurgeon appeared in the waiting room. He told us bluntly that Heather had a very serious head injury. "If we're going to have a chance to save her, we need to operate immediately."

The battle was on to save Heather's life. I felt a real peace. But medically speaking, it looked very bad.

Heather almost died on the operating table. She stopped breathing several times. Her pulse almost disappeared.

One of the nurses called the recovery room and told them, "This little girl isn't going to make it." Later, she called back to say, "She's hanging on. You'd better get something ready after all."

At the end of the surgery they took her to intensive care.

The long sleep begins. The little 8-year-old had begun her long sleep. We all knew she had a long, tough challenge ahead of her. One doctor explained that "maybe 10 percent survive" a total craniectomy such as Heather had.

Heather has survived. God has worked through a great medical team to deal with every problem that has occurred. And on occasion He has simply worked on His own, clearing up a condition with no medical explanation.

Along the way we have had our own special problems. One involved the matter of paying \$300,000 in hospital costs over the following sixteen months. The accident came at a seemingly inopportune time as far as insurance was concerned.

That September our law firm was in the process of dissolving. We had all wanted to pursue

^{*} The scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973.

different interests. So we dissolved our partnership as of August 31.

When this accident happened, I went into the waiting room with the belief that I had zero coverage.

Upon checking, I found that a secretary who handled the payment of insurance premiums had unintentionally made a double payment in August. So the bar association hospital plan had extended our policy through September, thus covering Heather's hospital costs up to \$500,000.

So you can see why I don't view Heather's experience as just a tragic accident. It has been one miracle after another.

Heather comes home. We had a special room addition for Heather built on our house, and she finally did come home to us on January 31, 1979—506 days after her accident. It was a great moment when we all welcomed her . . . Gay, Holly, David, Mopsy (our dog), and I.

Over the past year and a half I have watched Heather move from completely comatose to semicomatose. It's hard to accept her being so limited. But we dwell on the progress, however small.

Little things represent Olympic-sized achievements. She doesn't talk yet. She's still bedridden. But she does certain things on command. Her eyesight is good, and her hearing is excellent. Her expression is changing, and she recognizes people.

I know. One night I gathered Heather into my arms and settled the two of us into the rocking chair. As I rocked her slowly, I looked into her distant face.

Suddenly I realized her eyes were focusing on me. "I love you, Heather," I said softly.

Her eyes brightened briefly; I could almost imagine that she smiled. Then she closed her eyes once more.

Contentedly . . . she slept.

We still have a long way to go, but God is faithful. Only He can provide the peace that passes understanding in the face of trials such as this. That same peace can be yours, if you will put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Saviour. **TT**



Since Then

Heather continues to improve slowly from her brain injury, far beyond where the doctors said she would ever come. Although she cannot as yet communicate verbally, her eyes are open and responsive to the voices and sounds around her. God continues to strengthen our family—as long as we stand on His Word rather than relying upon our own resources. He has truly met all our needs as the Scripture says, "according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." As miraculous as Heather's progress has been, equally supernatural has been the absolute peace that the Lord has provided. He has used Heather's situation to bring many people into a relationship with Him—and He's not finished yet! He has given us the faith to believe in Heather's complete healing. We see her as whole—running and laughing on the beach she loved so much.

MAKING PATHS FOR THE WORLD TO FOLLOW

I was quite upset when I read the letter in the Response column (January issue) from a woman on the subject of reading about sex everywhere. I agreed with Mrs. Wade about reading articles on sex in most magazines and newspapers. But in my opinion, the articles on sex in this magazine are very helpful to me.

I'm an 18-year-old high school senior, and THESE TIMES writes about handling the pressure from people who insist on sex. They give subjective views on birth control and try to inform parents on how to go about talking and teaching sex (and the facts that surround it) to their children. Today parents need all the help they can get.

This magazine has given me new ideas on how to deal with sex education when I have children. How many magazines try to help parents cope with this? Not many! The articles on sex in this magazine do not hurt children who read them; they only help children to make up their own minds and hopefully lead them to the right decisions.

Again, in my opinion you were wrong, Mrs. Wade. THESE TIMES isn't following the rest of the world. It is making a path for the rest of the world to follow.—Robert E. Smith, Lake City, Florida.

I Love Reading the Magazine

I have a sweet friend who has had THESE TIMES sent to me for quite a while now. I must admit that I would get them and just put them away in a drawer. But

especially in the past few months I have read these magazines quite thoroughly. I have been truly inspired and am looking forward to my next issue. I love reading them. I have given myself to God and truly believe in His every word. I have such a feeling of joy.

