

# THESE TIMES

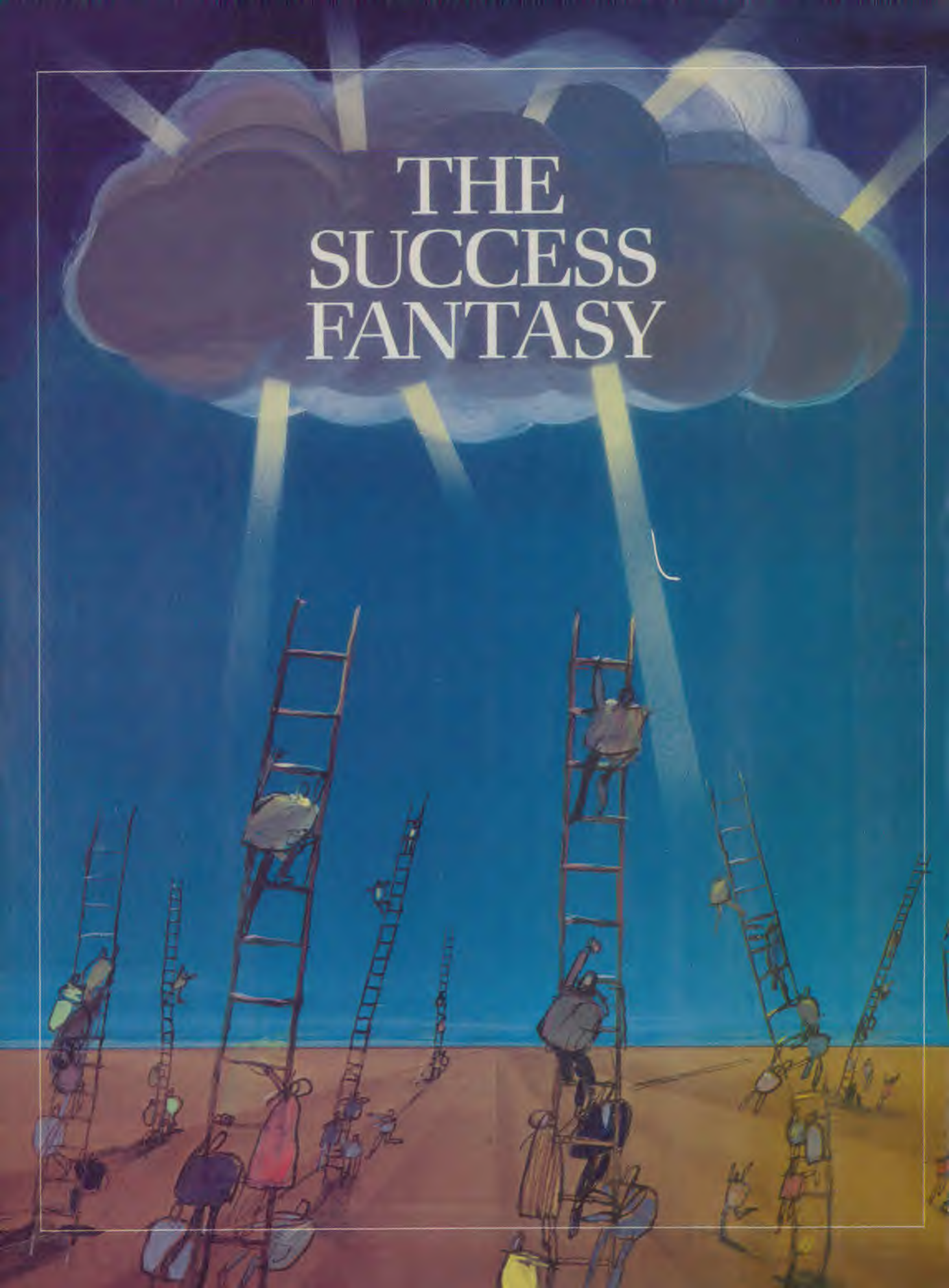
DECEMBER, 1982

BETHLEHEM  
AMONG THE BEDS  
HOW TO FACE  
JUDGMENT DAY  
WITH CONFIDENCE  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
IN SPACE

A man in a tuxedo and a woman in a white dress stand by a Rolls-Royce Phantom II at night. The car is the central focus, with its headlights and grille visible. The background shows a building with large windows and lights, suggesting a city street at night.

The  
Success  
Fantasy

# THE SUCCESS FANTASY



BY ANTHONY CAMPOLO

Success is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, the ultimate state of happiness. And the anxieties we suffer at the thought of not reaching it give us ulcers, heart attacks, and nervous disorders.

**W**hat is success? The word means many things, but for the sake of our discussion, let us agree that in our culture *success* means an individual has gained for himself one, if not all, of the following: wealth, power, and prestige. Sociologists teach us that wealth, power, and prestige express a "strain to consistency." This means that when people possess one of these, they tend to have the other two, also. The wealthy tend to have power and prestige. The powerful usually gain prestige and wealth, and the prestigious are likely to be people of wealth and power. People who have only one of these attributes will seldom be content until they have the other two. In our society, the usual path to success is first to acquire wealth and then gradually to gain prestige and power.

**A proof of success?** Who would question that wealth is a major proof of success? Those who have it are treated with deference and honor, while those who lack it are usually relegated to social insignificance and, at times, to disgrace.

Christians in the early church, who should have known better, often gave preference to the rich

and humiliated the poor. James, in his Epistle, cited such practices and condemned them:

"For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, 'You sit here in a good place,' and you say to the poor man, 'You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?" (James 2:2-6, N.A.S.B.).\*

**When people fail,** they may feel that even God rejects them. Many have found it difficult to believe they are acceptable to the Almighty, after they have been proved unacceptable by the success criteria of our culture.

Many people have twisted the Judeo-Christian message to mean that wealth is evidence of superior spiritual stature. Some Christians make the amount of money a

person possesses a means of judging his relationship with God, pointing out that when the ancient Jews were right with God, they enjoyed such an abundance of things that their cups were full and overflowing. They say that if we keep the law of God, particularly His command to tithe one tenth of our income to the work of the church, the Lord will prosper us beyond our imagination. Such claims are made in spite of the fact that there are tens of thousands of people in Third World nations who love the Lord, obey His law, faithfully tithe, and yet suffer privation beyond our comprehension. Many Christians subconsciously believe that God must be in league with the rich person.

Sermons from the pulpit, articles in magazines, and testimonies of successful Christian businessmen at luncheon meetings—all reinforce the creed that Jesus will prosper us if we just walk in His ways. An exaggerated example of this belief is the television preacher Reverend Ike. On more than one occasion he has said: "God doesn't want anybody to be poor. If you believe in Him you will believe in yourself, and if you believe in yourself, you will get rich. I'm rich and that's because I believe in God and I believe in Reverend Ike."

In our society many people ultimately measure a person's worth by the amount of wealth

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\* Scripture quotations marked N.A.S.B. in this article are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, and are used by permission.

possessed at death. We have all heard people say about someone who has just died: "He was born poor, with humble parents, but by the time he died he was worth millions of dollars." It is as if that is the best thing that can be said about the person.

We even look for the symbols of wealth at the time of death. This is why we provide such lavish funerals. Even if the person was not rich, we want him to appear so in his final display before friends and relatives.

I heard of a funeral in California where a man requested to be buried seated behind the wheel of a brand-new Cadillac, dressed in a tuxedo, with a two-dollar cigar in his mouth. He left the money to insure that his wish would be fulfilled, and when he died his plan was carried out. The undertaker brought in a huge crane to maneuver the automobile that served as the casket for the dead man. As he pulled the handle lowering the corpse and Cadillac into the ground, the crane operator was heard to say, "Man, that's really living!"

One time my daughter and I were taking the Grayline Bus tour of Chicago. As our bus stopped in front of a movie theater, our guide pointed to an alley and in a sober manner told us it was there that John Dillinger, the infamous bank robber, was gunned to death by the FBI. Then he added, "When John Dillinger died, after robbing more than one million dollars from banks across the Midwest, he had only thirty-two cents left."

My daughter responded, "What great timing!"

In her opinion, if you have to die, what better time to go than just when the cash is running out? But Americans do not generally share that opinion. For many, nothing could be worse than to have the final syllables describing existence be the condemning phrase "He died penniless."

**The lust for power.** Because we want to determine our own

destinies, we resent upheaval from forces beyond our control.

As Christians we may say we want power in order to do good for others in Christ's name. We may claim that our sole motivation for seeking power is that we see what needs to be done and want a free hand to do it. On such a noble platform, we seek high offices and important appointments. But such purity of purpose is often more declaration than reality. All who seek power have covert desires that have to do with the ego gratification that possession of power brings.

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*In our society many people ultimately measure a person's worth by the amount of wealth possessed at death.*

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I have never held power in any significant way, but I did win a primary election, which made me a candidate for the U.S. Congress. While I lost the general election, the very fact that I had been a candidate for my congressional district gave me a certain amount of influence over some minor politicians who held patronage jobs in our district.

At times people in deep trouble would come to me after they had been unable to get the local political bureaucracy to respond to their needs. I used to love reaching for the phone, calling the bureaucrat who had been causing the problem, and ordering him to do things right—or else. When the troubled person would look at me with gratitude and admiration, I would try to convince myself that my motives were pure; but down deep inside, I had an inkling that I enjoyed the use of my power too much to consider the act purely altruistic.

In labor disputes, the issues often have less to do with money than with labor's resentment of

"management's indiscriminate use of power." The workers want to determine what can and cannot be done to them by the management. They want to be part of the decision-making process. Employers know that frequently an unhappy employee can be appeased without a raise in salary, as long as he is given an increase in power.

**Even the church** cannot escape from petty struggles for power. No one can tell how many churches have disintegrated into power struggles, splitting congregations or causing systemic groups to pull out of the main congregation. The spokesmen for the warring camps usually cloak their actions in such idealistic claims as "standing for truth" or "being faithful to the gospel." But we are all too aware that behind such conflicts are people vying for power.

Even as we seek power, we sense something inherently wrong with what we are doing. We are confronted by our Lord Jesus Christ, who stands in opposition to our power plays.

During Jesus' temptation (Matthew 4), Satan tried to lure Him into utilizing power in ways that would compel people to grant Him allegiance by—

- feeding them bread made from stones.

- astounding them as He floated down from the Temple pinnacle and landed unhurt.

- establishing earthly authority over the systems and peoples of the world.

But Jesus refused to use power to win followers. Instead, He emptied Himself of power and chose to win us from a position of weakness—the cross. The Scriptures say that He became an obedient servant, obedient unto death, "even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8, N.A.S.B.). He was born in weakness and He died in weakness; for through that weakness, the Father worked His will in history, as salvation became a reality. Christ wants us to give

up our power plays and attempts to dominate others, and to follow Him into servanthood.

