

THESE TIMES

JANUARY, 1984

A LOVE STRONGER
THAN HATE

ABDUCTED!

ADVENTURE
ON WINGS

Seven Ways to Lower Blood Pressure

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A Love Stronger Than Hate



Belfast, Northern Ireland, a shattered city in a divided country. Where ignorant Catholics kill bigoted Protestants in the cause of political "freedom," and where ignorant Protestants kill bigoted Catholics in the cause of "religious" liberty. And where people live, and young men and women still manage to fall in love.

BY GEORGE TARGET

Let's call him Ian. That's not his real name—but in Ireland these days you have to be careful about revealing names. There have been more than a thousand sectarian murders and assaults since this recent flare-up of ancient troubles: shootings, stabbings, beatings. So there's no sense taking risks.

And Ian has had misery enough for his 24 years of life, misery enough to be sparing.

He came from good Protestant stock, the sort that goes to church twice every Sunday as regular as the proverbial clockwork.

His father, a welder in the shipyards, steady as they come.

Mother kept a clean and tidy house, always warm, baked the best bread in the neighborhood, and ruled the family with the sharp edge of her tongue.

Two elder brothers, both unemployed. Not much work for unskilled laborers in Northern Ireland.

Ian was intelligent, did well at school, and was now earning good money as a craftsman in a production plant. Quiet, serious, fond of walking through the countryside during the green evenings and golden weekends of summer, he liked few things better than a book by the roaring fire during the long loneliness of winter. Never had much to do with girlfriends—though men tend to marry late in Ireland.

It all sounds fairly ordinary, surely.

So what was the misery he had to be sparing?

Two years ago, on his

twenty-second birthday, he was walking home from work when a terrorist hurled a bomb from a speeding car . . . and left Ian babbling in the nightmare of sudden blindness.

He was rushed to a hospital, operated on immediately for internal injuries and broken bones. . . . But both eyes were destroyed past all healing.

The other wounds healed in their own time, though their scars would disfigure his flesh until the day he died. But the scars on his mind, though invisible, were even more obvious.

He hardly spoke a word, hardly ate or drank, hardly slept.

He simply lay in bed, brooding and sightless.

Nearly four months.

Though there was one nurse who seemed able to draw some small spark of human response from him.

Let's call her Bridget. Fine Irish name for a girl, Bridget—and she was as Irish as her name.

Good Catholic stock, the sort that goes to Mass first thing every Sunday morning.

Her father, a carpenter who mostly worked away from home over in England. Not much work for Catholics in Protestant Northern Ireland. A decent enough man—loved his family, spent weekends with them whenever he could afford the fare. And they loved him as only an absent father can be loved.

Mother kept a clean but untidy house, always warm, cooked the best stew in the neighborhood, and ruled the family with a quick hand and a soft heart.

Six brothers, four sisters—with the youngest of them all, Mary,

11, her father's darling and a real tomboy.

Bridget was intelligent, did well at school, had taken her training as a nurse at a famous London hospital, and now, at the age of 21, was a ward sister in Belfast's biggest Casualty Clinic.

Lively, though fundamentally serious, a singer with a sweet and gentle voice and a way of her own with folk songs. Never had much to do with boyfriends—though it wasn't from any lack of young men who'd set their caps for her.

But now her heart was moved for Ian, for there was something of the little-boy-lost about him that brought the tears to her eyes. True, he couldn't see the tears, yet she was afraid that her voice would betray her emotions.

In a way she was right about her voice, because it was the lilt and the laughter of it that dragged him back from the depths of depression and self-pity, the warmth and gentleness and strength of her words, the blessed assurance with which she spoke to him of the love of Jesus Christ.

At first the fact that a Catholic could talk with such happy naturalness about Christ baffled him, since it was against the grain of all he had been brought up to believe.

"Catholics?" his father would say. "Spawn of the devil!"

Yet here was one who had faith!

And so, as the long dark of his days turned to weeks and months, he would listen for her footsteps and turn his sightless face toward her coming like a flower bending for the sun.

At the end of his four months in the hospital he was pronounced incurably blind, but what he now

George Target has written many times on the violence of Northern Ireland. He writes from Norfolk, England. © 1984 by George Target. From Insight magazine.

knew as their love gave him the courage to accept his affliction.

Because, despite everything against them—religion, politics, the opposition of their families—they were in love, and wandering in that young and singing landscape.

He was discharged and began the weary months of rehabilitation: how to wash and shave and dress without help, how to move around the house without cracking his shins on every chair, how to walk through the streets with a white stick, how to read Braille, how to survive the crushing pity he could sense in the very air he breathed. But their love gave him the hope to go on living and trying, to go on picking himself up every time he stumbled and fell.

Not that they were able to spend much of their lives together: an occasional evening, perhaps an afternoon when her duties allowed. But they lived for those brief encounters and knew the beginnings of deep peace and high joys.

But their families were appalled! Thinking of getting married? The very law of God forbade it, surely.

"What fellowship hath the children of light with the children of darkness?" thundered his father. "You'll not be marrying her whilst I'm drawing breath!"

"The Roman Catholic Church," stated her priest, "absolutely prohibits all such mixed marriages, so you can be putting the idea from you!"

Each loved the other, each knew Christ and loved the Christ he knew, but each loved and worshiped in a different way.

So, by all manner of pressures—constant arguments, threats, promises, and even downright lies—they were driven apart.

And, eventually, they quarreled, said hurtful things in their black misery, and one evening, with the rain drizzling and their hearts cold, she walked away from him on the weeping street.

He withdrew into his perpetual night. Days and weeks of bitterness.

"You'll not be regretting it in the long run," he was told. "You'd

have been inviting trouble by unequally yoking with an unbeliever!"

And he would sit sightless and not answer them a word.

She withdrew into her work, too sick at heart to remember. Weeks and months of numbed agony.

"You'll live to praise the Almighty for it," she was told.

"You'd have been asking for hell on earth marrying a Protestant!"

And she would bite her lower lip and say nothing.

The months drained into a year.

And the bombings continued, to the grief of Ireland.

Then one evening, as Ian sat alone in the house, there came a frantic knocking and hammering at the door. He moved confidently through his accustomed darkness to open it.

"Ian! Come you quick, Ian!"

By the voice, hysterical, choked with tears, he recognized young Mary, Bridget's tomboy sister.

"Is it Bridget?" he said, knowing it was.

"A bombing! She's trapped and half dead, so she is! Screaming after you. Come you, Ian! In the name of God, please come!"

Without even shutting the door behind him he took her hand, tightly, unable to speak. And she led and stumbled and cried with him through the merciless streets.

The bomb had devastated a cheap little restaurant where Bridget had been eating supper with three other nurses. The others had managed to scramble out from under the shifting rubble. But she was trapped by the legs. And the fire was spreading, licking toward her.

They could hear her screaming, but couldn't yet reach the pit where she lay.

Firemen, police, soldiers, lights, and special equipment were on their way.

Ian moved into the chaos.

"You can't go in there!" shouted the officer in charge.

"She's my girl," said Ian.

"Don't be a raving lunatic!" shouted the officer. "You'll not be seeing your hand in front of your face in that darkness!"

"What difference does darkness make to a blind man?" said Ian.

And, as he had so many times before, he turned toward the sound of her voice, and moved through that black inferno with all the skills and instincts of the blind, all the urgency of love.

"I'm coming, Bridget! I'm coming!"

And he found her, and crouched there, and cradled her head in his yearning arms, and kissed her.

"Ian," she whispered. "Ian . . ." and lapsed into unconsciousness like a tired child.

And with her blood soaking into his clothes, the fire reaching them, he held her until their rescuers chopped a way through.

What he didn't see, being blind, was that the side of her lovely face had been seared by fire.

In time, a long time, she recovered. But despite the best cosmetic surgery, her face would always be scarred.

"But," she said, "the only man I love in the wide world will never have the seeing of it, so what difference does it make to me?"

And they took up their love from where they had never really left it.

True, both families resisted every step of the way. And there was one dramatic confrontation between them that almost led to a fistfight: shouted abuse, insults, desperate threats.

But, in the middle of it, Bridget took Ian's hand. "What has any of this to do with our Lord?" she said.

And they walked out of that place of hatred, again into those merciless streets.

Yes, they would marry. Yes, all the conventional wisdom warns of failure. But do you know a more excellent way than love? Or a better guide than Jesus Christ?

And what other healing is there? And if they seek, will they not find?

TT

Note: We publish this article in THESE TIMES not because we wish to encourage marriage between people of different faiths (which we do not), but because of the message it conveys about an issue frequently presented in the news media—Christians fighting Christians.—The Editors.

JUNE STRONG

WHAT TO DO WITH 12 NEW MONTHS

January is reality. Christmas decorations are packed away once more, and we've made our peace with the gaudy scarf Aunt Maude sent from Minnesota. The small spruce which lent its woody aroma throughout the holidays (and which cost so much we nearly succumbed to an artificial one) now leans against the bird feeder as a convenient spot for cardinals to rest. We can no longer ignore sleet and ice by baking Christmas cookies and putting "Joy to the World" on the stereo. The festivities are finished. The children trudge off to school. The stores are drab. New blenders and calculators no longer excite us.

January is pewter after tinsel. The real stuff from which life is made. A time of introspection and anticipation. What shall we do with the twelve months unrolling before us? Not that I have any scarcity of ideas. The problem is sorting out the essentials. Yet, let's not cast aside every relaxing nonessential, for this spells disaster. *Balance. All our priorities in order.* Such an elusive goal, but I seek it earnestly in this month of beginnings.



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

If you haven't accepted yourself as God created you, January's a good time to do it. We often waste so much valuable time lashing ourselves over what we are *not*, when possibly God had a good reason for making us just as we are. I tend to dawdle. To daydream. Moving fast in an inflexible schedule is a maneuver that eludes me. Every January I used to make a resolution about that, but I don't anymore.

It occurred to me one day, when I was feeling very guilty over having dallied with a scrapbook when I should have been cleaning the attic, that we each have our own pace. My mother-in-law, at 80, still darts about her kitchen like those characters in early movies. It used to bother me that I couldn't do that, but no more. My placid pace allows me time to think. And thinking produces writing. And writing has been one of the more productive areas of my life.

Perhaps, in this new year, it would be helpful to assess yourself as a *total package*. You may find your particular mix of characteristics creates an interesting and useful person whom you can live with quite comfortably after all.