These magazines truly keep a person tuned in to many truths about the world and its happenings and most of all about our dear Father, God, and His most loving Son, Jesus. I am longing to be with them on that last special day to come. I find myself every day longing to gather more and more knowledge and wisdom from our Lord, almighty and precious. For without Him life would not be worth living.

Thank you, Irene MacAdams, for being such a loving and caring friend. You have truly led me to the Lord. And a big Thank you to THESE TIMES.—Linda Leger, Leominster, Massachusetts.

More About Pornography

In reply to Richard Lewis, Jr.'s letter on his approval of pornography (February, 1982, issue), may I state that I was a correctional counselor for thirty-three years in California prisons, including San Quentin and Soledad. My job was to interview all inmates on my caseload when they first came to the prison and during their stay in prison. I would also prepare a sociological report for the prisoner's parole hearing and at times "clerk" the board. These reports

included his progress in prison and his background. I also conducted the parole classes at Soledad prison for over twenty years. I believe this makes me qualified to answer Mr. Lewis's letter.

Of the thousands of interviews I had with inmates, many were committed as a result of sex crimes. Of those committed on sex crimes I would guess about 90 percent admitted they had read and seen pornography before committing sex deviation, child molestation, and related crimes. Many inmates told me that after viewing this smut they desired to see and feel "the real thing" and then would attack the victim.

This does not mean that everyone, after seeing pornography, would be involved in a sex crime, but those who were weak in discipline would. Pornography is degrading, immoral, and un-Christian.—Joe Sveinsson, retired prison counselor, now mayor of Gonzales, California.

Thanks, Joe, for that confirmation of our editorial position.—Editors.

Found You in a Hospital

I just want to tell you what a terrific job you are doing by putting your *very well-written* magazines in hospitals. I was waiting for my dear husband to be operated on at Kettering Medical Center and saw your magazine in a rack in the waiting room. It was very interesting and helped to relieve the long waiting

anxiety. I made up my mind to write to thank you and ask for the magazine I have checked.—Mrs. Everett Townsley, Dayton, Ohio.

Keep This Type of Article Coming

I am writing in reference to one of your articles, "Smiles in the Mailbox" (January issue). I appreciated this article very much; it came when I needed a lift in my day.

In reading this article I found that I agree with all that it says. To cheer others' lives and to put love into their lives can also give us a satisfied feeling of happiness. And as the article said they don't have to know who wrote it.

In my own life I have found that making others happy makes me even more happy. Because I feel like I am helping the Lord reach out to those who need some ray of sunshine in their day.

I hope that you continue putting articles of this type in your magazine, because it lifted my day and I think it would lift other people's lives at times when they need it most.—Janet L. Turner, Collegedale, Tennessee.

Keeps Me Going

Your magazine keeps me going. I don't know who began my subscription. Whoever it was, he should realize that it is the best magazine I've ever received.—Marcia Angelo, Burner, Maine.

Address all correspondence for this column to: Letters to the Editor, THESE TIMES, 6856 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.

BETWEEN THE LINES

MAKE TODAY COUNT

Orville Kelly's family nearly disintegrated in depression when they learned he had lymphoma, which was diagnosed as cancerous. Eventually, however, the Kellys set about to "Make Today Count," a slogan that became the name for a network of sixty self-help groups of families beset with terminal illness. (There is also a book with that title by Kelly published by Delacorte Press.) Kelly came up with ten excellent suggestions on how to live with a terminal illness:

1. Talk about the illness. If it is cancer, call it cancer. You can't make life normal again by trying to hide what is wrong.

2. Accept death as a part of life. It is.

3. Consider each day as another day of life, a gift from God to be enjoyed as fully as possible.

4. Realize that life is never going to be perfect. It wasn't before, and it won't be now.

5. Pray. It isn't a sign of weakness; it is your strength.

6. Learn to live with your illness instead of considering yourself dying from it. We are all dying in some manner.

7. Put your friends and relatives at ease yourself. If you don't want pity, don't ask for it.

8. Make all practical arrangements for funerals, wills, et cetera, and make certain your family understands them.

9. Set new goals; realize your limitations. Sometimes the simple things of life become the most enjoyable.



10. Discuss your problems with your family as they occur. Include the children if possible. After all, your problem is not an individual one.