**If we lack money** and power, we can still feel successful if we have the respect of our peers. As a young minister without wealth or power, I loved to be called "Reverend." It was an ego trip for me when I was asked to pray at important public gatherings; I thrilled at the honor of addressing prestigious meetings. When I was asked to fly from Pennsylvania to speak at a convention on the West Coast, that seemed proof that I was somebody special. I might be short on power and low on cash, but I felt as successful as any millionaire or congressman when I just "humbly" preached the gospel to a few thousand people.

We all play for prestige. Clergymen seek honorary degrees to write after their names. High school boys pay a high price to be known as part of the varsity football team. Young girls fantasize over the status they will enjoy when the gang at school knows whom they are dating. We all tend to play one-upmanship with each other, and at the same time claim to be followers of Jesus, who "made himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7).

Feeling successful by means of prestige is a complex problem for women. Traditionally, they obtained their prestige vicariously, by borrowing it from their husbands. If their husbands had jobs that brought positive recognition, the women felt that they too were important. However, the feminist movement is changing all of that, saying each woman should have her own accomplishments to earn the respect of others.

For many a woman, this call to individual success has come too late. She has been comfortable in sharing her husband's successes, content to smile benevolently as he receives honors at the Kiwanis Club meeting and graciously tells the crowd, "I would not be here today if it weren't for my dear wife, who has stood by me



Drawing by McCallister; ©1974. The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

through thick and thin, and supported me in all my endeavors."

It seems like a dirty trick to play on such women. After becoming used to feeling successful because they are married to successful husbands, they are now told that it won't do anymore. They are informed that this age requires each woman to earn status through her own achievements. Such a challenge can create insecurities, particularly for women over 40 years of age.

When I evaluate my own attitudes, I find that the only time I am seriously tempted to lie is when it will enhance my personal status. I have a tendency to make myself out as more than I really am, to paint myself bigger than life. I exaggerate my successes, minimize my failures, and offer myself to the world as somebody who has done great things. Oh, what a sorry contrast I make to Jesus, who was willing to make Himself nothing for our sakes! God honors the humility of His Son by giving Him "the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:9-11, N.A.S.B.).

Those who seek prestige will never get it from God; but those who are willing to be humble and take the inferior seats at the

banquet will find that the heavenly Father calls them to the places of honor that they know they do not deserve. (See Luke 14:7-11.) The Scriptures warn that those who seek the praise of the world have their reward here on earth, but those who are willing to serve in secret, without any thought of public recognition, will find themselves honored in heaven (Matthew 6:1-6).

### **Christians and the big three.**

Because the world sees wealth, power, and prestige as the indicators of success, we have been conditioned to seek them with all of our might. But our Lord has different criteria for evaluating success. He calls us away from society's symbols of success and urges us to seek after "His kingdom and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33, N.A.S.B.). Many who are considered least important by society may find themselves sitting in places of honor at the great banquet feast in the world to come.

Wealth, power, and prestige can corrupt those who possess them. *Wealth* can delude us into a kind of self-sufficiency and denial of our need of God.

*Power* can turn us into megalomaniacs. Desire to dominate others can lead us to diminish their humanity, as well as our own.

Cravings for *prestige* can lead us into destructive pride and egotism that know no bounds.

Yet we must remember that wealth, power, and prestige have great potential for good. It is only their wrong use that is evil. Our Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills and the wealth in every mine. He has the power to hold the universe together or to destroy it in an instant. But He uses His wealth, power, and prestige to express love and to benefit everyone.

If we wish to be governed by God's will, we can learn to use our wealth, power, and prestige unselfishly for others, and to extend the kingdom of God in the world.

TT

## SERVING THE LONELY

**L**oneliness is one of the leading causes of premature death in America, according to Edward R. Walsh, superintendent of recreation for the village of Westbury, New York. Writing in the March issue of *Modern Ministries*, Walsh says shut-ins are the most vulnerable. He quotes a nine-year study by Dr. Lisa Berkman, a California epidemiologist, of 7,000 people in which she found those with few social contacts were two to four times more likely to die of major illnesses than those who maintained strong social ties.

This plight represents a new challenge to the church's healing ministry in which "miracles of resurrected hope" can occur, says Walsh. Just as isolation can kill, community can heal if three functions are performed by the Christian community.

First, mobilize church resources to locate the homebound and help them become involved in congregational activities. Recruit volunteers to be matched to shut-ins for phone visits and personal calls to help reduce isolation.

Second, serve as agents of change to alter systems that deny shut-ins equal opportunity to live fully human lives. Create a

climate in which advocacy *with* as well as *for* shut-ins becomes the norm. The overall objective is to sensitize the public to the rights and needs of shut-ins in order to facilitate equal access to services.

Third, empower the powerless to share in church ministry, using their talents to enrich community life and to enhance their concept of self-worth.

### Moon Convicted on Income Tax Charges

Pastor and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon, of the Unification Church, are shown (below) during an earlier interview. Mr. Moon, founder of the church, was

convicted by a New York Federal court jury on May 18 of conspiracy to defraud the government and filing false income tax returns. Defense Lawyers Charles Stillman and Andrew Lawler said they will appeal the verdict, and American Unification Church president Mose Durst expressed confidence that Mr. Moon will be "fully vindicated." The church leader faces up to 14 years in prison on the main conspiracy and tax counts. Takeru Kamiyama, a Japanese aide and codefendant, was found guilty on all counts with Mr. Moon, and also on charges of perjury and obstruction.

### Theological Liberalism Heading Toward Oblivion

James Hitchcock offers this projection: "By the beginning of the twenty-first century most of what are presently considered the 'mainline' Protestant denominations in America . . . will either have ceased to exist or ceased to claim any distinctively Christian character for themselves."

He does not see their declining memberships as the crucial issue: "Some of the existing churches in America will not survive simply because there is no reason why they should. They possess no doctrine, worship, structure, spirit, or morality that is indispensable to the world."

Hitchcock, professor of history at St. Louis University, reports a startling change in the nature of the church's mission:

"Rather than converting nonbelievers, liberal religious leaders see their principal task as that of converting their own people, a conversion process that involves helping their people overcome their religious 'hang-ups' and learning to live comfortably in an unbelieving world."

### Life in These Times

In 1960 no Japanese cars were sold in the United States. Gasoline was near 25 cents a gallon. Most houses cost from \$20,000 to \$35,000. There were no security checks at airports, no electronic chips, food stamps, computer games,



Unification Church leader Sun Myung Moon (left) is found guilty of income tax evasion and conspiracy.

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color TV, organ transplants, or Medicare. These are obvious changes.

In 1970 most households were supported by a single wage earner, according to *Graduate Woman*. By 1980 more than half of all married households had two wage earners. By 1990 it is expected that 80 percent of married households will have two wage earners. Furthermore, between 1970 and 1980 the number of children living with two parents declined by 18 percent and those living with one parent increased by 40 percent. (This still left the vast majority of children living with two parents, but not necessarily with their original parents.)

According to *Today's Education*, noise at rock concerts often reaches 120 decibels, close to 5,000 times higher than the danger level for ear damage. Two hours of a Rolling Stones concert is equivalent to two hours strapped to the underbelly of a supersonic transport in flight.

### Shy People Preach Best

The teacher of preachers John Killinger, of Vanderbilt Divinity School (Nashville), thinks he can work better with preachers who do not talk too much. "'Shy men,' said Phillips Brooks, 'make the best preachers.' That is because shy persons live much in the world of silence. They are like the man described by Rilke, whose ear was closed by a god so he could hear no sound but the god's own voice, and not be led astray by 'turbid and ephemeral' noises."

Preachers who abandon silence "have ceased to be formed by the eternal Word, and preach out of threadbare memories, out of mere wisps of experience they once had but can no longer lay hold upon."

### Evangelical Leader Proposes Summit on Political Role

Carl F. H. Henry, one of the nation's most influential evangelical leaders, is urging a summit meeting of top conservative Protestant leaders to discuss the movement's role in politics.

Dr. Henry, a former editor of the influential evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*, is concerned about the "conspicuously narrow" approach to politics by such evangelical groups as Christian Voice and the Moral Majority. His proposal is being informally circulated to "influential conservative Protestants" ranging from Jerry Falwell, of the Moral Majority, to Jim Wallis, of Sojourners, an evangelical but liberal social-action group.

"The purpose would not be to forge a religious party front," Dr. Henry's proposal says. "Rather it would lessen confusion and hopefully set some priorities for evangelical public involvement."

The proposal comes as the alliance between right-wing politics and Protestant fundamentalism is experiencing a major victory, with Falwell claiming that Moral Majority registered some 4 million voters and that the religious right can take at least partial credit for the election of Ronald Reagan and the defeat of a number of liberal Senators.

At the same time, the movement is facing increasing criticism from mainline Protestant and Jewish groups, as well as some evangelicals, who fear it will lead to violation of the traditional separation of church and state in the country. Others have expressed the fear that it will lead to legislation restricting the church's ability to speak out on moral issues.



Many young men and women in the armed services receive little or no mail during the holiday season.

### Brighten a Soldier's Holiday

At many posts and bases across the United States and around the world, Christmas will see many of our military personnel on duty, in defense of the United States and the free world. For many of these young people, it will be their first Christmas away from home.

Many of these young men and women will receive little or no mail during this special time of the year. For others, just being away from home will be an agonizing experience.

This is where Armed Forces Mail Call comes in. Mail Call receives Christmas cards filled with newsy and friendly notes and letters from individuals and groups all over the country. These Christmas greetings are in turn sent to various facilities of the Department of Defense as well as independent activities (USO's, Armed Services Y's, military hospitals, chaplains,

et cetera), where they are given to U.S. military personnel. "On behalf of all soldiers in the . . . Company, thank you for the Christmas cards you sent. . . . These cards gave additional inspiration for those soldiers who could not be home with their loved ones . . ." read one letter received by Mail Call in response to last year's Christmas mail.

For information on how you or your group may participate in the eighth annual CHRISTMAS Mail Call, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

ARMED FORCES MAIL  
CALL  
Box 6210  
Fort Bliss, Texas 79906

(Mail is not sent only to soldiers—it is also sent to Marines, sailors, and airmen! If you would like some mail directed to an individual in the military service, send his/her name and mailing address to Mail Call.)

TT

# Bethlehem Among the Beds

I didn't want to put Christ away at the end of December, to mark Him "Christmas Only." I wanted an experience that would continue throughout the entire year.

BY MARION DUCKWORTH



Stores wheezed from mid-December customer congestion. Outside, uniformed Salvation Army men and women rang bells and stomped their feet. Traffic detoured around city workers hanging red "Seasons Greetings" garlands across downtown streets. Members of the Oregon State Penitentiary Lifer's Club unloaded white, life-sized Nativity figures on the Capitol Mall, scattering torsos among the cows and sheep,

preparing to put Christmas together.

At the post office I stood in line waiting to mail my packages and tried to put my own Christmas together. I checked my list. *Address cards, . . . Bake. Unpack decorations. . . . Find someone for us to share Christmas with.*

Someone to share Christmas with? I wanted it to be someone in my town—one of the street-corner men, perhaps, or ragged children that I saw in supermarkets. I searched my mind for a name, but there was no one.