I'm not talking about *sins* here, just personality traits. Sins are another matter and must be dealt with, but it doesn't do much good to make resolutions about them either. The only way to get rid of sins is to really

get acquainted with the Sinless One, so I place time with God high on my list of priorities. Quality time, not just snatched moments here and there.

This year I'd like to concentrate more on praising God, and interceding for others, rather than presenting my own long list of needs which He already knows anyhow.

I'm not sure how well I'll do. Sometimes it's so downright scary to live in this world—or so painful—that everything narrows down to just God and me. And "Help!" is the only word I know. Every year God widens my vision of what it means to follow Him, and I stretch, not always successfully, to reach His challenges.

Last year I signed up for a course in *tole painting*. Often at the local craft show I'd admired the work of a young artist. She had invited me each time to enroll in a course that she taught. And I had declined, stating I had no artistic ability and even less time.

But, later, in January, as a matter of fact, I realized that my life style had become grim. Both my husband and I busied ourselves with endless tasks, none of which were restorative. Suddenly, I wanted to learn that art technique more than I'd wanted anything in a long time. I enrolled in the course and found that the young instructor taught with a vengeance.

For three solid hours on Wednesday afternoons I

never had a moment to consider depression, writing assignments, worries, or responsibilities. I struggled to keep up. I was older than most in the class. But I learned. I began to come home with lovely completed projects. "See, I told you you could do it," cheered the pretty young tyrant.

My life took on an excitement I hadn't known in years. I realized that the artists behind me in my mother's family, while bequeathing no real talent, *had* passed on a tremendous joy in artistic expression. What if I had never discovered it?

Perhaps you, too, as you survey the new year will opt to make changes—changes first of all, which will reveal more fully what God is like, what He asks of you, and what He longs to do for you. In view of eternity, these are the *only* relevant factors in our lives. And maybe, also, you will attempt something new, something which will challenge your talents, or your mind, or your body, and add sparkle to your life. Make 1984 a very special year.

TT

"And Then Shall the End Come"

Gospel radiobroadcasts may be heard around the globe. One of these programs—the Voice of Prophecy—launched by H. M. S. Richards, Sr., still vibrates through the airwaves after 50 years. H. M. S. Richards, Jr., who became the speaker-director in 1969, working side by side with his father, participated in an interview for THESE TIMES from the VOP offices at the Adventist Media Center in Newbury Park, California.

Pastor Richards, who refers to "the Word as a base for all my answers," believes in preaching from Matthew 24:14 in particular: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

Pastor Richards, we hear much about the return of Christ—a second coming, at the end of the world. Are we really nearing this event?

Betty Kossick is a free-lance writer living in El Monte, California. © 1984 by Betty Kossick.

It's easy to point our fingers at preachers and say, "But you've been preaching for years that Jesus is coming!" Yes, we have. My dad has been preaching it for more than 60 years, and so did his father H. M. J. Richards before him. In fact, we trace our ancestry back to the time of John Wesley, English evangelist and founder of the Methodist Societies. The Mr. Richards who traveled with him was my great-great-great grandfather! So why hasn't Jesus come?

Well, we humans are always trying to figure out God. But we must remember a day with God is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8). I've found that God can be trusted. Most Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, so I'm just as sure of the remaining prophecies about the Lord's return! The culmination of these points to a great and grand event.

There's probably not a diplomat or leader worldwide who doesn't think *something* is about to happen. I believe that something points to

the coming of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him" (Revelation 1:7).

Some say that He is coming because the world conditions are so terrible. Do you see conditions as being worse than before?

Every generation has made a mess of it. However, the Bible has spoken of various events that will take place just before Jesus returns. We are in that era of the last days—the latter days recorded in Daniel 2 and Matthew 24.

The Bible says that the end of human history will be like the days of Noah. The same conditions of extreme wickedness will appear. Remember, God repented that He'd created man! Can you imagine the fear which was in the hearts of men when the Flood finally did come after Noah preached about it for 120 years? They had wondered and had disbelieved Noah. They had thought he was a crazy old man for building that boat.

We face a scary future. The day



Pastor Harold Richards, Jr., speaker-director of Voice of Prophecy.

is coming when we will *have* to live by faith alone—even for our very sustenance and existence! That's real—and it's scary!

Is the present emphasis on the occult, demon possession, and spiritualism further evidence of this coming of Jesus?

That the world lies in spiritual darkness is not new. Adam and Eve, fresh from the creative hand of God, had everything—yet Eve was deceived. The events of today are the culmination of the great controversy between good and evil. Remember, there was a war in heaven! The angel Lucifer was cast out—and *then* he became the devil. He's a student of our nature. As an angel, he's of a higher order than man. He presents himself with a different face to different people. He deals with primitive voodoo believers in a much different way than he does with sophisticated persons.

I saw evidence of this in Papua New Guinea. In the highlands the devil appears as a two-legged dog that talks! To sophisticated men he

will appear in a reasonable manner. His main business is to deceive, to get man's allegiance. The devil makes things look nice, exciting—he's conditioning the human race for the final, great deception.

Has religion ceased to be a factor today generally?

No. I see a growing interest in religion in the U.S.—especially with young people. The hippie scene has faded, and young people are leaning more to conservative ideas. Yes, there are still drugs and rebellion. The drug scene, as I see it, is an illegitimate attempt to fill the needs of the human heart. It's a longing for love and problem solutions.

When I joined the VOP after being a pastor in Texas and New Mexico, I expected the listening population of the radio audience to be all gray-haired. To my amazement, I discovered 86 percent of them to be 30 years old or younger. The trend continues. I feel our format for the next two years will be even more appealing

with the new title "Bible Highlights—a Study of Genesis to Revelation."

How will Christ return?

I believe Jesus is going to come just as He left us. The Bible speaks of two men in white apparel who stood by the disciples and gave the following words of encouragement when the disciples saw Jesus being taken up in a cloud: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). The Bible is quite clear that Jesus will return just as He left.

There is not only a happy aspect to Christ's coming, but there is a sad one. Jesus mentioned that when He comes the second time, He's going to surprise a lot of people. His coming will be "as a thief in the night." Some will be ready, but some will not; that's why His encouragement to all of us today is to "watch. . . [and] be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42, 44).

The coming of Jesus will be the greatest event of all ages. No visits by the Queen of England or the Pope of Rome or man stepping on the moon will be as fantastic and mind boggling as Christ entering this world's atmosphere.

Just think, everybody will be able to see Him (Revelation 1:7). Just as lightning bolts rend the skies, so will His coming be. There will be no question about who it is. There will be no reason to doubt. Can you imagine thousands and hundreds of thousands of angels surrounding this globe, all singing praises to the Lamb of God, and with trumpets sounding! The sky will be the television screen for the inhabitants of this globe. We'll all see it in "living" color!

What errors of reasoning can be found in the popular theology that proclaims the rapture of the righteous when He comes?

The Bible teaches that Jesus will return to the earth at the end of this gospel age. He'll receive us to Himself and will destroy the

wicked with the brightness of His coming. Nowhere does the Bible teach a seven-year period connected with these events, either before, after, or in between. I do believe that there will be a brief period of time before the second coming of Jesus when the "man of sin" will reign, and a time when many will be persecuted for their faith!

I'm sure it would surprise many who believe in a pretribulation rapture to learn that this error had its beginnings in the early 1800s. Actually, the historic church position does not include any period of seven years of tribulation separating the coming of Christ for His saints.

The secret rapture theory became popular in the 19th century, mainly through the Plymouth Brethren. J. N. Darby popularized it, and the Scofield Bible, included this theory in its notes which has influenced many Bible students.

No doubt Mr. Darby got his understanding of the secret rapture from Edward Irving, the Scottish preacher who published a book in 1827 that he had translated from writings of Manuel LaCunza, a Jesuit who was born in Chile in 1731.

What errors do you find in the rapture theory?

To my way of thinking, there are many errors in it. One is the claim that the second coming of Christ will be secret and invisible. I believe the Bible is very clear on this point: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

This text tells of a threefold proclamation. We will hear a shout, we'll hear the voice of the archangel, and we'll hear the trumpet of God. That doesn't sound like a secret coming to me; does it to you?

I haven't found any place in the Bible that speaks of or uses the

word *rapture*. I realize those believing this theory bring up the Greek word *parousia*. This word means "coming" or "presence," but certainly not a secret one. The apostle Paul not only uses the same word to describe Christ's return, but he also uses it to describe a visit by his friend Titus (2 Corinthians 7:6). Let's be sure to include verses 26 to 33 of the seventeenth chapter of Luke, where Jesus compares His coming to the flood that destroyed the world in Noah's day and to the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in Lot's day. There was certainly nothing secret or invisible about those events, and the ones that were "left" at those times certainly weren't standing around wondering where all the saints went. Oh, no. They were drowned or burned!

I've found that God can be trusted. Most Bible prophecies have been fulfilled, so I'm just as sure of the remaining prophecies about the Lord's return.

Some might say, "Isn't Jesus supposed to come as a thief in the night?"

Notice 2 Peter 3:10. This text says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." I think it's quite clear here that Jesus and the apostles were saying that when Jesus comes, He will come *unexpectedly* and will surprise those not ready to meet Him.

How does the antichrist fit into the rapture teaching?

After the saints are "raptured," they say, then the antichrist, a dictator, will come into power at the beginning of the seven-year period. First of all, this seven-year period has been taken out of

context. It belongs in Daniel 9:27 and has to do with the 70-week prophecy of Jesus the Messiah. The Messiah, the prophecy declared, would be "cut off" in the midst of the prophetic week of seven years. (In Bible prophecy a day stands for a year.) This period was from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34. Yes, right in the middle of that prophetic seven-year time period, Messiah was cut off (crucified), in A.D. 31. It's strange how some Bible students will take that segment of time completely out of context and bring it up to the present.

Well, how about this dictator, this antichrist, beginning to reign *after* the saints have been "raptured"? The apostle Paul speaks about this in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Notice: "Now we beseech you . . . by the coming [*parousia*] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him. . . . Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away *first*, and that man of sin be revealed . . . [who] sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

You see, when the antichrist is active, the church is going through tribulation. Paul said that the antichrist was already active in his day. That's in verse 7.

Jesus never intended for His people, His church, to be absent when tribulations came. His prayer was, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). This popular theology takes many other lines of reasoning, but we don't have time to consider them all.

