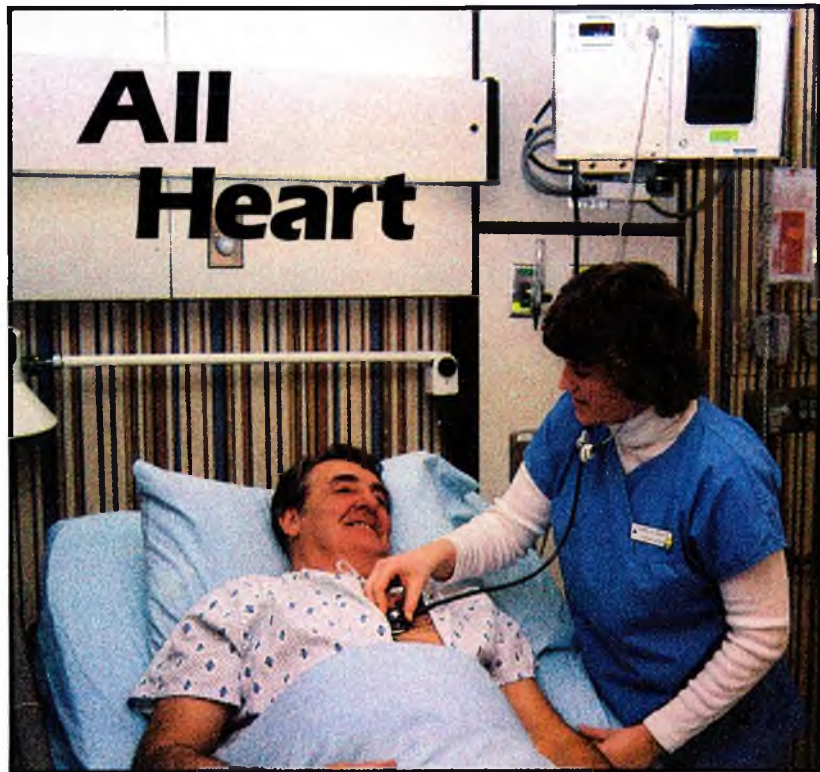


COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

A North American Youth Ministries Publication April-June 1985

KEEPING THE FAITH





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COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THE COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

Facts You Should Know

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is based on the conviction that there is transforming power in the Word of God and that one important way of tapping into that power is through group study. It is prepared with Adventist college students and young adults particularly in mind. Its purpose is to provide this group with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed together each week in Sabbath School.

Additionally, many who use the adult quarterly find that the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, since it deals with the same topics as the adult, enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist colleges and universities, along with young adult church groups, work together in producing the quarterly. The writing at each school is coordinated by the campus chaplain's office. Approximately 200 individuals contribute to the quarterly each year, on a volunteer basis.

Circulation of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is about 22,000.

Pointers for Study

1. The Bible passage to be studied for each week is indicated in bold on the Introduction page (Sunday's lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly Introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

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

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

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

Introduction (Sunday) is designed to get your attention and focus your thinking on the week's theme.

Logos (Monday), as described above, is a guide for direct study of the Bible passage for the week.

Testimony (Tuesday) presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.

Evidence (Wednesday) approaches issues raised by the lesson from an historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective. It is likely to be the most "scholarly" article of the week.

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

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

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

The CQ and the Church

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is the North American Division-approved quarterly for the collegiate/young adult age group. It upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church. *However, its contents should not be regarded as official pronouncements of the church.* Particularly in the Evidence and Opinion sections, views are expressed which are only individual opinion, not official denominational positions.

THIS QUARTER'S ARTIST



Louis Johnson, a resident of Redlands, California, is currently pursuing a free-lance career in illustration and design. He has studied figure, design, graphics and illustration techniques at Santa Monica City College, Art Center Design Pasadena, Otis Parson School of Design Los Angeles, and Loma Linda University.

Louis' work can be found throughout Loma Linda University Medical Center, at the Tri-County Surgical Society, and in the *Collegiate Quarterly* (Oct-Dec, 1984). His early achievements in art include designing the stone relief sculpture at the entrance of Pacific Palisades High School while attending school there, being elected senior class artist, and being awarded the Outstanding Senior Artist upon graduating.

Louis most enjoys biblical illustrating, and would like to expand this interest into motion pictures. He is currently researching techniques in special effects and stage design to further his interest in portraying the Bible.

We Are Family

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, NIV).



"Dear Tim"

by Sonia Di Memmo

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 1:1-4; 4:9-21

Dear Tim,

How are you doing? How are your Grandmother and Mom feeling? Are they well? I hear you've been busy. You've just finished holding an evangelistic series, haven't you? How did it go? Did many people attend the meetings? Were many baptized? How is the follow-up program working? Are the newly-baptized members finding a welcome place in the church? Please tell me how the young people are, too. I imagine you are tired this evening, after a long week of meetings.

I remember when you were interning under me. Together we went visiting in homes, gave Bible studies, attended board meetings, organized evangelistic meetings, and so on. I watched as you gained experience then, and now you are doing all these things, even starting a church school, as pastor of your own church. I'm proud of you because I have seen your abilities and confidence grow as you have worked. You have become like the son I never had.

I'm lonely now. No one has visited me for about a month. Charles and his wife moved north six weeks ago. He's pastoring a church now, too. I've written to them several times, but all the letters have been returned stamped with

"Address Unknown." Dennis stopped coming to visit me. I haven't seen him for seven weeks. I understand he has stopped attending church and moved East. Maybe you'll see him sometime; encourage him if you do. Tom, a new pastor I was working with, will be away for another month. He's attending some meetings in the South Eastern Division.

As you can tell, I miss your company, Tim, so please come visit me. Bring Marc with you too. Were you able to fix your car yet? If not, maybe you could rent one. Be careful if you rent one from Alex's Motors though. (Several cars I rented from him broke down.) A rental is just a suggestion, because you would arrive here sooner than if you traveled by bus. Also, since it's getting colder here, could you please stop at my old home to pick up my jacket and some books I left there. I surely would appreciate that.

I have not meant to complain, for God has been good to me! Through him I have a family, of which you are a special part. I receive strength from God, you, and others in the church who are close to me. I thank God for your support and pray that He will remember and bless you. Please give my greetings to Priscilla and Alan. I'm anxious to see you!

With love,
Paul

**INTRO-
DUCTION**

Sonia Di Memmo finished her A.S. in nursing at Southern College in 1983.

A Letter From Death Row

LOGOS Theme: Through Christ we are adopted into the family of God. In this family we find unity, mutual care, and our deepest human ties, as exemplified in the "father-son" relationship between Paul and Timothy.

1. The Background of 2 Timothy

Picture an elderly man sitting in a cell on death row. He has committed no violent crime, but he has been disseminating radical ideas. That would be all right if he were just an old crackpot, but his fanatical ideas have been sweeping through the world like a tornado, turning everything upside down, and the government feels it must act to get things under control.

His head is mostly bald, and his beard is mostly white; and though there is still vigor and intensity in his eyes and gestures, there is also a hint of pathos. He is certain now, after extended legal proceedings, that he will be executed, though that may not take place for several weeks yet. Estranged from his family, he begins to write a final letter to a young man who probably means more to him than anyone else on earth.

Such a picture gives at least an approximation of the setting of the letter we will be studying this quarter—2 Timothy. It is a deeply personal letter, written during Paul's final imprisonment in Rome, just before his martyrdom, sometime in the mid-60s A.D.

His final condemnation was probably part of the severe persecution of Christians initiated by the emperor Nero in 64 A.D. A terrible fire had swept through Rome that year, and there was general suspicion that the maniacal ruler of the empire was himself responsible. Needing a scapegoat, Nero put the blame on the Christians and devised incredibly cruel and bizarre tortures to punish them, such as dousing them with combustibles and burning them alive to illuminate night games held in his garden. It is in this fearsome setting that Paul urges Timothy to be bold and endure suffering. In 2 Timothy we see Paul "passing the torch" to one of the most promising individuals in a new generation of leadership for the church, urging him to keep the faith. And we find much about relationships, truth, faithfulness, courage, commitment, and hope that is vital for a new generation of young Adventists in the 1980s.

2. Father and Son in the Gospel (read 2 Tim. 1:1-4)

"I thank God . . . as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy" (1:3, 4, NIV).

The opening verses of the letter reveal the powerful bond of affection between the aging apostle and the youthful pastor. During their years of association, while Paul had instructed and guided Timothy, equipping him for effective service, while they had worked and traveled together in a common purpose, Paul came to think of Timothy as his "dear son." Paul's deep fatherly concern

for his spiritual offspring is demonstrated by his continual prayers (vs. 3). And the emotional warmth of the relationship between the two men is revealed by the reference to Timothy's tears at their parting and Paul's intense longing that they be reunited (vs. 4).

One reason why Paul valued Timothy as a son was that Timothy, perhaps more fully than anyone else, shared Paul's approach to life. Informing the believers at Phillipi that he would soon be sending Timothy to them, Paul wrote, "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel" (Phil. 2:20-22, NIV).

What do the following passages suggest to you about Timothy's character and personality? What strikes you most favorably and/or unfavorably about him? Acts 16:1-3; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; Phil. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 4:7, 11-14; 5:23; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:6, 7; 2:22, 23.

3. Paul Counts on Timothy (read 2 Tim. 4:9-21)

"When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments" (4:13, RSV).

Paul here relies on Timothy, his faithful son, to take care of his personal needs. The items Paul asked Timothy to bring with him suggest something about the hierarchy of Paul's values. The cloak Paul asked for, Barclay tells us, was a "great circular rug-like garment. It had a hole for the head in the middle, and it covered a man like a little tent, reaching right down to the ground."¹ The cloak would meet a physical need—winter was approaching, and it would no doubt be very cold in the Roman prison. He also wanted his books, to fill his intellectual need. But of greatest importance to him were the parchments, which were probably portions of the Old Testament, particularly the messianic prophecies. For Paul, even in the miserable circumstances of a jail cell, the supreme thing in life was ever Jesus Christ and the witness to him found in Scripture.²

The father-son relationship between Paul and Timothy exemplifies the family ties which bind together all who are in Christ. Through his grace, we are all adopted as sons and daughters of God (see Gal. 4:4-6) and thus are all brothers and sisters. Distinctions of race, nationality, status, or sex cannot alienate believers from one another, for we are family, we are one (Gal. 3:28).

Is the church a family no matter how its members behave, or is it a family only when they truly love each other?

D. F. M.

1. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 219.

2. Exposition of this passage along these lines is borrowed from a sermon on cassette tape by Noel Mason entitled, "The Supremacies of Life."

Becoming a Part of the Family

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Galatians 3:28

The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Christ made satisfaction for the guilt of the whole world, and all who will come to God in faith, will receive the righteousness of Christ, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24). Our sin has been expiated, put away, cast into the depths of the sea. Through repentance and faith we are rid of sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust.

"Christ pardons none but the penitent, but whom He pardons He first makes penitent."

Although as sinners we are under the condemnation of the law, yet Christ by His obedience rendered to the law, claims for the repentant soul the merit of His own righteousness. In order to obtain the righteousness of Christ, it is necessary for the sinner to know what that repentance is which works a radical change of mind and spirit and action. The work of transformation must begin in the heart, and manifest its power through every faculty of the being; but man is not capable of originating such a repentance as this, and can experience it alone through Christ, who ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . .

He who would become a child of God must receive the truth that repentance and forgiveness are to be obtained through nothing less than the atonement of Christ. Assured of this the sinner must put forth an effort in harmony with the work done for him, and with unwearied entreaty he must supplicate the throne of grace, that the renovating power of God may come into his soul. Christ pardons none but the penitent, but whom He pardons He first makes penitent. The provision made is complete, and the eternal righteousness of Christ is placed to the account of every believing soul. The costly, spotless robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has been provided for the repenting, believing sinner, and he may say: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61:10).

Excerpted from *Selected Messages*, Book 1, pp. 392-394.

God's Family: United in Diversity

by Carol J. Fawcett Smith

Why does my brother have dark brown eyes and hair, and my sister have hazel eyes and red hair, and I have blue eyes and light-brown hair? Genes, of course. Since each of us has 46 chromosomes with an estimated 20,000 genes in each, there are vast possibilities for combinations.

Why is my brother a Methodist, my sister a Roman Catholic, and I a Seventh-day Adventist? Again, there is no simple answer since so many complex factors contribute to this difference. We all believe in Christ and worship the same God, though in different ways. We love one another because we share a blood-relationship as a family.

God created a world filled with a rich variety of life. No two flowers are the same; no two animals just like each other; and sunrises and sunsets set the sky aflame differently every time. With everything so varied, it is no wonder he designed each of us to be unique.

Why is it then that some people believe everyone in the church should be the same? In Galatians 3:28, when Paul talks about all being one in Christ, he is not saying we will all become carbon copies. God created us to think differently, and so he doesn't expect us to become exact duplicates.

There are several ways in which Christians can be unified and diverse at the same time. Each member of the family has the responsibility of loving, accepting, forgiving, and caring for others in the family. These principles are exemplified in Paul's relationship with Timothy.

We can find specific examples of family responsibilities in Paul's last prison epistle to Timothy. Paul openly expressed his fatherly love for Timothy, whom he considered his spiritual child (1:2). He constantly prayed for this special young man whom he had led to Christ and longed for a reunion with him (1:3, 4). He encouraged him to keep alive the faith and love of Jesus Christ.

Paul counseled Timothy against engaging in disputes that would unnecessarily divide the family. Paul suffered hardships for the gospel: his enemies opposed him and his friends deserted him. Yet he was not bitter against those who deserted him, but was instead concerned that their action not be charged against them (4:16). His instruction was to avoid stupid controversies and quarrels and instead be kind, forbearing, and gentle in correction (2:23, 25).

Finally, in Paul's hour of need, he gave Timothy the opportunity to perform the duties of a spiritual son by bringing to Paul his cloak, books, and parchments. And Paul's last words were warm greetings to the various members of the household of faith.

Paul and Timothy were a part of the family—together they shared a relationship in the common bond of Christ's blood. Differences in people will always be present this side of heaven. By his blood, Jesus released us from our sins, and he made us to be a family. Therefore, let us love one another.

EVIDENCE Part 1

Key text:
Romans 12:4, 5

"When Paul talks about all being one in Christ, he is not saying we will all become carbon copies."

Carol J. Fawcett Smith is a graduate in Religion from Southern College and was working in the Division of Religion there at the time of this writing.

Wednesday, April 3 11

Brothers in the Faith

by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Evidence

Part 2

Key text:

Philippians 1:14

“In the
community of
the Spirit
the Word of God
alone rules.”

One is a brother to another only through Jesus Christ. I am a brother to another person through what Jesus Christ did for me and to me; the other person has become a brother to me through what Jesus Christ did for him. This fact that we are brethren only through Jesus Christ is of immeasurable significance. Not only the other person who is earnest and devout, who comes to me seeking brotherhood, must I deal with in fellowship. My brother is rather that other person who has been redeemed by Christ, delivered from his sin, and called to faith and eternal life. Not what a man is in himself as a Christian, his spirituality and piety, constitutes the basis of our community. What determines our brotherhood is what that man is by reason of Christ. Our community with one another consists solely in what Christ has done to both of us. This is true not merely at the beginning, as though in the course of time something else were to be added to our community; it remains so for all the future and to all eternity. I have community with others and I shall continue to have it only through Jesus Christ. The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us. We have one another only through Christ, but through Christ we do have one another, wholly, and for all eternity.

That dismisses once and for all every clamorous desire for something more. One who wants more than what Christ has established does not want Christian brotherhood. He is looking for some extraordinary social experience which he has not found elsewhere, he is bringing muddled and impure desires into Christian brotherhood. Just at this point Christian brotherhood is threatened most often at the very start by the greatest danger of all, the danger of being poisoned at its root, the danger of confusing Christian brotherhood with some wishful idea of religious fellowship, or confounding the natural desire of the devout heart for community with the spiritual reality of Christian brotherhood. In Christian brotherhood everything depends upon its being clear right from the beginning, *first, that Christian brotherhood is not an ideal, but a divine reality. Second, that Christian brotherhood is a spiritual . . . reality.*

Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate. The more clearly we learn to recognize that the ground and strength and promise of all our fellowship is in Jesus Christ alone, the more serenely shall we think of our fellowship and pray and hope for it.

Because Christian community is founded solely on Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual and not a psychic reality. In this it differs absolutely from all other communities. The Scriptures call “pneumatic,” “spiritual,” that which is created only by the Holy Spirit, who puts Jesus Christ into our hearts as Lord and Saviour. The Scriptures

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was a Lutheran theologian who was executed by the Nazis in World War II.

term "psychic," "human" that which comes from the natural urges, powers, and capacities of the human spirit.

The basis of all spiritual reality is the clear, manifest Word of God in Jesus Christ. The basis of all human reality is the dark, turbid urges and desires of the human mind. The basis of the community of the Spirit is truth; the basis of human community of spirit is desire. The essence of the community of the Spirit is light, for "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5) and "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1:7). The essence of human community of spirit is darkness, "for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts" (Mark 7:21). It is the deep night that hovers over the sources of all human action, even over all noble and devout impulses. The community of the Spirit is the fellowship of those who are called by Christ; human community of spirit is the fellowship of devout souls. In the community of the Spirit there burns the bright love of brotherly service, *agape*; in human community of spirit there glows the dark love of good and evil desire, *eros*. In the former there is ordered, brotherly service, in the latter disordered desire for pleasure; in the former humble subjection to the brethren, in the latter humble yet haughty subjection of a brother to one's own desire. In the community of the Spirit the Word of God alone rules; in human community of spirit there rules, along with the Word, the man who is furnished with exceptional powers, experience, and magical, suggestive capacities. There God's Word alone is binding; here, besides the Word, men bind others to themselves. There all power, honor, and dominion are surrendered to the Holy Spirit; here spheres of power and influence of a personal nature are sought and cultivated. It is true, in so far as these are devout men, that they do this with the intention of serving the highest and the best, but in actuality the result is to dethrone the Holy Spirit, to relegate Him to remote unreality. In actuality, it is only the human that is operative here. In the spiritual realm the Spirit governs; in the human community, psychological techniques and methods. In the former naive, unpsychological, unmethodical, helping love is extended toward one's brother; in the latter psychological analysis and construction; in the one the service of one's brother is simple; in the other service consists of a searching, calculating analysis of a stranger.

"Christian brotherhood is not an ideal, but a divine reality."

REACT

1. Is it wrong to seek warm, supportive relationships in Christian fellowship—"immediate contact with other souls," as Bonhoeffer puts it?
2. Do you agree with Bonhoeffer that Jesus Christ and his work is the only thing vital between Christians? Aren't distinctive doctrines an indispensable bond between Adventists?

Excerpted from
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, pp. 25, 26,
30-33.

How To Live Without Famine

by Ron Carter

HOW TO
Key text:
1 Corinthians
12:12-26

What does it really mean to be a member of a family? For the Christian, membership in God's family transcends mere genes and hemoglobin. Our adoption through Christ's blood makes our salvation fully secure. From this security should flow power enabling us to fulfill the gospel commission, which is embodied in the very meaning of the word "family." The term "family" comes from the Latin root "fam," meaning hungry. The suffix "il" means "not." The spiritual and physical meaning of being without hunger is obvious. Thus, the word "family" constitutes a God-given mandate that we are to follow confidently. Knowledge of our status and commission in Christ should make changes in our lives that have very real and practical implications for our involvement in God's family.

1. **Self-worth:** Adoption into the family of God should create within us a special sense of self-worth. It gives us assurance that our worth is not based on human bloodline, genes, or self. In Christ we are more than wretched worms. We are, instead, sons and daughters of the King. As members of the royal family we can confidently go into the world to perform our family-ordained duties.

2. **Purpose:** Membership in God's family gives direction. The very derivation of the word "family" gives focus to the task of removing famine, by feeding the hungry and giving the bread of life to the spiritually malnourished. The special sanctuary message of Christ's remnant family is to be a healing truth. A truth that can heal the world by showing how the sin that causes spiritual famine is removed. In addition to sharing this spiritual message, the family has the purpose of following Christ's example of tending to the physical feeding and healing of mankind.