A few days later I stood waiting for the bus, looking at our

decorated house. Plastic holly hung in the windows, candle angels sat on the mantle, a plaster manger scene rested on the coffee table. But I was sick of plastic Christmases. Each year God had been prodding me to celebrate Jesus' birthday by showing love in some practical way to ones who needed it. *But how, dear God?*

I pulled my coat around me more tightly, against the freezing rain. *Where are the ones with whom we can share You? Show me, Father.*

**Suddenly I saw God's answer.** Around the corner in a sprawling frame building was a nursing





home for retarded adults, the aged, the physically dependent, and others who needed special, long-term care. I had visited a friend there a few years ago, walking antiseptic corridors to a barracklike room of assembly-line bedrooms without walls.

A few days later I talked with the owner of the home. "I live in the neighborhood. I've been wondering, are any of your people forgotten at Christmas?"

Her mouth smiled; her eyes did not. "Most of them are forgotten," she told me.

"How many patients do you have?"

"Let's see. Right now we have 57."

Was this really God's answer? Fifty-seven people on our Christmas list? I looked at the patients who sat around dining tables and in straight-backed chairs lined against the wall in the room where we stood talking. How many times had I passed them on my way to the supermarket without seeing them?

That evening I asked Jack whether we could add 57 strangers to our Christmas list. "Great idea," he said when I told him about the patients. Together he and I decided on how much we

could spend and made a gift list. "This is really celebrating Christmas," he told me. "This is what it's all about."

Lunch hours I shopped in economy drugstores and loaded my shopping cart with packages of handkerchiefs, scarfs, bundles of red-and-white-striped peppermint sticks, bags of old-fashioned licorice, horehound drops, and rock candy. Somehow our money stretched to buy gifts for all 57, and we still had enough for our December expenses.

A few days before Christmas my three sons and I wrapped and ribboned packages for our 57

neighbors. The boys asked questions as they worked. "Who are these people, Mom? Do they have families?" I told them what I could. "You mean some of them don't have anyone?" the youngest said, struggling with a bow.

Two days before Christmas, Jack and I delivered the gifts to the nursing home's owner to be distributed with evening pills.

**Early December** of the following year we unpacked the trimmings of Christmas again, testing strings of lights and retouching chipped paint on the plaster Nativity. This time, though, the first question the family asked wasn't "Are we going to have a big tree?" It was "What kinds of presents are we going to get for the nursing-home people?"

I knew that God wanted us to do more than just leave gifts to be distributed by the staff this year. He wanted to have personal contact with the patients through us. He wanted Bethlehem among the beds. He wouldn't come from heaven this Christmas to visit a nursing home in Salem, Oregon. He had already come. He was here, now, in me.

But the inside of a nursing home is so strange to me. Leaving gifts for the aides to distribute would be safer. Did I dare risk personal involvement?

*God. I'm scared. Help. Please make me able.*

Early on Christmas Eve, Jack and I walked up the ramp to the front door of the home. I shivered. Would the patients respond to me? Would I be able to understand their sometimes garbled speech? I breathed a wordless prayer as I opened the door.

Inside, a middle-aged woman wearing a yellow-flowered housedress greeted us. "Are we going to get presents?" she asked, the lights from a thousand Christmas trees reflecting in her eyes.

An aide led us into the first room. In one bed an elderly woman lay asleep, but she awakened when she sensed me standing silently beside her. I took her hand and held it for a moment, then gave her candy. She

reached up, pulled me down, and kissed my cheek. Without speaking, we held each other close—two strangers on Christmas Eve.

As we went from bed to bed, I wanted to stop and touch each patient—to give love with the gift. We went upstairs to the men's dorm. I walked down one side of the room, greeting patients, and Jack went down the other. From the look on his face and the sound of his voice, I could tell that he felt the way I did.

One man looked puzzled as he accepted a bag of candy. "What organization are you with?" he asked.

"We're not with any organization."

"Oh? Then, who are you?"

"We're your neighbors."

"Neighbors?" A smile moved across his face, and he put out his hand. "Neighbors, eh? Well, a Merry Christmas to you. And thanks."

**Back home**, we ate our traditional Christmas Eve meal. Just before bedtime Jack read the same Luke account of Jesus' birth he always read. Soon we'd unload gifts from closets and spread them around the tree, according to our custom. We'd pray together and move to bed, calling, "Merry Christmas," to one another. This Christmas seemed the same as all the others—but it was very different.

After Christmas we wrapped our decorations and Nativity in newspaper, packed them in the trunk, and carried the tree out the door. Christmas was over. But I didn't want to put Christ away at the end of December, to mark Him "Christmas Only." Bethlehem was only the beginning.

Why should I let one day a year be the only time I visit the nursing home? Why not a through-the-year relationship with our 57 neighbors?

I knew what I could do. I could show my love and concern by celebrating residents' birthdays each month. When Jack and I told the director what we wanted to do, she supplied a list of patients and their birthdays.

In January we filled decorated paper plates with an apple, an

orange, a cupcake, and candy. A just-turned-90-year-old man welcomed us to sit and visit when we gave him his gift. A woman sitting next to her bed in the dorm took hers saying only, "I love apples."

Another month, Jack and I brought a present to Louis who lay dressed on his bed. "I just came from church," he told us. Pointing to a Bible on the shelf over his bed, he said, "See that Book? That tells how to go to heaven. If you believe, you will go to heaven." We three gathered around Christ together for a few moments, stunned by the wonder of His grace.

**We decided to make** miniature birthday cakes for each person in the following months. I baked and iced; Jack, who used to work as a cake decorator, put pink-icing flowers atop each.

In April a woman took my hand and led me to her bed, where she put her gift down and hugged me. In May, I was too late. Vincent died before the day of his celebration.

Birthdays followed one another until it was December again. John, our eldest son, had married the summer before. Several weeks before their first Christmas together, he and his wife, Lizabeth, came to see me. "Mom," John said, "Liz and I have decided that we want to take part in the nursing home's Christmas celebration."

Early on Christmas Eve, Jack and I and John and Lizabeth loaded cartons of gifts in our car and drove to the nursing home. The same fear that I'd experienced on my first visit stiffened the smiles on John and Liz's faces as they helped unload the gifts, but as we moved between the beds, I saw God's love conquer their fears.

Again one of the patients asked, "Say, what organization are you with?"

"We aren't with an organization."

"Who are you?"

"We're your neighbors."

"Neighbors?" A broad smile; an arm around my shoulder. "Well, Merry Christmas." **T**

# JUNE STRONG

## ROGER NEVER COMES . . .

She lay curled into a fetal position, her frail, old body making only a small rise in the sterile white sheet.

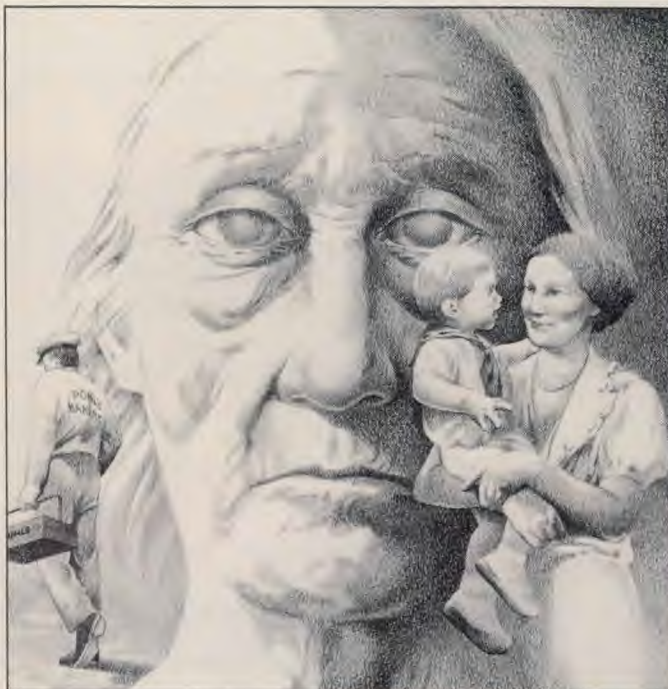
"Emily," I said, "It's me—June. How are you?"

She peered at me through rheumy, unseeing eyes.

"I'm not good, not good at all. I don't know you, do I? Are you going to leave me now? Please don't leave. I'm scared here. I'm scared all the time." She closed her eyes and sighed deeply. "Please don't go."

I knew it was hopeless to bring her news of the world, even the small world in which she had once lived. Everything was gone but the sightless, trembling shell that refused to die. There was little to do but hold her hand briefly until she slept.

It was hard to recognize, in the pitiful scrap before me, the vibrant woman she had once been. I remembered her best in a bright-blue coat that matched her bright-blue eyes. I had always noticed her eyes. Fringed with thick dark lashes, they'd lit her wrinkled face, reminding one she'd not always been old. With her naturally curly hair, I could visualize her as a real beauty at 18. Even at 65, there'd been a sparkle about her, glinting like



sunlight in those sea-blue eyes, that made mockery of her years.

I'd first known her widowed—but lively, independent, and well. Over the passing years her health and, more cruelly, her vision had deteriorated. I'd watched her fumbling about her small house, surviving because the dim shapes were familiar and in their right places. She had a son and grandchildren, but they came less and less as she grew unable to minister and more in need of ministry.

Finally darkness closed in, and she was bundled off to a nursing home, where she'd be "taken care of." No longer were things in their right places, so she just sat through the long days. It so happened that her son drove a bakery truck that

Whose voice? Whose touch? The aides chided her gently. "Granny's a little mixed up today, isn't she? Why don't you watch some TV? It will help you orient yourself."

So she felt her way to the lounge and sat in front of the chattering box, which drifted from soap operas to football to soft-drink commercials that promised *life*. Some around her nodded. Some muttered incoherently of events long past. Others, like herself, fought to hang onto reality. But slowly it slipped away.

Today I asked her, just to make conversation, "Does Roger ever come?"

She raised her hand and peered at me through the railings of her bed.

"Who is Roger?" Her querulous old voice was thin and rasping.

Her eyes took on a fierce, momentary concentration.

"Who is Roger?" Out of her long nightmare, she groped for those golden moments of motherhood and then answered herself softly, "I think he was my son."

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12.

TT

delivered goodies to the nursing home once or twice a week. At first she awaited, with eagerness, the sound of his vehicle driving around to the back door, sure he would bound up the stairs for a brief Good morning and news of the grandchildren. But the welcome footsteps never came, though she could hear his loved voice below. With tears following the deep lines in her face, she had told me, "Roger never comes. He's right downstairs and he doesn't even come up." She paused, steadying her emotions. "He was always such a sweet child."

After months of sitting in the dark, the boredom broken only by an occasional visitor or phone call, she began to be confused. What day was it?



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.