Must Israel fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about it before Christ can return?

The popular teaching in some circles today is that every promise in prophecy relating to Israel must have a literal interpretation and literal fulfillment. Since many of these prophecies were not fulfilled by ancient Israel, this group feels they must happen to the modern state of Israel. They believe that all the power, all the glory, all the fame, must come to modern Israel.



The Dome of the Rock stands on the site of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem.

My understanding of Bible prophecy impresses me that these prophecies were not unconditional. They were conditional. For instance, notice how God made it very clear through the prophet Jeremiah that His promise to a nation would not be carried out if they repented and obeyed Him. Jeremiah 18:8 tells it like it is: "If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them."

I can't keep from thinking about that classic case of the city of Nineveh. God had sent Jonah the prophet to announce that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days if the people didn't repent. But the entire city pleaded with God for forgiveness, and the city was spared. That is a conditional prophecy.

Actually, God even set a time limit on Israel's second chance. If I might refer back to Daniel 9 again, from the time of the royal decree to rebuild Jerusalem the prophecy stated that Israel had "seventy weeks" of seven years each, or 490 years, to fulfill God's plan. If they had, all His promises for them would have come true.

God had a special work for His people. They were to proclaim His law to all the world, but they continually rejected God's will for them. The prophets had tried to

warn them, and, in fact, Jesus had warned them. You can read about it in one of the parables Jesus gave—the one of the wicked husbandmen. Jesus closed with these words, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43).

In A.D. 34 Israel ceased to be the children of God, and spiritual Israel took its place. What I mean by spiritual Israel are those individuals—Jews or Gentiles who receive God's promises and who in their individual lives fulfill the role that Israel was to play—that God will use and will give to them the blessing that He promised to Israel of old. Therefore, because Israel was rejected by God as His special people, and because of their unfaithfulness, the great prophecies of the future glory of Israel will never be fulfilled. They were conditional, and the conditions were not met.

We hear more about demons than we used to. Do you have any comments?

I think one of the saddest Scriptures is the one that says, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1).

From the very beginning of time, when the devil was cast out

of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9), he has done all he could to destroy the kingdom of God. That's why Paul cautioned, "Put on all the armour which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm against the devices of the devil. For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens" (Ephesians 6:11, 12, N.E.B.).*

Those who study Scripture will realize that in the last days these demons will be working miracles, will be going "forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Revelation 16:14). We must be careful not to be deceived. Jesus gave a warning. He said we must beware of false Christs, false prophets. In the Garden of Eden the devil used the serpent as his medium to speak through. In these last days he will be speaking through the lips of men. That's why his deceptions will be so subtle and people will be easily deceived unless they know what God's Word says!

Well, I could talk a lot about this subject. I will say I can hardly wait for the day that Jesus Himself spoke of when the devil will be cast into that everlasting fire, which is prepared especially for him and his angels (Matthew 25:41). He will actually be turned into ashes, and the whole earth and the entire human race will see it! (Ezekiel 28:18, 19).

I understand your father, H. M. S. Richards, Sr., suffered a stroke just prior to his eighty-eighth birthday and he is recuperating now. If he were sitting in on this interview, what do you think he'd have to say about the coming of Jesus?

Oh, that's easy! Dad would say, "You tell all my friends that I'm confident about the future. Everything is on schedule. Keep courage. Soon we'll see our Lord!"

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Seven Ways to Lower Blood Pressure —Without Drugs



What to do about “mild” high blood pressure continues to be one of medicine’s most vexing questions. There is even disagreement as to where the boundary between “high” and “normal” should be drawn.

Blood pressure is always expressed as two numbers separated by a slash: first *systolic* (or the maximal pressure with each heartbeat), then *diastolic* (the minimum pressure). A typically normal value is 120/80, whereas 160/105 is obviously high.

Reprinted from The Harvard Medical School Health Letter, August, 1983. Used by permission.

The diastolic pressure is usually the focus of treatment decisions, and much of the current uncertainty about when to treat involves values between 90 and 94. Since roughly 10 percent of Americans have a diastolic blood pressure in this range, and another 6 percent have values between 95 and 99, the decision as to when treatment should be given involves some 24 to 40 million of us. The crux of the question is, quite simply: Does using drugs to lower a diastolic in this range do enough good to justify the expense and potential drawbacks? Because the number of people affected is so large, even a small

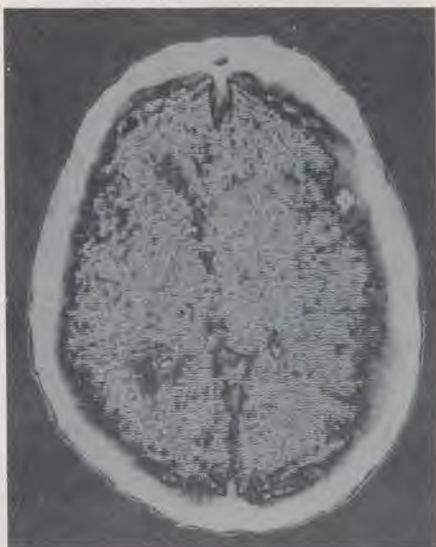
difference in their health would have an enormous impact.

The results of three major studies, two conducted in the United States and one in Australia, unfortunately do not support a single or simple conclusion, and debate is likely to continue. Meanwhile the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) “regards it as prudent practice at this time” to treat diastolic pressures of 90 to 94 first without drugs, and then with drugs as needed, to get the number below 90. But even with this blanket recommendation, physicians still have to make individual judgments.

Mild high blood pressure has relatively little effect on health *in the absence* of any other risk factors, and in this setting a decision not to treat slight elevations can be defended. But a high cholesterol level, diabetes, cigarette smoking, a strong family history of heart disease, or certain abnormalities of the electrocardiogram (ECG) make even slight degrees of high blood pressure much more serious, and such associations are very common. Mild high blood pressure developing in a young person is more likely to produce complications than it is in an older individual. In working out a treatment plan, the doctor must consider these various factors.

Nondrug treatments. If physician and patient agree to begin treatment without drugs, what are their options? As the NHLBI notes, no large-scale studies have been conducted that would firmly establish the effectiveness of nondrug approaches to hypertension on a population-wide basis. On the other hand, quite a lot of recent work with smaller groups shows that it is possible to reduce high blood pressure without drugs. It seems highly likely that people with mild high blood pressure could achieve the desired goal—with a minimum of adverse side effects—using the

This cross-section CAT scan of a human brain reveals a subdural hematoma—a tumor or swelling containing blood (white area in upper right-hand corner).



The blood vessels of the eye retina of a person with normal blood pressure (above) appear in sharp contrast to the retina and blood vessels of a person with hypertension (photo at right).



nondrug approach.

Weight control. The overweight person with high blood pressure can almost be described as "lucky," because he or she has a safe and highly effective option for lowering the pressure. Weight loss with no other change often returns blood pressure to normal. Moreover, it is usually not necessary to reduce weight all the way down to the desirable value listed in the insurance tables. For many people, going halfway can produce a completely normal blood pressure.

The best way to lose the weight is to increase physical activity, to reduce fat intake, and continue to eat a moderate, balanced diet. Faddist approaches using severe calorie restriction rarely work in the long run.

Exercise. Physical activity is actually a double asset in blood pressure control. Exercise helps with long-term weight control, and it is likely to lower blood pressure significantly even if no weight is lost.

The kind of exercise that helps to lower blood pressure is

so-called aerobic training: sustained, moderately vigorous activity that goes on for half an hour, three to four times a week. Fast walking, jogging, swimming, exercise bicycling, and rope-skipping are some examples.

On the other hand, short bursts of very intense activity, as exemplified by weight lifting, are not a good idea. Blood pressure goes up even higher during the effort, and overall this type of training has little influence on resting blood pressure.

Cigarettes and coffee. Cigarette smoking also has a double significance for people with high blood pressure. Smoking radically worsens the risk of cardiovascular complications for any degree of high blood pressure. In addition, nicotine itself makes blood pressure go higher. In one study, when subjects with mild hypertension smoked two cigarettes, their systolic blood pressure went up an average of 10 points, their diastolic went up 8 points, and the values stayed up for about 15 minutes. With a typical cigarette habit, that

amounts to at least eight hours a day of blood pressure elevation caused by nicotine.

In another study, individuals with high blood pressure were asked to abstain from cigarettes and coffee overnight. When they came into the clinic the next morning, their average blood pressure had dropped from 164/102 to 147/89. Then they were allowed to have their coffee and cigarettes. Two hours later, their average pressure increased back up to 162/102.

Like nicotine, caffeine has immediate effects on blood pressure. The equivalent of two or three cups of coffee raises blood pressure of normal people an average of 14/10 points—enough to bring many of them into the range of "mild" hypertension—and this increase can last as long as three hours.

In people who already have mild hypertension, the caffeine in one or two cups of coffee produces a further increase of 10/7 points, and the effect persists for a couple of hours. Avoiding caffeine—which is found in coffee, tea, cola, chocolate, and at least two dozen over-the-counter remedies—could be sufficient to make some cases of mild hypertension disappear.

Alcohol. The effect of alcohol on blood pressure is puzzling. If you just give someone a drink and measure blood pressure, there is no consistent effect. But high blood pressure measured in a large population is found more commonly among those who take more than three alcoholic drinks a day, allowing for such associated factors as weight and the use of salt, coffee, or cigarettes.

A possible explanation is that the drinkers studied (who were likely to be sober when their blood pressure was measured) were suffering from withdrawal symptoms, one of which is elevated blood pressure. Whether this effect occurs as part of a drinker's daily cycle is not known, but reducing or eliminating alcohol intake to lower blood pressure is worth trying—and it will certainly have other positive effects on health.

Medications. Many prescription

and over-the-counter drugs can increase blood pressure. The oral contraceptives and certain agents used to treat asthma are among the commonly used prescription drugs with this potential. The decongestant phenylpropanolamine (PPA) is present in at least 59 over-the-counter preparations—notably cold or allergy medications and so-called appetite suppressants (such as Dexatrim, Dietac, and others). Caffeine is also a common ingredient in such preparations. When high blood pressure is detected, doctor and patient should make a careful inventory of all drugs (including nonprescription items) that the patient is taking to see whether any of them may be contributing to the problem.