3. **Being one:** Paul gives us the insight that a family that is one in the Spirit and one through Christ's blood, is a body (see 1 Cor. 12). This metaphor speaks to us about tensions that will exist within any corporate body. These tensions are destructive when they cause the body to fight against itself. But tensions can be positive. Coordinated, beautiful movements of the human body are accomplished by muscles in tension, pulling against one another. Successful muscle coordination is produced when each muscle responds to the commands of the body's head. We need not be afraid of individuality, differences of opinion and even tension within the church family, as long as we allow Christ to be the head of the body.

Ron Carter was an associate professor of biology at Southern College at the time of this writing.

Successful Spiritual Siblingship

by J. Bruce Ashton

All of my life I had been taught about the evil of the partiality which divided the home of Isaac and Rebekah. Obviously it was not wise for the submissive, gentle, retiring Isaac to be so enamored of Esau's bold cunning and adventurous prowess. Certainly the direct and forthright Rebekah badly overplayed her favoritism for the devout, earnest, and utterly cooperative Jacob. How much of Bible history could have been rewritten (and with so much happier results!) if the two adults had only worked through their foolish narrow-sightedness and forged a truly unified family!

Then I became the father of three marvelous, lovable, but utterly distinct personalities. While I still do not condone the attitudes of Isaac and Rebekah, their problem is now much easier to understand. There *is* something in one heart that does especially respond to another particular heart.

If, indeed, each new soul born into the world is a new creation by God—the result of his deliberate fusing of specific chromosomal characteristics, why does he put such diverse, sometimes seemingly incompatible, personalities into this (ideally) compact unit, the family?

Part of the answer may lie in our expectations of the family and of each member in it. Each family member has a particular function.

But what do we expect of siblings? Do brothers and sisters exist to provide rivalry, disagreement, and competition, or is there a more helpful role? The fact that so often a single child has extra difficulty meeting social expectations suggests that some of the most basic lessons of coping, of adjusting, of enjoying another's success, are ideally learned in the normal interactions of family living. The optimum solution for two siblings in conflict is *not* for one (or both) to run away from home (or from each other), but to work out terms by which they can co-exist (at the least) and be blessed by each other's friendship and support (at the best).

Is it not so with "church siblings" as well? Perhaps we have never really clarified what we expect of our brothers and sisters in Christ. (Possibly we have never really thought about what they might be expecting of us!) Should it not be easier to work through disagreements peaceably with those who share with us a basic common ground of belief and a mutual commitment to one Lord and Master? How can we hope to influence the worldling for good, reconciling him to our (presumably higher) value system, if the only tactic we have for handling disputes within the church is to run away—or, far worse, to disparage, slander, and vilify? "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18)—certainly with those whose fellowship, whose brotherhood, we enjoy within our Father's house.

REACT

In what ways, if any, should "church siblings" expect complete unanimity from one another?

OPINION

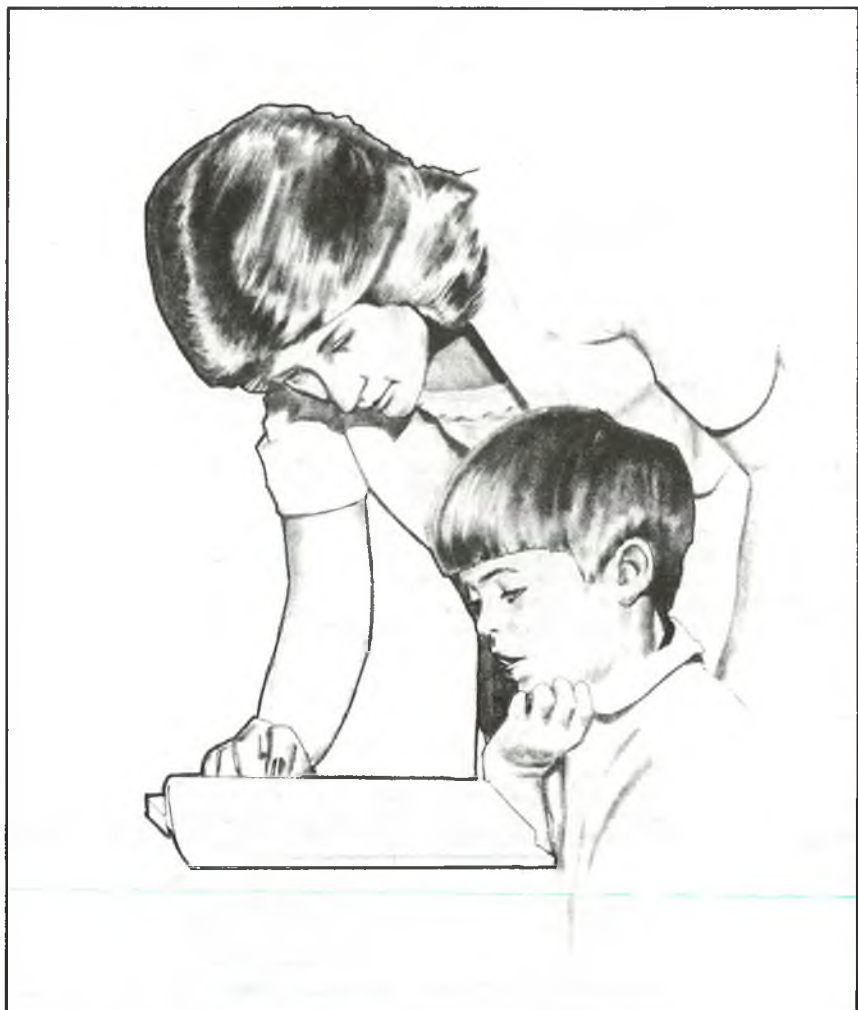
Key texts:
Psalm 133:1;
1 Peter 4:8

"Do brothers and sisters exist to provide rivalry, disagreement, and competition?"

J. Bruce Ashton is a professor of piano at Southern College.

The Faith Lives On

"From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15, NIV).



Maturing in the Faith

by Leslie A. Mathewson

This Week's Scripture:

2 Timothy 1:3-5; 3:14, 15; 4:5

Tim was one of the "good kids." He had been given the best possible religious education. His behavior was above reproach. He didn't drink or smoke. He went to church every Sabbath, studied his Bible diligently, and made a generally good impression on all the church elders.

The day came when the church was being split apart by an entirely new way of thinking. The old guard placed extreme importance on rules and regulations. The newer way of thinking placed greater stress on love than the elders did. Tim was attracted to the new teaching, but he was confused.

It wasn't just the young people who were listening to this new message. Tim's mother and grandmother were being affected as well. Soon Tim, his mother, and his grandmother were being treated with a cold shoulder at church on Sabbath. Things were really changing for Tim. Some of his friends rejected and even ridiculed him. His mother would just tell him that those people needed to come to understand God's love in a new way, and until they did, he would need to learn to take reproach without talking back.

Before long Tim found his spot in the new church that had been established when the old church rejected the new teaching. Paul, one of the foremost leaders of the new

movement, was very impressed with the young man. He took Tim with him on his evangelistic journeys, teaching him more and more about the faith and how to share it.

The day came when Tim was given a church district to pastor. He was alone now. It was his turn to teach the Scriptures every week. It was his duty to appoint and ordain elders. When there was a problem in the church, the members would somehow end up on his doorstep looking for him to provide an answer.

He discovered that it really can be "lonely at the top." Tim was single and young and alone in a strange city. Doubts crept into his mind. Had there been some mistake in this new message? Perhaps the elders in the old church were right. Perhaps, if he would somehow be better, God would make his problems go away! After the doubts came mild depression. Just as Tim was about to give up, a letter arrived. It was from his old friend, Paul. It helped Tim regain the proper perspective.

This week we will note how in this letter Paul reminded Timothy to hold to those things that had led to his success: the spiritual nurture he had received at home, his personal commitment, and guidance and training from Paul. Drawing on these resources, Tim would be able to meet the rigorous challenge of fulfilling what he had been called to do (see 2 Tim. 4:5).

INTRO- DUCTION

Leslie A. Mathewson was assistant campus chaplain at Southern College at the time of this writing.

The Nurture of God's Fellow Worker

LOGOS Theme: Thoroughly nurtured in the true faith, Timothy committed himself to service and was a particularly effective evangelist and pastor in the early Christian church.

1. Heir of the Faith (read 2 Tim. 1:3-5)

"I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also" (1:5, NIV).

Timothy was the recipient of a rich heritage of faith carefully handed down to him by his grandmother and mother. Growing up in the faith in no way makes Timothy inferior to those who have been converted from "the world." For, in Timothy, Paul has observed constant evidence of "sincere faith" (vs. 5).

Why is it that recent converts often seem more zealous than those who have grown up in the church?

2. Proclaimer of Faith (read 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:14, 15)

"We sent Timothy, who is our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith" (1 Thess. 3:2, NIV).

It was the careful nurture in the faith which Timothy had received that, in large measure, led to his emergence as a distinguished minister of the gospel. (See 2 Tim. 3:15.)

The term, "God's fellow worker" used to refer to Timothy in 1 Thess. 3:2 deserves special note. With this term, Paul was giving emphatic stress to the proclamation of the gospel as a labor commissioned, pioneered, and directed by God. "This noble conception of being linked with God in his great mission of love for fellow humanity occupied a prominent place in Paul's thinking and often found expression in his writings (cf. Rom. 1:9, 1 Cor. 3:9, 2 Cor. 6:1, Phil. 4:3)."¹

3. Directed in the Faith (read 1 Tim. 4:12-16; 2 Tim. 4:5)

"Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5, NIV).

Paul's emphasis in this verse is upon endurance in spite of hardships and setbacks encountered. In his previous correspondence with Timothy, Paul had already laid out the work that Timothy should do and the qualities he should display. In this second letter, Paul is not simply repeating himself, but rather recognizing the adversity that Timothy faces and reiterating that these circumstances must not deter him from his mission.

Do you think Timothy retained the faith heritage he was given without any revision or development? Explain.

L. R. C.

1. Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 238.

Safeguarded in Truth

by Stanley Hobbs

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, RSV). Perhaps there has been no finer realization of this idea than in the life of Timothy. Let us look at Ellen White's comments concerning his training and its effect upon his life.

"From a child he had known the Scriptures. The piety that he saw in his home life was sound and sensible. The faith of his mother and his grandmother in the sacred oracles was to him a constant reminder of the blessing in doing God's will. The word of God was the rule by which these two godly women had guided Timothy."¹

The spiritual training given Timothy by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice was perhaps much like that found in the following description of education in the schools of the prophets. "Thoughts of God were to be associated with all the events of daily life. . . . The great truths of God's providence and of the future life were impressed on the young mind. It was trained to see God alike in the scenes of nature and the words of revelation. The stars of heaven, the trees and flowers of the field, the lofty mountains, the rippling brooks—all spoke of the Creator."²

"Religion was the atmosphere of his home. The piety of his home life was . . . pure, sensible, and uncorrupted by false sentiments. . . . The Word of God was the rule which guided Timothy. He received instruction, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little."³

"His knowledge was a safeguard to him against the evil influences surrounding him and the temptation to choose pleasure and selfish gratification before duty. Such a safeguard all our children need, and it should be a part of the work of parents . . . to see that the children are properly instructed in the word of God."⁴

"His home instructors cooperated with God in educating this young man to bear the burdens that were to come upon him at an early age. . . . The lessons of the Bible have a moral and a religious influence upon the character as they are wrought in practical life. Timothy learned and practiced these lessons. He had no specially wonderful talents, but his work was valuable because he used God-given abilities as consecrated gifts in the service of God. His intelligent knowledge of the truth and of experimental piety gave him distinction and influence. The Holy Spirit found in Timothy a mind that could be molded and fashioned to become a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. . . . The youth should place themselves under the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and weave them into their daily thoughts and practical life. Then they will possess the attributes classed as highest in heavenly courts."⁵

REACT

1. How can you best use your own training to serve God?
2. As a parent, what principles would you follow in training a child in today's society?

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Proverbs 22:6

**"The Word
of God was
the rule
which guided
Timothy."**

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 203.
2. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 592.
3. *My Life Today*, p. 34.
4. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 398.
5. *My Life Today*, p. 34.

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Changeless Faith in a Changing World?

by Jerry A. Gladson

EVIDENCE

Key text:
2 Timothy
1:10-12

Over the years, I have had to face moving day many times. Saying the hard good-byes, settling the phone bill, withdrawing meager funds from the bank, and always, when facing mounds of old books and once-cherished trinkets, the dilemma: What goes and what stays?

Religious communities, it seems to me, face a similar situation. Unable to pass on everything to a new generation, they must decide what has to be discarded, what requires polishing to a high sheen for loving presentation to the next generation, and what is to be tucked away for safekeeping—out of sight—as a family heirloom. Religious traditions may pass on only the forms of faith; each new generation must fill those forms with its own content. New generations must experience the enduring core of faith anew.

Timothy represented the first *second-generation* Christians. Behind him, for the first time in the infant movement, lay a distinctively Christian heritage (see 2 Tim. 1:5). Preservation of the proper heritage naturally concerned Paul. Several times he referred to deviations from the gospel (see 2:17-19, 23-26; 3:2-9; 4:3, 4). Paul instinctively knew that the shifting tides of time alter all things, even doctrines.

How is a religious community to preserve its doctrinal faith without fossilizing it?

“New generations must experience the enduring core of faith anew.”

As is necessary on moving day, the church must establish priorities. Some things must go; others stay. The early church, for instance, in order to survive, eventually jettisoned the synagogue, where it for a time worshiped, with all its peculiar Jewish practices. Yet the core of the faith lived on; only its trappings changed. What was that core? Paul calls it the “appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus” (1:10, RSV).

But even the core needs interpretation. “We cannot adjust our thinking to what the Bible declares until we know what it is declaring,” insists Ronnie Littlejohn. “In order to know what it is declaring, we must interpret it.”¹ This process of interpretation is always ongoing; each generation confronts the task anew, armed only with the biblical text, personal experience, reason, and the tradition of the faith community.

Hopefully, what emerges from this generational symbiosis maintains the “family” heritage. But given the truly elusive nature of truth, one cannot be certain it will. Often the heritage of a faith community turns out to be merely the foundation upon which an eventual superstructure emerges as, for instance, in contemporary Methodism. If a faith community fails to establish appropriate priorities and tries to hang on to everything, as often happens in conservative communities, it quickly loses relevance, because the language and metaphors in which it attempts to preserve the core become outmoded.

More trendy types of theological systems, determined to keep up with the times, often fall into the opposite error. They jettison

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much of the faith, including even its core elements, to attain relevancy. History, unfortunately, is strewn with novel theologies which died in infancy.

What stays and what goes? Our church this very moment faces this critical point of departure. Winds of change, like twisting, wrenching tornadoes, swirl around us. No easy answers seem obvious. Administrators, ministers, teachers, students, church members, ponder seemingly intractable dilemmas. But perhaps this constitutes our finest hour. Like our pioneers, armed with the Bible, personal experience, reason, and tradition, we must settle down to the hard task of establishing those priorities which will once again challenge the new generation.

Moving is hard on everyone in the family. Sorting through those mounds of "stuff" tries patience. But whatever we decide to keep and whatever we decide to leave, let it be done in "love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:14, RSV). That, more than heirlooms, represents the true core of faith.

REACT

What is the process in our church for deciding what stays and what goes as the faith is passed on from generation to generation? What do you think the process *should* be?

"Winds of change, like twisting, wrenching tornadoes, swirl around us. No easy answers seem obvious."

1. "There Is No Sola Scriptura," *Christian Century*, March 14, 1984, p. 280.

How To Take Advantage of Your Spiritual Heritage

by Jim Herman, Jr.

HOW TO
Key text:
1 Timothy
4:12, 16

We learned from Paul's evaluation of Timothy's upbringing that he valued and encouraged a strong spiritual and religious training. The apostle commended the imparting of faith to Timothy by his mother and grandmother. In view of this, how can we as young people in this generation make best use of our spiritual heritage?

1. We can look at our spiritual heritage as an enormous endowment paying rich spiritual dividends if we allow it to and if we will make our own contributions to it. This attitude can pervade every aspect of our lives, from the decisions we make to the influence we allow our associates to have upon us.

2. We can exert a positive influence. Many times feelings of inadequacy and insecurity plague teens and young adults. All they need is someone to show them the positive aspects of Christianity and they will gladly respond and realize that they can be fulfilled in committing their lives to Christ. I have seen this happen many times on campus when student leaders created positive peer pressure by drawing on their rich spiritual heritage.

3. We can enjoy a real and lasting peace that is rarely seen in students. Total commitment to the Lord of our lives is the prerequisite to this valuable aspect of our spiritual heritage. Inner peace can help us weather the storms of adolescence and the trauma that comes with developing into our own persons. Inner peace can overcome the negative peer pressure that can be exerted so strongly upon us when we're trying to be true to the spiritual heritage given us. With this peace, we have no unsatisfied cravings that *must* be met no matter what the consequences. Instead, we can turn away, as did Moses, from "the transient pleasures of sin" (Heb. 11:25, NEB).

In the life of Timothy we see an example for young people today. Paul's admonition to him would also be applicable to us. "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:12, 16, NIV).

Jim Herman, Jr., is Campus Chaplain at Southern College.

The Joys of Being a Fanatic

by Jerry Morgan

Fanatics used to bother me. To me, they were the campmeeting crowd, often with blue hair and false teeth, who seemed to gain pleasure from making the rest of us feel guilty about never being good enough. That was until I learned the true definition of a fanatic: "A person exhibiting enthusiasm and intense uncritical devotion toward some controversial matter." In other words, a person who is totally committed to what he believes. Thus people like Ralph Nader, Anita Bryant, Jerry Falwell, Gloria Steinem, and Jesse Jackson, while disliked by many, still get an A+ in one area—conviction. They may be different from the mainstream, but they are totally committed to their particular causes.

Unfortunately, totally committed people tend to be equated with "nerds," who definitely don't have a good image. Each year on campus, the Student Association sponsors an event called "Nerd Day." The only rule for dress on this day is that there are no rules for dress. Thus, mismatched shoes, zany sunglasses, buck teeth, oversized lapels, do-it-yourself zits, plus a rainbow coalition of Bic pens in the shirt pocket, become the norm rather than the exception. (A while ago I saw the following warning: "You know you have problems when everyone admires your Nerd Day outfit and you didn't know it was Nerd Day.")

Now, everyone knows what a nerd is even though no reputable dictionary contains the word. He is someone different, weird, strange—a nonconformist. Sometimes committed young people—"fanatics" in the best sense of the word—are labeled nerds.

You know the type; it's the student who:

- Sings during song service and knows what the lesson is about.
- Always brings an offering (and a Bible) to Sabbath School.
- Gets A's in Bible class.
- Volunteers to be an Ingathering Band leader.
- Is the automatic choice to be class pastor(ette).
- Would never smoke, drink Coke, or listen to an obscene joke.

It is sad that such a person is often ridiculed for being grounded in the faith and practicing it openly.

The good news is that the Bible is full of "fanatics," and they were not social rejects, but community leaders. People like Noah, Joseph, Moses, Daniel, Paul, Timothy, and of course, Christ himself. Their lives knew hardship, but they wouldn't have changed places with conformists or social climbers for anything. They were grounded in the faith.

In Hamlet, Polonius says to Laertes: "This above all else to thine own self be true. And it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." Timothy would have liked that.

REACT

Is religious fanaticism good or bad? Would you characterize Paul or Timothy as a fanatic? Can you be a fanatic without being a "nerd"?

OPINION

Key text:

2 Timothy 3:14

"Bible is full of fanatics and they were not social rejects, but community leaders."

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Fanning the Flame

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (Romans 12:6, RSV).



Recognizing One's Gifts

by Dennis Negrón

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 1:6, 7, 13, 14

Jamie lay in his crib, his chubby legs kicking at the air. "Just think," said Left Leg to Right, "we're going to help Jamie walk one day."

"Isn't that exciting!" Right cried out.

"Yeah, the day little Jamie moves around on his own will be a day of celebration. As far as I'm concerned, that's reward enough for me."

"You realize that we're going to feel a lot of pain before we can walk even three steps."

"I know," Left replied, "but the bumps and bruises are just part of growing up. It will be worth them all in the end."

As this conversation went on, so did many others. Right Arm bantered with Left Arm. Nose chatted with Eyes. Ears had to shout at times, but they also were involved in conversation. Everywhere, talk was about the role each member of the body was playing so that little Jamie could one day grow to be a strong boy—everywhere—except one place. In little Jamie's mouth, two soft, pink rows whispered to each other because they didn't want anyone to hear them.