# HOW TO FACE JUDGMENT DAY WITH CONFIDENCE

The photographs and comments about judgment accompanying this article resulted from on-the-street interviews in Washington, D.C., with people from all over America.—Editors

BY GERALD WHEELER

**W**e were a little nervous, my wife and I, but our 18-month-old daughter seemed excited as the bailiff's "All rise" echoed in the turn-of-the-century courtroom. Her eyes large with curiosity, Noelle clutched her fuzzy brown coat tightly around her. It hid the white embroidered dress we had put on her for the occasion, but the coat was a Christmas present from Grandma, and no one could get her out of it.

The black-robed judge strode into the room and banged his gavel. "Court is in session." Noelle stared around her. Her wispy white-blonde hair escaped from her pink barrettes to wave straight up and down as she twisted her head in every direction. Her vocabulary consisting of little more than undecipherable happy sounds and *Mamma*, she began to talk to herself.

Noelle was our child—well, almost our child. Within minutes the judge would call us to his bench and pronounce her legally



**"In order for a person to be ready for the day of judgment, he has to know Christ, and Christ has to know him. Just being a good person isn't enough."**—Diana Moore, Anniston, Alabama.

adopted. It had been a long wait. Our social worker interviewed us at home and in her office. She questioned neighbors and friends and talked with us again. "How much money do you make? What are your hobbies? Do you have other children? How many rooms in your house?"

Now she sat in the witness stand, testifying before the court

and the State of Tennessee that she had found us to be capable and fit. Then she gave her approval to the adoption.

The judge spoke with me next—routine, easy questions—while our daughter chuckled and chortled in my wife's arms. But when Penny handed her to me and started for the stand, the child's face became puzzled, then crumpled.

"What is your full name?" the judge asked my wife.

"*Mammaaa! Mammamamama!*" Noelle cried.

"Your age?"

"*Mammamamamamamama . . .*"

The social worker took Noelle from me so the child could be closer to Penny. That was a mistake. Her face reddening, the little girl bounced up and down, her little arms reaching for the security and comfort of her mother. "Mamma . . . Mamma . . . Mamma . . ."

The judge knew when he was beat. "Let the baby go to her mother," he said, so my wife finished her testimony with the child cuddled happily in her lap. Within minutes we were the legal and forever parents of Noelle Wheeler.

Gerald Wheeler is associate book editor of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C. © 1982 by Gerald Wheeler.



"If we want to be ready for the day of judgment we have to live as if every day is going to be our last one on earth."—Frank Palmer, Sacramento, California.

"Well, I guess in the Bible, which is the way I was brought up, it says there is going to be a great gathering of everyone at the end, but I'm not real sure about it."—Anna Topmiller, Utica, New York.



**Her adoption hearing** has been to me a wonderful illustration of the goals of Biblical justice and a foretaste of what God has promised for us at the last judgment. For standing before the judgment seat of God, we will be pronounced sons and daughters of God.

Most of us when we hear the words *justice* and *judgment* automatically think of punishment. As the cynic H. L. Mencken declared, "Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice." Justice is, to the average person, getting exactly what you deserve. And people deserve a lot of punishment for the bad things they do.

God has announced that one day He will judge the world (Acts 17:31). Everyone will receive a completely honest and accurate verdict based on what he or she has done in this life (2 Corinthians 5:10). And that's what we're afraid will happen to us. It could be rather unpleasant if God's perfect justice handed out to us what we should have coming to us. The last judgment, most assume—if they think about it at all—is when God dispenses the punishment appropriate to our sins.

When we think of justice and judgment, we naturally visualize the courts we are familiar with. The most headline-catching part of the modern legal system is criminal justice. We shudder at the idea of facing a criminal court free from the imperfections of human justice—imperfections that we have been able sometimes to turn to our advantage.

The modern legal obsession with finding guilt, of determining whether laws and regulations have been broken, carries over into our religious lives. Realizing that we aren't good enough to get into heaven, we also know that no lawyer could find a technicality that would let us escape God's verdict.

But punishment is only a part of justice—especially of God's justice.

Because we have viewed the doctrine of judgment in the context of modern legal practice, we have feared it rather than found comfort in it. The Biblical concept of judgment is expressed in images borrowed from Israelite justice, and it had some vital differences that throw a whole new light on the concept.

Old Testament justice involved far more than just criminal

prosecution. All law must deal with every aspect of daily life. And it is how Biblical justice approached problems that is the important thing.

Besides the police function, the Israelite court performed a large number of what we would consider social or welfare services. It acted as arbitrator for disputes and quarrels. A villager could take to it any aggravation or friction that was upsetting his peace and harmony or that of the community.

The court would seek to resolve the problem, somewhat like those newspaper columns or television news segments that attempt to get faulty merchandise replaced or a bureaucratic hassle worked out. Because its main goal was peace and restoration among neighbors and families, it had little and sometimes no interest in seeing whether the law had been broken or not, or who needed to be punished. Instead it concerned itself with patching up quarrels and controversies, of helping people regain lost rights and property.

One scholar has called the village court "the organization for reconciliation," whose sole

purpose was "to settle quarrels and guard the well-being of the community" (L. Kohler, quoted in Hans Jochen Boecker, *Laws and the Administration of Justice in the Old Testament and Ancient East*, pp. 37, 38). The judges looked to see how they could help, not punish.

**Let's see how justice** operated through a legal hearing in the familiar Biblical story of Ruth. Ruth was a widow. But in Bible times a widow was not simply someone whose husband had died. She was a woman without any source of support, which in those male-dominated societies meant that she did not have male relatives to look after her or a brother-in-law to marry her in the custom of levirate marriage.

In Ruth's case there were two relatives of her dead husband, one of whom could assume responsibility for her if he desired. She fell in love with Boaz, the one second in line. To marry her he had to get the other man to relinquish his right. So he called a legal assembly—a village court—into existence to officiate at the transfer of legal responsibility for Ruth.

Boaz went to the open area, by the city gate, that served as the center of the village's public life. There he summoned ten of the elders present to form a court to hear his request. An elder of the community—a leading citizen or head of a family or tribal clan—acted as judge in such village courts.

Here we see justice dealing with a problem that did not involve punishment, but help and aid. The hearing allowed Boaz to become Ruth's kinsman-redeemer (and the couple became the ancestors of the world's Kinsman-Redeemer). The court gave official recognition to the solution worked out between him and the other kinsman. (See Ruth 4.)

**Whether the case** involved a dispute or a suspected crime, the plaintiff, or accuser, would present his arguments, followed by those of the defendant. Israelite justice had no professional lawyers—Hebrew did not even have a word for a legal advocate. Then the



**"I believe the judgment is based on our lives; and if it is in fact based on our lives, then how can anyone think that what we do on earth doesn't matter?"—June Bybee, Lakewood, Colorado.**

informal court would summon witnesses to determine the facts. Any case that might lead to the death penalty demanded the testimony of at least two witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6). Either party could introduce physical evidence.

For example, in order for a herdsman to verify his claim that a predator had attacked one of the animals in his care, he had to show his employer the mangled remains (Exodus 22:13). After testifying as a witness, an elder could then serve as judge in the same case—a practice strange to us today.

When both sides had pressed or defended their case, they and the elders would stand, and the latter would declare a verdict of guilt or innocence. The verdict was not for the purpose of punishing, but to work out a way of bringing the dispute or problem to an end and the parties back together. Even the execution of a murderer was not just because he broke the law, but also to resolve the tension between the family or tribe of the victim and his own clan. Without his death a blood feud could have devastated the community. The loss the victim's family experienced had to be balanced by

an equal one in the guilty party's family.

Also, the court arbitrated or officiated on such topics as questions of inheritance and marriage and business. If the Israelite had a problem, he automatically went to the highly democratic court for a solution. Because of his constant exposure to such legal justice, the Old Testament man or woman had no fear of the idea of judgment. Actually it was something he longed for (as we see in Psalms 7:8; 26:1; 35:24; 43:1; 54:1). The thought of judgment comforted those who suffered from oppression or injustice. In fact, the word for justice itself, *mispal*, came from a Hebrew root that frequently implied the giving of a favorable verdict.

**The New Testament** may appear to present judgment in a harsher light. But that is because social conditions had changed. By the time of Christ oppression and injustice had become widespread in Palestine. A handful had gained control of wealth and power, and the rest lived in abject poverty. The village courts no longer operated as they once had.

To the suffering multitudes of the first century of the Christian era, the New Testament statements about the wicked receiving their due were some of the most comforting things Jesus could have said. Our mistake today is identifying with the oppressors instead of the oppressed as we read these statements. New Testament Palestine had no middle class. There were only the vast majority needing justice, and the few who denied it to them. But the images of justice still reflect their Old Testament heritage.

Remembering the concepts of justice the New Testament writers had in the back of their minds, we as Christians do not have to fear when God will enter "into judgment with all flesh" (Jeremiah 25:31, R.S.V.).\* Jesus is our Judge (2 Timothy 4:1) and He is on our side, determined to give us justice,

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

unlike the judge our Saviour told about in Luke 18:1-8.

Because the woman in Christ's parable was a widow, like Ruth, the verdict was already in her favor as a consequence of her need. But the judge was dragging his feet in doing what he was supposed to. Finally she got tired of waiting for what was due her and demanded that he "vindicate" her (verse 3). Eventually he realized that he could not stall any longer and gave her the justice that was her right. The point is that if the widow received justice despite the interference of an unrighteous judge, how much more certain we can be of obtaining vindication from the righteous Judge, God Himself!

**We see the kind** of justice our heavenly Judge offers us in another parable about a trial—this one from the Old Testament. It depicts most clearly what God's judgment has in mind for us.

The third chapter of the book of Zechariah portrays the cosmic trial of Joshua the high priest. Joshua stands as defendant before the Angel of the Lord, who serves as Judge. The plaintiff, Satan (the name *Satan* means "accuser"), has brought a charge against Joshua. With a sneer in his voice he points to the religious leader—who represents God's people—and condemns him for wearing filthy garments. The condition of the high priest's clothing symbolizes impurity and defilement. No priest true to his duty and role would have soiled robes. But Joshua does—he has sinned against his God.

But the goal of Biblical judgment was restoration and reconciliation. Instead of imprisoning a thief who had stolen a sheep, for example, the Israelite court would have him replace it and again live in peace with its owner. In Zechariah's parable God does not punish Joshua. He has him cleaned up and the guilt removed, asking only that he "walk in my ways, and . . . keep my charge" (verse 7). This is what God longs to do for each one of us who will accept His offer of salvation.

Noelle's adoption hearing affirmed to the world that she was

now our daughter. She needed parents, we wanted a daughter, and justice brought us together, meeting all our needs. God's judgment will establish and confirm that we are His adopted children and heirs (Galatians 4:1-7; Romans 8:15-17). The cross brought us reconciliation, and the judgment declares it forever confirmed.

**The thought** that God's judgment also applies to those He saves will

life. It is the official declaration that we have been brought back among the unfallen beings, restored to a universe of love.