Relaxation. Specific training in relaxation can produce significant and long-lasting reduction of blood pressure in as many as two thirds of those with hypertension. The technique that has been shown to work is not psychotherapy or stress management; rather, it involves systematic exercises designed to produce muscular and mental relaxation. Evidently, relaxation techniques are learned most effectively in sessions conducted by a therapist. Thereafter, regular use of these exercises can lead to significant decreases in blood pressure. (Interestingly, the effect seems to be least pronounced in mild hypertension.)

Diet. Many components of the standard American diet have come under suspicion as contributing to high blood pressure, but the most widely publicized one is salt. About one third of people with mild hypertension respond to a low-salt diet by lowering their pressure to normal levels. The remaining two-thirds also benefit from salt restriction. A laboratory test—the plasma renin activity level—can help to identify those patients likely to have the best response to salt restriction.

A few studies have indicated that diets which are low in total fat and have a high ratio of unsaturated to saturated fats can reduce the blood pressure of people with mild hypertension.

There is also provocative, but inconclusive, evidence that adequate dietary calcium and supplemental potassium may help to lower blood pressure.

These inferences are yet to be confirmed, and until they are we would not advise an increase in calcium above the recommended daily allowance for young adults (1,200 mg.) or supplementation with potassium. People with kidney disease must be especially careful to avoid excess potassium.

Conclusion. High blood pressure is worth the trouble it takes to treat. The payoff is a longer life with a much lower risk of strokes or heart attacks. Success, however, depends on close cooperation between doctor and patient, and it may require the assistance of other professionals.

Blood pressure treatment with drugs is highly effective, and the wide variety of agents now available makes it possible to achieve individualized therapy with a minimum of side effects. However, many drugs do still have side effects, they do cost money, and adhering to the correct medication schedule proves to be difficult for many people.

Nondrug therapy, especially for relatively modest increases of blood pressure, has several advantages. Side effects are likely to be minimal, and the health benefits go beyond blood pressure control. Although making ambitious changes in diet, exercise, and other habits is not likely to be any easier than taking pills on schedule, modest efforts can combine to produce significant benefits.

Somewhat reducing salt and fat in the diet and increasing activity (by climbing stairs instead of taking elevators, or going out for a brisk walk several times a week) may work together to improve weight and blood pressure control. An important phase in planning a treatment program is to identify the changes you are willing to make and realistically stick with. Even if drugs cannot be withdrawn completely, the amount required to control blood pressure can usually be reduced.

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Christ, Our Saviour

*To the thief, harlot, and persecutor of Christians,
Jesus brought transformation and the assurance of eternal life.*

Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the Word of God. Then grasp the promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." You can never perish while you do this—never.

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any one all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.

Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of His wrath on our world, to destroy those who are filled with hatred of God. He might wipe this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help.

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand before the great Sin-bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that

condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was "full of leprosy." Its deadly poison had permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him, for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, Jesus received no defilement. His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed.

Thus it is with the leprosy of sin—deep-rooted, deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."

But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution. His presence has healing virtue for the sinner. Whoever will fall at His feet, saying in faith, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," shall hear the answer, "I will; be thou clean."

The Saviour never passed by one soul, however sunken in sin, who was willing to receive the precious truth of heaven. To publicans and harlots His words were as the beginning of a new life.

Mary Magdalene, out of whom He cast seven devils, was the last at the Saviour's tomb, and the first

whom He greeted in the morning of His resurrection.

It was Saul of Tarsus, one of the most determined enemies of the Gospel, who became Paul, the devoted minister of Christ.

The dying thief, seeing in Jesus the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, cried, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Quickly the answer came, full of love, compassion, and power: "Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in paradise." (See Lamsa's Version.)

As Christ spoke the words of promise, the dark cloud that seemed to enshroud the cross was pierced with a bright and living light. To the penitent thief came the perfect peace of acceptance with God. Christ in His humiliation was glorified. He who in all other eyes appeared to be conquered was a conqueror. He was acknowledged as the Sin-bearer.

Men might exercise power over His human body. They might pierce the holy temple with the crown of thorns. They might strip from Him His raiment, and quarrel over its division. But they could not rob Him of His power to forgive sins. In dying He bore witness to His own divinity and to the glory of the Father.

His ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, neither is His arm shortened that it cannot save. It is His royal right to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

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Ellen White—church leader, lecturer, counselor—has been called the most prolific woman writer of all time, having written approximately 25 million words.

HOW TO STOP DRUNK DRIVERS

People will not stop drinking and driving to save their lives or yours, but they will to save their licenses." This statement by William N. Plymat, president of the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP) and member of the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving, appears in an interview in the September issue of *Listen* magazine.

Plymat points out that 50,000 people die in the United States each year as a result of traffic accidents and that about half of these accidents involve alcohol. As a result the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving has recommended an innovative plan in its interim report: administrative revocation of drivers' licenses for drinking and driving.

Already instituted in some states—Minnesota, West Virginia, Iowa, Delaware, Oklahoma, and Utah—it will soon be implemented by others. Plymat claims that this law reduced the death toll from alcohol-related accidents in Iowa by 38 percent in its first six months.

In Iowa if a driver suspected of drunk driving tests out at more than 0.10 percent blood alcohol, or if he refuses to take the sobriety test, his license is administratively revoked for 120 days or replaced with a



20-day driver's permit, during which he must prove in court that the test was invalid.

"This system," Plymat says, "doesn't take away the court's power to punish, but it simply lowers the burden on the courts." He feels that such a law could cut down the problem of drinking and driving by 40 percent throughout the United States.

The Shadow of Bob Jones

In an eight-to-one decision, the Supreme Court on May 24 upheld the authority of the IRS to deny tax exemption to Bob Jones

University because of its policy prohibiting interracial dating and marriage. If ever there was a case exemplifying the old legal maxim that "hard cases make bad law," the Bob Jones case is it.

The racial discrimination context of the BJU case has blinded many to deeper implications of the decision. What the Court has done, in effect, is to rule that government is free to tax unpopular beliefs. The message? Conform or be taxed. While the Court attempted to confine its ruling to cases of "fundamental public policy" and pointed out that it was

speaking about educational institutions rather than churches, we discern no principled basis for thus confining the Court's holding in future decisions.

To appreciate fully the ramifications of the decision, consider two educational institutions. Would a Mennonite college, with a traditional pacifist stance, lose its tax-exempt status at a time when public policy is to be at war? Would a Roman Catholic seminary, preparing only men for the priesthood, be in jeopardy?

If the ERA ever becomes part of the Constitution, of course there would be no doubt whatever that sex discrimination would be on a par with racial discrimination as fundamental national policy. Such problems are only the tip of the iceberg. We are convinced that Congress should specify what public policies must be observed to qualify for tax exemption, instead of leaving such decisions to nonelected IRS officials.

Gambling: Social Acceptance and Profits Increase

U.S. News & World Report ("Gambling Rage: Out of Control?" May 30) summarizes the gambling scene: "In what some social critics describe as a craze that reflects basic changes in public attitudes toward work and money, gambling has been multiplying so rapidly that experts measure it in fractions of the national economy."

Those of us who live in Philadelphia hardly need this reminder from *USNWR*:

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Photo by David B. Sherwin



"Nowhere is the gambling rage more prevalent than in Atlantic City, where the gross winnings of all nine casinos, before expenses and taxes, soared 36 percent to \$1.5 billion last year. Visitors, defying the recession, numbered more than 27 million, up from 19 million in 1981."

The Philadelphia *Inquirer* (June 12) tells where most of these people came from: "Last year, 9 million of the 23 million people who visited Atlantic City came on chartered casino buses. Most of those bus passengers exclusively played the slot machines, which accounted for 46 percent of Atlantic City's \$1.5 billion in gaming revenues in 1982."

Round-trip bus tickets (from Philadelphia) are \$10.95, but riders are often given more than that in quarters and meal vouchers, redeemable at the casinos that operate the buses.

Winning is the big dream, the *Inquirer* reports. "In reality, however, nearly everyone is a loser. . . . The flashing lights on top of the machines, the bells, the 'rat-tat-tat' of the coins hitting the metal trays—all are designed to create a sense of action, of untold wealth available at the pull of a handle."

Lotteries have become important revenue producers for many States: "Those who want to wager without leaving home are

putting up with legal gambling's worst odds and buying \$3.8 billion worth of state lottery tickets annually, up more than 30 percent in just one year," says *USNWR*. Only four States now prohibit all forms of gambling (Mississippi, Indiana, Utah, Hawaii).

Why the growth and change in attitude? "One fact that helps explain declining opposition to gambling: Previously wary governments and religious groups are now among the biggest profit makers, promoters, and proprietors of legal games. Gambling authorized by State law includes 18 government lotteries and 42 States where churches and other

nonprofit organizations usually have sole right to sponsor bingo for cash prizes."

One research study reported by *USNWR* came to this conclusion: "Gambling's get-rich-quick appeal appears to mock capitalism's core values: disciplined work habits, thrift, prudence, adherence to routine, and the relationship between effort and reward." A *USNWR* self-analysis of an addict includes this statement: "I told myself I was too good to be doing the nine-to-five grind."

Want Something Done? Ask a Volunteer!

At least that's the impression gained from a recent survey of voluntarism by the nation's adults sponsored by United Media Enterprises, a Scripps-Howard company, which found that 46 percent of the nation's adults work without pay for charitable causes, donating an average of 17 hours per month. Churches can take heart from the survey, for nearly 40 percent devote time to church activities. Furthermore, the survey tells you what age group to ask, as it discovered that the age group most generous with its time is the 35- to 64-year-old crowd.

Life in These Times

Heaven will be complete with an unlimited charge card, said one Californian in response to a *U.S. Catholic* magazine survey on afterlife expectations. You can also golf every day—if there are days—according to an Ohio man. An Indiana man thinks there will be "lots of baseball." He wants to hit "one of God's fastballs into the upper deck."

Twenty-two percent of the readers expected Hitler to end up in hell; 2 percent put Richard Nixon in the same place.

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Adventure on Wings

*Whenever I begin to rush so much that I ignore life's blessings,
I see a weathered old fisherman extending an invitation to sit and chat.
Then I slow down and smile.*

BY GERRY BRUDER

Old Jake Holland's cabin was the second stop on my weekly mail and freight run along West Behm Canal, and each Wednesday I'd grimace as I taxied the Cessna 185 floatplane up to the pebbly beach out front.