"I suppose we should be happy for everyone else, but I want to do something for Jamie, too," said Upper Gum.

"I know," Lower Gum replied. "Legs are preparing for the day Jamie walks; Arms hold one of those teddy bears once in a while; Nose helps

Jamie breathe, but we don't do a thing."

"I hear you guys talking," cut in Tongue, "and I really don't think you should worry."

"You can say that because you help with Jamie's feeding, but all we do is watch the food go by," Upper Gum spouted.

"Listen, you guys have a talent; you just haven't found it yet. Why, look at Bellybutton. Seems to me that he should be upset, because I can't think of anything he could be of use for. But he feels that one day he'll find his niche in Jamie's life."

"Yeah, but at least Jamie plays with him every day. Anyway, you're probably right. Upper Gum and I will work harder at finding our niches, even if it takes all year."

Six months went by, and Upper Gum and Lower Gum tried to do little things, like help Jamie form the word "Dada." But they still felt that that special gift eluded them. Then one day, a tooth appeared on Upper Gum.

"Who are you?" Upper Gum asked.

"My name is Tooth," beamed the tiny white stone. "What are you doing here where I'm supposed to be born?"

"Now, you shouldn't be talking like that, Tooth," interrupted Lower Gum. "That space has belonged to Upper since Jamie was born."

"Personally, Lower," interjected Upper, "you know how I

INTRODUCTION

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feel about this space. It doesn't allow me to do my utmost for Jamie. Jamie is going to be one year old, and I believe we've done less than anyone else to help him."

"Don't forget Bellybutton, Upper."

"Yeah, but at least Jamie plays with him every day."

Tongue entered the conversation. "First of all, Tooth, I'm happy you made it. But you guys haven't given him much of a welcome."

"We're sorry, First Tooth," piped the Gums together, "but you can see how we feel about being here."

"Listen, you two, I've been thinking," Tongue said. "Seems to me that you have a special gift shaping up."

"What is it?" jumped in Lower Gum.

"Think about it. If you

weren't around, who would hold First Tooth in place? That's a special gift."

"But only Upper Gum gets to do that. What about me?"

"Have you looked at yourself today? Don't you see that speck of white on you? Lower Gum, you're going to be a mother."

This revelation excited both Gums. For the rest of the day they entertained First Tooth and encouraged Second Tooth to join them. Keeping those two little teeth out of trouble was a load for the Gums, but if you asked them, they would say they loved the job. A year later they had a bunch of little teeth about them.

"I think we found our gift, Lower Gum." Upper Gum beamed.

Lower Gum was radiant. "So do I," he said.

The Challenge of Giftedness

Theme: Every Christian is given spiritual gifts, and we are called to discover and develop these so that we may make the greatest contribution we are capable of to the cause of Christ. **LOGOS**

1. All Are Gifted (read 1 Cor. 12:4-11 and 1 Tim. 4:11-16)

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord" (1 Cor. 12:4, 5, NIV).

Paul's essential purpose in 1 Corinthians 12 is a call for church unity. This, however, does not mean uniformity. Each person is given his or her specific gift. To some it's wisdom, to others knowledge, or faith, or healing, or miraculous powers, or prophecy, and so on. The unifying factor of these diverse gifts is that they come from the same Spirit. And because they come from the same Spirit, the same responsibility comes to all: to use the gift given you. Timothy was told, "Do not neglect your gift, which was given you" (1 Tim. 4:14, NIV).

Timothy's gift seems to have been made known to him through a prophetic message (see 1 Tim. 4:14). How can we know what our particular gift is? Are all "spiritual gifts" spiritual in nature, such as prophecy and preaching?

2. Wise Use of Gifts (read Matt. 25:14-30)

"For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him" (Matt. 25:29, NIV).

From this parable we learn that one gift is not better than another. There's no room for pride in getting five talents over two or two over one, as it is not what one has but rather how one uses what he has. The one who is punished is the one who refuses to try to use his gift. The little that he has is taken from him. But the one who attempts to use his abilities, to him will be given more. He will be told, "'Well done, good and faithful servant! . . . Come and share your master's happiness!'" (vs. 21, NIV).

What is God's service, and how is one to employ his or her talents in this service?

3. The Care of Gifts (read 2 Tim. 1:6, 7, 13, 14)

"For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (1:6, NIV).

Not only are we to use the gifts given to us, but we are to "guard the good deposit that was entrusted to us" (vs. 14) and develop them to their full potential.

How do we "guard" our gifts? How does one "fan a gift into flame?"

E. R. M.

Talents Feed the Fire

by Keith Goodrum

TESTIMONY

Key Text:
Matthew
25:14-30

In the parable of the Talents, Christ tells his disciples how to prepare themselves for Christian service. He explains how best to spend the time between his first and second advents. It is not to be spent in idle waiting, hoarding God's gifts in selfish pride. Rather, it should be spent diligently working to spread the Gospel (Matt. 25:13-30).¹ Through this illustration we discover our own responsibilities concerning the use of spiritual gifts from God.

Redeemed for Service

"Christ's followers have been redeemed for service."²

"The development of all our powers is the final duty we owe to God and to our fellow men. No one who is not growing daily in capability and usefulness is fulfilling the purpose of life. In making a profession of faith in Christ we pledge ourselves to become all that it is possible for us to be as workers for the Master, and we should cultivate every faculty to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable."³

Use Your Gifts Wisely

Another responsibility we have is to use our gifts wisely. "To every man God has given 'according to his several ability.' The talents are not apportioned capriciously. He who has ability to use five talents, receives five. He who can improve but two, receives two. He who can wisely use only one, receives one. None need lament that they have not received larger gifts; for He who has apportioned to every man is equally honored by the improvement of each trust."⁴

"The
development
of all our
powers is the
first duty we
owe to God."

Return to God

A third responsibility we have is to return to God that which he has given to us. "However large, however small, your talents, remember that what you have is yours only in trust. Thus God is testing you, giving you opportunity to prove yourself true. To Him you are indebted for all your capabilities. To Him belong your powers of body, mind, and soul, and for Him these powers are to be used. Your time, your influence, your capabilities, your skill—all must be accounted for to Him who gives all. He uses his gifts best who seeks by earnest endeavor to carry out the Lord's great plan for the uplifting of humanity, remembering always that he must be a learner as well as a teacher."⁵

REACT

How would you distinguish between natural ability and a spiritual gift?

1. See *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 325.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 326.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 329, 330.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
5. *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 281, 282.

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Making the Embers Glow

by Gordon Bietz

In the winter we heat our home with a wood stove. When I load the stove with wood on top of a few small, glowing embers, I blow on them until they are hot enough to start burning the new batch of wood. If I wait too long, and the embers grow cold, they will not have enough heat to start the load of wood burning. Fanning the coals helps start the fire only if I have warm embers to begin with. No matter how long I fan cold ashes I will not get any results.

Paul reminds Timothy to "fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands" (2 Timothy 1:6, NIV). Timothy could not fan into flame what was not there. He was to fan that which he had received through the laying on of Paul's hands. Christians occasionally try to fan into flame gifts in themselves or others that are not there.

There are Christians who project their gift on others. They seek to fan their embers in other people. They say by word and action, "I show my Christianity this way, shouldn't everyone else do the same?"

There are other Christians who, when converted into the church or upon having some dramatic religious experience, think that any ember must be fanned into formal employment by the denomination. A strong spiritual experience, it is sometimes thought, must produce missionaries or pastors. A church that places a high value on "working for the church" can sometimes mistakenly communicate to someone with a new religious experience that they are not living up to their calling if they don't train to work for the church.

Through our commitment and baptism, God calls us to use the gift he places in us. Don't seek to fan into flame that which is not in you, for you will use much energy for no profit. If you are using much energy and getting no flame, maybe you are fanning cold ashes. How can one know if energy taking classes, joining clubs, and making plans are attempts wasted on something that is not there?

As I prepare to load the stove with wood, occasionally I will blow across the bed of ashes seeking to uncover the hot embers. Persons seeking to uncover spiritual embers in their own lives may need to do the same.

But since we don't have Paul here to tell us, how are we supposed to know what embers are in our lives to fan? Well, there *are* some modern Pauls in your life who can give you guidance—people who know you and who have been instrumental in your spiritual growth. There are some trusted friends who know you and can reflect with you on what embers burn within you. And the embers themselves will burn conviction into your heart if given time and some oxygen.

REACT

If you do not feel inclined to develop a particular skill or ability, does that necessarily mean that the gift isn't in you?

EVIDENCE

Key text:

2 Timothy 1:6

"A strong spiritual experience, it is sometimes thought, must produce missionaries or pastors."

Gordon Bietz is pastor of the Collegedale Seventh-day Adventist church on the Southern College campus.

Understanding the Gifts of the Spirit

by Howard A. Snyder

HOW TO
Key text:
Ephesians
4:11, 12

For generations the subject of spiritual gifts was largely misunderstood or ignored by much of the Christian Church. The New Testament gives clear teachings regarding spiritual gifts and states emphatically that the exercise of such gifts is part of the normal life of the Christian community (1 Cor. 12-14). Yet even today many Christians either deny the validity of gifts, limiting them to the early church only, or reinterpret them in a way that robs them of their impact and sees them as synonymous with native abilities. This neglect and misunderstanding of gifts has produced a sometimes exaggerated emphasis on them among some groups. This reaction may represent God's judgment on mainline Protestantism for its neglect of this biblical truth. A polarization has resulted—one group denying or ignoring spiritual gifts, the other often over-emphasizing them or elevating one or two gifts to the level of spiritual ID cards. Fortunately, we are beginning to see a new emphasis . . . on the fact that spiritual gifts must be understood in their biblical context, that is, as part of God's plan for the normal functioning of the Christian community. . . .

"Leaders' authority is contingent upon their faithfulness as witnesses."

My own study of the church in the New Testament convinces me that we can understand God's plan for the Church only as we give proper attention to spiritual gifts. This is no strange doctrine but something the early church understood very well. In Ephesians spiritual gifts form the connecting link between Paul's statement of God's cosmic plan for the Church and his description of normal local church life: "There is one body and one Spirit. . . . But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. . . . It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:4, 7, 11). Having been saved by grace, "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10). There is a link between these fore-ordained "good works" and spiritual gifts, for it is principally through the exercise of spiritual gifts that the individual accomplishes those good works which make up God's cosmic plan. . . .

Paul clearly states that his "gift of God's grace" as an apostle was "to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone my administration of this mystery" of the gospel (Eph. 3:7-9). Paul was an apostle; this was his spiritual gift. It involved for him evangelism and church planting as well as teaching and spiritual oversight. He was effective because he was exercising the gift and calling he had received from God the Spirit.

Philip was an evangelist. Agabus was a prophet; we have no evidence he was an evangelist. Dorcas "was always doing good and helping the poor" (Acts 9:36); that is how she exercised her spiritual gifts. Lydia of Philippi led a prayer group and practiced the gift of hospitality (Acts 16:13-15). Silas was a prophet (Acts 15:32), and Phoebe was a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). And so on throughout

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the early church. Not all of these were evangelists, but all were witnesses to the grace of God. And each one, in his or her own way, was useful in the witness of the Church. . . .

How are we to understand these enabling functions of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher today? . . .

Apostles. In the early church an apostle was one recognized as having a place of pre-eminent leadership and authority in the Church. Often he played a key role in cross-cultural evangelism. The original apostles, that is, the chosen disciples of Jesus, plus Paul, were recognized as having particular authority because of their closeness to Christ: they had seen him and were witnesses of his resurrection, although (significantly) in the case of Paul this was by vision and by direct revelation not by physical association.

But did apostleship continue beyond the New Testament period? Because of the obvious uniqueness of the original apostles, some have argued that apostles no longer exist today. But this conclusion runs counter to biblical evidence and makes too sharp a break between the original apostles and the church leaders who followed them. . . .

Apostles, then, usually are (1) general leaders for the Church (2) whose place and authority are recognized throughout the Church (3) because of a general conviction that the Spirit of God has raised them up. They are general leaders whose authority is based in their being raised up by God and in their faithfulness to revealed truth, that is, the Bible. Their authority is contingent upon their faithfulness as witnesses; ceasing to witness faithfully to the truth of God's revelation, they cease to have authority. . . .

Prophets. From the New Testament and early Christian writings we know something of the function of prophet in the primitive church. William Barclay notes, "The prophets were wanderers throughout the Church. Their message was held to be not the result of thought and study, but the direct result of the Holy Spirit. . . . They went from Church to Church proclaiming the will of God as God had told it to them." It is obvious by Paul's usage of the term in Ephesians and elsewhere that prophets, like apostles, were recognized as having a general and pre-eminent ministry throughout the Church. In a somewhat more restricted sense, prophecy was also a gift often exercised by individuals within the local church (1 Cor. 14:26-40). . . .

As in the Bible, so in the Church: the prophet is God's instrument speaking directly to his people (and, perhaps, secondarily to the world) with encouragement, exhortation, warning or judgment, according to the situation. The validity of his message does not depend upon approval or acceptance by the Church. His message is valid only, however, if in harmony with the Bible because the Spirit of God is a Spirit of order, not confusion. He does not contradict himself. . . .

Evangelists. Paul, and the New Testament church in general, did

"The validity of the prophet's message does not depend upon approval or acceptance by the church."

not conceive of evangelism as primarily the work of specialists. Evangelism happened; it was the natural expression of the life of the Church. There was little need either to exhort people to evangelize or to raise up a special class of evangelists because new Christians went everywhere "gossiping" the good news about Jesus.

But if this is so, why then does Paul even mention evangelists at all? The answer probably lies in the simple fact that people who were gifted as evangelists, and recognized as such (in distinction to apostles and prophets with whom they presumably had much in common), had arisen in the Church. Paul recognized these men and women as being within God's ecclesiology. The growth of a healthy church does not depend on the work of evangelists, however, for the Church is a witnessing community. But a healthy church may properly have and profitably use such "specialists." This, apparently, was the situation in the early church. . . .

Pastors and Teachers. These may be thought of as one group or as two distinct groups; some scholars put them together as pastor-teachers. In practice it makes little difference, since these distinctions are not rigid. The pastoral and teaching ministries are two more or less distinct but overlapping functions. And these, for the most part, involve local leaders whose ministry is to and within the local congregation.

There is nothing here (or elsewhere in the New Testament) to suggest that *pastor* in the early church had anything like the highly specialized and professional sense it has come to have in modern Protestantism. Ephesians 4:11 is, in fact, the only occurrence of the word *pastors* in the New Testament sense of congregational leaders, although the idea of the congregation as a flock to be cared for occurs in John 21:16, Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2. . . .

Shepherding includes teaching. The teaching ministry was and is essential in the Church. Paul elsewhere shows his concern for the teaching ministry (1 Tim. 3:2; 4:11, 12; 2 Tim. 2:2) and himself dedicated time to teaching converts in the cities he evangelized.

There is much to be taught. There is doctrinal teaching, which is essential; teaching in the disciplines of the Christian life; training in evangelism; and Bible teaching in general. Whatever else may be taught in the local church, this surely must be the core curriculum.

REACT

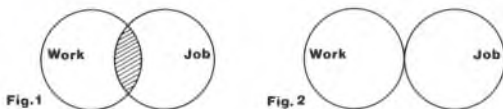
How would you apply to modern settings the other spiritual gifts found in 1 Cor. 12:4-11, 27, 28; Rom. 12:4-8?

Taken from *The Community of the King* by Howard A. Snyder, pp. 76-93 © 1977 by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship of the USA and used by Permission of InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 60515.

The Work of the Flame

by Melvin Campbell

You may not be excited by the work of John Venn, a nineteenth-century English mathematician and logician, but his Venn Diagrams tell us more about life than just mathematics. I will dispense with the jargon and symbolism of mathematics while using these diagrams in an attempt to put into perspective one's gifts, work, and job. Here are two diagrams with labels. Definitions and discussion follow.



Definitions:

Job — An activity that a person does for remuneration (that which provides the wherewithal for food, shelter, clothing, and so on).

Work — An activity that articulates the gospel of Jesus Christ (see Matt. 28:18-20).

Shaded areas — That part of one's job that provides one the opportunity to articulate the gospel.

The Scriptures do not tell us what Timothy did to put food on the table. But his work was to fan into flame the gifts of God. The flame was the testifying about the Lord Jesus Christ (see 2 Tim. 1:8).

In fact, Timothy's work was really no different from any other Christian's then or now. The work then and now is to testify to the Lord Jesus Christ—articulate the gospel by word and deed. We need to stop asking the question, "What does the Lord want me to do?" as if we didn't know the answer. Matthew 28:18-20 makes it very clear—articulate the gospel. It is as simple as that!

But what about the job? What should I do for a job in life? Sorry—you are going to decide on that yourself according to interest, capabilities, and job opportunities. The way I see it, the Lord doesn't much care. If he did, it seems he would have done something about Paul's tentmaking, Peter's fishing, Luke's doctoring, Elisha's farming, Moses' shepherding, Daniel's politicking, and the little maid's serving. The Lord used all of these people, not because they received money from the tithe receipts (none did!) but because they "fanned the flame" (which being interpreted means they committed their gifts to God and his work).

It is the intersection of work and job in which God is interested (see fig. 1). Perhaps the greatest danger lies with those of us who are "in the work," which is really a job, but still do not articulate the gospel (see fig. 2). Nurses, teachers, ministers, and accountants may or may not do the work of God even if they work for the church. Tentmakers, fishermen, doctors, farmers, shepherds, politicians, and servants have at times and still may do the work of God. For your work and job to intersect, you will fan your gifts into flame!

OPINION

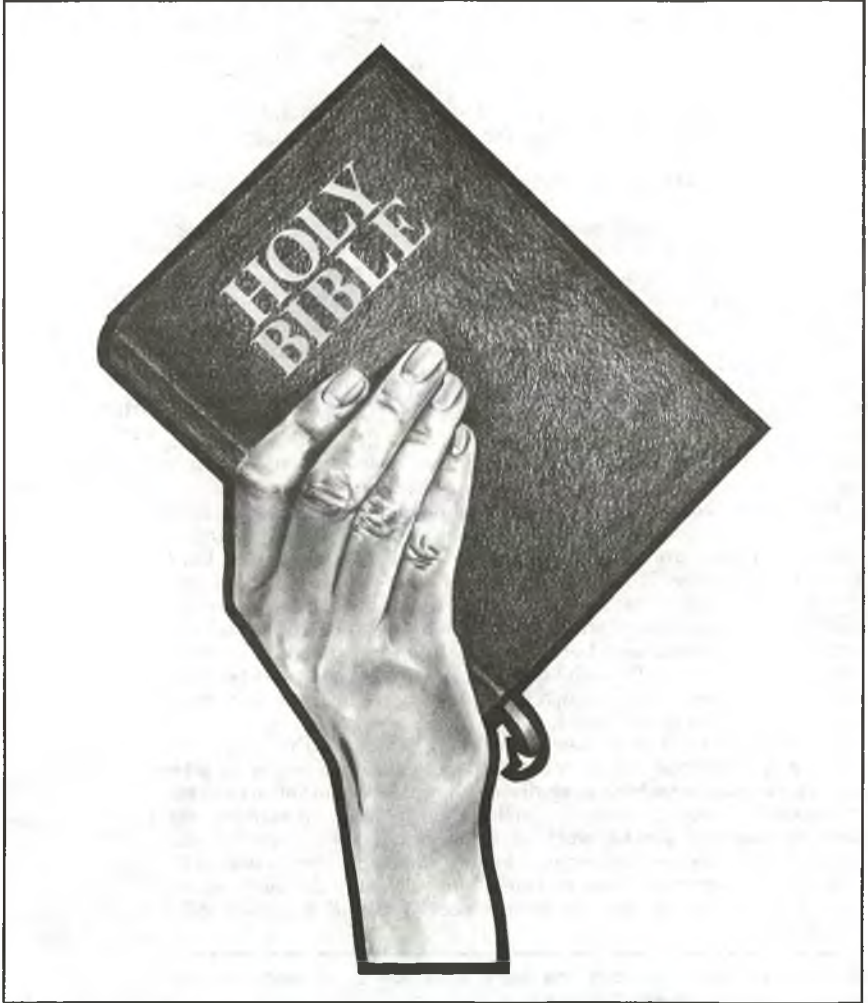
Key text:
Acts 16:2, 3, 11

"The work then and now is to articulate the gospel by word and deed."