A third of the inhabitants of heaven once used their power of choice to turn against God (see Revelation 12:4; 2 Peter 2:4). For the peace of heaven itself God had to exile them. Naturally those who remained loyal to their Creator would be expected to be cautious toward anyone who had once been hostile to Him as we human

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*The divine tribunal is God's opportunity to demonstrate His justice, which has always sought reconciliation and restoration.*

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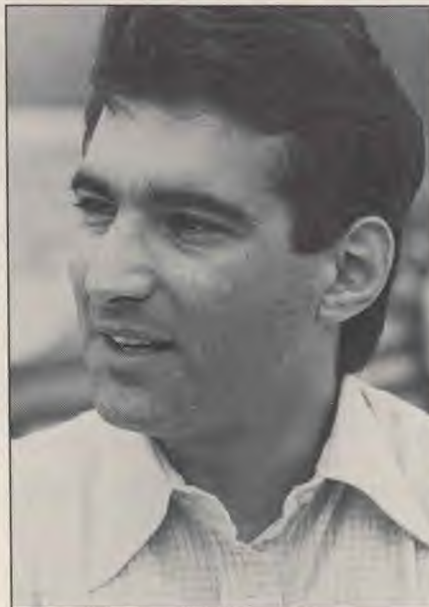
startle some Christians. They forget that none of us can escape the fact that "we must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Caught up in the joy of our relationship with our Saviour, we may not be able to see how it could have any relevance for us. Surely the judgment applies only to the unrepentant. But heaven's court is a hearing to affirm God's right to give us heaven and eternal

beings have been. The unfallen beings have seen the suffering and confusion that sin brought to heaven. What guarantee, they might ask, is there that we won't re-infect heaven with it? Or what right do human beings have to be saved when God had to take the terrible step of casting their fellow angels out?

Thus the judgment serves as a formal hearing to proclaim to the universe that the saved are entitled to eternal life. It presents the evidence of our relationship to Jesus. God's court meets and deals with any fears or suspicions that rescued men and women might stir up new conflict. The divine tribunal is God's opportunity to demonstrate His justice, which has always sought reconciliation and restoration. It is our adoption hearing back into the family of God. Noelle lived with us 18 months before the final formal announcement. The judgment is our formal, final pronouncement.

To those who reject Jesus as their Saviour, the judgment will be frightening; but to those who approach the divine bench of justice in a faith relationship with Him, who eagerly await their hearing in the celestial courtroom, the judgment will be the greatest comfort and assurance possible. The Judge is on our side and testifies in our behalf.

What more could we ask? **TF**



**"Certainly I believe in judgment, and I would say it takes place on a specific day at the end of time."—Don Giantelli, White Plains, New York.**

# The Miracle of the Funny-nosed Bear

That Christmas two years ago marked the beginning of Jussy's venture out of his autistic world and into the real world.

BY PAULA MONTGOMERY

With Christmas only three days off, my spirits seemed far from festive as I guided the car downriver toward the county seat.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee . . ." I repeated Isaiah 26:3, half praying, half preaching, to myself. I felt so tied in knots that the blue pantsuit I wore must have looked more like a pretzel.

Caring for an autistic child had to be one of the most bewildering experiences of my life.

How I yearned to hold Jussy, to cuddle him close! But I had learned that such affection could send the 2-year-old into screaming tantrums.

At times Jussy would hug everyone in sight, but more often he rebelled against the slightest touch of another human being. He preferred to stay inside his private cocoon of self-stimulating rituals—rocking, spinning, or staring at his fingers.

Sitting alone in the back seat, Jussy seemed totally unaware of the mountains and river beyond the car windows.

I asked myself, How could love

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*Paula Montgomery is a free-lance writer living in Underwood, Washington. © 1982 by Paula Montgomery.*



and frustration be packaged so curiously into one boy? He was a beautiful child, with tufts of blond hair tumbling about a face of dimples and saucy brown eyes. I found it hard to believe the youngster could be afflicted with so many handicaps. Besides the autism, Jussy had been diagnosed as mentally retarded, epileptic, and hyperactive. He was also affected by a hearing loss, as well as sight and speech difficulties.

When his mother became ill the month before, we took over her son. My children, ages 8 and 10, had readily accepted their newly acquired brother, although at times he tested their patience to the hilt.

If a record existed for the fastest time in destroying a room, Jussy would hold it. We clocked him at two minutes. *Destroying* means tearing down pictures and posters, unloading all contents of drawers, ripping mattresses, covers, and pillows off beds. However childproofed his playroom, Jussy still found a way to "unproof" it.

**I determined** that even with his handicaps, Jussy would develop to his capacity. My family transformed themselves into a teaching force, using every opportunity to help the lad copy

vowel sounds and learn other basic skills.

Our efforts began to pay off when, in a few weeks, we noticed some improvement. He was no longer the screaming, disoriented child that had stormed into our home at first.

In spite of his handicaps, Jussy possessed a talent that surpassed all others in his Bible school class. He could sing their songs in perfect pitch, except that he eliminated all consonants from the lyrics. For instance, he translated "Jesus loves me" to "Ee ah ah ee."

The half-hour drive that wintry afternoon gave me time to consider the reasons for my anxiety.

I decided that Jussy wasn't the whole cause. After all, just one of his rare kisses could bring on instant amnesia, my mind erasing all the toil that goes along with caring for such a child.

And I had relied often on the promise in Isaiah 40:29: "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

I found that verse especially true while keeping an all-night vigil over Jussy's sickbed, watching for seizures that could snuff out his life or cause more brain damage.

A shortage of time must have



been the reason for my stress, I concluded, time reduced by commitments made long before Jussy's arrival. Commitments such as cleaning the church that month or preparing for the next day's dinner guests weren't as pressing as the public office I held—the purpose of my trip to the county seat that afternoon.

When I had run for hospital commissioner from our rural district, I expected the job to be an easy one, since our county had no hospital, just a small but adequate ambulance service. Was I surprised when I walked into a major personnel and financial upheaval! Then without warning, I was hurled into the board chairman's seat, sputtering, "But, but—I haven't reviewed *Robert's Rules of Order* in ages."

Daniel 2:21 proclaims, "He [God] removeth kings, and setteth up kings." I wondered whether kings included weak-kneed chairwomen. If so, then I could claim the rest of the promise, "He giveth wisdom . . . and knowledge."

The crisis meant long hours away from home, refiguring budgets, and interviewing job applicants. At one such meeting I had confided in a few ladies about Jussy. "I hate being away from the child too long. His security and development depend upon a rigid schedule."

The county treasurer, a tall, slender redhead, had shown genuine concern and asked some questions, giving my morale the boost it needed.

**As the car** neared its destination, I spotted the courthouse, where I would sign some papers. At the same time Jussy had an appointment with a teacher at the mental health clinic, a convenient arrangement. The boy could stay with her while I took care of ambulance matters.

But plans went awry. The papers weren't ready, and consequently Jussy would accompany me to the courthouse. Since he was so unpredictable, I cringed at the prospect.

As it happened, however, the treasurer and attorney were so intent upon our business, no one

seemed to notice the one-boy choir in the corner. "Ee ah ah ee ee ah oh!" He appeared to be singing to the office's Christmas decorations.

It was then that I spotted a cute creature peering over my shoulder—a fluffy, brown-and-tan, funny-nosed bear. No doubt his swollen nose had been the target of "angry bees."

"What a darling bear!" I commented.

"Thank you!" the treasurer replied. "My sister made him."

With Mr. Bear looking on and Jussy continuing his serenade, we turned once again to the business at hand.

Soon I was hustling the child down the hall before he could stage anything sensational. To my exasperation, a large meeting was in session near the elevator.

"Come on, elevator!" I breathed anxiously.

All at once Jussy realized the corridor echoed, and he emitted a long, loud yodel.

"Hush!" I commanded.

But Jussy was lost in his own grand echo chamber and yelled all the louder, his voice reverberating off the walls.

I could feel scores of eyes upon me and read the thoughts behind them. "What's the matter with you? Can't you quiet the kid?"

At last the elevator doors opened and we escaped inside.

Earlier, the teacher had reported some improvement. "He's beginning to interact," she had said. Although the report sounded encouraging, in that moment it wasn't enough. I had expected instant results for our efforts. And except for the diminishing tantrums, Jussy seemed little different from the month before, when he had joined our family.

**As I filed** through heavy doors to the place where my car waited, Christmas music blared from a passing truck. And when I spotted Main Street's tinsel, glittering in the afternoon sunlight, an overwhelming weariness swept through me.

Jussy's chubby hand closed tightly around my fingers.

"What about you, little guy? Will you ever learn to talk?" I muttered.

"Paula!" called a voice behind me. The treasurer was scurrying from the courthouse. Breathless, she exclaimed, "I've been hunting all over. I'm so glad to catch up with you."

At once I noticed the compassion in her eyes as she gazed down at Jussy.

"Is this the young man you were telling us about?"

"Y . . . yes!"

She smiled, seemingly oblivious to the chilly breeze that tousled her hair. "I'd like him to have this," she said, handing me—the funny-nosed bear!

In the midst of the woman's prestigious world of credits and debits, of taxes and endless ledgers, she had taken time out to present a gift to a small, handicapped boy. To me, that bear with the swollen nose was as precious as the Magi's gold.

Suddenly a new surge of energy shot through my veins while I helped Jussy into the car and handed him the fluffy creature.

"Here's your bear, Jussy—bear!"

He grabbed the toy and beamed. "B . . . b . . . buh!" he stammered.

"Oh, Jussy!" Mr. "Buh" dug into my stomach as the child let me hug him.

It wasn't a big word, only one syllable. But it was formed with a *consonant*. A breakthrough! A beginning.

As I drove out of town, its street decorations took on new meaning as Christ's words came to mind, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The commissioner's job still hung like a ball and chain around my neck, and housework still waited my return home, but something had changed—my attitude!

God promises perfect peace to the one *whose mind is stayed on Him*. I had been dwelling on the *problems*, not on God. Concentrating on Him and His purpose for my life brought a refreshing perspective. I vowed to leave the weight of worry behind as boy and bear grinned at me in the rearview mirror.

"Merry Christmas, Jussy!" I cried. "Merry Christmas!"

## Postscript

Recently my cousin wrote, "How privileged you are that God has chosen you to care for Jussy!"

I'm discovering the "reward" is for here and now. It's the "labour of love" spoken of in Hebrews 6:10, a love that takes us beyond the daily drudgery of diaper cleanups, a love that gives life purpose.

That Christmas two years ago marked the beginning of Jussy's venture out of his autistic world. Although he still reverts back to his self-stimulatory routines at times, he has reached out to us and to the real world.

Probably my greatest joy comes at night when I rock Jussy to sleep. He actually delights in the sessions now.

Jussy remains severely retarded, but he continues to make progress. Since that initial "Buh," he has learned to communicate some basic needs with two- and three-word sentences; for instance, "Ee nanna, pree ["Eat banana, please"]." His hugs are accompanied by "I wuh boo ["I love you"]." And most precious of all are his prayers, "Jeeduh, hankoo ["Jesus, thank You"]" and "Jeedah, nigh-nigh ["Jesus, good night"]."