It seems Kelly has something to say to all of us. We're all dying. From the moment we took our first breath, we began a struggle destined to end in the grave. We have three score years and ten, more or less, then death. What shall we do with the time that remains to us—be it short or long?

"Make today count," advises Kelly. The Bible says, "Work . . . while it is

day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).—K.J.H.

Reasonably Sweet

I don't know who composed the following prayer, but someone in a moment of rare insight put together a classic statement about growing old gracefully. Perhaps a reader can come up with the authentic writer of the piece. If so, we'll identify him/her later. Right now, however, sit back, relax, and ruminate upon the challenges to be "reasonably sweet."

"Lord, thou knowest

better than I know myself that I am growing older, and someday will be old. Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and every occasion.

"Release me from the craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details—give me wings to get to the point. I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of others' pains. Help me to endure them with patience.

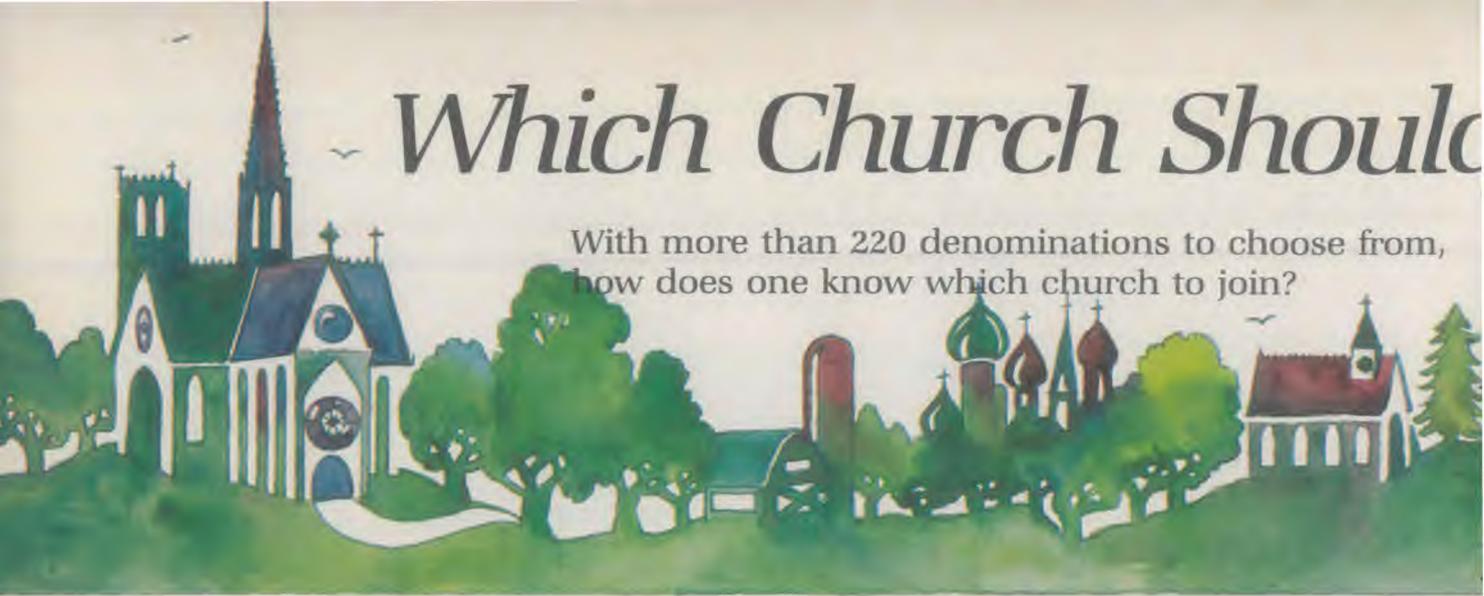
"But seal my lips on my own aches and pains. They are increasing, and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

"Keep me reasonably sweet. I do not want to be a saint—some of them are so hard to live with—but a sour old woman (or man) is one of the crowning works of the devil. Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it, but Thou knowest, Lord, I want a few friends at the end.

"Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people. And give me, Lord, the grace to tell them so.

Amen."—K.J.H.

TJ



Which Church Should

With more than 220 denominations to choose from, how does one know which church to join?

"You might say I met the Master in a foxhole." Jim, a husky veteran of World War II, spoke quietly.