Melvin Campbell teaches teachers to teach as a professor of education at Southern College.

Be Not Ashamed

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16, NIV).



Called to Suffer

by Mary Alice Gilbert

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 1:8-18.

The story of the martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer gives light to the true meaning of suffering for the gospel. Bonhoeffer was a leading German theologian who believed that Hitler's regime would destroy Germany and the Christian Church. He spoke out against Hitler's *Aryan Clauses* and stated that racism violates Christian ethics. Hitler was outraged by these claims, and in 1940 he forbade Bonhoeffer to speak in public or to publish any written material. This decree was followed by many threats on his life, but this did not stop Bonhoeffer, who believed, "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."¹ He continued leading an underground seminary, and he refused offers to escape to America, because he felt a need to be with his people and to share in their struggle for the church.

Bonhoeffer's brave stand for Christianity was his road to freedom. "Do and dare what is right, not swayed by the

whim of the moment. . . . Not in the flight of ideas, but only in action is freedom."² He rejoiced in his suffering, because in his suffering he found freedom in God. The Christian, as stated by Bonhoeffer, is identified not by his religious acts, but by his "participation in the suffering of God in the life of the world."³

In 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested by the Gestapo and jailed on charges of subversion. Later these charges were increased to conspiring to assassinate Hitler. Then on April 9, 1945, the 39-year-old Bonhoeffer was hanged at Flossenburg by direct order from Heinrich Himmler for treason against the Nazi regime. As he was being taken to the gallows he stated, "This is the end, but for me it is the beginning of life."⁴

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4:16, 17, RSV).

INTRO- DUCTION

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 8.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 15.
3. *Encyclopedia Americana*, vol. 4, p. 208.
4. *Life Together*, p. 13.

Mary Alice Gilbert is a music and business major at Southern College.

I Am Not Ashamed

LOGOS

Theme: Christians are called to stand unashamedly for the gospel and for fellow Christians who may be persecuted, accepting whatever suffering such a stand may entail.

1. Not Ashamed of Christ (read 2 Tim. 1:8-10)

"So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord. . . . But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God" (1:8, NIV).

Paul is not insinuating that Timothy is or has been previously ashamed. But, rather, as Guthrie notes, he is seeking to fortify him from future temptation, well aware that Satan constantly dogs those who are most effective in communicating the gospel.¹

From the worldly viewpoint of the time, there was cause for shame in being a follower of Christ. Christ was known as a criminal—one crucified for blasphemy and treason. And in Nero's Rome, Christians were made objects of public contempt and were subjected to intense persecution and torture. But verses 9 and 10 reveal the facts which erase all cause for shame. For Christ came and "destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light" (1:10, NIV).

Have you ever been ashamed of your Christianity? If so, try to recall the specific reasons for that feeling. Are they defensible in the light of 2 Tim. 1:8, 9?

2. Not Ashamed to Suffer (read 2 Tim. 8:11-14)

"And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day" (1:11, 12, NIV).

Paul clearly points out that his present sufferings came as a direct result of his preaching of the gospel. It is not due to any errors or provocation on his part. In fact, he seems to be telling Timothy that he also must expect the same. Paul does not, however, hopelessly resign himself to these sufferings as an inevitable end to his work, but recognizes them for what they are—transitory circumstances that cannot shake his hold on things eternal.

3. Not Ashamed of Christian Brothers or Sisters (read 2 Tim. 1:15-18)

"So do not be ashamed . . . of me his [the Lord's] prisoner" (1:8, NIV).

Paul certainly has some reason for despair even though the earlier passage shows he hasn't given in to it. It seems that all of his trusted Asian subordinates have succumbed to shame or cowardice and left him to breathe the miasma of his Roman dungeon alone. Yet Paul takes courage in the steadfast loyalty of Timothy, and then extends a further example of faithfulness—Onesiphorus.

How might we be called to show the same loyalty to fellow believers that Onesiphorus demonstrated?

1. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 127.

L. R. C.

Relating to Persecution

selected by Mark Goldstein

God's People are Persecuted

"In all ages Satan has persecuted the people of God. He has tortured them and put them to death, but in dying they became conquerors. They revealed in their steadfast faith a mightier One than Satan. Satan could torture and kill their body, but he could not touch the life that was hid with Christ in God. He could incarcerate in prison walls, but he could not bind the spirit. . . . Through trials and persecution, the glory—character—of God is revealed in His chosen ones. The church of God, hated and persecuted by the world, are educated and disciplined in the school of Christ. They walk in narrow paths on earth; they are purified in the furnace of affliction. They follow Christ through sore conflicts; they endure self-denial and experience bitter disappointments; but their painful experience teaches them the guilt and woe of sin, and they look upon it with abhorrence. Being partakers of Christ's sufferings, they are destined to be partakers of His glory."¹

Persecution Not to Be Invited

"So bitter would be the enmity to the gospel that even the tenderest earthly ties would be disregarded. The disciples of Christ would be betrayed to death by members of their own households. 'Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake,' He added; 'but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.' Mark 13:13. But He bade them not to expose themselves unnecessarily to persecution. He Himself often left one field of labor for another, in order to escape from those who were seeking His life."²

"If it can be avoided, do not put yourself into the power of men who are worked by the spirit of antichrist. Everything that we can do should be done that those who are willing to suffer for the truth's sake may be saved from oppression and cruelty."³

Encouragement for Those Persecuted

"The servants of Christ were to prepare no set speech to present when brought to trial. Their preparation was to be made day by day in treasuring up the precious truths of God's word, and through prayer strengthening their faith. When they were brought into trial, the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the very truths that would be needed."⁴

"If you are called to go through the fiery furnace for His sake, Jesus will be by your side even as He was with the faithful three in Babylon. Those who love their Redeemer will rejoice at every opportunity of sharing with Him humiliation and reproach. The love they bear for their Lord makes suffering for His sake sweet."⁵

REACT

Are there issues today in which the church needs to be more deeply involved, even though greater involvement would mean greater controversy and persecution?

TESTIMONY

Key Text:
Mark 13:13

"Everything that we can do should be done that those who are willing to suffer for the truth's sake may be saved from oppression and cruelty."

1. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 30, 31.

2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 355.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 230.

4. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 355.

5. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 30.

Mark Goldstein was a senior theology major at Southern College at the time of this writing.

Peace With God

by Robert M. Horn

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 5:1

The direct result of being justified by faith is that we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). This is the first consequence of justification; and it is so wonderful that we need to be very precise in the way we understand it. If our thinking is woolly, we shall neither enjoy our justification as we should nor give God proper thanks for it.

We hear much about peace. "I'd give anything for peace of mind," says a distracted society, swallowing another tranquilizer. "I'll drown my worries," says a frenzied world, and it gulps down another gin and tonic. "Peace is my next fix," says the addict. "Real peace is Jesus," says the sticker. The testimony says, "I was dissatisfied and all churned up until I found peace in Jesus." What is peace? To most people it means peace of mind: a psychological state in which they no longer fret, or a temperament which is always placid and unruffled, or the ability to look on the bright side.

This is not what Paul means by peace with God. He was not saying that "now I'm justified, I have a peaceful kind of feeling about life." He was not talking about a state of mind, but a restored relationship—peace *with* God, not just peace. There is a difference. Many would give anything for peace, but not so many want peace with God. This is simply because, to be at peace with someone, you must meet and face them. This is why a football referee may make two players shake hands. One fouled, the other retaliated, and they must make it up and say 'Sorry.' Now the referee cannot eradicate the enmity of players, but in principle he is right to make them face each other in apology. If they slipped away to opposite ends of the field, their vendetta would certainly flare up again. Peace with God means facing God—and the consequence of justification is that we *can* face Him and be at peace with Him.

"Peace with
God is a
constant
for all who
are justified."

Paul uses two phrases about peace: peace *with* God and the peace *of* God (Phil. 4:7). The Christian knows also the peace *of* God. It passes all understanding. It surrounds and defends his heart like a garrison round a castle (Phil. 4:7) and it teaches the Christian to be content whatever the circumstances (Phil. 4:11). The mind thus stayed on God is kept in perfect peace, literally "peace-peace", peace twice over (Is. 26:3). That is the peace of God, enjoyed in daily experience and dealing with anxiety (1 Pet. 5:7).

Peace *with* God is related to this, but there are practical reasons why we should keep to Paul's distinction. For example, Christians sometimes come into spiritual depression. Maybe they look back on a rather unconvincing conversion. They lack a sense of peace and fret more about the future than they used to. They feel uneasy about their faith and may come to doubt their whole relationship with God. All this may be due to their thinking, "Because I don't feel peace I cannot be saved." Though they may not know it, what that really means is: "Because I don't feel the peace *of* God I cannot be at peace *with* God and cannot be a Christian."

It is vital to be clear on this. We shall not always feel the same, and our conscious enjoyment of the peace of God may vary. But

Robert Horn is editor of *Evangelical Times*.

peace with God is a constant for all who are justified. Paul tells us what peace with God is. To him it is a stupendous miracle for us to be at peace with the God we have wronged!

Peace with God is based on the fact that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1)... "No condemnation" means this: no rejection at the day of judgment, no having to answer for our own sins, no hell, no outer darkness. It means God will not take issue with us then, for Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross. It means that no-one can bring any charge against those whom God has chosen: "Who is he that condemns?" asks Paul, confident that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Rom. 8:33-35). It means that we need not be in terror before the devil nor tremble at the prospect of death.

"It is a stupendous miracle for us to be at peace with the God we have wronged!"

REACT

What is the basis of our peace with God? Is there a relationship between peace with God and suffering in the Christian life?

Excerpted from Robert M. Horn, *Go Free! The Meaning of Justification* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1976), pp. 54-56.

Coping With Gospel Tension

by Helmut Ott

HOW TO

Key text:
1 Timothy
1:8, NIV

The suffering experienced by the believer on account of the gospel can be divided into internal and external. The internal suffering is caused by the tension that exists between the desires and inclinations of the believer's sinful nature and the gifts and demands of the gospel. For example, the gospel establishes that one cannot earn or merit salvation but has to accept it as God's free gift in Christ; that one cannot develop or attain to a righteousness that God will accept but depends on the imputed righteousness of Christ for a right standing with God. To admit being unworthy, and to live constantly depending on God's grace for salvation is extremely humiliating, and therefore painful, to the disciple of Christ. That is why many theological changes have been introduced throughout history in an attempt to make room for at least some human merit.

On the other hand, the gospel establishes that, in order to live as is worthy of God's reconciled children, believers cannot allow their sinful nature to create its own standard of right and wrong. The principles of Scripture, and not personal preference, must determine how they live. To live constantly denying the sinful nature's desire for autonomy takes supernatural power; and it always creates a painful internal tension for the believer.

The external suffering of the gospel is caused by the tension that exists between the believer and society. As a social being, he has a genuine need to belong and be accepted. However, since he is "in the world" but not "of the world" (John 17:11, 16), the believer must not yield to peer pressure. He must not allow society either to determine his spiritual principles, establish his moral values, or dictate his personal conduct. The resulting friction and estrangement between the believer and his society is often quite painful.

Besides pressuring them to conform, "the world" frequently is openly hostile to Christ's disciples. This hostility takes many forms but, as Paul's personal experience shows, it always inflicts pain on the believer, if not physically, at least psychologically.

I'd like to make three specific suggestions I hope will make suffering for the gospel more bearable.

1. **Be positive and unapologetic about your Christianity.** There is nothing shameful about being a forgiven sinner, a reconciled child of God, honestly attempting to live worthy of his high calling.

2. **Make sure that whenever you suffer, it is for the gospel and not on account of some personal or theological eccentricity.**

3. **Make the Savior first and foremost in your life.** Nothing seems better calculated to strengthen a person to endure suffering for the gospel than an enlightened, meaningful, and growing faith-relationship with Jesus Christ.

REACT

Is it ever right to compromise in order to avoid suffering for yourself and others?

Helmut Ott teaches modern languages at Southern College.

Grace Under Fire

by Edwin Zackrison

It is not surprising that Christians have usually stressed the importance of endurance under personal trial and faithfulness to God in the face of persecution or difficulty and loss. The Scriptures emphasize this faithfulness. "Do not curse" when you are persecuted, wrote Paul (Rom. 12:14, NIV). "Live in harmony" and peace to the fullest extent possible; "do not repay anyone evil for evil" (vv. 16, 17); "do what is right in the eyes of everybody" (v. 17); "do not take revenge" (v. 19); "do not be overcome by evil" (v. 21).

All of these Pauline admonitions are strong moral imperatives indicating what it means to be true and loyal to God when things get rough.

But have you ever tried to carry them out *under pressure*? They make wonderful sermon material and great platitudes when things are going well, but how about when you are really suffering? When your stand for what you believe to be right is met by scorn and alienation, what is your response? When you are lied about and everything you say or do is twisted and distorted through the prism of gossip and speculation, how do you go on?

In times of difficulty, we demand a hearing; we hunger for some kind of meaningful justification for abuse. Our emphasis on "being faithful to God" sounds good before the pressures come and after they are resolved. But I often wonder about the value of such instruction in the eye of the storm.

At the tough, rough times of our experience, when we are suffering severely, it is time to think about the second perspective in the Pauline admonition—that which is not emphasized enough, in my opinion: Let God be faithful and take care of the revenge. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord," (Rom. 12:19, RSV). "Leave room for God's wrath" (Rom. 12:19, NIV). Perhaps we should begin to emphasize the other side of the coin—not *our* faithfulness to God but *God's faithfulness to us* (see 2 Tim. 2:13). No matter what the hardship suffered for the sake of the Christian ethic, the maintaining of your integrity, or for the clear presentation of the gospel, God is faithful—he will see to it that suffering for the sake of right is justly avenged (see Dan. 7:22). Plus he will see to it that a powerful witness is the offspring of your suffering gracefully under fire.

Once you internalize by faith the notion that God is always faithful to his children, you will have a sense of security. You will begin to see indications of his faithfulness in little ways and later in bigger ones. Once you grasp that God does not leave those who need him, you will demonstrate a grace under fire that others will sense, though you may not.

The behavior of the Christian in suffering carries a power in witness that little else can match. It does not come from psyching oneself up to remain true to God. Its source is far deeper—it comes from trusting that God means it when he promises to be faithful. Internalizing that principle has a staying effect that makes remaining faithful to God under fire a reality.

OPINION

Key text:
Romans 12:14-21

"Let God be faithful and take care of the revenge."

Edwin Zackrison is a professor of religion at Southern College.

The Treasure of Grace

“This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:9, 10, NIV).



In Search of a Treasure

by Carol J. Fawcett Smith

This Week's Scripture:

2 Timothy 1:9-14; 2:1, 2, 13;
4:22

In 1622, the treasure-laden *Santa Margarita* embarked upon an ill-fated journey from the New World back to Spain. The galleon's manifest recorded a cargo of 419 silver ingots, 118,000 silver coins, 1,488 ounces of gold, copper, and indigo—vital goods for Spain's economy.

After a calm first day of sailing, the *Margarita* was attacked by the violent winds and powerful waves of a treacherous storm, and it soon sank. More than 120 people drowned.

Efforts to retrieve the treasure were plagued with problems ranging from natural hazards to greedy forces. The rival Dutch West Indies Navy continually thwarted any attempts by the Spanish to recover their treasure. The first successful venture was by Francisco Nuñez Melian, a powerful Havana politician, who obtained a contract to search for and salvage the lost galleon. His crew recovered 350 silver ingots.

In 1627, the Dutch threatened again, and Captain Melian escaped to safe waters and ended his search. He sought high rewards for his services, and legal battles ensued. Melian, merchants, heirs, and the crown all claimed a portion of the treasure.

Over the years, other bits were recovered, but most of the

treasure remained on the bottom.

Three and a half centuries later, Treasure Salvors, Inc., filed for a shipwreck site with the U.S. District court and began to search and salvage the lost treasure estimated to be worth \$20 million. Reminiscent of the Dutch harassment of Melian's salvage attempts, modern rivals fired shots and terrorized Treasure Salvors' boats. Their troubles multiplied and personal tragedy struck. Mel and Dolores Fisher, the company founders, suffered the loss of their son, Dirk, and his wife, Angel, in an explosion.

To add to Mel Fisher's problems, his office and galleon museum, ravaged by shipworms, sank. New legal battles began when Bob Jordan, one of the contracted divers, filed the wreck site in his own name before a federal judge and turned the gold and silver over to a U.S. Marshal. Treasure Salvors, Jordan, the state of Florida, and the federal government all claimed rights to the golden treasure. And the legal battles continue.

Quite a price to pay in order to obtain silver and gold! So many lives were spent in gathering, guarding, searching, and salvaging the *Santa Margarita's* treasure.

The price has already been paid for a treasure far more valuable. God freely gives us his treasure of grace—the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ—a treasure truly worth discovering, receiving, and keeping.

INTRO- DUCTION

Carol J. Fawcett Smith is a religion graduate from Southern College and was working in the Division of Religion there at the time of this writing.

Sunday, April 28 43

The Calling of Grace

LOGOS

Theme: In Christ, God has freely lavished upon us his saving grace. We are called to live according to that grace, to guard it as a treasured deposit, and to be channels through which others may receive it.

1. The Gospel of Grace (read 2 Tim. 1:9-12)

"[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace" (1:9, NIV).

Paul here reminds Timothy of the salient facts about the gospel:

1) *The saving action is from God, not from us.* It is wholly God's decision and generosity that saves us. Our achievements and even our attitudes make no contribution (vs. 9).

2) *The saving action was decided on before the beginning of time.* Even before the creation of the world, God determined to save his lost creatures through Jesus Christ (vs. 9; cf. Eph. 1:4, 5).

3) *The saving action took place in human history.* By his life, death, and resurrection, all taking place at specific times and concrete places in history, Christ "destroyed death" and "brought life and immortality to light" (vs. 10).

4) *The saving action has already been fully accomplished.* All the verbs describing God's gracious action in the gospel are past tense. They describe something that has already taken place for us, not something that takes place within us. Paul's letter to Timothy is filled with advice and instruction essential to Christian living. But right here at the beginning of the letter, Paul reminds us that the Christian's hope lies, not in how well he performs or will perform, but in what God has already performed in Christ Jesus. As one theologian puts it, the gospel is not good advice, it's good news!

J. N. D. Kelly points out that the term "Savior" (vs. 10), not frequently used in Paul's earlier epistles, was widely used in the popular Hellenistic pagan religions of the day, and also in the state cult deifying the emperor.¹ So we perhaps here see Paul interacting with the culture of his time, borrowing its terminology to express a theological truth. Over against the dubious "saviors" in the pagan cults and the imperial religion, Paul sets forth the one true Savior, Jesus of Nazareth.

In vs. 11 Paul uses three words to describe his involvement in the gospel of grace. He is a "herald"—proclaiming the message in as bold and striking a manner as possible. The same word was used for an individual employed to shout out the wares of a merchant and invite people to come and buy. He is an "apostle"—one specially commissioned as an ambassador to represent Christ and speak on his behalf to humanity. And he is a "teacher." He is responsible for much more than just the initial stage of bringing an individual to Christ. He is responsible for providing the wisdom and direction needed to help believers face the challenges and difficulties of daily Christian living.²

Is the gospel exclusively something that took place in history? Is it in any sense about what takes place in our lives in the here and now?

2. The Responsibility of Grace (read 2 Tim. 1:13, 14)

"Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us" (1:14, NIV).

Reception of the free treasure of grace does lead to responsibility. First, Paul urges that Timothy keep the truth of the gospel that the apostle proclaimed as "the pattern of sound teaching" (vs. 13). Does this statement reveal Paul to be a theological obscurantist who would brook no attempt at progressive understanding or fresh restatement of truth? Kelly comments that Paul was "not saying that Timothy should reproduce his teaching word for word, still less has he in mind some fixed creedal formula which he wants him to recite without deviation. The word translated model ["pattern," NIV] denotes an outline sketch or ground plan used by an artist or, in literature, a rough draft forming the basis of a fuller exposition."³ So the thrust here is not rigid theological dogmatism, but adherence to the gospel revealed to and proclaimed by the apostles.