Even if Jussy's progress came to a sudden halt, even if he is never healed, we will always consider him a valuable part of our family. He causes us to look forward to the day when "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Revelation 21:4).

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# 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.

## How to Face Judgment Day With Confidence .....page 12

1. What makes God's final judgment undreadful?
2. Who is the "accuser" in God's final judgment?
3. Judgment in Old Testament times was most likely to result in (circle all correct responses)—
  - a. a harsh sentence.
  - b. patching up quarrels and controversies.
  - c. regaining lost rights and property.
  - d. getting relief from oppression.
4. What was the likely sentence in Old Testament times for stealing sheep? a. Imprisonment. b. Restoration.

## Man's Relationship to God .....page 19

1. What is the *best way* to complete this statement? Happiness is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. If God is the *owner* of the world, which of these words best describes man's position? (Circle one.) a. Slave. b. Servant. c. Deputy. d. Manager.
3. What makes people merely transitory possessors of things in the world? (Name at least five, in addition to the two given.)
  - a. Fire. b. Flood. c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_ f. \_\_\_\_\_ g. \_\_\_\_\_ h. \_\_\_\_\_
4. How did each of the following help Israel to remember God?
  - a. Barley waved at the altar during Passover.
  - b. Loaves of bread presented on day of Pentecost.
  - c. First-fruits gifts at Feast of Tabernacles.
  - d. Leaving the home unguarded during trips to feasts.

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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# MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

BY MEL REES

Humans were never given the ownership of the world or anything in it—just dominion.

**N**o matter how much of this world's goods a person might think he owns, no matter how many deeds of title he might have, he can never be an owner. His claim to ownership is always subject to forces beyond his control. Fire, flood, tornado, conquest, and even termites can make his claims worthless, because mankind has never been able to completely control the environment.

A claim to ownership may even be refuted by the refusal of his fellows to recognize his claim. Legal maneuvering may nullify it. Our great system of superhighways has forced people to move from homes for which they held valid deeds of ownership. And, even if a person could successfully defend his ownership claims during his lifetime, he would have to relinquish them at death, for they will inevitably fall into other hands.

Solomon recognized the difficulty in trying to perpetuate ownership. He said, "Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after

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*Mel Rees is a minister with much experience in conducting stewardship seminars. He lives in Woodland, Washington. This article is reprinted from the book God and Man Unlimited, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C.*

me" (Ecclesiastes 2:18).

From the beginning, a person's relationship to God has always been that of a manager, not an owner. This fact was clearly established when God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (Genesis 1:26).

This fact must have been impressed on Adam's mind by the tree that God planted in the Garden and forbade him to touch. The penalty was severe enough to show how God regarded ownership. From the record it appears that Adam had no difficulty in naming every animal and flower, but he didn't seem able to manage the orchard! After his transgression, he hid from God. Owners don't have to hide. Then he was evicted from his home—he didn't even own that.

**The example of Israel.** Just before God brought Israel into the land of Canaan, He instructed Moses to warn the people regarding their attitude concerning ownership. "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God," Moses told the people. "It is he that giveth thee power to get wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:11, 18). He said that just as soon as their flocks and herds multiplied and their silver and gold was multiplied and

their stomachs were full, there would be a tendency to forget God. He even told them what would happen to them if they forgot. But they could avoid these dire consequences if they followed the safeguards that God had provided to help them remember.

Each year the men were required to go—first to Shiloh, later to Jerusalem—to worship the Lord. At these feasts they were to present their tithes and offerings. There were other requirements that would keep this Owner-manager relation crystal clear.

On the day after the yearly Passover Sabbath, a sheaf of freshly ripened grain (barley) was waved before the altar of the Lord as an acknowledgment that all was His. No grain was to be harvested until this recognition was made.

On the day of Pentecost two loaves of bread, baked with leaven and wheat flour from the new crops, were presented to God as still another expression of their recognition of His supreme ownership.

In the seventh month came the Feast of Tabernacles. This was a time of rejoicing, for the harvest had been gathered into the granaries. On this occasion the choicest of the orchard, the olive grove, and the vineyard were presented to the Lord.

To further impress on their minds His love and watchcare, God protected their lands during

their journeys to these feasts. Every man who could make the journey was required to attend. They left their wives with small children and the old people back on the farm. There wasn't one able-bodied man in all Israel to protect these defenseless people from the marauding bands of the enemies that surrounded them. Their protection required a miracle. God simply took the desire for their lands out of the hearts of the heathen during this period when His instructions were being followed: "For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: *neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the*

some unusual dreams) he found himself a slave to the wealthy and influential Potiphar, the captain of the Egyptian Pharaoh's guard.

Because of his faithfulness to duty, Joseph was finally elevated to a position of almost absolute authority in the Egyptian's household. That Joseph recognized that this authority did not include everything his master possessed is clearly shown by his refusal to enter into a liaison with his mistress, Potiphar's beautiful but adulterous wife: "But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater

This eternal principle can be seen in the words of Jesus when He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Paul, self-assured, zealous, wasn't a very good manager (for God) until that fateful day on the road to Damascus when, amazed and bewildered, he cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). This is the question of one who is looking for orders from a superior, not the words of an owner. From that time on to the end of his life he strove to accomplish only one thing—the will of his Master.

The problem of the ages has been that people have embraced the pagan theory of ownership rather than the Christian tenet that every person is a manager of God's goods. A Christian looks for a spiritual relationship with his Maker, not to the possession of material or temporal things. It is heard over and over again in his prayers and in the songs that he sings. Without this belief, he would be wasting a great deal of time and effort that he now spends in religious activities. This hope provides meaning and direction to his life that is not enjoyed by the unbeliever.

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*The one who considers himself God's steward can rest in the assurance that regardless of the circumstances he is under the direction and protection of the Owner of the world.*

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Lord thy God thrice in the year" (Exodus 34:24).

But somehow as time passed, these people lost sight of God as the owner of the lands that they farmed, and found to their sorrow they couldn't hold them against their enemies. They just couldn't control their environment.

**The Owner-manager relationship.** To really understand the Owner-manager relationship, one must recognize the difference between an owner and a manager. In ownership there are unlimited privileges; that is, an owner may use or dispose of his goods as he desires. The manager has certain restrictions, and a violation of these constitutes the crime of embezzlement. Man-made laws have always imposed severe penalties on perpetrators of this crime, for it is a felony.

One of the best illustrations of this limitation in management is found in the story of the young Hebrew Joseph. Through no fault of his own (except perhaps for a bit of talebearing on his brothers, and naiveté in telling the family of

in this house than I; *neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* (Genesis 39:8, 9).

Joseph recognized that a violation of the restriction in the management of the property of another constitutes a crime. His faithful adherence to this principle was a great bulwark that protected his moral integrity. On the other hand, when Adam took of the forbidden fruit he became an embezzler and was subject to the penalties for the violation.

**The first sin** in heaven was also a violation of this Owner-manager relationship. Lucifer, a created being, refused to recognize his relationship to God. Cast out from the courts of glory, he enticed Eve by a delusive argument to forget that she wasn't an owner. Adam, because of his fatal fascination for his lovely wife, willingly violated the only restriction in his manager-relationship to God, and has given to his descendants the inordinate desire for ownership.

**Right attitude brings security.** As a manager under God, a person can enjoy the freedom of dependence. He can be sure that all his plans are under divine control and direction. He also has the assurance that the daily needs of both him and his family will be supplied.

This is what Jesus was trying so urgently to get folks to see in His Sermon on the Mount. He told them that happiness didn't consist in owning things—this produces only headaches. The more things, the bigger the headache. True happiness includes the knowledge that God will provide all the necessities of life no matter what conditions might exist. He explained it by calling attention to God's watchcare over the birds, the grass, and the flowers.

Perhaps a certain farmer understood it best. Reading his well-worn Bible one day, he saw

this great truth of God's ownership. Falling to his knees he prayed, "I'm sorry, God. I thought I owned this farm. Now I see You really own it—I'm just the manager. So I'm going to give it back to You. But I hope You'll forgive me, because we do things a bit strange down here. You see, I'll have to keep my name on the deed; but You and I will both know who *really* owns it!"

Down in the little village his neighbors thought he had been out in the sun too long when he told them that he had given his farm back to the One who owned it—especially when they found out it was God. But, not allowing their jests to disturb him, he explained that this took all the worry from his shoulders. "I just get down on my knees each morning and ask God to show me how He wants His farm run, and that's the way I run it—just as good as I can."

One day a plague of grasshoppers came. They ate their way across his neighbor's farm. When they got to his fence they didn't stop, roll over on their backs, and die; they swept across his farm, too, and consumed every blade of grass. The neighbor could hardly wait to see him.

"I'll bet this changes your mind about God owning your farm," he greeted him.

"Why, not at all," calmly replied the farmer.

"I don't get it," said the neighbor.

"It's simple. God owns the farm and He owns the grasshoppers. If He wants to pasture *His* grasshoppers on *His* farm, it's all right by me!"

Job recognized God's ownership when he told his wife, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). He could suffer the loss of all the possessions he controlled with calmness because he didn't regard them as his. In reality, what Job lost was his job as manager—temporarily.

**Rx for happiness.** And so it is with a person who considers himself God's steward—His manager. He can rest in the assurance that regardless of circumstances he is under the

## The Nature of Human Beings

Man and woman were made in the image of God, with individuality—the power and freedom to think and to do. Though created free beings, each is an indivisible unity of body, mind, and soul, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else.

When our first parents disobeyed God, they denied their dependence upon Him and fell from their high position under God. The image of God in them was marred and they became subject to death. Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences.

They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker.

Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another, and to care for their environment. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7; Psalm 8:4-8; Acts 17:24-28; Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-17; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20.)

direction and protection of the Owner of the world. He can walk in confidence knowing that his Master has a thousand ways to care for him of which he knows nothing.

Jesus explained it this way: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For

my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Placing trust and confidence in God at all times and under all circumstances will free a person from worry over the uncertainties of life. This can only be experienced when he recognizes that God is the Owner—he is only the manager of the things with which he has been entrusted. This is the position for which he was created.

TT

If you wish a fuller presentation of the subject of Christian stewardship—having God as a partner in all aspects of our lives, not just our wages—be sure to order the 143-page book by Mel Rees titled *God and Man Unlimited*. Send \$5.95 for each book ordered (price includes postage and handling) to ABC Mailing Service, 6856 Eastern Avenue NW., Washington, D.C. 20012.



# When You Care Enough to Give the Best

BY KAREN O'CONNOR



I gave a talk recently at the San Diego Writer's Guild. A few weeks later I met someone who had been in the audience that day. She told me she enjoyed my remarks and added, "You were so natural up there. You didn't try to teach us anything. You just shared your own experience."

Her words gave me a warm glow. I was reminded that the best gift of all is one's self. I know how much I love it when others share completely with me. Perhaps I had given others the same joy.