"Our infantry unit was engaged in heavy fighting. I knew God was trying to breach the citadel of my own stubborn mind, because my life was providentially spared so many times. His mercy and persistence won. I flung aside my mental reservations and gave in unconditionally to Jesus Christ.

"What an experience I found in this new relationship! My pocket Testament was precious. As our forces moved from position to position, I read it at every opportunity and in all kinds of places. We—God and I—'walked' through that Book together! In those months of terrible human slaughter I was sustained by a spiritual experience I'll never forget, Frank. Christ was very real to me."

Jim paused and looked thoughtful. "But a surprise awaited me when the war was over and I was discharged from the service. The first question family and friends asked was, 'Well, Jim, now that you are a Christian, what church are you going to join?'"

My friend's face wrinkled into a perplexed expression. "You know, Frank, I was enjoying such a one-to-one experience with my Lord that a question like that had never crossed my mind! I've joined the church around the

corner because of convenience, but thoughts about 'church' still trouble me. What is it all about? Is it really necessary to belong to an organization? Isn't my experience with the Lord all that counts? And why are there so many different expressions of the Christian faith? Can there be such a thing as a 'true' church?"

Jim is not the first to puzzle over the place of the "church" in Christian experience. Many can identify with him. But Christ never intended that union with Him should be at variance to union with the organized church. The same Lord who calls us to discipleship ("Follow me," Matthew 16:24) is also the Founder of the church ("Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," verse 18).

What is church all about? The New Testament answers our question indirectly by describing the church through a variety of figures:

1. **A flourishing grapevine** metaphor draws attention to the vital union that must exist between the Saviour and the church if it is to experience a fruitful existence in the earth (see John 15:1-8).

2. **A functioning body** depicts Christ as "the head"—the Master Intelligence who personally directs and coordinates the movements of the church, His body (see Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22, 23).

3. **A stately temple** denotes the stability of the church and its unifying force. Christ is its never-crumbling foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11) and its uniting cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-22) upon which and into which believers are built as "living stones" (1 Peter 2:4-8, R.S.V.).*

4. **A loving marriage.** The symbol is used in both Old and New Testaments. It highlights the richness and tenderness of God's love with which He has embraced His people (see 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22, 23).

5. **A trusting flock of sheep** picturesquely delineates the dependency of the church—its need for the protection and care of the Divine Shepherd (see John 10:14).

What do these figures tell about the place of the church in Christian experience? In the first place, they focus on Christ's special regard for His people. They are, as it were, a living part of Himself! Can we imagine a vine without branches, a head without a body? Christ and His church are described as two parts of a whole.

Second, they underscore the absolute necessity for the church to be attached to Christ. Sheep without a shepherd are defenseless, victims to every predator. Branches separated from the vine stock can only wither and die. A foundationless temple is certain to collapse.

These Biblical figures never

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* The Scripture quotations marked R.S.V. are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952, © 1971, 1973.

Join?

BY FRANK B. HOLBROOK



foresee the fading of the church from human society. As long as Christ lives, His attached church shall live. He will have a viable body, His appointed agency in the world for the salvation of the human family. Although torn by division and at times compromised by sin and infidelity, it will ever remain the object of His supreme regard.

I must tell Jim, however, that salvation is not by church. That is, we are not saved by merely joining a church group. We receive salvation only by receiving Christ as our personal Saviour and Lord (1 John 2:2). This conversion is what Jim experienced directly through the ministry of the Scriptures under the wooing influence of the Holy Spirit. But it is evident from these descriptive figures that Christ intends for believers to be a part of a church family. An organized fellowship of Christians provides mutual encouragement, nurture for spiritual development, and unity of resources to extend more effectively the Christian witness. Every Christian needs a church home.

The invisible church. The Biblical figures of speech obviously deal with Christ's church in general terms. In fact, the metaphors fit nicely what is sometimes designated the invisible church.

If "the church" is defined broadly as the totality of believers in union with God wherever and in whatever organizations they may be found, then we may

properly speak of an invisible church. The apostle Peter acknowledged as much when he met the centurion Cornelius. The Roman was a worshiper of the true God but was unaware of the further insights of the Christian evangel. "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34, 35, R.S.V.).

Even in the end-time religious confusion and spiritual declension foretold by the Bible prophet under the symbol of "Babylon the Great," God recognizes His true followers. "Come out of her [Babylon], my people," He calls, "lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues" (Revelation 18:4, R.S.V.).

The visible church. But what about Jim's concern about the plethora of Christian churches?