Second, Paul tells Timothy to guard the treasure of grace as a "good deposit" (vs. 14). God has committed the gospel to "earthen vessels" (see 2 Cor. 4:18), who have the responsibility of preserving, protecting, cherishing, and keeping it. As Barclay observes, "Not only do we put our trust in God; he also puts his trust in us."⁴ He commits to our guardianship a deposit of incomparable worth.

3. The Transmission of Grace (read 2 Tim. 2:1, 2)

"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2:1, NIV).

Paul calls on Timothy to pour the totality of his energies into the new life situation created by grace. Such a response, however, is not made through sheer human grit. Rather, grace itself is the enabling factor. Kelly points out that the preposition "in" preceding "the grace" should be understood in the instrumental sense. Timothy was to be strong "by means of" or "in the power of" grace.⁵

In vs. 2, Paul impresses on Timothy the sacred responsibility of faithfully transmitting the treasure of grace to the coming generation. "The torch of the heavenly light," writes E. K. Simpson, "must be transmitted unquenched from one generation to another, and Timothy must count himself an intermediary between apostolic and later ages."⁶

Do young people today have a responsibility in transmitting the "torch of the heavenly light?" If so, how is the responsibility fulfilled?

D. F. M.

1. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 163
2. See Kelly, pp. 164, 165, and William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, pp. 148, 149.
3. Kelly, p. 166
4. Barclay, p. 153.
5. Kelly, p. 172.
6. Cited by Barclay, p. 158

A Treasure Bestowed From Eternity

selected by Alexander O. Lian

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Timothy 1:9

The purpose and plan of grace existed from all eternity. Before the foundation of the world it was according to the determinate counsel of God that man should be created, endowed with power to do the divine will. But the defection of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent, and yet it did not deter him from carrying out his eternal purpose; for the Lord would establish his throne in righteousness. God knows the end from the beginning. . . . Therefore redemption was not an afterthought . . . but an eternal purpose to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world but for the good of all the worlds which God has created.

"Redemption was not an afterthought but an eternal purpose."

The creation of the worlds, the mystery of the gospel, are for one purpose, to make manifest to all created intelligences, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character. By the marvelous display of his love in giving "his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," the glory of God is revealed to lost humanity and to the intelligences of other worlds.¹

Jesus encircles the race with his human arm, while with his divine arm he lays hold upon infinity. He is the "daysman" between a holy God and our sinful humanity,—one who can "lay his hand on us both" [Job 9:33].

The terms of this oneness between God and man in the great covenant of redemption were arranged with Christ from all eternity. The covenant of grace was revealed to the patriarchs. The covenant made with Abraham . . . was a covenant confirmed by God in Christ, the very same gospel which is preached to us. . . . Paul speaks of the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ, as "the revelation of the mystery, which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith" [Rom. 16:25, 26, RV].²

REACT

Why did God create human beings, knowing that they would rebel and vast suffering would result?

1. *Signs of the Times*,
April 25, 1892.

2. *Ibid.*, August 24, 1891.

Alexander O. Lian is a history and religion major at Southern College.

Giving the Treasure Away

by Wilma McClarty

There is a story about a poor youth whose friend Robert had an older, wealthy brother who often bestowed gifts upon his younger sibling. One day Robert showed up with the ultimate gift, a new automobile from his generous elder brother. The penniless lad, his eyes shining in unbelief as he admired his friend's sleek, red vehicle, stood back for yet another look at the wonderful car: "My," he stated wistfully, "I surely do wish I could be a brother like that and give gifts."

Of the three characters in the tale, whom should the Christian be most like?

- The wealthy older brother who gave an impressive gift from no other motive than brotherly love.
- The done-nothing-to-deserve-such-a-gift younger brother.
- The poor lad who longingly wished to be able to lavish such presents.
- All of the above
- None of the above.

If you checked option one, you probably reasoned that all Christians should give to others the gospel gift of grace, not because they deserve the gift but because Christians love them.

If you selected the second choice, the younger brother, you probably did so on the basic argument that the Bible calls Jesus our Elder Brother and we are symbolically then all younger brothers who have done absolutely nothing to merit a gift of any nature.

If you decided—as I did—upon the third option, the poor lad, then possibly you reasoned this way: poor though Christians are, ideally their first concern should be to give, not receive; consequently their greatest anguish will be over their inability to give the treasure of grace to everyone, their greatest motivation being to get something to share.

Of course, no analogy stands on all four legs. If the concern for sharing the treasure of grace is Christians' strongest motivation and their eyes shine in wistful longing just thinking about what it would be like to give God's grace to another, then it follows that Christians certainly must also get into the younger brother-Elder Brother relationship so that they too will be given spiritual treasure to disseminate.

What if you selected All of the above or None of the above? Who has the key to this test anyway? Maybe Paul does: "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:1, 2, RSV).

To "be strong in the grace" demands a relationship with Christ. In order to testify of Jesus "before many witnesses" means that the relationship has been a rich one, the treasure received having been so large it has to be shared. In short, to "guard the truth" (2 Tim. 1:14) is to give it away.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
2 Timothy 2:1, 2

Wilma McClarty is a professor of English at Southern College.

Our Response to the Treasure

by Jan Haluska

HOW TO
Key text:
Acts 3:1-10

Now let's get down to specifics. How must we react to this gift of grace? 2 Timothy 2:1 says to "be strong." Just what does that mean? We find a good illustration of the answer in the healing of the cripple described in Acts 3:1-10. Of course that was a physical healing; but the experience provides a useful model for our own behavior.

1. **The cripple stood.** Through grace we spiritual cripples can stand erect also, freed not only from guilt itself but from its psychological side effects. Paul Tournier, in his book *Guilt and Grace*, identifies guilt as a major cause of neurosis. So the first thing we may expect from grace is better mental health. We should be nicer, steadier, calmer people. Confidence can begin to replace nervous energy.

2. **The cripple walked.** The life touched by grace finds new direction along with steadiness. But there is more: the healed man walked *into the temple*. Why? Peter and John hadn't told him where to go. The direction he chose freely was a natural statement of gratitude to the Giver of grace, as well as an indication of where he expected his future blessings to originate. We respond to the gift of grace in the same way, turning naturally both to worship services and fellowship among Christians. Our thinking comes more into harmony with the Father's, and prayer becomes less labored. We learn to expect future blessings too, and this habit of positive anticipation gives us an attitude common among those born to immense wealth. We become more generous.

3. **The cripple leaped.** Those who accept the grip of grace can display abilities gloriously beyond anything before possible for them. Take the matter of moral courage. In Acts 7:54-60, it isn't only that Stephen spoke boldly while facing the murderous crowd. Amid a furnace of hatred he remained cool and forgiving—a leap of moral power beyond human understanding. Through grace we may display a character of incredible strength—a character fitted for heaven.

4. **The cripple praised God.** So did David. So did Paul. So do we when we understand the depth and height and breadth of God's love. Boldly we witness facts from our own lives, not mere theories or speculations, so that God's gift of grace will be as obvious as was the former cripple's new condition. We must join him in standing, walking, leaping, adding our voices so that the message is unmistakable. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:14).

That says it all.

REACT

Can we always expect the effect of grace on our own lives to be as obvious and dramatic as it was for the cripple?

Jan Haluska teaches English at Southern College.

The Treasure of Responsibility

by Cyril E. Roe

"Guard well the splendid, God-given ability you received as a gift from the Holy Spirit who lives within you" (2 Tim. 1:14, Living Bible).

What does God want me to do with my life? That I have gifts from him—skills, knowledge, abilities is beyond doubt. To these he adds the gifts of love, kindness, and the ability to trust him. Then gently, persuasively, and clearly he adds the final ingredient to make my life whole for him—responsibility.

On October 21, 1805 Admiral Nelson of the British navy sent a signal to his sailors as the fleet moved into battle against the combined forces of the French and Spanish fleets off Cape Trafalgar, south of Cadiz, Spain. "England expects that every man will do his duty." The English victory secured for Great Britain a naval supremacy that lasted more than a century.

Similarly today, Jesus sends a signal to each of those committed to him. "God expects that every Christian will do his duty." It appears from the various texts in the lesson this week that Paul clearly recognizes two important aspects of this duty:

1) That recognizing the gift(s) that God has given me, I will, under his direction and in his strength, use these gifts to share the love and kindness he has shown to me with those who do not yet love and trust him.

2) That such a sharing is incumbent upon me in order that the completeness and wholeness of his glory may be expressed in eternity. If I fail to do his will in his strength, I will not be there, and thus a unique and special tiny piece of his total creation will be forever absent. The purpose for which I was created, to bring honor and glory to his name, will be forever denied. There seems to be no greater tragedy than that this should happen.

What a treasure of grace is mine! What a thrilling duty—to do his will in his strength as his humble servant. This appears to be the best way to guard the treasure of his grace. How remarkable that a man condemned to die, chained in a smelly, dark dungeon, should have the perception and fortitude to recognize this and pass it on to his son by adoption and to all Christians to this time.

REACT

Is Christian duty and responsibility sometimes burdensome? Can or should a sense of burden be avoided?

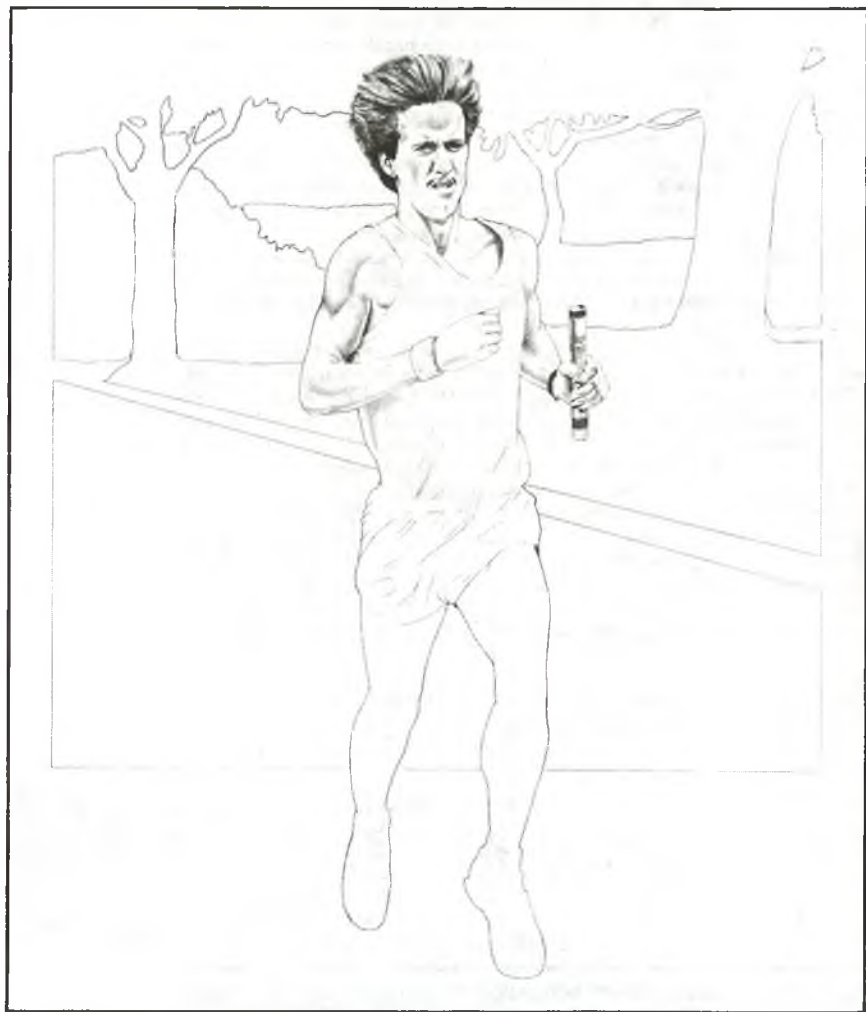
OPINION

Key text:
2 Timothy 1:14,
Living Bible

Cyril Roe is a professor of education at Southern College and is chairman of the Division of Education and Human Sciences.

Images for the Christian Lifestyle

"Athletes will take tremendous pains—for a fading crown of leaves. But our contest is for a crown that will never fade" (1 Corinthians 9:25, Phillips).



Christ— Our Commanding Officer

by Sheila Elwin

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 2:1-13

Israel Putnam, an American soldier during the French and Indian wars, was a man renowned for his bravery. Stories are told in which, against all odds, he rescued comrades from enemy forces.

At one time Putnam led a group of men in preventing a fire from spreading to the camp's gunpowder storage tent. He stayed heroically fighting the flames in the fiercest area for so long that when the fire was finally put out he was covered with blisters and burns.

Possibly the most amazing tale recalls the time when Putnam was captured by Indians. He was tied to a tree in the midst of a battle with bullets flying on every side. Miraculously, he survived this, only to be taken back to the Indian camp and put through hideous tortures. Finally, after being condemned to death by slow burning, he was taken out of the flames and allowed to live because of the bravery he had displayed.

When we look back at the feats of men like Israel Putnam, it is easy to see why warriors have always excited

great admiration. Heroes who have exhibited bravery in the face of danger hold the highest positions in the annals of history.

What goes into the making of such soldiers? The ancient Romans believed in strict discipline with extensive training in the areas of marching, physical exercise, and weaponry. It seems, however, that their greatest emphasis was on the ability to work together as a team with confidence, obedience, and loyalty to their commander.

In today's U.S. army, not only is discipline stressed, but also the responsibility of duty. The new recruits' handbook states that a soldier's duty is to represent his commanding officer at all times.

To be a Christian is to take on God's armor and become a soldier for him. We too, like today's soldiers, must make representing our Commanding Officer our primary goal.

How fortunate we are to have one such as Christ to represent. We need never worry that he will guide us astray or give misleading orders. All we have to do to be in Christ's army is respond in willingness to follow him, our Commanding Officer.

INTRO- DUCTION

Sheila Elwin was a junior communications major at Southern College at the time of this writing.

Metaphors of the Christian Life

LOGOS

Theme: Paul employs the images of a soldier, athlete, and farmer to describe qualities that are essential to a Christian lifestyle.

1. The Enduring Soldier (read 2 Tim. 2:1-4)

"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. . . . Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer" (2 Tim. 2:1, 3, 4, NIV).

In making use of one of his favorite metaphors—that of the Christian life as warfare (cf. Romans 7:23; 1 Cor. 9:7; 2 Cor. 6:7; Eph. 6:11-18)—Paul seeks to impress at least two points on Timothy. First, he wishes to stress that opposition to the work of Christ is inevitable; hence the need for soldiers of Christ to combat the foe. For if there was to be no opposition, soldiers would be unnecessary and provocative. But because there *is* a powerful opposition, Timothy must be prepared to endure any hardships encountered for the cause of Christ. The phrase "endure hardship" is perhaps better rendered "share in suffering" (RSV) with the implication that ill-treatment in the work of the gospel is to be expected, and that every Christian will encounter it—just as every soldier does.

The second application of the military metaphor (vs. 4) deals with the Christian's proper relationship to the world. "The main point is . . . the renunciation of everything which hinders the real purpose of the soldier of Christ. There is nothing intrinsically wrong, in other words, about the affairs of this life until they entangle. Then they must be resolutely cast aside. The basic reason for such renunciation is added to reinforce the metaphor a soldier must please his commander. . . . This involves for the soldier a sinking of his own desires in a total effort to please his chief. No more admirable figure of speech could be found to illustrate the extent of Christ's claims upon His ministers."¹

What sort of worldly things are you most susceptible to becoming entangled in? How can you most successfully avoid these entanglements?

2. The Disciplined Athlete

"Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules" (2 Tim. 2:5, NIV).

The key concept here, of course, rests with the final phrase "according to the rules." This metaphor is most likely drawn from Paul's knowledge of the ancient Olympic games still being held at the time. In 1 Cor. 9:24-27 he had previously used this comparison to describe the Christian life. There also, Paul emphasizes the necessity of adherence to strict guidelines if the prize is to be won. These guidelines are often simply seen as the parameters of the race. But this is an incomplete understanding. *Training* for these

games was an official requirement, not just an important preparation. Instances have been cited showing that all athletes had to swear an oath that they had completed at least ten months' training in order to be eligible to enter the contest. This rule was for the purpose of upholding the high standards of the games by barring unqualified participants.

Similarly, a high degree of discipline and preparation is required if the Christian is to run successfully in the Christian race. Those determining to work for God without proper preparation and qualifications often bring disgrace to his name.

There is one exception, however, in the application of this metaphor. While in a race only one gains the prize, in the life of Christian service all who strive loyally can and will obtain the reward. Paul makes this abundantly clear in 2 Tim. 4:8.

Is Paul suggesting that formal training is prerequisite to participation in the Lord's work? How does his own experience shed light upon this question?

3. The Persevering Farmer (read 2 Tim. 2:6, 11-13)

"The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops" (2 Tim. 2:6, NIV).

Paul's final metaphor is also the most difficult to interpret. Obviously, the emphasis is upon diligent toil, but what is the significance of Paul's counsel? There are several explanations—two of which are most prominent.

1) Paul is restating the principle that God's servants possess the right to receive remuneration from those they serve. While Paul himself, and likely Timothy also, had declined material assistance in the belief that this was the more noble course, Paul apparently feels it necessary to remind Timothy of what he might fairly claim for himself.²

2) "The farmer's produce feeds both himself and the rest of the world. If the farmer did not share his produce, he would die and the rest of the world would go hungry. Hence, the minister must first partake of the Christian graces . . . before he is able to share these graces with others. No one can share something he does not have."³

Regardless of interpretations, the direct connection between labor and results must be recognized. Without dedicated labor, a worker for God cannot expect success.

In each of the three metaphors a reward for success is inferred but not described. Paul does not intend to leave this facet untouched. In vs. 11, 12, he reminds Timothy that there is reward for faithfulness, using the words of what is apparently an early Christian hymn.

What do you consider the greatest reward for serving God? Is it worth the endurance, the discipline, the perseverance?

L. R. C.

1. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 140, 141.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

3. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 334.

The Epistle of Timothy to Tychicus

by Patrick D. Williams

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Acts 16:1

Following is an imaginary first-century epistle based on Ellen White's comments on the relationship between Paul and Timothy.

Timothy, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the grace of God, and Luke our brother,

To Tychicus, my fellow minister:

Grace, mercy, peace, and hope in the risen Saviour from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

I would have you to know, dear Tychicus, that we have lost our father, Paul. I cannot express the depths of my sorrow at the death of our beloved. It was but by the grace of God that I was able to obtain a clear passage from Ephesus to Rome in time to visit with him before Nero determined to dispose of him.

When I arrived at the Tiber, Rome was as busy as I had heard it would be. It was not without difficulty that I made it to the dungeon where I found Dr. Luke attending to sick and ailing Paul. He appeared worn and enfeebled by age, toil, and infirmities,¹ but upon seeing me, his health and attitude apparently improved drastically. I was surprised to find that many had deserted him.² Phygellus and Hermogenes left first, and Demas was quick to follow.³ I can't believe he left to pursue lowly, worldly considerations.⁴ They obviously had no root in the gospel of our resurrected Lord. Because of their unfaithfulness, Paul was lonely.⁵ I remember in his last letter he spoke of his trial and the many desertions, but he closed by uplifting God,⁶ and I had no real idea how depressed he was until Luke and I talked later that first evening. Luke said Paul really wanted to see me,⁷ and I will thank God always for your replacing me there at Ephesus for a time.

It was Paul's wonderful, fiery attitude that taught me about the gospel. He was always questioning me about the Scriptures,⁸ making sure I knew well the gospel that had made such a change in his life. He made the early training of my mother and grandmother come alive.⁹ As we shared the hopes, the perils, and the toils of missionary life,¹⁰ he became as close to me as was my father, who cared not about the gospel. Paul taught me not to shun hardship or responsibility.¹¹ He constantly helped Luke and me out of hard spots financially even though it made life harder for him.¹²

Paul died in better spirits than when I found him. He was cheerful and joyous at the prospect of dying for the Way.¹³ I long now for the Coming that Paul may not continue to sleep, but be gathered in the air to meet the Lord, and where we shall always be a family together, forever. I must go now, Tychicus. Grace be with you. Amen.

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 490.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, p. 455.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, p. 499.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

10. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 917.

11. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 501.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 352.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 510.

At the time of this writing, Patrick Williams was a senior theology major at Southern College.

The Meaning of "Patient Endurance" In the End-Time

by Melvin Campbell
and Edwin Zackrisson

Note: Please read today's key texts *before* reading this section.