"Do you have time for a cup of tea?" the lean, stoop-shouldered fisherman would ask week after week once I handed him his mail and carried any heavy boxes up the incline to his porch. Each week

I'd explain I had other stops to make, that bush pilots often don't have time for lunch, much less a casual cup of tea. Yet, the next week Jake would pose the same question, forcing me once again to make excuses.

Sometimes I'd land outside the mouth of the cove and taxi in at idle power, hoping to avoid him. I'd beach the 185, sneak up to the porch with whatever freight he had radioed to town for, and hurry back down to the hole in the old spruce tree where he cached his outgoing mail. Right about then his raspy voice would sound from the porch: "Hey there, didn't

hear you come in. Got time for a cup of tea?"

Actually, the company dispatcher always allowed a few extra minutes for weather or other delays a pilot might encounter, so I usually could have stayed for tea and still returned to town in time for my next flight. Of course, I recognized "tea" as a euphemism for visiting; Jake's nearest neighbors lived in a floathouse in Moser Bay more than two miles away, and the man undoubtedly was lonely.

But my own problems left little room for compassion. I had lost the romantic enthusiasm that had

Gerry Bruder does air-taxi charter flying in single-engine seaplanes in Ketchikan, Alaska. His interests, besides flying and writing, include exploring, hiking, and archeology. © 1984 by Gerry Bruder.

inspired me to become a bush pilot five years earlier, and now, 32 years old, I felt constantly bitter.

After graduation from Ohio State University with an M.A. degree in journalism, I had passed up a chance to become a reporter on a large, metropolitan newspaper in order to move to coastal Alaska; let the other guy settle down into the usual nine-to-five job, commute to work and keep up with the latest fads, I had said to myself. That mundane life wasn't for me. Instead, my inner voice whispered dreams of adventure in the Last Frontier.

For the first couple of years, bush flying fulfilled those dreams. The spectacular scenery, the colorful variety of passengers and destinations, the fascinating wildlife, the excitement of the wilderness—each morning I scrambled out of bed like a kid before a fishing trip, burning to find out what challenges and discoveries the new day would bring. Gradually, however, the fire diminished until only the bitterness remained.

Now, while my classmates had climbed well up the journalistic career ladder, I worked in faded blue jeans as an aerial taxi driver and climbed only when the pontoons left the water. It seemed life had lured me down a

dead-end road lined with paper flowers.

Accepting Jake's hospitality inside the cabin would have alleviated his loneliness for a while, but I'd have to put aside my own misery for the same period, and I wasn't willing to let go. As a sop to my conscience, I chatted with the old man during the minute or two it took to unload his mail and freight.

Alaskan outdoors without accumulating a treasure of anecdotes and wisdom. I realize now that he ached to share his experiences with me—with anyone. But I didn't even say goodbye on my last run, knowing that by the next Wednesday I'd be in New York City seeking a white-collar job. I just waved as usual as I started the engine and taxied away. I can still picture Jake

You can't spend a half century in the Alaskan outdoors without accumulating a treasure of anecdotes and wisdom. I realize now that he asked to share his experience with me—with anyone.

Little by little, I learned that he and his wife had trolled for salmon in the coastal waterways since the 1920s, that he knew where two ancient, crumbling Tlingit Indian war canoes lay stashed in the forest on Prince of Wales Island, that he remembered when the first airplane arrived in this part of Alaska. After his wife died suddenly about three years before, Jake had sold his troller and moved to the cabin.

He had much more to tell; you can't spend a half century in the

standing on the beach in his paint-streaked halibut jacket, the October wind ruffling his white hair.

In New York I found almost everything I wanted: a job as an associate editor on a national consumer magazine, financial security in my future, and the proper image. I joined a squash club in the city and a country club in nearby Connecticut and sipped Scotch on the rocks in fashionable Upper East Side bars after work.

The only thing that eluded me was happiness. I found myself in the same situation I had vowed to avoid when I moved to Alaska, and as the months passed my enthusiasm remained in hibernation. My main motivation had been the approval of society, which meant little once I thought I had it.

Desperate for meaning to my life, I finally turned for help to a source I had neglected since childhood. At first my prayers seemed unanswered, as if I were saying Hello to an empty room. Then, I noticed a stirring in my spirit, and soon I felt that special joy all believers experience. As faith rekindled the fire inside, I wondered how I had ever gotten along without God.

It was clear then why I had lost interest in Alaska, despite its



beauty and excitement. Like food left uncovered in the sun, my attitude had become poisoned in a mind unprotected by spiritual leadership. As Jesus said in Mark 8:36, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Yearning to try Alaska again with God in my life, I returned to bush flying in the town I had left four years earlier. The mountains looked higher, the forest greener, and the waterways deeper as I flew at peace with the world, my heart full of gratitude.

Next to keeping God as my navigator, my top priority was visiting Jake the first chance I had. I planned to rev the engine several times to attract his attention while taxiing up to his cabin. When he walked onto the porch, I'd yell out the door, "Hey, you got time for a

cup of tea?" I'd spend at least an hour with him and drop by periodically thereafter.

The tragic news came from the pilot currently assigned to the mail run: Jake was dead. He had died almost two years before, and some family from Oregon now lived in his cabin. I felt devastated. Visiting Jake—atoning for my previous selfishness toward him—had been an important part of my rebirth. Tears formed in my eyes from grief and the thought that I would never have that chance.

On my next flight, still feeling melancholy, I spotted a black bear lumbering along a stream, and I descended and circled so my passengers could get a good look. Out-of-State high school musicians bound for a festival in an island village, they uttered cries of

delight as they watched the bear, which paid no attention to the airplane. Suddenly, I realized I *was* making it up to Jake.

I could not marvel at the wonders around me and believe that all life ended in eternal death. I knew that by appreciating life, by being grateful for my gifts and opportunities, by taking the time to share such joys as a lumbering black bear with others, I was following God's guidance. Jake would have understood and approved.

Bush flying puts pressure on a pilot, and it's easy to grow impatient. But whenever I'm tempted to snap at a passenger, whenever I begin to rush so much that I ignore life's blessings, I see a weathered old fisherman extending a cup of tea. Then I slow down and smile.

TT

The author, Gerry Bruder, with his charter plane (inset photo), shown before a typical Alaskan sunset.



"And Man Became a Living Soul"

*What does the Bible mean when it says
humans were made in "the image of God"?*

BY RICHARD W. COFFEN

Little Alex reveled in the tales his grandmother used to relate. The roster of characters on the stage of his ancestry included such colorful actors as Chicken George, Kizzie, and Kunta Kinte. When Alex reached manhood, he set out on a ten-year trek to uncover his lineage. The dramatic story that emerged became the best-selling novel *Roots*, which opens in 1750 with Kunta Kinte, Alex's West African progenitor and spans two continents.

Roots's success can be directly attributed to our curiosity about our forebears. Our ethnic origins matter little. Alex Haley's *Roots* holds universal appeal because it probes into the drama of yesteryear, thereby lending significance to life today.

There's another best-seller that

even more completely peels away the consecutive layers of the onion of human history. Its pages uncover the very core of existence by taking us back to the beginning of the cosmos. That book, the Holy Bible, opens with the words: "In the beginning God . . ." (Genesis 1:1).

Attentive readers find that the early chapters of Scripture speak profoundly to the human condition. It is the fad today for scientists and theologians to argue over the factuality of the Genesis record, but in their caviling they miss the deep truths latent in this ancient book held sacred by Jews and Christians alike. You might find it worthwhile to explore some of the implications inherent in the Biblical account of mankind's roots. The key passage is Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man

became a living soul."

This verse repeats a theme that permeates the first three chapters of Genesis that over and over make God the great Subject of the sentences. He speaks, sees, and calls. He makes and creates. He blesses, finishes, and rests. He forms, breathes, plants, puts, and makes to grow. He takes. He commands. He brings and causes. He walks, multiplies, curses, sends, and drives out. God is the great Doer in Genesis.

In modern accounts of our planet's origin and the beginning of the human species, the grammatical pattern differs drastically from the ancient record. Conspicuous by His absence is a Supreme Sovereign whose actions started the biological, geological, anthropological, and sociological effects we now know. Instead, we read about the forces of blind chance.

Thus it is highly significant to

read in Genesis 2:7 that "the Lord God *formed* man . . . , and *breathed* into his nostrils." These and the other transitive verbs of which God is the Subject clearly imply volition and purpose. We exist because God willed it.

Jodie and Bill were still in their teens when they got married. Since neither had finished high school, they agreed to postpone having a family until both had received their diplomas. Then midway through Jodie's junior year she began experiencing disturbing bouts of nausea. At first she passed it off as a touch of the flu. It wasn't. Jodie's pregnancy rocked the marriage. She loudly blamed Bill, and he in turn argued that it was all her fault. Jodie delivered a healthy baby the summer before her senior year. She never did finish high school.

Sylvia and Peter desperately wanted a child, but pregnancy seemed as elusive as a mirage. Both underwent special examinations, and the physician made a few suggestions. Not until four years after their wedding did Sylvia finally get pregnant. The nine months seemed like an eternity, but the day finally arrived when she went into labor. Peter kissed her proudly as a nurse wheeled her into the labor room.

If you could choose, which baby would you want to be? The one accidentally conceived or the one purposely conceived? According to Genesis, *Homo sapiens* inhabit this planet because we were wanted. You and I are here because God wanted us here, so life can glow with meaning.

"God formed man of the dust of the ground." God made the first human being from the elements of the ground (*adamah* in Hebrew), and God named this creature Man (*Adam* in Hebrew). We can preserve the Hebrew pun by saying that from the clay God created a person named Clay. The point is that human beings are of the earth.

This earth is our home—in more ways than one. It is part of our very nature. We are in our element here on this planet. And this earth will be our eternal home

as well. Christians enjoy talking about heaven, but often we forget that heaven is not our eternal abode. According to Scripture the saved remain in heaven only temporarily. The meek "shall inherit the earth," Jesus said (Matthew 5:5). "We look for . . . a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

John the revelator reported that he saw a new earth. He viewed "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle [dwelling] of God is with men" (Revelation 21:2, 3).

"And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Into the lifeless earthling God infused the principle of life. One can easily imagine God inventing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation at the very beginning. But today we can only restore life already in existence. What we read about in Genesis 2:7 was a creative act. Life is a divine gift and should be treated accordingly.