The Hebrew church, which inherited the faith of the godly patriarchs from Adam to Abraham, their immediate ancestor, was a highly visible body of believers. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, referred to Israel en route to Canaan as "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38).

Jesus organized the Christian phase of God's church from a believing remnant in Israel (cf. Romans 11:1-7). He took the first step toward that end early in His ministry when "he ordained twelve" disciples to be with Him (Mark 3:14). Trained by the Saviour, these men eventually

became the first leaders of the infant movement. Christ invested the church He established upon Himself with authority to conduct its affairs and to carry out His commission to it. "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19; see also verses 13-18; 1 Peter 2:4-8).

The commission laid upon the church was the task of announcing throughout the earth the good news (gospel) of salvation from sin through faith in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:45-48). Disciples were to be made from all nations and were to be baptized into the church body (Matthew 28:19, 20; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13). Pentecost witnessed the birthday of the church when thousands of believers were baptized and "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. . . . And the Lord added to the church daily" (Acts 2:42-47). Thus the church Jesus Christ left on earth at His ascension was a visible, organized church with delegated authority and a task to perform.

An important point pertaining to the authority of the visible church should not be overlooked. What did Jesus mean when He verbally handed over to His church "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"? What does this expression mean?

In the first place, the key symbol in Biblical usage connotes authority to rule, that is, authority

to conduct the affairs of the "house" of God or in this instance "the kingdom of heaven" (cf. Isaiah 22:22; Revelation 3:7). In the second place, Biblical usage also relates to the common purpose of keys: to open locked doors or to secure open doors.

In the spiritual realm the "key"

only to contribute to its spread. "They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). The prophetic snapshot of the first-century church is action-filled: a mighty warrior astride a white charger galloping forth "conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2).

Christians must admit with sadness that the faith established by God has splintered over the years.



that opens "the kingdom of heaven" is the "key of knowledge," that is, *saving knowledge* (see Luke 11:52). Since Christ has made His church the "pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15, R.S.V.), it is evident that the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" are the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. These alone contain the saving truths or knowledge which can open heaven to the penitent sinner (see 2 Timothy 3:15; John 6:63).

The authority of the visible, organized church—in whatever form it may appear—does not rest, therefore, in its organizational structure or even in its antiquity, but in its faithfulness to the teachings of the Scriptures. The Word of God must always be prime authority, and final authority, in matters of faith and conscience.

Why so many churches? Under Pentecostal power the church quickly planted itself throughout the Roman empire and beyond its limits. It was a dynamic laymen's movement. Opposition seemed

But there is a darker side to the subsequent nineteen hundred

years of church history. Although the church in every age has been and is the object of divine solicitude (Revelation 1:12-3:22), it is also the focal point of satanic fury and hate (Revelation 12:13). Through subversion from within (Acts 20:29-31; 1 Timothy 4:1), attacks from without (Revelation 12:15), and even through popular courting by the world (cf. Revelation 18:2, 3), Satan has sought to destroy the witness of the church and thus to mute God's voice in the world.

Just as ancient Israel eventually divided into various religious and political entities (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Herodians), so the Christian church under similar pressures splintered. Many factors on the human level have contributed over the centuries to the rending of the body of Christ. Worldliness, compromise with surrounding pagan cultures, open apostasy, doctrinal controversies, political favor as well as interference, to mention but a few, have contributed to the splintering process.

In fact, the apostle Paul himself foretold the massive apostasy that would develop within the

church—a Christian apostasy that would seek to become the ruling force and the moral voice within the "temple of God" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 6:16). His prophecy was tragically fulfilled in the centuries that followed as Christianity and paganism intermingled and spiritual darkness began to eclipse much of the radiance of the original Christian witness.

But the panoramic view of church history sketched by both Scripture and history is not all black. True witnesses have loyally upheld the Word of God in every age. When heretical teachings overturned the faith of some Christians in the time of the apostle Paul, he could write, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19).

From time to time God's Spirit brought about great revivals of faith. The Protestant Reformation was one of those movements that saw a rediscovery and a reaffirmation of the authority of the Holy Scriptures, salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, and the priesthood of every believer—the privilege of every Christian to come directly to God through Christ without an interposing human priesthood.

The Reformation unleashed fervent study in the Scriptures to ascertain more clearly the original apostolic faith. Unfortunately, soon these efforts to discover truth from the Bible turned into efforts to defend the truth they had found. And before long the various groups developed into their own ecclesiastical entities such as we see today.