Paul admonishes Timothy to endure hardships as a good soldier. It is not clear just what Timothy's hardships were or for what reasons he had to endure them. Paul had to endure imprisonment and physical abuse. Perhaps the same could be said for Timothy's hardships—common occurrences for the early missionaries.

What relation does this endurance have with the "patient endurance" described in Revelation 14:12: "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints" (NIV)? No doubt the end-time saints will have to endure hardships like those suffered by Paul and Timothy. Yet could it be that these last-day believers will be called to a more specific type of endurance, that of relating to the intense destruction which comes as a result of God's wrath being demonstrated on earth? Are the saints in some way tested as they try to solve the paradox of God's love amidst sulfur, wine, fury, and pain? One can only wonder how much "wrath" one can observe while maintaining the notion that God is loving and wise and acts always in the best interest of humanity.

As the final events consummate, it may seem that the God of the Old Testament has been revived for one last inexplicably vindicating moment. But just as Jesus' first coming helps to put into perspective the Israelite God, so the second coming of Jesus will help us to understand the "cup of his wrath" (Rev. 14:10).

Some have suggested that God does not destroy. Others have pointed out that the Bible makes it clear he does. Regardless of how one interprets the texts, the saints still must deal with the circumstances. Somehow, if confidence in God is maintained in the midst of this holocaust until Jesus appears on the white cloud, then mankind will understand much better the realities of justice in its purest form.

"Wrath" is God's attitude toward sin. "Grace" is God's attitude toward sinners. But for the grace of God, we would all suffer his wrath. It has ever been difficult for human beings to relate to God's wrath as an unimpassioned, non-emotive attitude. Some have viewed God as a benevolent grandfather who stands for little or nothing. Others have seen him as an arbitrary ogre bent on punishing those who are out of step with him. It seems difficult, even for thinking people, to grasp the concept that God's wrath is an attitude similar to that of the loving and professional surgeon who must carefully extract a cancer from the debilitated body.

But to wed those notions of justice and mercy while seeing them displayed takes the experience of "patient endurance." Perhaps Peter had a taste of it when he fled the scene of the cross. Perhaps Judas represents the only realistic alternative to patient endurance.

Somewhat easily we have said, "God loves the sinner and hates

EVIDENCE

Key texts:
2 Timothy 2:3;
Revelation 14:6-16

"Perhaps Judas represents the only realistic alternative to patient endurance."

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the sin." But what shall we say when the sinner has become so identified with his sin that they are one and the same? Patient endurance then becomes indiscernible from trust.

The events of the end-time, when sin/sinners are extracted as malignant tumors from God's universal body, are so awesome that even those who keep the commandments of God and remain faithful to Jesus will surely have their trust tested to the uttermost. The tender, sensitive Christian will, for a fleeting moment which seems like an eternity, endure with *patience* the viewing of God's strange act.

It is incredible, but there is a paradoxical relief expressed in the response of the righteous when the act is finally consummated: "Hallelujah! . . . for his judgments are true and just; . . . he has avenged . . . the blood of his servants" (Rev. 19:1, 2, RSV).

The recognition that Christ's coming is the only answer to the situation is intimated in the words of the believers: "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him!" (Isa. 25:9, RSV). Patient endurance will play its part to secure for eternity the moral balance of God's universe for the free moral agents who dwell therein.

REACT

Do you think it would be difficult for you to live through the final execution of God's justice? Why or why not?

The Whole Armor

by Ruth Garren

In the St. John's, Newfoundland neighborhood where I grew up, one wasn't very old before she knew the difference between Catholic and Protestant. Along with the two usual introductory questions children ask about each other's names and ages, I remember being asked a third: "Are you Catholic or Protestant?"

I was totally perplexed. All I knew was that I was an Adventist, so I just shook my head. "Are you Catholic or Protestant?" my friend asked again.

"I don't know," I told her. "I'll find out." And I hurried home to ask my mother.

"Imagine, she don't know if she's Catholic or Protestant!" The girl, a true daughter of her Irish heritage, jeered at my back.

It was the first of many questions I was asked about religion. We were the only Seventh-day Adventists in a neighborhood where everybody had some church affiliation and attended regularly—even on Sunday nights. All of the schools in the city were parochial, as they still are. Those kids knew what they believed—especially the Catholics, who were thoroughly trained from babyhood, confirmed at the age of six, and could rattle off the questions and answers in their catechism books faster than I could recite the books of the Bible—which was plenty fast. It was evident to me at an early age that if I was going to hold my own in that neighborhood, I had better have on the whole armor of God. If there were any chinks in that armor, those kids would be sure to find them.

My three best friends lived in three houses in a row across the street. Association with non-Adventists had its pitfalls. I spent a lot of time playing in houses where people were drinking and smoking and thereby picked up some unfortunate language. It was at a friend's house that I had a bologna sandwich and a Pepsi and pronounced them both delicious, and in later years snickered my way through the steamy passages of *Peyton Place*.

But I answered a lot of questions about our religion and asked a lot about my friends', too. As a result, in time, I developed an unwavering conviction that while other religions might be more convenient (our strict Sabbath observance at times seemed a tremendous burden), our religion was *right* and therefore worth the trouble.

In contrast, my own children are being raised in the rarefied atmosphere of an Adventist community. It's comfortable for them, of course. There were many times in my childhood when I would have given anything for a life like theirs. But I can't help wondering sometimes if we're doing them a disservice. It's true that without non-Adventist friends they don't have the constant challenge I grew up with. However, neither have they had a friend change a birthday party to a day other than Sabbath so they could attend, or change entertainment plans to something they would enjoy. My kids have never had to explain the doctrines of their church to anyone, nor do they know much about the doctrines of any other

HOW TO

Key text:
Ephesians
6:10-18

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church. The fact that there are good people in other religions is something they've heard from me, but haven't experienced for themselves.

If you long for the comfortable life of an Adventist community, remember that strength of conviction *grows* through constant challenge. Challenge can help you develop the whole armor of God, the armor Paul considered so essential to the Christian life.

1. **Know what you believe.** If you haven't studied Seventh-day Adventist doctrine since your baptismal class, this is a good time to start.

2. **Know why you believe it.** Be prepared with the Bible texts which support your belief. The committed athlete of 2 Timothy 2:1-4 has a purpose for his life, a reason for his program of conditioning. He is prepared when the competition begins.

3. **Be a good witness.** In other words, live a life that's consistent with what you say you believe. Just as we don't always eat the way we know we should, or have work habits consistent with our personal work ethic, we often don't live a life consistent with what Seventh-day Adventists believe. Close the gap between what you believe and how you behave.

If you're the only Adventist in your office or the only Adventist on your block, you're the only Adventist that the people around you know. God wants your witness to be a good one.

Associating with non-Adventists can be a real blessing. Be grateful for the opportunity you have and thank God for it.

REACT

Does life in an Adventist community tend to make one a weaker, less effective Christian "soldier"? Is it necessary to have considerable regular contact with non-believers in order to be a good soldier?

Go for the Gold!

by Noel Mason

The first evangelists of Christianity saw in the Olympic Games of their day a picture of the Christian life. . . . They were not so other-worldly to refuse to use the popular sporting events of their day as a metaphor of the Christian's pursuit of holiness. The Isthmian games were held regularly at Corinth as a sort of warm-up for the Olympics, and so the city was often filled with athletes.

In the Christian church at Corinth there was a gifted, elitist group who believed they had already "arrived." They believed that they had already experienced the final resurrection (1 Cor. 15). With a touch of sarcasm, Paul complains: "Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings—and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you!" (1 Cor. 4:8, NIV).

In 1 Corinthians 9:1 to 10:22 Paul defends his apostleship to this group. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 to 10:22 he attacks their soft spots, not by direct recriminations but with several illustrations. His criticism is implicit in three examples: first, himself (9:24-27); then the Israelites in the desert lapsing into idolatry and fornication (10:1-13); and finally the problem of Christians associating with pagan practices (10:14-22). All these examples remind the Corinthians that salvation is not something they can take for granted but something for which they must strive and even suffer. Consider what he says:

"Do you know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Cor. 9:24-27, NIV).

Here, Paul likens himself to an Olympic athlete and boxer who knows that they have to train if they want to triumph in the games. Even though he is an apostle and has subordinated his rights and privileges for the sake of the gospel (cf. 9:15-23), he nevertheless does not take his salvation for granted. Paul's point is that to win the race and the fight, the athlete and boxer need discipline and direction. He says, "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training"—that's discipline. He says, "I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air"—that's direction.

"No," he says, "I beat my body and make it my slave." This is not the asceticism of the monk suppressing the body; it is the rugged discipline of Paul the Christian counteracting the sinful desires of the natural self. These punches are the punches of the will against the insubordinate passions of the old nature. These words of Paul imply that there were some Corinthians who thought that their salvation was assured, that their race was already won, and that there

OPINION

Key texts:
1 Corinthians
9:24-27;
Hebrews 12:1-4

"These robust, athletic metaphors do not convey to us a mystical, ascetic, passive image of the Christian life."

Noel Mason writes from Auburn, California.

is no need for the discipline and self-sacrifice called for by the theology of the cross.

The peril of over-confidence is clearly the lesson hammered home in the account of the Israelites in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:1-13). Even though they had been baptized into Moses (as Christians are baptized into Christ), and even though they ate the same spiritual food and drink (as Christians partake of the same Eucharistic bread and wine), yet God was not pleased with them (as he was not pleased with certain Corinthians), for they became idolators.

The writer of the book of Hebrews also used the metaphor of an athlete to inspire his community to greater faithfulness. Consider his appeal:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and *let us run with perseverance* the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Heb. 12:1-4, NIV, emphasis supplied).

A quick reading of this letter reveals the problems of this community. As Christians they were slothful (5:11; 6:12) and despondent (12:3, 12). They had lost their initial enthusiasm for the faith (3:6, 14; 10:23, 35). They had failed to grow or to progress, and were seriously deficient in spiritual understanding and discernment (5:12-14). They were ceasing to attend Christian meetings (10:25) and to be actively loyal to their Christian leaders (13:17). They tended to be carried away by new and strange teachings (13:9). They were in danger of coming short of God's promises (4:1) and of drifting away from the things which they had heard (2:1). They were even in danger of completely abandoning the faith in deliberate and persistent apostasy (3:12; 10:26).

The author of Hebrews makes a powerful appeal to this community which is wistfully looking back to the good old days of Judaism. In short, he tells them that Christians have something better. The comparative adjective "better" is used thirteen times in Hebrews to contrast Christ and his new order with what went before him. Jesus is a better messenger, a better apostle, a better priest, etc. Jesus has established a better covenant and made a better sacrifice. Finally there is the better way—the way of faith.

This way of faith is illustrated in Chapters 11 and 12. Christian faith, according to this evangelist, is a busy, active thing. It's stepping out into the unknown with Abraham; it's believing the impossible with Sarah; it's turning your back on worldly wealth and crossing the wilderness with Moses; it's blowing the trumpets with Joshua; it's tearing down the evil strongholds with Samson; it's conquering kingdoms with David; it's running with perseverance

the race that is set before us; it's looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

These robust, athletic metaphors do not convey to us a mystical, ascetic, passive image of the Christian life. The image they convey needs to be emphasized today to correct the half-truths conveyed by the bumper stickers, "Let go and let God" and "Christians aren't perfect—just forgiven." In making this criticism we do not deny the work of the Holy Spirit in the process of daily renewal (Eph. 4:23; Titus 3:5; 2 Cor. 4:16). However, although renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit, the believer is always active rather than passive. It is true that there are many times when we need to "let go and let God," but this formula does not cover the *whole* of Christian life. Life is too diverse to be reduced to a single formula. It is also true that Christians aren't perfect, but is it true that they are *just* forgiven? The popular bumper stickers, *if* taken as the whole truth, become dangerous half-truths. They need large qualifications.

Years ago J. C. Ryle spoke out against a passive type of faith in relation to the believer's sanctification. He asked "whether it is wise to speak of faith as the one thing needful, and the only thing required, as many seem to do nowadays in handling the doctrine of sanctification—is it wise to proclaim in so bald, naked, and unqualified a way as many do, that the holiness of converted people is by faith only, and not at all by personal exertion? Is it according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it." (*Holiness*, p. 8).

John Owen, in his book *Temptation and Sin* put the truth succinctly when he wrote: "God works in us and with us, not against us or without us." (p. 20).

Yes, Christian faith is a busy, active thing. It's like running a race in the Olympic Games. It's going for the gold!

" 'Let go and let God' does not cover the *whole* of Christian life."

REACT

Does the biblical metaphor of athletic training and discipline imply that we ultimately reach the Kingdom through our own striving? What is the role of human effort in sanctification?

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The Transforming Word

"All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy" (2 Timothy 3:16, Jerusalem Bible).



The Excellency of the Power

by Jill Hughes

INTRODUCTION

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 2:9, 15; 3:14-17;
4:2.

I straightened my back against the unyielding wooden pew and tried to keep my mind on Kent's sermon. I really meant to listen. But it had been a trying week, and the week ahead looked no better. I wondered how simply saying Yes to the directorship of such a nice, small English-language school could have buried me under such an avalanche of responsibilities.

When Ron had asked me to take over the position, he'd made it sound as if it wouldn't take ten minutes a week. "We just need someone to look after the school down here, it's no problem." He mentioned that plans needed to be made for next term's evangelistic meetings, and a few details wrapped up for the current term. Ron didn't add that I'd need to find speakers for the next two sermons, plan a special visitors' Sabbath School program, a final social for the departing teachers and their English students, and convince the weary, homeward-bound teachers to help put on these events.

I reminded Ron that since we were in the Orient he ought to find a guy to put in charge. "They're all leaving for America, Jill," he'd said. "Don't worry, you'll do fine."

"But, Ron, we have a summer Bible school coming up next term for the high school students—that's a five-sermon

series, and I can't preach them myself."

"Have one of the new student missionaries do it," he replied.

"I need to think about this whole idea," I said. "Can I let you know for sure tomorrow whether I'll accept the position or not?"

Ron shuffled the papers he held. "Well, I have to catch the train in an hour, and I need to know before I leave." Reluctantly I'd accepted, and had spent the past week fighting off the feeling that I had more responsibility than authority. Meanwhile my lists of things to do grew longer and longer. I began to wish it was my turn to go back to the relative calm of college.

Kent's voice broke through my reverie. "Let's look at 2 Corinthians 4:3." I found the reference. "Maybe if I read a little farther I can keep my mind on what he's saying," I thought. I read past verses 3 and 4 and on to verse 5. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." That's right, I mused, that's what we're trying to do as Christians and as student missionaries here. I read on. "God . . . hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God." Some places, I thought, had so much light and knowledge that people pulled down the blinds, taking it for granted, while other areas had only a faint streetlight or two. Then I

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looked quickly at the verse again—God is the Source of that shining light and love. It only shines through his people. If they mustered up their own energy, they'd be preaching their own gospel, not his. Something that had been wound tightly within me for the last week and maybe longer began to loosen.

My eyes wandered on to verse 7. "But we have this treasure"—the knowledge of God—"in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." I knew it had been written just for me! I'd been so tired and overwhelmed with planning programs, visiting students, and running last-

minute errands that I'd almost forgotten my source of strength. I'd felt as brittle as an earthen flowerpot, and if someone nudged me too hard I'd tip over and shatter. But in that verse I found a reason for my own weakness and weariness—that God's power might be evident in me, as well as in the other student missionaries and workers, in whatever we did.

After church I found Kent and shook his hand firmly. "You may never know how much I enjoyed your sermon this morning," I told him. "I really learned a lot!" I'd explain later. Just then I needed to rewrite a couple of lists—from a different point of view.

Handling Truth

Theme: The written Word of God transforms our lives by leading us to Christ and by providing guidance for belief and action. **LOGOS**

1. The Nature and Value of the Word (read 2 Tim. 3:15, 16)

"From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:15, NIV).

To the Jews the law was of utmost importance. From earliest childhood they were instructed in it. They claimed that their children drank it in with their mother's milk and that it would be more likely that a Jew forget his name than the law. Such no doubt was Timothy's training. From a young age he had known the Scriptures. Paul reminds him of this but points out that it is not knowledge of the Scriptures that brings salvation. Rather, knowledge of the Scriptures can lead one to the salvation which comes through faith in Christ Jesus. He goes on to say—in verse 16—that this is possible because the Scriptures are God-inspired. This makes them useful as a source of Christian principles and doctrine, for refuting error and rebuking sin, for conviction of error that motivates change, and for constructive education in the Christian life-style.

According to 2 Tim. 3:16, all Scripture is inspired, literally "God-breathed" (NIV). What do you understand to be the nature of this inspiration? What are the practical implications of your view?

2. The Correct Use of the Word (read 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2)

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2:15, NIV).

These verses were written against a background of persecution and false teachings. It is in the face of these that Christians reveal their true allegiances. The Christian must always stand firm, not wavering no matter what the trial. To correctly handle truth is to understand the full significance of what God has said to man through Jesus Christ and relate this understanding to practical life. This involves a serious study of Scripture. Seeking divine approval in such a way, one is delivered from being concerned with interpreting the Scriptures merely to win the approval of man.

Being not ashamed means one is prepared to give witness "in season and out of season" (4:2). In this text there is a sense of urgency, born of an understanding of the message of salvation. One who is not ashamed realizes he bears a message of life and death. Therefore he is not afraid to correct, rebuke, and encourage.

What is the balance between a "good workman" and an unashamed fanatic? What principles are involved in "correctly handling the word of truth?"

E. R. M.

Through Human Agents

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Timothy 3:16

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. . . .

"The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God' (2 Tim. 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language. . . .

"Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than another. And as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony.

"As presented through different individuals, the truth is brought out in its varied aspects. One writer is more strongly impressed with one phase of the subject; he grasps those points that harmonize with his experience or with his power of perception and appreciation; another seizes upon a different phase; and each, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, presents what is most forcibly impressed upon his own mind—a different aspect of the truth in each, but a perfect harmony through all. . . .

"God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do His work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language, yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth."

Excerpted from *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 21, 25, 26.

The Dynamic Power

by Clark H. Pinnock

The nature of the Bible's inspiration is a complex and hotly-debated issue among Christians. The following reflections by Clark Pinnock, while not offering a comprehensive doctrine of inspiration, suggest some ways in which we can better appreciate how biblical inspiration functions.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
1 Corinthians
13:12

I believe that conservative Christians are correct to want to preserve the high doctrine of inspiration. But we must ask if we have really understood that doctrine if in fact it is well represented in the theological traditions of our elders. It seems to me that the Bible says much about itself that does not fit into our tight little scheme, and what we must do is to hear its witness afresh. The Bible does not want us to make it into an oppressive set of legalistic rules designed to put people in their place. It is a book that frees us to become the sons and daughters of God and participate in God's work of liberation which has begun and which will result in the coming of God's kingdom of peace and justice. . . .

A mere doctrine of authority of the Bible is an empty useless thing if it does not help us discover how to determine the meaning of the Bible for our lives. If people are not hearing God speak through Scripture, no theological defense of its authority is going to convince them. Furthermore, even a high view of the Bible cannot prevent them from refusing the truth and holding it at a distance, refusing to let it make contact with their lives. It is of utmost importance to ask how the Bible can come alive for us.

It helps me to see this outworking of biblical authority in a dynamic rather than static way. The Bible should not be seen as a legal compendium of timelessly applicable divine oracles, but more as a place to stand when one wants to hear God's word and to discern God's will. Reading the Bible is the way we can orient our lives according to the parameters of definitive past revelation and, open to the Holy Spirit, receive direction for our life and work at hand. The Bible is a means of grace, a sacramental circle, where we can stand together with the family of God and seek the will of the Lord prayerfully for our time and place.

Let us not forget that the coming of the Spirit is an event as important as the incarnation itself. The Spirit was sent to make the gospel come alive, and the written word a living and powerful sword. The Bible can be little more than a museum of old antiques, but when the Spirit gets hold of it, the inspired information deposited in the text becomes activated in our experience. The Bible in the power of the Spirit is a means of grace whereby the liberating force of Jesus' message can become real in human life today. We should think of the Bible then as an instrument in the hands of the living God, as an occasion for the enlightening and illuminating of our hearts and minds.

The Bible itself assists us to reconceive of it in a dynamic way by means of its own composition and nature. For one thing, it is a cov-

"We should think of the Bible as an instrument in the hands of the living God."