"And man became a living soul." Some people believe that Adam *received* a soul from God, but that idea comes from Greek philosophy, not the Hebrew Scriptures. The Creator did not infuse a soul into the first human being. The first human received the breath of life or life principle and *became* a living soul or living being (see R.S.V.).

It's easy to assume that these three essentials placed the first *Homo sapiens* one or two cuts above the rest of the animal kingdom. God didn't just speak Adam into existence. Instead, He became personally involved in crafting him. Then God breathed into him the breath of life. Certainly this special divine gift was unique to humanity! Finally, the first individual became a living soul. Such language could refer only to the human species!

As a youngster, I enjoyed listening to the radio program Twenty Questions. Whenever the panel was supposed to guess a famous person, the host would give the clue, "Animal." And for many years that bothered me.

Animal, vegetable, or mineral. Surely a fourth category should have referred to humanity. I thought the master of ceremonies was degrading mankind by categorizing us with birds, fish, reptiles, and mammals.

Yet this is precisely how Genesis classifies us! As members of the animal kingdom, we must accept our creatureliness—our oneness with the other living, breathing, mobile life forms on our planet. According to Genesis 3, perfect bliss pervaded Eden until our first parents became dissatisfied with their creaturely status and wanted to become like God. Egocentricity, self-aggrandizement, opened the door to human misery.

Although God personally involved Himself in molding Adam from earth, Genesis tells us that He did the same thing when He fashioned the other animals (Genesis 2:19). Neither was the breath of life unique to mankind (Genesis 6:17; 7:15, 21, 22). Likewise, being categorized as a living soul was not limited to Adam and Eve and their offspring. The same Hebrew term referred to the animal kingdom as well (Genesis 1:21; 2:19). Man and animals even enjoyed the same diet (Genesis 2:16; cf. 1:29, 30).

Although Genesis may place our roots firmly in the animal kingdom, it also tells about another dimension to humanity. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:26, 27). Adam and Eve were unique, for nowhere does Scripture relate that any of the other animals bears God's image.

This doesn't necessarily imply that we are pint-sized, stripped-down models of God. However, we *do* share certain things in common with the Creator that the rest of the animal kingdom does not. We can reflect on life. We possess the capacity of self-awareness. An intricate network of instincts dictates most animal behavior. Human beings, however, have very few instincts. Something infinitely more complex motivates us. We have the ability

to carefully reason things through and then to direct our behavior.

Genesis specifically connects two traits with the image of God in mankind. First, Genesis 1:27 tells us that the image consists of maleness and femaleness. Obviously this account of our roots speaks of more than gender identity, for nearly all animals come in two models—male and female.

When we speak of human maleness and femaleness, we refer to qualities of personality. We don't talk about a male parakeet being "masculine." Neither do we speak of a female rhinoceros as being "feminine." Yet the amazing truth of Genesis is that these distinctions are not so much

nature, not exploit it.

One more point is worth stressing. Genesis formed part of the Torah—the Hebrew law, or instruction—and the Torah constituted the very basis of Judaism. Each morning and evening every good Jew recited the Shema, the Torah's revolutionary description of God: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is *one* Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). God's oneness was part and parcel of His perfection. Today we call this kernel of Judaism "monotheism."

God is *one*, and since we bear His likeness, I'd like to suggest that every human being is *one* also. This oneness of the human person is as revolutionary to our understanding of human nature as

sign and vice versa. Therefore, DEAD BODY = LIVING SOUL – BREATH OF LIFE.

But can we legitimately invert this equation? Yes. Other Bible passages support the inversion. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit [the Hebrew word means "breath"] shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4).

Death has always remained mysterious. When Hamlet contemplated suicide as a way to "take arms against a sea of troubles," he devoutly wished that death would bring him blessed relief. But he really wasn't sure that he could spell relief D-E-A-T-H. Perhaps death might be a sleep, but "in that sleep of death what dreams may come" gave Hamlet pause. "The dread of something after death . . . makes us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of," he concluded.

Hamlet hadn't read his Bible closely enough. "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing. . . . Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6). "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave" (verse 10). In the grave "there is no remembrance" of God (Psalm 6:5) nor any speech (Psalm 115:17).

At first, such news devastates those who have grown up believing that at death people shuck their bodies but remain conscious—only on a more sophisticated level. This past year my paternal grandmother died. She was in her early nineties. When Grandma died, a neighbor sent my parents a sympathy card in which she penned, "God has another angel."

In many ways it would be comforting if that were true. Grandma was a dedicated Christian, and I fully expect that she will enjoy eternal bliss. But according to the Bible, that day

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:22, 23).

human as they are divine.

Genesis 1:27 also indicates that the character traits of both male and female *together* make up the image of God. Neither a woman nor a man alone reveals God's likeness in its totality. A man with his masculine traits presents only half the picture. Similarly, a woman in her femininity only partially portrays God's image.

Second, verse 26 provides the other direct identification of the divine image in humanity. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, . . . and let them have dominion. . . ." We represent God on this planet. Because we bear His image, we can represent Him here.

Genesis 1 and 2 reveals God carefully bringing order out of chaos. You and I are here to keep this cosmos from degenerating into primeval chaos. That is why we have dominion. Dominion implies carefulness, not carelessness. Dominion means that we should preserve the order of

it was to humanity's understanding of God.

Christopher Allison writes: "Christianity holds the much more vulnerable but much more total view of man as a whole being. His body, soul, spirit, heart, and mind is one, no part of which can be isolated from the other."—*Guilt, Anger, and God*, p. 99.

According to Scripture, then, every human being is a complex unity, a psychophysical unity. And that brings us back to Genesis 2:7. Some Bible students who are mathematically inclined have formulated an equation from this verse. LIVING SOUL = DEAD BODY + BREATH OF LIFE.

Did you take algebra in high school? I did, though I remember very little about it. Mathematics is not my forte. However, I do recall that when we switch the elements of an equation to the other side of the equal sign, the mathematical symbols take the opposite form: the plus sign becomes a minus

remains future. The Bible teaches not immortality but resurrection.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Corinthians 15:21-23). For the trumpet shall sound, and "the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive . . . shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

The apostle Paul wrote these words to ease the minds of the early believers. They had assumed that the Second Coming would take place soon after Jesus ascended in A.D. 31. But more than two decades had elapsed. Some of the early Christians had taken ill and died. Others had passed away because of old age. Some had met a martyr's fate. And Jesus still had not returned. Had the seeming delay in Jesus' return ruined the future of these deceased Christians? This was the question Paul needed to answer. Death might overcome Christians, Paul argued, but it was not eternal. When Jesus returned, He would resurrect the saints from their graves.

A few more decades rolled by, and apparently Paul's words did not satisfy everyone. After all, hadn't Jesus promised His followers eternal life *now*? So John, the last of the disciples, spoke to the issue. "He that believeth on me hath [present tense] everlasting life" (John 6:47; cf. John 5:24).

But that is not all Jesus said. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Note that people with eternal life might die, but they will be raised to life when Jesus returns.

Because each person is a psychophysical unity, the entire person expires at death. But by the same token this unity of personhood also means that at the resurrection the total person

arises. Once again the body will become enlivened by the breath of life, and man will become a living soul.

The oneness of the human person not only gives insight into death and dying, but it also helps us understand living. Many Christians reckon that each individual resembles a multistoried building. The top floor represents the spiritual capacity. The basement—the bodily capacity—is subdivided into many shallow levels of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching. And sexuality is a musty underground level at the very depths of human nature. Between the basement and the top story of human nature lie other floors such as intellect and will power. Some of these Christians often assume further that these various levels of existence require an increasing amount of care the higher they get. Hence, these sincere persons believe that Christian duty demands (1) that they meticulously cater to their spirituality and (2) that they ignore as much as possible their physical nature.

However, the Biblical concept that every human being is a unity has at least three important implications for living.

First, if a person is a unit, then the human being is not like a multistoried building. And Immanuel Kant's famous distinction between the "higher" world of mind and the "lower" world of sense collapses. Strictly speaking, no human capacity can be termed "the lower nature." If we use the expression at all, it must refer to the totality of human nature as permeated by sin.

Second, if a person is a unit, then all one's capacities interreact with every other. It is futile, for example, to say, "Don't be emotional"—as if there were something inherently wrong in having emotions. As long as our emotions don't keep us from adjusting to life properly, we should not try to deny their existence. Our spiritual, volitional, intellectual, and physical capacities blend into each other so subtly that it is practically impossible to

differentiate where one ends and another begins.

Because all our capacities interreact with each other, what affects one can affect the others. My physical condition, for example, can affect my emotional or spiritual capacities. None of my capacities is an isolated island. When scientists talk about psychosomatic diseases, they are referring to the unity of human nature.

Third, if a person is a unit, none of one's capacities are inferior or superior to the others. Each person as a unit resembles not a multistoried building but a symphony orchestra. For example, my physical abilities can correspond to the percussion instruments. My emotional faculties, the woodwinds. My intelligence, the brass section. And my spiritual capacity, the strings.

All the sections are equally important, although sin has set them all out of tune. Sometimes I may beat on the percussions when the musical score calls for the strings, but that doesn't imply that the percussions are inferior or the strings superior. It insults our great Conductor when we try to eliminate one section from the orchestra.

Jesus, the Conductor, wants to tune each section and blend them all into a beautiful sonata to the glory of God. It's the kind of music that God originally intended each of us to play. It's the same musical score that He expects us to harmonize with today. And it's the same tune that saved human beings will play throughout eternity.

Alex Haley's *Roots* covers seven generations and provides entertaining reading. But who can guess at how many generations Scripture goes back when it speaks of our roots? And the ancient Genesis account affords more than entertainment. It offers profound insights into human nature, the human condition, and what it means for men and women to live and die. Just under the surface of the Genesis story lie deep truths that fill existence with meaning. They await anyone who like Alex Haley is interested in digging out our roots.

TT

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I thought he was waiting for somebody. He was leaning against a post near my car in the parking lot of a large department store in Pasadena, California, a shabby-looking man in his late 40s. "Good afternoon," I said, getting out of my car.

"Hello," he mumbled and looked at the ground. In spite of the pleasant, sunny September day, he seemed gloomy and preoccupied. I forgot all about him as I went into the store. As for myself, I was in a great mood. I'd had a happy start to my day with an early-morning Bible class, and I still had lots to do: see my car insurance agent, buy a gift for a friend's birthday, give a singing lesson at my church.