Wouldn't relationships be easy if we all lived by that principle? Unfortunately, few of us practice it a hundred percent of the time. I see in my own life how I

withdraw from time to time—particularly when I'm afraid or insecure or angry or sad. It takes courage to stay out there all the time. After all, it's not easy to share one's innermost thoughts, feelings, ideas, and values.

It's embarrassing and scary. What if they don't agree with me? Leave me. Reject me.

On the other hand, how wonderful it is when we're willing to risk it, and how joyful when others share themselves fully with us. I have noticed that when I focus on context instead of conditions, I am more open to the beauty around me. Even the challenges are beautiful, for they hold the promise of another level of enlightenment, another opportunity for love.

When I can get beyond the petty pace of lack and limitation, I discover abundance in every area

of my life, not just when people are "behaving" or when the circumstances meet my ideals.

When I let go of my position about life, let go of my notion that my way is the *only* way, I become an empty vessel and love rushes in to fill me up again.

When I look at my life in this way, I am reminded that Jesus preached the abundant life on every level. He came to fulfill the law with love. To follow Him is to live. And to live is to fully express ourselves and our love at all times.

Our willingness is all it takes. When we love and share, we heal the mind and body, nurture and restore our spirits, and unite with people of every belief and background. Helen Keller put it another way. "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

And what is love, if not an adventure? What is life without sharing it? Love is courageous and adventuresome. It takes courage to let go of a deep hurt and forgive another unconditionally, to cuddle a crying baby through an illness, to care for an aging parent at death, to express our commitment to Christ through marriage and family life.

Every moment is filled with the opportunity to give ourselves away—to express who we really are. Love is not a function of time or space or form. Love is who we are. As the artist Corita expressed it so beautifully in one of her paintings: "You are unlimited, limitless, and less and less and less—end less."

There are unlimited things we can do each day that will let others know that they are special and loved:

- Hide a love letter under your spouse's pillow.
- Tuck a note in your son's lunch bag.
- Stuff a surprise toy in your children's shoes at night.
- Be first to greet your neighbor, sales clerk, banker.
- Call an old friend and meet at the park for lunch.

Life is too precious to hold back another minute. Let's start today. We don't have to wait for a special occasion or a good mood or until we know someone better. We can begin now, right where we are. **TT**

Karen O'Connor is a writing instructor at the University of California-San Diego and writes books and educational pieces for children. © 1982 by Karen O'Connor.

# BETWEEN THE LINES

## ON OVERCOMING INFERIORITY



I suppose most of us have feelings of inferiority. We react like that little cartoon character in Miss Peach. The school psychologist asks this half pint lying on a couch, "Tell me, Ira—what about life frightens you the most?" The student responds, "Realizing that my future lies in the hands of a hopelessly incompetent fool—namely me."

You look around you and you see all sorts of talented people. You say to yourself, "I can't preach like Billy Graham. I can't sing like Pavarotti, or hit a golf ball like Jack Nicklaus, or play the violin like Isaac Stern, or do a million other things that seem to come so easy to other people."

We sense an incompleteness about ourselves, a lack of fulfillment. We are like the fellow who said, "Frankly, I have days when I wish somebody else were master of my fate and captain of my soul."

In a Peanuts cartoon Lucy asks, "Life is a mystery, Charlie Brown. Do you know the answer?" And Charlie Brown replies, "Be kind, don't smoke, be prompt, smile a lot, eat

sensibly, avoid cavities, and mark your ballot carefully. Avoid too much sun, send overseas packages early, love all creatures above and below, insure your belongings, and try to keep the ball low." The final frame shows Lucy saying, "Hold real still because I am going to hit you a very sharp blow on the nose."

The secret to overcoming feelings of inferiority, this lack of meaning in life, this lack of worth, lies in a single word that was used by Christ's apostles and once turned the world upside down.

I refer to the word *agapē* and it means a special kind of love. Robert Wieland reminded us in our October issue that it was the kind of love Jesus Christ showed us on the cross. In those last few hours as He hung there in the darkness, Christ drained the cup of human woe to its dregs. The bright sunshine in which He had walked all His days on earth was gone. All thought of reward to come fled His mind. He could not see to the other side of the dark and awful grave that came before Him. Jesus, with all His sensitivity, Jesus, who had known the greatest of

all joys—oneness with the Father—was willing to give it all up *forever*—for *you*.

This awesome truth should immediately erase all our sinful feelings of inferiority and lack of worth. We have been bought with a fearsome price. Furthermore, the price tag includes limitations our Lord must contend with throughout eternity. We are *that* important in our Lord's sight!

The challenge for us, therefore, is to learn to appreciate this love of Christ, to accept it for ourselves, and to love our fellowman with this *agapē* love. It entails doing what Jesus Himself did: stripping Himself of all worldly success and power. We must rid ourselves of any false gods we may have. God's "power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9, R.S.V.). And this means Jesus' "weakness" and our own.

The way to Jesus is the way of the cross: "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27, R.S.V.). It is this way of His, the way of the cross, that irritates so many and drives them from Him in

intense disgust.

But it is the glorious solution to our problem of lack of worth.—K.J.H.

### More Than a Babe

This Christmas season will again witness the usual preoccupation with the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. Greeting cards, window displays, children's plays, will focus on the nativity scene. We will renew acquaintances with the Judean shepherds and the adoring Wise Men from the East as they render homage to the infant Jesus.

But almost lost in the shuffle will be the good news that the Babe grew up, became a Man, and sacrificed His life for you and me. Bethlehem soon gave way to Nazareth, Capernaum, Samaria, Jericho, Jerusalem—and then Golgotha. The latter is what makes the Christmas story so meaningful. It is the Christmas story completed.

This Christmas season, carolers will sing, "Glory to the new-born King!" and "Proclaim the holy birth!" And we heartily join with them. But He was more than a Babe. Infinitely more.—K.J.H.

# Good News

*for Special Children and Their Families*



Little Joshua Jennings (above) is more fortunate than most special children. He's got Edmarc, a group of caring people in Suffolk, Virginia, who offer special services to disabled youngsters. Rosalind Cutchins, Family Services supervisor, took Joshua out to the playground and swung with him on her lap so that he wouldn't fall off and be frightened. She found him to be a happy, loving child.

Edmarc was founded in 1978 as a hospice, a place where the families of dying children could go to receive emotional, spiritual, and practical support. Today the services are not limited to children who are dying, but include respite for parents in the program, organized day care for the children, and assessment of developmental delay in infants. Edmarc also offers counseling and acts as a referral service where appropriate. The newest addition to the curriculum is a home-care program for dying children.

Brian Kober (at the far right) has trouble with balance, but runs pretty well. He had a blast playing with the tumbling equipment.





Christian values—compassion, loving one's neighbor, and ministering to those in need—do have a place in today's busy world.

BY KATHLEEN S. CARTER



*"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

*Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . .*

*Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:35, 36, 40).*

The message in these New Testament verses is alive and well today in Suffolk, a small town nestled among the peanut fields of southeastern Virginia.

Much about Suffolk is ordinary. Its main street could be the main street of countless other American towns. It has wealth and poverty. It has its share of crime. Its churches are of the usual denominations: Methodist, Baptist, Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, to name a few.

And yet there is something about Suffolk that sets it apart. It is the home of a special ministry that brings the words of Christ to life for the families of disabled children.

Imagine, for a moment, that you are the parent of a 5-year-old boy who is dying. For the past three years his nervous system has been slowly falling apart until he now has the physical ability of a 3-month-old baby.

Where do you find the physical therapy your little boy needs? How do you arrange for a teacher to help him learn all the things children his age are learning in school? Who will babysit for your son and his normal sisters when you and your spouse must be

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*"Many of the families we serve are at a very difficult time in their own lives and may very well be questioning their faith."*



**Rosalind Cutchins and a 13-year-old volunteer help Brian Kober develop his motor skills. He became quite adept at putting blocks in the right places.**

**Emilie Sharp, a preschooler, is the victim of multiple birth defects, affecting her eyes, ears, heart, and legs. She is severely retarded and may be going blind. Doctors are trying to save her eyesight.**

**Edmarc started out as a few volunteers working out of one room in the Suffolk Presbyterian church. It has grown into an organization of six staff members and more than 100 volunteers helping families throughout Tidewater Virginia. Families served by Edmarc come from diverse social, economic, and religious backgrounds.**



away from home for a few hours? How do you keep doing a good job at work and at running your home when your thoughts are centered around your dying child? How do you keep your family from falling apart under the weight of such a heavy load?

**Allen and Joan Hogge**, a young doctor and his wife, had to face all those questions when they moved to Suffolk in 1977.

Their family included two daughters and Marcus, a bright-eyed 5-year-old dying of metachromatic leukodystrophy, an inherited disease that made his nerves stop working, one by one, until he could no longer move.

Caring for a disabled child in a new home was at times overwhelming for the Hogges. "It was hard enough coping with the fact of having a child who was going to die," Joan recalled. "Besides that, there were all the everyday things that needed to be done to take care of the children and the house. It was overwhelming to have to think about anything else but Marcus."

The Hogges quickly learned there was no agency in Suffolk that could help them. It took the Suffolk school system three months to find a teacher who would give Marcus his lessons at home. The physical therapists at the local hospital were not trained to work with children. Babysitters were difficult to find; often the Hogges had to pay private nurses to stay with their children when they went out.

Joan Hogge turned to the family's church for help. She and Allen had joined the 150-member Suffolk Presbyterian church soon after moving to Suffolk. They had been impressed by the caring manner of the pastor, Edward

Page. It was Ed Page in whom Joan confided the family's worries.

Page could sympathize more deeply than most with the family. Page, like Marcus, was dying. The 30-year-old minister had lived with a brain tumor for six years; he died of it shortly after he and the congregation launched a program to help the Hogges, and families like them.

Thus Edmarc was born. The organization's title came from the first names of Ed Page and Marcus Hogge, who died in 1980 at the age of 7. The intent of Edmarc was to be a hospice: a place where the families of dying children could go to receive emotional, spiritual, and practical support.

In the fall of 1978, Edmarc opened its offices in a wing of the Suffolk Presbyterian church. It soon became clear to the congregation and the community of Suffolk that there was a real need for the services Edmarc provided: trained babysitters to care for the children when their parents were away, physical therapy individually tailored to each child, an infant stimulation program, parent groups that lent mothers and fathers spiritual and emotional support, day care for disabled children, and a home-care program so dying children could spend their last days among family and friends rather than in a hospital.

The need was not limited, however, to dying children. Pastor Barbara Mease, Edmarc's director of professional services, said, "What makes Edmarc unique is our willingness to provide service to a wide range of children. There are other programs in existence that will serve mentally retarded children, or children with cerebral palsy, or dying children. But Edmarc is the only organization I know of that will minister to the families of all these children, and others who need what we can offer."