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enant document, given not just to inform our minds, but to shape our character and to motivate our will. It is an inexhaustible resource, made up of incredibly diverse elements which come together in a grand symphony through the work of the Spirit to further our progress as the people of God. It does not announce a law dangling over our heads like the sword of Damocles, but the promise of the coming of the kingdom of God, pointing us forward, not backward, to the Christ who is coming to reign.

Now we know "in part," even when we read from the Bible, but then "face to face." Now our prophecy, even when recorded in the Bible, is "imperfect," but when the "perfect" is come, we shall see everything plainly. Even the Bible does not know everything it would like to. Even the Bible sees in a mirror dimly, and also we who read from it. But it plants a glorious hope within us and points us in the directions we should be moving. The Bible never intended for us to employ it as an instrument of oppression.

This does not mean that it is safe to avoid the scriptural letter and follow the inner light instead. The inner light can be a quick route to outer darkness. We want to hear exactly what the text has to say in exactly the shade of meaning that it had when first written down. Otherwise the truth of the text would turn out to be the reader's opinion of that moment, and the real authority of the Scripture would be lost. Frequently these "relevant" self-interpretations turn out to be misconceptions which obscure the word of God.

**"The inner light
can be a
quick route
to outer
darkness."**

But when we return to the original sense of the text, the first thing we discover is the dynamism of the text itself. Not only is its basic message forward-looking, the text itself records a very dynamic process of revelation, in which the saving message once given gets continually and constantly updated, refocused, and occasionally revised. Just consider the progression between the Old and the New Testament; how the coming of the Messiah introduced crucial reinterpretations into the earlier revelational process. Or consider how the four Gospels present different portraits of Jesus, shaping the tradition reverently for their own contexts, and inviting us to think of Jesus afresh for our time and place. Thus a biblical text, say in Isaiah, not only has an original meaning in the eighth century B.C., but also a place in the history of interpretation in which unsuspected nuances of meaning surface because of what was seen later on.

The authority of the Bible is not a static affair of soliciting infallible oracles to suit one's need. By presenting us with a process of clarification and education and by offering us many angles of interpretation on God's word, the Bible serves as a tutor and guide in our own covenant pilgrimage. Precisely because the Bible itself updates its own material, placing older texts in new contexts, it helps us to do the same thing where we are. Because the Bible is inherently a dynamic book it can be the covenantal Scripture it claims to be for us. . . .

The art of interpreting the Bible (it is not a science) is not something we can do all by ourselves. We will need all the help we can get from readers who have gone before, from Christians studying the Bible in different contexts than ours, and from our brothers and sisters who stand, and more importantly, kneel beside us. Our ability to understand the Bible is as broken and imperfect as all the other things we try to do for God, and yet we can gain strength and truth from it because of the indwelling Spirit testifying to the risen Lord.

From my conversion 30 years ago to this hour, I have always loved the Bible and the message it conveys to me, and always desired to place my life under its authority. I think we all need to do so. It has not been easy for me to express this doctrine or to defend it against threats real or imagined.

But Scripture is not a "problem." It is a priceless treasure bringing our Saviour to us and us to him. I only hope that these humble reflections will lead some others into more of an experience of the blessing of Scripture and less of an experience of Scripture as a bone of contention.

REACT

Respond to the following assertions, explaining why you agree or disagree with them:

- 1) The Bible is infallible.
- 2) The Bible is authoritative.
- 3) The Bible should not be regarded as infallible on matters of history (compare Gen. 33:18, 19; 49:29-31 and Acts 7:16) and science (see Isa. 40:22).
- 4) Through the guidance of the Spirit we may at times set aside the letter of certain portions of the Bible.

What's Your Recipe?

by Nancy Hoyt Lecourt

HOW TO
Key text:
John 5:39, 40

Sometimes Bible study seems a lot like cooking chili. You think you have the One All-Time Great Recipe and then some expert comes along and says, What? You use *tomatoes*? You mean to tell me you've been studying the *King James Version*? You study your Bible *after* breakfast? You started with *Genesis*? Just you try my recipe for SuperChristian's Heavenly Chili. If it doesn't save your soul, honey, nothing will!

But the essence of effective Bible study is that it is personal, unique—the way your conversations with your best friend are personal and unique. There are many good ways to approach the Scriptures. You may study by books, by chapters, by verses; you may follow themes or characters; you may enjoy word studies or a historical approach. You'll probably change your method from time to time. The important thing is that you find the one that is right for you—the one which helps the Scriptures "make you wise to accept God's salvation by trusting Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 3:15, Living Bible).

Here are a few general pointers that will make your Bible study effective, whatever system you follow:

1. **Assemble good materials.** First, try to get a good *study* Bible, with fairly large print and wide margins for making notes. Over the years you may want to collect several versions, a concordance (such as *Young's* or *Cruden's*), a Bible dictionary, and even a commentary. Many people complete the list of materials with a notebook for recording each day's thoughts and discoveries. Writing is a good discipline—it keeps your mind on the task at hand and helps you focus your ideas.

2. **Always begin with prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.** He is our teacher. Without him we usually "discover" only what we're looking for, not what the text is really saying.

3. **Remember your purpose:** dialogue with a Person. Forget this and you may begin to feel that you're doing God a favor by taking time for him. Next comes guilt when you don't. Then shorter and shorter sessions seem to "satisfy the requirement." This is deadly for effective Bible study.

4. **Persevere.** We often hear the testimony of these who find Bible study vibrant and wonderfully stimulating. But let's face it: for many Christians it is often very difficult to find the Word lively and invigorating. Bible study is hard work. But if you stick to it, you will be rewarded with God's presence in your life. Who could ask for more?

Nancy Hoyt Lecourt is currently doing free-lance writing from her home near Geneva, Switzerland.

People of the Word

by Mike Boyko

Adventists have been called "people of the Word." When I was growing up I felt proud when someone would say, "Don't get into a debate with an Adventist; they know their Bibles too well, and you will lose." I wonder where that type of mentality has taken us? Yes, we know the Bible; yes, we can quote texts; yes, we know all the right "proofs." Has it transformed our lives? Paul's counsel to Timothy should lead us to ask, Are we using the Bible correctly? Is the Bible a tool simply to propagate our own specific dogmas and biases?

This week we have been challenged to re-evaluate our Bible study "recipe." Christianity's appeal to many is its emphasis on the individual. Christ came to save each person, and that individual must decide for himself or herself whether to respond. Consequently, communication through Bible study and prayer must be individually tailored to meet each personality in order to fulfill the fundamental purpose of study, which is to "dialogue with a Person."

Paul pointed out to Timothy in his letter the nature and value of the word of God: it has saving power, it is God's inspired word, it is useful for instruction in righteousness, it cannot be bound. However, all this doesn't do anything for us unless we pick it up and read it, digest it, and make it part of us. The function of the Bible is not to make us experts in ancient Jewish history, proficient in the memorization of long passages of moral sayings, or even the defenders of the "right doctrines." The Bible as God's inspired word is designed, through our study of it, to lead us to God. As I now look back at the label "people of the Word," I, who was so proud that I could stand my ground, Bible in hand, and argue convincingly as an apologist for the Adventist Church, would rather be called a friend of God who found his Lord in the Bible and shared this discovery with his neighbor.

REACT

Do you think Adventists today are any more a "people of the Word" than other conservative Christian groups? Is there any spiritual value in memorizing Scripture for the purpose of being able to defend Adventist doctrine?

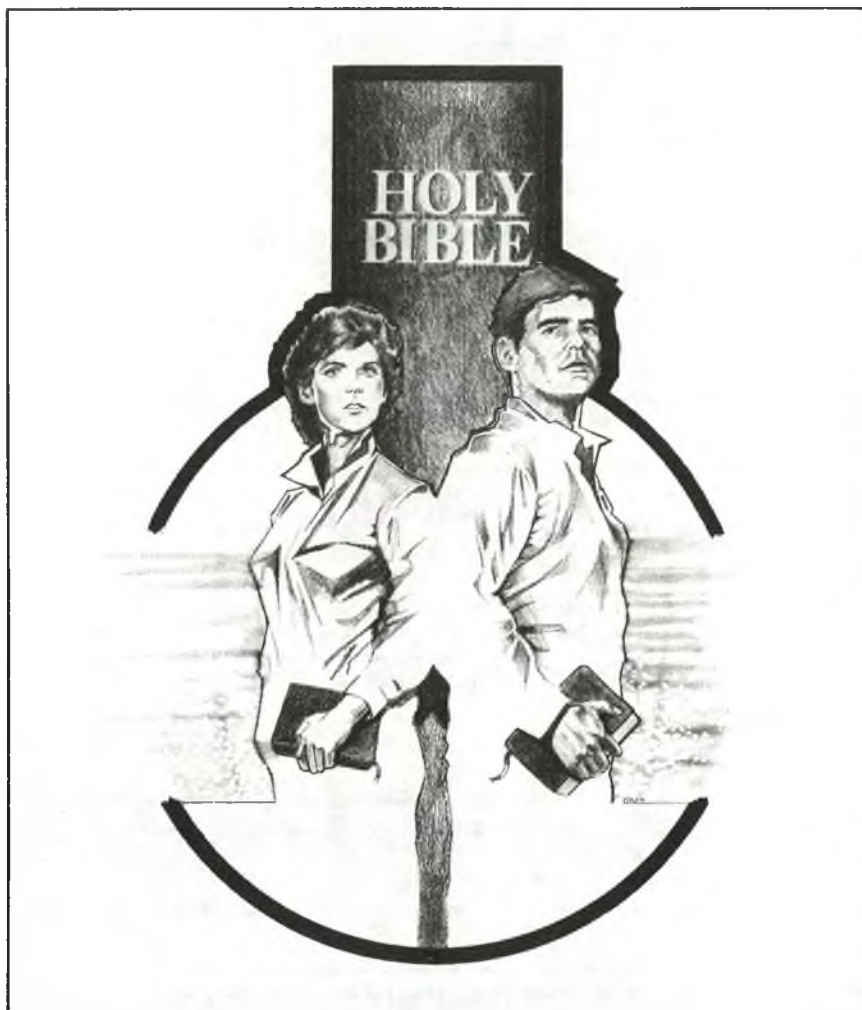
OPINION

Key text:
2 Timothy
3:14-17

Mike Boyko is a dentist and part-time instructor in oral surgery at Loma Linda University.

On Guard for the Gospel

“Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us” (2 Timothy 1:14, NIV).



Don't Waste Time

by Daniel Castro

This Week's Scripture:

2 Timothy 2:14-19, 23; 3:7-9;
4:14, 15.

Manolo spent lots of time at our home in Chile. He was a four-year-old neighbor who had no brothers or sisters, and was at the stage when kids ask all sorts of questions. He would ask my father, "Don Julio, are you my friend?" to which my father would reply, "Why, yes, of course!" Then would come the unexpected question, "Why?" When we would be weeding the tomatoes or onions or picking green beans or apricots, Manolo would be around interrogating us. He would always ask questions like: What are you doing? Why? What is that in your hand? Why? To me they all seemed like silly questions. He never asked beneficial questions (for me) such as, "Can I help you?" One could spend *hours*, it seemed, answering him and get no work done, and, worst of all, not answer all his inquiries! I was glad when Manolo finally outgrew that period!

In our Christian lives we many times find "four-year-olds" or we act like them ourselves. Questions of all varieties are asked. Friday nights, Sabbath afternoons, and other times are spent trying to get "the answers." We try to find out what God has not revealed. Or we get into doctrines, disputes, and controversies only to find out that after weeks we are still left with questions and doubts. I myself have gotten into these question sessions, and many have proved to be very interesting.

Now, there's nothing wrong with asking questions, as long as they are the appropriate questions and are asked in the proper attitude. But we must remember that Christ has given us a mission, a task to perform, and nothing should make us lose sight of our goal. We must grow up and ask the more important questions. Where's the gospel? Where's the point? Where's the cross? Where's the love? Where's the "new light"? Where's the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

INTRO- DUCTION

Daniel Castro is a medical student at Loma Linda University.

In Aid of Truth

LOGOS **Theme:** Christians are to stand firm for truth in the face of opposition, without becoming embroiled in trivial controversies, ever keeping their focus upon Christ and his gospel.

1. Dealing with Opposition to Truth (read 2 Tim. 2:14-19)

"Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. . . . Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly" (2:14-16, NIV).

In instructing Timothy how to deal with challenges to truth, Paul separates his suggested responses into two distinct categories. He suggests several positive actions (what to promote) as well as some negative actions (what to avoid). The positive responses are alternated with the negative ones throughout the passage, but we will be discussing them separately.

In the first part of verse 14, Paul advises Timothy to "keep reminding them of these things" (NIV). The phrase "these things" refer to the hymn that Paul quotes in the immediately preceding passage (2:11-13). Thus, the importance of constant exposure and re-exposure to truth is stressed as an antidote to false teachings. If truth is clearly perceived, error can find no beachhead. Similarly, this principle can be used to counter falsehood by example, "for the most effective refutations of error is for the teacher to be the living embodiment of Truth, with God's approval upon him."¹ In essence Paul is saying that error is best combatted by an emphasis upon truth—exposure produces imitation (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18).

Paul does not, however, exclude the need, at times, for a negative response to error. Therefore, he points out to Timothy that there are some things that he and his congregations should avoid to contain the spread of falsehood. Quarrels over semantics, "godless chatter," all sorts of non-constructive debate and argument—these contribute only to dissension and clouding of truth and should be shunned (see 2:14, 16, 23).

How do you decide which issues are worth discussing and debating, and which are not?

2. Results of Opposition to Truth (read 2 Tim. 3:7-9)

"Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these men oppose the truth—men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far. . . , their folly will be clear to everyone" (3:7-9, NIV).

Paul was not so naïve as to think that error can be constantly and completely suppressed. He recognized that false doctrines and interpretations would regularly confront the truth—even as they were during his time.

Barclay makes some interesting observations concerning the figures of Jannes and Jambres in his comments on this passage.

"Jannes and Jambres were the names given to the court magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses and Aaron. . . . At first these magicians were able to match the wonders which Moses and Aaron did, but in the end they were defeated and discredited. In the Old Testament itself they are not named, but they are referred to in Exodus 7:11, 8:7, and 9:11. A whole collection of stories and legends gathered round their names. They were said to have been disobedient to God (Num. 22:22); they were said to have been part of the great mixed multitude who accompanied the children of Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 12:38); some said that they perished at the crossing of the Red Sea; other stories said that it was Jannes and Jambres who were behind the making of the golden calf. . . . Amidst all the stories one fact stands out—Jannes and Jambres became legendary figures typifying all those who opposed and sought to frustrate the purposes of God, and the works of the true leaders of God."²

Despite such opposition, Paul's confidence in the ultimate triumph of truth over error was absolute. He believed that the very nature of truth destined its final victory. And his faith was not misplaced, for, "The history of the Christian Church teaches us that falsity cannot live. It may flourish for a time, but when it is exposed to the light of truth it is bound to shrivel and die."³

Does the inevitability of error's demise give us any cause to oppose it with less vigor?

3. Standing Guard Against Opposition to Truth (read 2 Tim. 4:14, 15)

"Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. . . . You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message" (4:14, 15, NIV).

Our emphasis here lies in Paul's admonition to be "on guard" against any opposition. We are not passively to allow error to overtake us. Instead, we should make constant use of the ready weapon that truth provides. "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Heb. 4:12, NIV). Equipped with such a weapon and invigorated with the power of God, our defense of truth cannot but be successful.

In what specific ways does the word of God function as a weapon? Are there any dangers to viewing it as a weapon?

L. R. C.

1. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 147.
2. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 194.
3. *Ibid.*

Relying on the Power of Truth

selected by Daniel Castro

TESTIMONY

Key texts:
Galatians 1:6-9;
2 Timothy 2:15

There are those who are always seeking to engage in controversy. This is the sum of their religion. . . . They dwell upon matters of the smallest consequence, exercising upon these their sharp, controversial talents.

Idle tales are brought in as important truths, and by some they are actually set up as tests. Thus controversy is created, and minds are diverted from present truth. Satan knows that if he can get men and women absorbed in trifling details, greater questions will be left unheeded. . . .

I would say to my brethren and sisters, Keep close to the instruction found in the Word of God. Dwell upon the rich truths of the Scriptures. Thus only can you become one in Christ. . . . Do not allow anything to draw your attention from the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). This is a life and death question, which we must each settle for eternity.¹

My husband has some ideas on some points differing from the views taken by his brethren. I was shown that however true his views were, God did not call for him to put them in front before his brethren and create differences of ideas. . . .

"Bring forth the light and the power of truth, and let it outweigh the errors."

There are the main pillars of our faith, subjects which are of vital interest, the Sabbath, the keeping of the commandments of God. Speculative ideas should not be agitated. . . . Twice I have been shown that everything of a character to cause our brethren to be diverted from the very points now essential for this time, should be kept in the background.²

The servants of God who teach the truth should be men of judgment. They should be men who can bear opposition and not get excited; for those who oppose the truth will pick at those who teach it, and every objection that can be produced, will be brought in its worst form to bear against the truth. . . . I saw that we must be prepared for objections, and with patience, judgment, and meekness, let them have the weight they deserve, not throw them away or dispose of them by positive assertions, and then bear down upon the objector, and manifest a hard spirit toward him; but give the objections their weight, then bring forth the light and the power of the truth, and let it outweigh and remove the errors. Thus a good impression will be made, and honest opposers will acknowledge that they have been deceived and that the commandment keepers are not what they have been represented to be.³

Like the builders of the walls of Jerusalem, we should not be diverted and hindered from our work by reports, by messengers desiring discussion or controversy, or by intimidating threats, the publication of falsehoods, or any of the devices that Satan may instigate. Our answer should be: We are engaged in a great work, and we cannot come down.⁴

1. *Selected Messages*, vol. 1, pp. 170, 171.

2. *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 76, 77.

3. *Early Writings*, p. 102.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 574.

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In Defense of Truth

by Todd Guthrie

Paul's second epistle to the young Timothy continues the exhortation to guard the truth that is found in the first epistle (1 Tim. 6:20). As an experienced apostle, Paul understood the problems the youthful preacher faced as he strove to be an unashamed workman, "handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, NASB). But there were those who opposed truth and in so doing upset the faith of many in the church.

We are assured of the fact that similar problems will continue to confront us in the last days (3:1-7). The Christian's duty and purpose is to proclaim and defend the truth about God. He is not left to this task unaided; the best defense the Christian has is the weapon of truth itself, Christ the Word (Heb. 4:12; John 1:1, 2, 14). Yet those who deviate from truth have a characteristic habit of resorting to "foolish and stupid arguments" (2 Tim. 2:23, NIV) to avoid the real issues of the gospel, namely: (1) Who God is and (2) How we can be reconciled to him.

These "foolish and stupid arguments" include two extremes. The first is a tendency to "wrangle about words" (2:14, NASB). Some people are much too concerned about using just the right words in doctrinal discussions. Hours can be wasted on semantics alone because of an egotistical desire to have one's own definition of a word imposed on everyone. The second extreme is what Paul refers to as "empty chatter" (1 Tim. 6:21, NASB). In empty conversations too little thought is given to the concepts behind the words used. People at this extreme tend to rely on clichés in their doctrinal discussions or may become proponents of ideas which are scripturally unsound (2 Tim. 2:18), simply because they avoid really *thinking* about what they say. Both extremes tend to produce Christians who are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (3:7, NASB).

What must Christians do, then, to counter the tendency to deviate from truth? First, we must avoid the extremes mentioned and do our best to pursue the kingdom of God with a pure heart (2:22, 23). Secondly, we should recognize that the foundation of truth is secure because: (1) God knows who his true followers are and (2) Truth is upheld by those who are obedient to him (2:19). Finally, we should present the truth as we see it with patience and gentleness, avoiding quarrels and arguments which drive away those who might otherwise be led to the truth (2:24-26).

REACT

1. Does the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-43) have any implications for our approach in defending the truth and opposing false doctrines in the church?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the doctrinal disputes described by Paul in 2 Timothy and those we are experiencing in the church today?

EVIDENCE

Key text:
2 Timothy 2:19

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When Your Beliefs Are Challenged

by Dorene B. Sample

HOW TO
Key text:
Romans 12:21

Suppose you are a spiritual thought leader in a large and influential Protestant denomination. Then, suppose another spiritual thought leader in your denomination challenges a belief that you consider basic Christian doctrine. How will you approach the problem?