Which church shall I join? How shall I answer Jim's practical question? Christians must admit with sadness that the faith established by God has splintered. This division has greatly weakened its witness. As a totality of bodies, it gives a broken expression (and at times a contradictory one) to the world of the Christian message.

In the early centuries after the apostles, as various groups began to emerge within the Christian

community, the notion of "episcopal succession" was developed. This view, more commonly designated today as "apostolic succession," argued that a church (and those in communion with it) that could trace a historical continuity through its successive bishops back to the apostolic age must be the true church, preserving thereby the original apostolic deposit of truth. The idea that apostolic authority also was transmitted by episcopal ordination was a later addition to this line of reasoning.

This combination of ideas is appealing, but it rests on two assumptions, both false: (a) that the role and authority of the twelve apostles could be transferred to successors, and (b) that historical continuity of bishops guarantees the integrity of Christian doctrine.

The first position is untenable, of course, for the role of the twelve was unique. They were special witnesses to the incarnate Christ—His ministry, atoning death, especially His resurrection, and His ascension (cf. Acts 1:21, 22). Nowhere does Scripture indicate that their distinctive role and authority was to be transferred from generation to generation through certain selected persons. As John R. W. Stott has written: "The apostles were unique in both authorization and inspiration, and they have no successors."—*Only One Way*, p. 187.

The second position, which implies that a church with a pedigree of historical continuity to the apostolic age cannot err, is denied by the apostles themselves as well as by the plain facts of church history. These chosen men told of apostasies that would arise from among the leadership itself that would wrench the church after their time. (See Acts 20:28-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-8; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 2:19; 4:1-3.)

Not apostolic succession or a pedigree of historical continuity, but rather present loyalty to the expressed truths of Holy Scripture is the real key for determining which church group one joins. "A Christian community, however it

may be administered," states F. F. Bruce, "stands in the true apostolic succession if it maintains the apostles' teaching and displays 'the signs of an apostle.'"—*The Spreading Flame*, p. 209.

Acknowledging the religious confusion of our times, Dr. Stott gives a practical answer to the question: "What church shall I join?" "Almost deafened by the babel of voices in the contemporary church, how are we to decide whom to follow? The answer is the same: we must test them all by the teaching of the apostles of Jesus Christ. 'Peace and mercy' will be on the church when it 'walks by this rule' ([Galatians] 6:16). . . . This is why the Bible is over the church and not *vice versa*."—*Only One Way*, pp. 186, 187.

Heaven's end-time plan. In spite of human weakness, God has not abandoned His cause on earth. He continues to witness to earth's millions through every true believer in whatever communion. But more than that. Through the prophet John He has foretold His purpose to raise up an end-time movement to give voice to His last appeal before He sends His Son and consummates the plan of salvation. That movement is delineated in the prophecies of Revelation.

In quick, bold strokes the history of the great moral controversy between God and Satan is sketched in Revelation, chapter 12. The origin of sin in heaven (verses 7-9), the satanic attacks on the incarnate Christ (verses 1-5), the centuries of Christian persecution (verses 6, 13-16) are briefly summarized, with attention being drawn inevitably to the final conflict: "And the dragon was wroth [angry] with the woman [the church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (verse 17). The question may be asked whether this "remnant of her seed"—a last phase—denotes splintered Christendom in general, or whether it may be more narrowly defined? Certain marks in the

passage suggest the latter:

1. The time. The focus in the prophecy is on a time frame that follows a long "wilderness" experience of persecution (Revelation 12:6, 14-16). Historically speaking, Old World persecutions of Christians had ceased by the end of the eighteenth century. The period of "the remnant" would thus be subsequent to that era.

2. The teachings. The "remnant of her seed" would have to be a last phase of the *woman*, that is, the church. Naturally, therefore, we would expect its doctrinal beliefs to be in harmony with the teachings of the apostles, the teachings of Holy Scripture.

3. The commandments of God. This end-time phase is particularly characterized as "keep[ing] the commandments of God." "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man," Solomon wrote. The prophetic picture indicates that in a time of great lawlessness God will have a people upholding the principles and precepts of the moral law of the Ten Commandments, which define man's duty to his God and to his fellow beings. This would involve a restoration of the ancient Sabbath of the fourth precept.

4. The testimony of Jesus Christ. These Christians are further described as having or possessing in their midst "the testimony of Jesus." This expression is defined a few chapters later as "the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10), that is, the prophetic gift (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:2).