As I walked around the store, with its bright array of stylish clothing, I looked at the other shoppers—old, young, fat, skinny. I couldn't help but wonder about their relationships with God. Now, I don't usually go around thinking about that, but I'd just completed a course called "Evangelism Explosion," which taught me how to share my faith in Jesus Christ.

I'd worked hard memorizing the complex outline presentation that was supposed to seem smooth and natural when put to use. Boiled down, it consisted of three main Biblical ideas: (1) convincing a nonbeliever of man's need for God (Romans 3:23); (2) persuading him that, in spite of man's sin, God is loving and merciful (Jeremiah 31:3); (3) leading him to trust Christ as his Saviour (Acts 16:31).

I caught my reflection in a mirror on the makeup counter: a young woman of 23—was I really knowledgeable enough to share the gospel effectively? Would I know the right time and place? Would I even remember the main points? Pushing my doubts away, I went about my chores.

As I left the store and walked to the parking lot, I passed by the same man I'd seen before, still standing dejectedly by the post. My car was only ten feet away

Delisa Boydston is a free-lance writer living in Mahwah, New Jersey. Reprinted by permission from Guideposts magazine. Copyright © 1982 by Guideposts Associates, Inc., Carmel, New York 10512.

ABDUCTED!

At first the man didn't seem dangerous. Then he thrust a knife at me and pushed his way into my car, kidnapping me in the parking lot.

BY DELISA BOYDSTON



from him. I opened the door, sat down, put my packages on the passenger seat, and was just about to swing my legs into the car when suddenly he was hovering over me, pushing a handbill at me. Just as I started to say "No, thanks," he roughly grabbed it away and thrust a knife at me with his other hand. "I'll kill you if you don't move over," he growled.

Suddenly my breath was sucked away painfully. I felt cold all over.

Without thinking, I started pushing against him, but the man forcefully shoved me over to the passenger seat of the car. *This can't be happening!* I thought. *It's a nightmare!* I tried to unlock the door, but it jammed. I saw blood running from a cut in my right hand. *Oh, God, help me,* I prayed.

The man got in the car and started it. Then he put his right arm around me and pressed the cold steel of the knife into my neck. "I don't want to hurt you,"

Illustration by Dean Williams



he said hurriedly. "I just want the car. I'll let you off at the first corner." He ordered me to shift gears, and we peeled out of the parking lot, nearly sideswiping two parked cars.

We zoomed past the corner outside the parking lot and onto the freeway. At that moment I began to panic. I knew he had no intention of letting me go. Never in my life had I experienced such horror and fear. My heart beat in my ears so loudly I was sure he

could hear it. I looked at the man fearfully. His right arm was still around my neck, and the knife he held seemed sharper by the second. *There is no help, I thought. I'm alone with this man, and he's dangerous.*

"Are you married?" he asked.

"Yes," I lied. The question frightened me. I figured if he thought I had a family who'd be expecting my return, he might be more hesitant about harming me.

Then my eyes fell on my Bible

in my lap. Here was my lifeline, my salvation! *Lord, I know You're with me always. Please help me to be calm.*

Suddenly, from deep within, I found the courage and inspiration to say, "Would you please take the knife away from my throat? I won't jump out of the car at 60 miles an hour!"

He took his arm away, and I breathed a prayer of thanks—I knew God was truly with me there.

Gaining courage, I asked if I could read from the Bible. He sort of shrugged. "I don't care." I picked up the Bible and noticed that my hand had stopped bleeding; it was only a superficial cut. I fumbled through the pages to the Psalms, amazed that my shaking fingers didn't rip the pages.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." The beautiful words, so peaceful, so deeply comforting, seemed to shiver in the air, so quavery was my voice. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil . . ."

When I finished reading the twenty-third psalm, the man said to me, "What's all that stuff supposed to mean? I never understood any of it."

Dimly I realized that he was giving me the perfect "opening" for the message of the gospel. Outside the car windows, trees and traffic signs tore past. The details of the evangelism outline I'd so carefully memorized seemed to disappear along with them. *Lord, help me, I prayed, if this is what You want me to do.*

I glanced at the Bible in my lap. Just as before, I knew the words of the gospel were my only hope. I sighed deeply and prayed, *Lord, I have a feeling I'm really going to botch that long outline I learned, but help me make some sense to this man. Help me to let him know that You love him.*

"When I say, 'The Lord is my shepherd,'" I began, my voice shaking, "that means that God guides and protects me every step of my life. I believe that God can bring good out of every situation if you love Him—even something like this. There's another quotation in the Bible that says the same thing. I'll read it for you."

He didn't seem to have heard. He glared ahead, gripping the wheel as if he'd break it off. His driving was fast and reckless. It seemed to take me forever to find Romans 8:28 with my trembling fingers. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

"Hmph!" the man snorted. Yet when I looked at his face, his expression had changed slightly; it

seemed to have softened. "You really believe that?" he asked.

"Yes, absolutely." I began speaking rapidly of my faith in Jesus Christ. "Since I've found Christ, my whole life has changed. No matter what my problems have been, I've felt a new sense of purpose . . . a security in His love . . ." I spoke on and on. Astonishing even myself, I told him that no matter what happened to me—even if he killed me!—I knew I would have eternal life.

He just kept staring straight ahead and said nothing.

Then I remembered that when witnessing, you are supposed to ask the person about himself, to get some idea of what his personal needs are.

"Can you tell me what you're planning to do right now?"

"I—I won't hurt you," he stammered. "I just have to get somewhere."

"Where?"

He didn't answer. I realized then that he really didn't know what he was doing or where he was going. This frightened me just as much as if he had told me he was planning to rape and kill me.

"Look," I said, trying to sound firm, "I have to get back to my church in 45 minutes to give a singing lesson."

"Well, it takes about an hour to get where we're going."

I took a deep breath. I had to pull myself together to continue to try to persuade him. I gripped the edges of the Bible in my lap, wondering if I was being a complete fool, but knowing the Word of God was my only hope. "Can you tell me what your name is?" I asked. "If you're married?"

"I don't think I should tell you my name. I have a wife and a young son and a daughter about your age. But they're better off without me. I just lost my job. And, see this?"

He extended the inside of his right arm to me. It was riddled with little red marks that looked like insect bites. But with a shock that washed through me like ice water I realized they were needle marks.

"I've spent a lot of time in jail, and I got off drugs just a few days

ago. My rehabilitation counselor knows I'm nervous. She told me not to do anything rash—but I had to get this car."

I was amazed at this outpouring. God was truly helping me! The man had told me his fears and anxieties. My only hope now was somehow to meet them with the message of God's love. I prayed that God would speak through me.

"The most important thing you can ever know," I began, "is that God loves you. That's what God is all about—love." I flipped back to Psalm 23. "Where it says, 'my cup runneth over,' that means that we can hardly comprehend His love; it's too much for us to hold. And it says, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.' He's a merciful God. He loves and forgives everybody, no matter what they do."

I talked about this for a long time. I wasn't sure if he was listening or cared—but I knew I must witness to him. Almost miraculously, Scripture quotations came back to me. "In the New Testament, Jesus tells us that He is the Good Shepherd and that on the cross He laid down His life to save His sheep. That's how much He loves us. That means if we listen to Christ and follow Him, we will live with Him forever in heaven."

He was very quiet. Then suddenly he took an exit at Pomona and started driving through a run-down old neighborhood. The empty windows of abandoned buildings seemed to leer evilly at me. *This is it, I thought. I'm going to die.* Then other bits of the outline started coming back to me: *If the person you are witnessing to seems at all receptive, tell him about a church where he'll be welcome.*

"I go to Lake Avenue Congregational church in Pasadena. There are counselors and pastors there who could help you, who'd be willing to talk to you about your problems with drugs and jobs or anything on your mind. I think you ought to take me back there. It's a much better way of dealing with your problems than what you're doing now."

Still, he was quiet. The car rumbled on, bouncing now and then on the uneven streets. I felt the panic rising again, the awful feeling of claustrophobia and helplessness. I prayed, *Lord, keep me calm.*

Then the man said, "I'm thinking about taking you back."

I felt certain I shouldn't speak. I just kept praying to myself, *God, please do something to change his heart.*

All of a sudden the man whipped the car around in a U-turn. "I'm taking you back to your church," he said quietly. He handed me the knife. "Do whatever you want with this. I'd like to hear some more of this stuff about God and Jesus."

I knew he meant it. He sat back in the seat. The very lines of his face had relaxed. In no time we were back on the highway, headed for Pasadena. I was so happy. I sang hymns of praise all the way back to the church.

When we arrived, he parked the car and handed me my keys. "I'd like to talk to the pastor," he said.

Together we went into the church's reception area. Though I was still a little shaky and my hand and neck were bruised and dirty, the receptionist politely seemed to ignore it. "My friend wants to talk to the pastor," I said. "Who's on duty?"

"John," she said.

John Raymond is a down-to-earth, direct man, a good friend of mine. I was totally confident he could handle the situation. We went up the stairs to his office.

As soon as we walked in, the man said, "I'm a drug addict and an ex-convict. I've just abducted this young lady."

John looked from him to me and back again, containing his amazement. "Please sit down," he said. We took seats in front of his desk. I was safe at last.

"Is it true?" John asked me.

"Yes," I said and briefly explained what had just happened.

"I've told him about the Lord, that God loves and forgives him. He'd like to know more."

John nodded. Slowly and

patiently, he began talking with the man, who told us his name and address. He was open and seemed relaxed. John talked for about ten minutes, presenting the gospel clearly and simply.

"That's just what she told me!" the man said. He seemed surprised and glad, as if relieved to know I hadn't just made it all up.

"Would you like to pray now and ask Jesus into your life?" John asked him.

"Yes, I would. But I don't know how."

"Just repeat after me: Lord, I acknowledge my sins and ask You to forgive me."

Clasping his hands and bowing his head, the man repeated it in a solemn voice.

John continued, "I ask that You enter my heart and live in my life as Lord and Saviour now and forever. Amen."

The man repeated that, too. Then he turned to me with tears in his eyes. "I can't tell you how sorry I am for what I did to you." He paused and looked away thoughtfully. "Maybe things do

work out for good—like you told me."