By 1982 Edmarc was serving about 50 families scattered throughout 1500 square miles in Suffolk and rural Southampton and Isle of Wight counties. What started as the home ministry of a small church was now a community-oriented program

helping families who were rich and poor, black and white, of many faiths.

Yet Edmarc's staff and more than 100 volunteers have kept in mind that their work is a Christian ministry. Allen Hogge, who has served as Edmarc's medical advisor since 1978, explained: "Edmarc was formed because a group of committed Christians felt a need to share the good news in a tangible way. We sought a way to live out the gospel in our community in a way that was not merely talking, but involved our whole lives.

"Many of the families we serve are at a very difficult time in their own lives and may very well be questioning their faith. We share our history and our love. But we also realize that we may need to sit and share the pain and the confusion of someone who believes there is no God. We believe that our own faith and witness may make a difference in the days ahead, when the family once again has a chance to accept our love and God's love."

**To families** with disabled or dying children, Edmarc has indeed made a difference.

Emilie, for example, is a preschooler with her mother's dark hair and a rosebud mouth. She is also the victim of multiple birth defects, affecting her eyes, ears, heart, and legs. She is severely retarded. At one time doctors told her parents that she had about 6 months to live.

In many places, parents of a child such as Emilie would be advised to place her in an institution and go on with their own lives.

Through Edmarc, Emilie can live at home and be an important member of her family. A volunteer trained by Edmarc comes to her home once a week to give her physical therapy and teach her to use her muscles for rolling over and perhaps one day for crawling or walking.

Emilie's parents get together often at Edmarc with other parents of disabled children. At those meetings they exchange ideas and air the problems they have in keeping family life going.

When Emilie had to have open heart surgery to correct one of her many birth defects, an Edmarc staff member stayed with her parents and offered comfort until word came that she had survived the operation.

And now, when Emilie's mother has to take her other daughter (who is normal) to a dentist's appointment or shopping for shoes—or when she just wants an hour to herself once in a while—Edmarc provides her with a trained babysitter or day care at no charge.

Life is as close to normal for Emilie and her family as Edmarc can make it. Keeping families together has always been one of the organization's major concerns.

"We provide families with an alternative to sending their children outside the home for help," Pastor Mease said. "We do this through providing training, support, and referral to other agencies when appropriate. Helping families stay together is one of our most important objectives."

**A grant proposal** for Edmarc, written by Pastor Mease and Dr. Hogge in 1980, described Edmarc as "a ministry of compassion," whose major purposes included, "strengthening the family, and witnessing to God's healing powers."

The present minister of Suffolk Presbyterian church, Pastor J. Allen Johnson, elaborated: "Here is a very small church doing a very great thing. From the beginning we have talked about how we could be good news to people rather than talking about good news and telling the story of the gospel.

"(Edmarc) has given us an opportunity to really be good news to people, to offer hope where there is no hope, and to offer comfort where there seems to be none."

For the Hogges, for Emilie's family, and for many others in southeastern Virginia, Edmarc has shown that Christian values—compassion, loving one's neighbor, ministering to those in need—have a place in today's busy world.

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# FRANK ANSWERS

## NOTHING UNCLEAN OF ITSELF?

**What does the apostle Paul mean by his statement in Romans 14:14—"I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." This appears to refer to the Jewish dietary laws, but how does the death of Jesus suddenly make pork fit for food?**

It doesn't! Romans 14, unfortunately, has been one of those chapters whose subject matter has been debated through the centuries. It sketches two problems that were agitating Christian groups in those times: (1) the observance of certain days (verses 5, 6) and, (2) the eating of certain foods (verses 1-4, 14-23). We wish the apostle had given a few footnotes to clear up the obscurity of his language! However, in the absence of anything of this nature we must survey the New Testament to see what were the problems with which early Christians wrestled. Against such a background we may see more clearly the issues Paul was addressing.

In the first place it should



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

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be noted that the usage of the term "unclean" (and its synonym, *common*) was not limited to certain kinds of flesh food. Alcoholic drink was *unclean* for priests on duty in the sanctuary (Leviticus 10:9, 10). A person with certain diseases or bodily conditions, clothing—and even houses—in certain conditions could be viewed as unclean (Leviticus 14:54-57). A land might be viewed as unclean, as well as evil angels (Leviticus 22:19; Mark 1:23).

Furthermore, in the Jewish mind non-Jewish persons were likewise regarded as unclean and common (Acts 10:28). Thus the term unclean or common came to mean anything that was unfit or improper to use or to associate with and did not always have a reference to forbidden flesh food as detailed in Leviticus 11.

The New Testament is clear that the issue early Christians had over food did not pertain to the Mosaic dietary laws but to the question whether Christians could or should eat food that had been offered to idols. The Jerusalem Council (A.D. 49) requested Gentile Christians to abstain from this practice (Acts 15:28, 29). The reason was obvious. To eat food offered to an idol was construed as tantamount to the worship of the idol. Consequently, flesh offered to idols was viewed as unclean or common—unfit for a Christian to eat.

This ruling of the Council was eventually challenged by certain Christians in

Corinth. The apostle Paul's discussion of this issue (1 Corinthians chapters 8 to 10, especially chapter 8) is the true historical background to the food issue in Romans 14. The Corinthians argued that inasmuch as an idol was nothing, the consecrated food (generally, sacrificial animals later sold in the marketplaces) was in nowise affected; hence it could be eaten without any idea of worship (1 Corinthians 8:1-6). Some were so bold as to argue they could even eat in an idol's temple and not be guilty of idolatry (verse 10).

But the apostle pointed out: Not every Christian viewed the matter in the same light. "There is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled" (verse 7). Therefore, he argued, "take heed lest by any means this liberty of your's become a stumbling block to them that are weak" (verse 9). His appeal was that those Christians who claimed to see matters more clearly should not cause their so-called weaker brethren to stumble over their example on this point (verses 7-13). This is the same argument in Romans 14:15-23.

Since many Christians viewed the food offered to idols as unclean and common and the eating of it as idolatrous worship, others who felt differently were called upon to deny themselves for the sake of Christ and their brethren

lest the latter stumble and lose their way over the conduct of the other. Both groups were urged to desist from their criticisms of one another and to live in an exemplary manner, for one day both groups would stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of themselves (Romans 14:10-13).

### **Do Seventh-day Adventists believe in eternal salvation?**

If you mean, Does the Christian have assurance of eternal life in Christ? we would answer, Yes. The apostle John affirms: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13, see also verses 11, 12). As long as the believer remains in union with his Saviour and Lord, he may rejoice in this assurance. This assurance emanates from God's pledged word.

If you mean what some teach: "Once saved, always saved"—there being no possibility of falling away from Christ—then we would answer, No. We believe the Scriptures clearly teach that just as we chose to accept Christ, so we may choose at any point in our experience to reject Him and to turn from Him. See 2 Peter 2:20-22. Heaven forces none. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

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# THESE TIMES

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Gerald Wheeler's article on the great day of judgment illustrates beautifully what THESE TIMES is all about. The article goes behind the scenes and reveals in a splendid way the kind of God we really have.

Many people feel uncomfortable about the judgment: God's some kind of tyrant just waiting to do them in, they feel. Even some Bible-toting Christians get a bit tentative when the subject comes up for discussion or when it disturbs them during their most serious moments.

Judgment day has been defined in literature as the "world's last session" (John Milton), that "dreadful day when heaven and earth shall pass away" (Walter Scott), the "time when the silence of death will descend upon our planet" (E. I. Watkins), "when all this old world and its generations shall be consumed in one fire" (Tertullian).

Is judgment day bad news? The Bible itself pulls no punches. There IS a judgment day coming, make no mistake about it.

The concept of God's entering into judgment with the inhabitants of earth is frequently presented by Bible writers. Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," pictured the Lord as coming to execute judgment upon all (Jude 14, 15). Isaiah described God as coming with fire to execute judgment (Isaiah 66:15, 16, R.S.V.), and the prophet Jeremiah pictured the awesome time when "the Lord will roar from on high" and enter "into judgment with all flesh" (Jeremiah 25:30, 31, R.S.V.). Daniel foresaw the time when "the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Daniel 7:10), and in mystic language Joel prophesied that God would "sit to judge all the heathen round about" (Joel 3:12; cf. verses 13-16).

Jesus frequently referred to the final judgment. He declared that ancient Sodom and Gomorrah would be treated more leniently in the judgment for refusing the light they had than would the cities of His day that spurned Him (Mark 10:11, 14, 15), and the pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon would receive lesser condemnation in the judgment than Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, which rejected Him (Luke 10:13-15). He asserted that men shall give an account of "every idle word" in the judgment.

Paul declared that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world (Acts 17:31). He preached of coming judgment to Felix with such conviction that the Roman procurator trembled (Acts 24:25). He showed that conviction of a future judgment is found implanted in human conscience (Romans 1:32; 2:14-16), and that for the wicked prospect of a future judgment is a fearful thing (Hebrews 10:26, 27). Peter noted that both evil angels and wicked men are reserved unto judgment (2 Peter 2:4, 9; 3:7; cf. Jude 6).

And yet the truth is that we can face judgment day with confidence and joy. The judgment is good news! How can this be? Please turn to page 12.

*Kenneth J. Holland*

# Christmas Eve in Space

BY PAUL HARVEY

Fourteen years ago our Apollo Eight Astronauts, Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders were 238,000 miles from home. They were orbiting the moon. And it was Christmas Eve.

They were the first earthmen ever really to explore beyond the beyond. NASA had scheduled a broadcast from them to us—a Christmas Eve greeting from space. What would it be? The Space Agency had left it entirely up to the Apollo crew, Borman in particular.

He had scribbled some notes about "peace on earth," but earth-people at that time were suffering internecine strife over our unpopular involvement in Vietnam.

Borman wanted any Christmas message to contribute to universality—something to which all the people of planet Earth could relate and respond. A Christmas message for Christians would not touch nameless millions of Chinese, Indians, Moslems.

Our spacemen were feeling the oneness of our home planet and they wanted everyone to share that feeling. The lonely Earth floating in all that dark, forbidding emptiness hungered for hope.

---

*Paul Harvey is a well-known news commentator, columnist, and lecturer. © 1982, Los Angeles Times Syndicate.*

They were rich and poor down there. They were Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Mohammedan, Shinto and Buddhist . . . They were East and West, generations deep in separate and frequently conflicting traditions.

What Christmas Eve message could possibly be a catalyst for so much diversity? They were male and female, young and old, well and ill, fed and unfed; and they were all tuned in—waiting.

Do not judge Commander Borman's choice of words critically until you try it yourself . . .

- You cannot offer "Merry Christmas" where it was neither.

- You cannot wish "Happy Holidays" to hungry.

- You cannot without hypocrisy plead the cause of peace to men at war.

Yet, this monumental opportunity to wrap your words around all men and women of all nations must not pass with less . . .

And it was then that Commander Borman inscribed on the flame proof paper of his flight plan the words which he would speak to us that Christmas Eve 14 years ago. From Scripture, from the book of Genesis, the words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." And we were one.

Tr



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