5. Last messages. It is only reasonable to infer that an end-time phase of the church would preach a final end-time message. The book of Revelation indicates that three special messages will be sounded to earth's inhabitants prior to the return of Christ. (See Revelation 14:6-14.) The centerpiece of these proclamations is "the everlasting gospel," but it is to be presented in connection with the solemn announcement that the hour of God's judgment has come and with a warning of the perils of falling "Babylon" and the coming

conflict over the mark of the beast and its image. The messages combine as a mighty appeal to humankind to return to the authority and obedience to and worship of the Creator and to keep the faith of Jesus (see Revelation 14:12).

6. A worldwide objective. The preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ with these end-time emphases is portrayed as going rapidly "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Revelation 14:6). It is clear that only a visible, organized movement, operating in a united manner throughout the earth could fulfill this prophetic description. It would not be inappropriate, therefore, to refer to it as a "remnant of her [the church] seed."

"**Jim,**" I said to my friend one day, "I am a Seventh-day Adventist Christian because I believe the movement is identified by these marks. The Adventist Church arose from an interdenominational awakening in the mid-nineteenth century after the era of church-state persecutions. Its doctrinal beliefs are in harmony with the Scriptures. It upholds the obligation of the Ten Commandments, including the Sabbath of the fourth precept, and has been providentially guided in its endeavors by a modern endowment of the prophetic gift.

"It is the only movement operating in nearly two hundred countries of the world consciously proclaiming the gospel in the context of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14. Through its medical, educational, and evangelistic programs the movement seeks to minister to the whole person, to bring the joy of salvation to every man and woman, boy and girl. Time is short. The coming of Christ is imminent. The task is formidable.

"The Lord marvelously preserved your life in the midst of physical warfare so that you might participate on His side in a war whose issues touch on eternal realities. Will you accept His summons to service, Jim, and join with me?"

TT

REFLECTIONS

BY BILL LOVELESS

To help you get the most out of THESE TIMES, we offer "Reflections," a guide to deeper understanding of individual articles. Actually, we'd like to challenge you to probe these issues that can enrich your life and make them more fulfilling. Please read each article first, then consider Bill Loveless' suggestions. Bill is a master at inspiring people to think—and what is even more amazing—to enjoy doing it.

Bonding—The Bridge From Womb to World page 2

- What sounds, touches, and sights would you design for a perfect birthing setting?
- Describe an occasion when someone's touching became a ministry to you.

Learn How to Be Like a Child page 8

- What truth about yourself have you learned from children?
- Of the seven roads to the fountain of "aliveness," which is the most difficult for you to travel?

The Initiation page 13

- What opportunities have you taken to demonstrate to others your affiliation with Jesus Christ?
- How does immersion in water demonstrate what happens to a person who has entered into a relationship with Jesus Christ?

4 Secrets of Lending a Helping Hand page 16

- Describe a time when someone encouraged you during a downstream experience.
- Describe a time when you stifled an impulse to offer help—to your regret.

Which Church Should I Join? page 24

- The author uses five New Testament descriptions of the church. What do these descriptions have in common? How are they unlike each other? Which description seems the most meaningful to you? Why?
- Why does Christ intend believers to be part of a church family?

If you have found "Reflections" helpful, we offer one more suggestion: We have available an expanded version of "Reflections" called "Discussion Guides." These guides are designed to act as aids for study groups. Perhaps your church or community club would find these guides a perfect catalyst for sprightly conversation and continuing study. Certainly they are worth trying.

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When Susan Smith Jones's article on the fountain of youth (see page 8) first hit our desk, there was only one person we wanted to illustrate the world of children. We thought, Why not ask Photographer Ken Touchton to spend some time with little kids and show our readers that small fry are just as innovative and spontaneous as Susan says they are?

To help Ken get started we suggested he get two or three kids in a room and turn them loose with an enormous cardboard box—just an ordinary TV or refrigerator box, square or otherwise, but big enough to fill a Grand Canyon.

Next we shared with Ken the insight Delia Ephron wrote about in her delightful little book *How to Eat Like a Child*. In case you've forgotten, here's how to eat mashed potatoes: "Pat mashed potatoes flat on top. Dig several little depressions. Think of them as pools or ponds. Fill with gravy. With your fork, sculpt rivers between pools and watch the gravy flow between them. Decorate with peas. Do not eat."