He *had* heard!

I decided, after prayer and consultation with John and with the other pastors, not to press charges. John and I believed the man was sincere and that going back to jail would only jeopardize his faith and stability.

The pastors have kept in touch with him. He has returned to his family, stayed out of trouble, and gotten his job back.

How can I sum up what I learned from this extraordinary experience? That God loves and forgives us all and is with us always. That He works in wonderful ways. Most of all, that He *wants* us to share our faith with others. Just as Jesus said: "Do not worry beforehand about what you will say, but when the time comes say whatever is given you to say; for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11, N.E.B.).*

T

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REFLECTIONS

by Ralph Blodgett

1. The Bible says that the end of human history will be like the days of _____. (Page 6)
2. According to Revelation 1:7, every person on earth will see Jesus when He returns. (Page 7) ☐ True ☐ False
3. List three proclamations, or sounds, that will accompany Christ's return to Planet Earth. (Page 8)

4. Name the person who was the last one at the Saviour's tomb on Friday, and the first one He greeted Sunday morning following His resurrection. (Page 13)
5. Where did the idea originate that humans receive their souls from God? (Page 20)
☐ Greek philosophy ☐ The Bible ☐ Neither
6. List three things that perish when a person dies, according to Ecclesiastes 9:5. (Page 21)

FRANK ANSWERS

DOES GOD KILL PEOPLE?

Does God kill people?

In the sense of murder? Of course not. He forbids such an act in the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13). In the sense of a judicial execution? Yes. But even in such an event, "the Judge of all the earth" (Genesis 18:25) is deeply pained. "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Some well-meaning Christians argue that the execution of impenitent sinners by God is contrary to His nature of love. This kind of argument is meant to exalt the loving character of God, but, in effect, it depreciates it. God's love is a holy love, not an indulgent, sentimental love. The psalmist says: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalm 89:14). Love and justice are two sides of the same coin and must be held in proper balance. What kind of

security in civil government would we have if government could not or would not punish infractions of its laws? Or if government left it to the criminals to destroy themselves? God is not less just and orderly than humankind!

The view that God will not execute the impenitent sets Him forth as less than sovereign in His universe. Is it really true justice to permit a sinner physically to destroy himself? Take an extreme example: The dictator Adolf Hitler died with the blood of millions of innocent people on his hands. Would the universe of the loyal and redeemed truly be satisfied if in the judgment God should say to him: "You, Adolf Hitler, are a wicked and lost man. I sentence you to die by whatsoever means you may wish—suicide or by the stroke of someone near you who is also condemned. I will not touch you, for I am love"? What would the victims of this criminal think? Would the universe see any justice in such a sentence?

Although the destruction of the wicked is referred to as God's "strange act" (Isaiah 28:21), yet true justice demands proper punishment and execution. "[God] will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). Endless torment is not justice. But justice does require adequate punishment for the sins and crimes that the impenitent have committed. Love and justice are two aspects of the same divine

character. It is holy love that ultimately makes the universe secure.

The angels see no injustice in God's direct punishment of the wicked. The seven last plagues are described as "the wrath of God" (Revelation 15:1). After bringing about the third plague (fresh waters turned to blood), the angel says to God, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." In response to these words the prophet hears another heavenly voice ring out: "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments" (Revelation 16:5-7).

God is often compared to a father. A loving and just father must at times punish his disobedient child. It is not out of order for the father to administer the judgment directly. It is expected. In the sin situation two principles struggle for the mastery: the principle of self-sacrificing love and the principle of selfishness—self-centeredness. They cannot coexist. The Godhead has passed judgment on sin: separation and eternal death (Romans 6:23).

Only God, the Source of life, has the right and authority to deprive a living being of his life. Those who have chosen to remain rebellious and impenitent, He will punish according to

their deeds and will deprive them of their lives. This is both simple justice and mercy. Such persons would rather be dead than to live in the holy atmosphere of heaven and the new earth—which they rejected, while on this planet. Hence, Christ's warning: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28, cf. Hebrews 10:30, 31).

Does Jeremiah 10:1-6 condemn the practice of setting a Christmas tree in the house?

The lines you have in mind read as follows: "One cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not" (verses 3, 4).

If the context is read it will be seen that the prophet Jeremiah is referring to the superstitions and idol worship of those pre-Christian times. In verse 2 he tells the Jews not to adopt the perspectives of the pagan Gentiles nor to be disturbed by their interpretations of the zodiac.

In the verses cited above he describes with fine irony the pagan man's efforts in making his idol-god: the cutting of a tree from the woods and the shaping of it into a form to be plated with gold and silver. He spoofs the helplessness of such wooden, lifeless gods. **TT**



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

Write to him c/o THESE TIMES, 55 West Oak Ridge Drive, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. Names are confidential. If a personal answer is desired, please send an addressed envelope. Only questions of general interest are published.

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THIS TIME



Several years ago THESE TIMES ran a column entitled Current and Quotable. A nostalgic glimpse at the entries in 1961 convinced me that because of their enduring wisdom I ought to share a sampling of the most penetrating comments. Here, then, is a New Year's extra for you.

Charles A. Lindbergh: "Living in rented apartments, jamming roads and subways, punching time clocks, sitting paunchily at desks, cramming the minds of his children with technical knowledge, modern man sacrifices health of body and freedom of spirit to the scientific idol of his time. On its altar go the smell of earth, the feel of wind and weather, vision of fields and rivers, warmth of friendship, understanding of children, even the contemplation of God; all these are given over to a metallic, intellectual existence."

Anthony J. Pettito: "The best way to bring up some children is short."

Helen Keller: "Those are red-letter days in our lives when we meet people who thrill us like a fine poem, people whose handshake is brimful of unspoken sympathy and whose sweet, rich natures impart to our eager, impatient spirits a wonderful restfulness which, in its essence, is divine. The perplexities, irritations, and worries that have absorbed us pass like unpleasant dreams, and we wait to see with new eyes and hear with new ears the beauty and harmony of God's real world."

Dr. John Mackay, former president of Princeton Theological Seminary: "I suppose that when we open the New Testament, we find that the most profound and objective description of the servanthood of Jesus Christ is in that extraordinary foot-washing scene which the author of the Fourth Gospel thought so important, so tremendously significant."

Francis D. Nichol, editor and author: "How could even the most primitive person truly believe that God is our Father without gaining a new idea of the kind of relationship he ought to bear to his fellow men?"

Dr. E. Stanley Jones: "The emptiness of the human soul is the greatest evangelistic opportunity in both East and West. The central neurosis of the world is the soul's emptiness. Men cut themselves off from the root of their being—God—so life becomes dull and meaningless. It is the same problem everywhere."

Van Cliburn, diplomat of the keyboard: "I am highly stimulated by people, and drinking would be like throwing gasoline on a brightly burning fire. Besides, I don't care for liquor. I have found that social acceptance does not depend on drinking, nor does it enhance one's esteem either professionally or socially. In fact, people the world over respect one for refusing to drink."

Kenneth J. Holland

Seven Secrets for a Happier Life

Passed from one generation to another, these seven points have proved their value over the years.

BY JOHN WOODEN

My father was truly a gentle man, yet when he said something I knew he meant it.

We had a team of mules on our farm named Jack and Kate. Kate would often get stubborn and lie down on me when I was plowing. I couldn't get her up no matter how roughly I treated her. Dad would see my predicament, walk across the field until he was close enough to say "Kate," and she'd get up and start working again.

He never touched her in anger, and it took me a long time to learn that lesson.

When I graduated from the small country grade school I attended, Dad gave me a card with seven creeds, or points, on it that I've carried with me in one form or another ever since. I've not lived up to them as well as I've wanted, but I've tried, and

John Wooden is a legend in his own time. As head basketball coach at UCLA from 1948 until retiring in 1975, he rewrote the record book: 88 consecutive victories, 10 NCAA titles, 7 consecutive NCAA championships, 38 straight NCAA tournament wins, and 8 undefeated Pac-8 Conference crowns (no other team had ever gone unbeaten).

An honors English major and three-time all-American cager at Purdue, John was named college basketball "player of the year" in 1932 and is the only person to be inducted into the National Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and coach.

*John lives with wife, Nell, in Encino, California, where he is active in the Christian Church and keeps busy with clinics, speaking, and writing. Reprinted by permission from *Sharing the Victory*, official publication of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.*

that gives me peace. Here they are:

1. *Be true to yourself.* This covers many areas. True to your faith, your wife and family, your profession and colleagues. Polonius said in *Hamlet*, "This above all: to thine ownself be true. . . . Thou canst not then be false to any man."

2. *Make each day your masterpiece.* Just do your best each day. You can't change yesterday—it's gone forever; its door has been shut and the key thrown away. But you can work to do your best today.

3. *Help others.* Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." We say the words but many times don't really believe them. They're still true. You can never acquire happiness, freedom, and peace without giving of yourself to someone else.

4. *Make friendship a fine art.* Work at it. Don't take friendship for granted. If you do, it may not last. And don't work at it just from one side. Friendship comes from mutual esteem, respect, and devotion. Just as in a successful marriage, both sides must work at it.

A man from the Midwest came up to me after I'd spoken at a convention in San Francisco and remarked that Californians sure weren't as friendly as the folks back home. He'd encountered a lot of people while walking to the meeting room and not one had spoken to him. "Did you greet any of them?" I asked. He hadn't. If

we wait for the other person to speak first, often no one speaks.

5. *Build a shelter against a rainy day.* This can mean material possessions, but I think it means things that are everlasting. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," Jesus said; "and all these things shall be added unto you." In many ways we've been taken in by materialism. I'm not saying possessions are unimportant, but we often put them out of proportion.

6. *Drink deeply from good books.* Especially that book that's far outsold all the others—the Bible. We must read it every day. And familiarize yourself with Lloyd Douglas's *The Robe* and *The Magnificent Obsession*. Read Shakespeare and other great authors. They can make you a little better than you are.

7. *Pray for guidance and give thanks daily.* We pray frequently for help, but how often do we give thanks for our blessings? America is imperfect, and we must constantly work to improve her, but she's the greatest nation of all and we're blessed to be here.

We're also blessed by the fact that Someone gave His life for us and took our sins on His shoulders so we might have eternal life. This alone is reason to give thanks every day. As someone said, "How much more pleasant this world would be if we magnified our blessings the way we do our disappointments." **TT**



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