We hope Susan and Ken have combined their talents to such an extent that you may better develop your capacity for wonder, love of learning, the ability to play, and creativity—and thus live life to the full.

Mencius, an ancient philosopher, summed it all up: "The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart."

Have you ever felt so dirty that you could hardly wait to clean up? It's a common experience. People in all ages and all cultures have seen themselves as dirty—physically and spiritually—and have felt compelled to seek cleansing.

Baptism is the Christian answer to this universal feeling of dirtiness. (See William Johnsson's article, "The Initiation," page 13.) Baptism shows that the believer wishes to be clean. Clean from sin. Done with the past way of life. Made clean by Jesus.

In his recent book entitled *Clean!* Dr. Johnsson enlarges on the theme in this article and discusses our persistent feelings of dirtiness, our search for cleansing, the origin of Christian baptism, the significance of baptism in the early church, and the importance of baptism in the church today.

Clean! is printed by the publishers of THESE TIMES and is available postpaid simply by sending \$5.95 in check or money order to THESE TIMES, Review and Herald Publishing Association, 6856 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.



Kenneth J. Holland

"In the Beginning"

If we look at the creation of life on earth from God's point of view, we can gain new insights into the meaning of life itself.

Think back to that long-ago time when God first revealed Himself. Back to "in the beginning." Back to "before all things." Back to "times eternal." God is there in all His divine fullness. God and no one else. God and nothing else.

What a moment that was! All that power. All that knowledge. All that wisdom. All that love. All the other priceless attributes of Deity. Life that was unborrowed and underived. Truth that could not be added to, needed no correction. Absolute foreknowledge. Ability to create suns and galaxies, planets and moons. Ability to create life in an infinite variety of forms and to give to each form procreative powers that would perpetuate it forever.

All this and—alone! Not lonely, perhaps, in the way that men are lonely. But still alone.

What did God elect to do for a living? For recreation? What options were open to Him? What might such a Being do with His talents?

The Bible answers this question in a single sentence: "In the beginning God *created*" (Genesis 1:1).

To create means to bring into being something that did not previously exist. To make a world where no world was, a tree where no tree was, a human where no human was, a sun where no sun was, a galaxy where no galaxy had ever been. Creation is not a new paint job on an old car. It is a new car.

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.
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What was the extent of God's creative activity? "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

How was it accomplished? "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9).

No hocus-pocus here. No sleight of hand. No tricks. The Creator did not depend on preexistent matter or law. God preceded all this. He made the materials He wanted. He established the laws that govern them. All things, visible and invisible, stood forth at His command.

In His creative work God went far beyond form and continuity. In everything, animate and inanimate, He put a built-in need that only He Himself can fill. "By him," we are told, "all things consist" (Colossians 1:17).

Everything alive owes its life to God. Everything inanimate, from the least subdivision of the atom to the teeming hosts of the largest galaxy, owes its existence and movement to the intent and power of the Most High. God was very deliberate about this. That body of so-called "natural law" by which all things are upheld issued from God, not men. Thus it was in the beginning. Thus it continues today. Thus it shall be as long as God shall be God.

The same plan was followed in the spiritual kingdom. Within the hearts and minds of men God fashioned a need and a desire that only He can satisfy. At the same time, in His Edenic trysts with Adam and Eve, He acknowledged a joy found nowhere else.

Of the "all things" of the *kosmos* we are told, "For thy pleasure

they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

Beyond our power to comprehend, God enjoyed the creative acts that brought the universe into existence. Equally beyond our understanding is His delight in the beauty and associations of the sinless realms.

Nowhere did vanity appear in the blueprint of Creation. God didn't exercise His great power to spice a tedious hour or to amuse Himself on a dull evening. Our world was created for life that measures in time and compares in quality with the life of God.

Deep were the purposes of the Creator. Sublime were His aspirations. Glorious will be their fulfillment. And fulfilled they will be when the hurt of His people shall be healed. No shadow then to fall across the highlands of glory. None there to make afraid. No stooping shoulder in that fair land. No slowing step. No failing sight. No inhibiting infirmity. No unyielding void of loneliness.

But this is not all. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7).

Read the words again. Study them carefully. Marvel at their message. The "no end" is not to God's government. That will be grand beyond words. The "no end" is to the *increase* of His government! Each day in its coming will be better than any day that has gone before. This without end. This unto everlasting.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

TT

God Created . . .”

BY SANFORD T. WHITMAN





WHERE IS GOD WHEN I NEED HIM?

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