Let's see how Paul advises Timothy on the subject.

1. **Affirm confidence in God's love and care.** Before addressing the issue of doctrinal dispute, Paul first reviews his own reasons for confidence in God's faithfulness, and encourages Timothy likewise to remain faithful (see 2 Tim. 1:3-14; 2:1-13).

Paul then urges Timothy to "keep reminding" Christians of the reasons for their faith, warning them not to dwell on unhelpful theological quibbles (2:14, NIV).

2. **Study the Scripture carefully and sincerely (2:14, 22).** Accurate Scripture interpretation requires more than superficial reading. Scripture must be compared with Scripture. New truth will not contradict old truth (Isaiah 8:20). Instead, new truth will build on the old and clarify it. And Jesus assures us that when we search Scripture with a true motive to obey, we will understand what is of God (John 7:17).

3. **Concentrate on a clear explanation of truth.** Paul doesn't waste a lot of time exposing error. Instead, he mentions the names of two leading opponents, and briefly summarizes their doctrinal misunderstanding and its result (2 Timothy 2:17, 18). He then continues to affirm the truth (vs. 19).

Ellen White observes that if defenders of truth concentrate on exposing fallacies, Satan will stir up enough opposition to keep them from having sufficient time to present truth.¹

Paul, the New Testament systematic theologian, is well known for his detailed precision in expounding truth. Yet Paul's sketchy descriptions of opposing doctrines often leave us puzzling over what he meant. To Paul, a comprehensive exposure of error was not important. But a comprehensive exposition of truth was essential.

4. **Explain the truth kindly, gently, and patiently (2:24, 25).** In doctrinal discussions, tactfulness is still the best policy. There is no need to bolster the defense of truth with sharp thrusts against opponents. Truth is strong enough to stand on its own. Ellen White cautions us that "one drop of gall" in a doctrinal discourse may cause many to reject the truth presented.²

If I were a spiritual thought leader, how would I best defend truth? I'll sum it up in one sentence: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21, NIV).

REACT

Discuss the frequently-stated dictum that "new truth" will not contradict "old truth." Does this mean a Christian individual or group should never revise what they have once held as basic truth? How do you establish just what "old truth" is?

1. *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 56, 57.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 65, 66.

At the time of this writing, Dorene B. Sample was working as a demonstrator for Worthington Foods.

What Is Truth?

by Mike Boyko

Human beings have an innate desire to discover truth. The *truth*, complete and absolute, seems ever to evade us. Our understanding of truth is progressive and changing, and that can make the search for it baffling. The search has caused some to lose their faith and others to miss its focus. Others, feeling sure they have the truth, have codified it, only later finding that their attempt to harness this precious gift caused them to miss some new and greater blessing. However baffled, we continue to search after truth because it leads to God.

Throughout the ages our theories have stood or faded under the bright light of truth revealed in Christ and in Scripture. Just because an idea is new doesn't mean it is good and is truth; nor does the fact that it has been around and is established save a cherished idea. We as Adventists painfully learned this at the Minneapolis Conference of 1888 when the cherished emphasis on works and the law was challenged by the controversial righteousness by faith doctrine. We seem to have a short memory though, and we may need to be reminded that the search for truth is progressive. Truth as presented in 1888 or 1928 may need to be updated for us today. We as a church must be open to this sort of change, and not afraid to discuss it in a spirit of Christian love and honest searching.

Truth can protect itself. It doesn't need a human institution to codify, solidify, and encase it. Truth will never be static—the church that believes it is unchanging or acts as if it is will find itself like the Judaism of Christ's time. While the Pharisees and Sadducees debated over minutia such as whether a handkerchief could be carried on the Sabbath or had to be sewn to the sleeve so as not to be a burden, the “truth” came, and they did not perceive it.

Finally, we must accept our limitations when it comes to comprehending truth, and realize that there are spiritual values higher than absolute correctness of theology. Paul, therefore, counsels us to avoid foolishness and unlearned questions and to “follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22, 23, KJV). Pascal said it another way, “We make an idol of truth; for truth without charity is not God, but His image and idol, which we must neither love nor worship.”

REACT

Is it possible to be *certain* that you have “the truth”?

OPINION

Key text:
2 Timothy
2:22, 23

“Truth doesn't need a human institution to codify, solidify, and encase it.”

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A Caring Community

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4, NIV).



Shopping Strategy

by Beverly Benchina

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 1:15-18; 2:20, 21;
4:9-21.

I like to go shopping, especially when I have had a particularly rough day. It is my way of escaping. I can disappear into the crowd while darting from store to store in a busy mall. This is also the time when I like to try on clothes. Because my trips are usually spur-of-the-moment excursions, I do not come prepared as organized people might, with a folder full of swatches in "my" colors, nor is there usually any rhyme or reason to what I try on.

My main question in selecting an item from a rack is, "Will it fit?" Which translated means, "Will it look good with my red espadrilles? Has my exercise program paid off? Does this adorable blouse fit my budget—is it on sale?" If the answer is "yes" to all of the above, I might buy the item. But being picky, I often return home empty-handed.

These musings on shopping for clothes remind me of the way we all too often "shop around" for chances to care, to be supportive. We're too picky. We give a moment's con-

sideration and pity to those less fortunate than ourselves and turn away, keeping busy to hide from the guilt inflicted by hungry eyes. Or we smile sheepishly and keep walking past the friend who appears downhearted, wondering all the while whether we should risk becoming involved.

We care when it is convenient, when it fits into schedules and seasons. Maybe it is time we revise our "shopping" strategy. I like what George Bernard Shaw had to say about his purpose in life: "I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch that I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

A pretty good motto for Christians to adopt, helping us to form the kind of caring community that builds the church into unity under Christ's leadership.

INTRODUCTION

At this writing, Beverly Benchina was a secretary in the Graduate School at Loma Linda University.

Instruments for the Highest Purpose

LOGOS Theme: The church is to be a caring fellowship where members put the needs of others ahead of their own interests and security, demonstrating their concern for one another in tangible ways.

1. The Noble and the Ignoble (read 2 Tim. 2:20, 21)

"If a man cleanses himself . . . he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master" (2:21, NIV).

Paul here compares the church with a household that contains items of high quality and items of low quality. As long as the church is an earthly institution, comprised of sinful human beings, it will contain this mix of the good and the bad, the admirable and the contemptible. But while we can never hope for perfection in the church, we can dedicate ourselves to making the church a more caring community, and thus be instruments for noble purposes.

Below we will look at the examples of a few individuals mentioned in 2 Timothy whose examples suggest some of the characteristics of instruments for building Christian community.

2. People who Cared (read 2 Tim. 1:15-18; 4:9-21)

"May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains" (1:16, NIV).

Onesiphorus (1:15-18). Paul had been condemned, not just as a religious fanatic—but as a political and social threat as well. To be a known sympathizer with this man, and furthermore to have undertaken an arduous search for him through the labyrinthine streets of Rome was very risky business. Yet that is what Onesiphorus did; and it was not for one brief, furtive visit that he sought out Paul. He returned repeatedly and "often refreshed" the apostle. From Onesiphorus we learn that caring means placing the needs of others above one's own security.

Luke (4:11). In contrast to Demas, who forsook Paul for the ease of the world (4:10), Luke, the "beloved physician" (Col. 4:14) was a caring presence during this time of great need in Paul's life. Barclay believes that, in accordance with Roman practice, Luke probably enrolled himself as Paul's slave in order to be allowed to accompany him to Rome and to prison.¹ From Luke we learn that caring means willingness to surrender privilege and status to be with someone in need.

Mark (4:11). Though Mark had failed Paul years earlier (see Acts 13:13; 15:37-39), Mark had now come to the place where Paul regarded him as a "useful assistant" (4:11, NEB). From Mark we learn that caring means developing and honing one's skills so as to be of the greatest possible usefulness to others.

Look up Philipians 2:1-4. Discuss the principles for treating one another found in this passage.

1. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 215.

D. F. M.

What Matters Most

selected by Beverly Benchina

In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another.

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. . . .

Christ designs that heaven's order, heaven's plan of government, heaven's divine harmony, shall be represented in His church on earth. Thus in His people He is glorified. Through them the Sun of Righteousness will shine in undimmed luster to the world. Christ has given to His church ample facilities, that He may receive a large revenue of glory from His redeemed, purchased possession. He has bestowed upon His people capabilities and blessings that they may represent His own sufficiency. The church, endowed with the righteousness of Christ, is His depository, in which the riches of His mercy, His grace, and His love, are to appear in full and final display. Christ looks upon His people in their purity and perfection, as the reward of His humiliation, and the supplement of His glory,—Christ, the great Center, from whom radiates all glory.

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Philippians 2:5

"The whole work of grace is one continual service of love."

Excerpted from *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 677-680. For further reading: *Steps to Christ*, "The Work and the Life," pp. 71-80.

At this writing, Beverly Benchina was a secretary in the Graduate School at Loma Linda University.

Sharing the Synergy

Marion Verrill Poos

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Ephesians
4:15, 16

Helen Keller is an example of a person who was a victor in the face of great adversity. Sightless, still she saw, and envisioned the true essence of life. It was she who wrote:

Happiness cannot come from without.
It must come from within.
It is not what we see and touch
or that which others do for us which
makes us happy; it is that
which we think and feel and do,
first for the fellow
and then for ourselves.

These lines point us to the sort of relationships that should characterize God's family. He created us to be relational, to experience belonging with one another in a setting where each individual is nurtured to grow. God made us to interact in such a way that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Each person grows as a Christian in a unique way, and is also a member of something eternal. There is a synergistic relationship within a community of believers that draws on God's infinite love for a never-ending supply of energy.

**"God made us
to interact
in such a way
that the whole
is more
than the sum
of the parts."**

Because this is so, Christians discover significant purpose in service to others. Filling another's needs also fills someone's own. The effect produced by our action for others has an impact on us, too.

Paul felt the caring of members of God's family during a difficult crisis in his life. Onesiphorus, he tells us, sought him out in Rome and refreshed him. Mark was helpful to him in his ministry, and Luke stayed by him when others deserted. There were others as well, who provided Paul with the kind of support that is vital to a caring community. Priscilla and Aquila risked their lives for him and consequently, not just he, but all the Gentile believers were grateful to them.

We are told in Philippians 2:1-4 that the self-giving example of these biblical personages should be a blueprint for our own behavior and values. By growing sensitive to the needs of those about us, and by seeking to advance the wholeness of others, we will mature as God's children. The world will be a little more beautiful, a little more healed, as each of us responds to Christ's teaching that we are to be caring believers.

REACT

Does an emphasis on winning souls and getting baptisms detract from building and nurturing Christian community? Explain.

Marion Verrill Poos is a doctoral student in health education at Loma Linda University.

The Wino, "Mom," and Me

by Paul Welter

As we sat among the barrels of "2-4-D" pesticide eating our brown-bagged lunches in an industrial section of Los Angeles, I decided we made a rather strange pair. Jim was referred to around work as "The Wino." He was a small, dark-haired man of about sixty. His face was tanned and lined, with a rough, friendly appearance. I was a tall, skinny young man. It was my first day at work at the insecticide plant in Los Angeles, and I had gotten acquainted with Jim that morning. Before the morning was over I was quite aware of his hangups. I was not yet aware of my own. As I looked at Jim, I realized he needed help. For a starter, he needed help to stop drinking, although I wasn't at all sure how to help him do that. As I think back on it, the hangup I had was seeing myself in a helping, "good-guy" role. I'm sure this made me come across in a condescending, arrogant way. It was as if I had a neon light on my jacket flashing on and off with the word "HELPER."

After I had become a Christian at nineteen, I had stayed in college for another year or so and then dropped out because college had no meaning for me. I had several jobs; then I was drafted and spent two years in the army. During this time in the service I married Lillian and we began our family. When I got out of the service, I finished college and then decided to go to a seminary to pursue a personal quest. I wanted to study the Bible to learn more about God, and about me. Also, I thought that I might later teach in a Christian college and I wanted this preparation.

During my middle year at seminary I found this part-time job at the insecticide plant and worked every weekday afternoon after finishing my classes, and all day Saturday. Jim worked full time at the plant, that is, when he wasn't at home with a hangover. We worked together for nearly two years and came to be friends. I worried about him because he often came to work with his hands shaking. When he carried sacks of powdered pesticides, he often stumbled. But as we glued five-pound boxes of pesticides, he was somehow able to keep his fingers from going through the gluing rollers.

When we got better acquainted, he began to tell me his story. He grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He remembered an influenza epidemic that occurred when he was fifteen years old. His father had given him some whiskey and told him to drink it—it would keep him from getting the flu. Since that time he had been drinking whiskey and wine and about anything else with alcohol in it that he could get his hands on. When he was old enough, he began working in a steel plant in Pittsburgh and was able to keep that job until he was about forty. By then, his alcoholism was interfering so much with his work that he was fired. Then he came to Southern California and started out in a steel plant there. However, he held that job for only a year or so, and then he "just bounced around" for the next twenty years.

He never talked much about his first family back in Pittsburgh.

HOW TO
Key text:
Philippians 2:3

"The hangup I had was seeing myself in a helping, 'good-guy' role."

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Apparently, his wife had divorced him because of his drinking, and he seemed to want to forget those days. He did talk some about the woman he had been living with for twenty years. They had never married, and neither of them seemed to be concerned about this. She was, in fact, his common law wife. I could tell he loved her by the way he talked about her. He always called her "Mom," even though they had no children. He helped her get around. She could move about only with the aid of a walker.

I shared out of my life with Jim—told him about Lillian, and about Steve and Kathy, our children. I told him about the time I had found new meaning in my life when I received Jesus Christ. But I don't remember sharing with him my struggles with pride and selfishness and grumpiness. In general, I think I regarded myself as the person up here with the answer, and Jim as the person down there with the problem. Still, he listened intently when I spoke about Jesus Christ. I don't know what he decided to do about Jesus.

During the second year we worked together, I noticed that his work became harder and harder for him. His hands were shaking more now. He sometimes came in late to work and was absent more. Our boss appeared gruff, but actually he was pretty understanding and allowed Jim to continue work.

**"I had failed
Jim because
I had tried to
help him without
getting
involved."**

I was still trying to do something *for* Jim—trying to "straighten him out." I remember asking him one time if he would like to stop drinking. Not knowing anything about alcoholics, I was not prepared for his answer, which was "No." When I heard this response, my blinking neon light dimmed a bit.

Then came a time when Jim was off work for two consecutive days. When he came back the third day he said to me, "I'm really worried about Mom. She's been sick the last two days. She's a little better today, but I hate to leave her home alone." He was preoccupied the whole day and left work the minute the work day was over. He didn't come back to work for the next three days. The evening of the third day I got a telephone call from a man who told me, "I'm Jim's neighbor. He told me your name and asked me to look you up in the phone book and give you a call tonight. He wants you to come over."

I went over, and when nobody answered my knock at the door, I opened it and walked in. Jim was running through the house, drunk, yelling, "Mom, Mom!" I went over to him and put my arm on his shoulder and walked with him a little while until he could talk in a fairly coherent way. He told me his wife had died two days ago and had just been buried. Her walker looked lonely standing in the corner by itself. Periodically as we talked he would yell out, "Mom, Mom!" I talked with him an hour or two and then went home feeling helpless.

The next morning I went over to see Jim again before my first class. I walked in without knocking and saw Jim and another man

sitting on the couch, both drunk. The other man had his arm around Jim's shoulder. They looked at me without saying anything and I sat down in an old overstuffed chair near Jim. Finally Jim said, "My buddy here came over last night and spent the night." The men had never gone to bed. They had stayed up talking and drinking.

I fixed some coffee and as we sat around a little dinette, drinking the coffee, his friend said to me with slow, slurred speech, "I'm just an old drunk like Jim, but I thought the least I could do was to spend the night with him."

Before I went to class, I had to sit for a while on a bench outside the school building. Jim's friend's word "with" kept echoing inside me. I had worked very hard to do something *for* Jim. His friend had understood that Jim needed someone to be *with* him. At that moment some of the "professional helper" started to shrivel inside me. I began to realize that the night before when I went home from Jim's house, it was not just to be with my family; I went home because I could not stand my own helplessness. I had failed Jim earlier because I had tried to help him without getting involved. I failed him at his time of greatest crisis, because the crisis had stripped me of my helping role. What I didn't realize was that now the front of my jacket didn't flash on and off with the word "HELPER." I was in a position to help for the first time. Instead, I fled.

Jim never came back to work. He died that day. Apparently the alcohol level got high enough in his blood, coupled with the shock of his wife's death, to kill him. It may have been, too, that he felt as if he didn't have anything left to live for.

I had tried to do something for Jim—and failed. But he and his friend had given a gift to me. They taught me that it is more important to do something with another human being than to do something for him. I had always thought how much Jesus did *for* his disciples. However, I began to see that Jesus' primary reason for calling the disciples together was not to do something for them. "And he appointed twelve to be *with* him. . ."

In the years that have followed since Jim's life—and death—touched my life, I've been putting into practice, little by little, the idea of "withness." I put on the old helper's uniform now and then, but more and more I'm aware that it gets in the way. Sometimes now I don't run away when I feel helpless. Instead, through the power of the Holy Spirit, I find myself moving forward to be with my friend in the time of crisis.

"It is more important to do something with another human being than to do something for him."

Excerpted from *How to Help a Friend* by Paul Welter, pp. 13-17. Published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Copyright © 1978. Used by permission.

Caring to Change

by Tony Campolo

OPINION

Key Text:
Philippians 2:4

Some of my students and colleagues at Eastern College have gotten together and started a feeding program in the city of Cap-Haitien, Haiti. We're trying to raise enough money to pay for feeding the many suffering children of that miserable city. So far we are able to feed only five hundred children. There are hundreds more in that city who are malnourished. There are tens of thousands in Haiti who are close to death. You know the job I want my college students to do down there? I don't want to give them the job of giving out the food; that's too easy. I would like to put them at the entrance to our feeding center and tell them that their job is to count the first five hundred kids who come in and then say to the others, "Sorry. No more food. Go on, leave."

How would you handle that? Could you look a starving Haitian kid in the face and say, "I'm sorry, but you have to starve because we've run out of food?"

I don't want to put a guilt trip on you, but there is something wrong with us when we can spend so much on ourselves, and be so insensitive to the fact that there are five hundred million children in the world today who are suffering from hunger and malnutrition.

When you become possessed by Jesus, when the mind of Christ takes over your mind, when you begin to think His thoughts, when you start to feel what He feels, you will enter into His sufferings. Then the things that break the heart of Jesus will break your heart.

"When you become possessed by Jesus, you will enter into His sufferings."

There is an incredible slum I wish you could visit. It is like thousands of such slums throughout the Third World. It is only a hundred acres in size, yet forty thousand people are squeezed into it. They live in squalor that defies imagination. There is suffering and death everywhere. Amidst those suffering people is a priest who tries to serve them with a dedication worthy of sainthood. One morning that priest woke me and my students at six o'clock. He said, "I want you to see something." We followed him through the mud paths that separated the lean-to shacks of that hellhole. There was a flu epidemic in progress. When flu hits an American community, children miss school. In an impoverished Third World country, when malnourished children get the flu, they die. As we made our way through the mud paths of that slum we saw mothers come out of those shacks carrying in their arms the tiny corpses of children who died during the night. We followed those mothers as they walked with their priest to the edge of the slum where we dug a ditch. And into that ditch we laid the emaciated bodies of those tiny babies, side by side. We heard the mothers scream and cry as only bereaved mothers can scream and cry. The priest said what he had to say and ended with a prayer.

Then we began to shovel the dirt over those tiny dead bodies. As I looked across the ditch, I noticed one of my students, a great big basketball player. I had never seen him cry before, but his lower lip was trembling, his fists were clenched, and tears were running

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down his cheeks. Something inside of me said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Indeed, there is a comfort that is only for those who enter into the sufferings of Jesus.

There is joy in this walk with Jesus, but there is agony, too. To be possessed by Jesus is to begin to care about people like you have never, ever cared for them before. Their hurts will become your hurts, and their agonies will become your agonies, because that's what it means to be in Jesus and to have Jesus in you. . . .

When you become a Christian, Jesus will invade your life and make you into somebody He can use to change the world. Through you, He will challenge racism. Through you, Jesus will attack sexism, poverty, and militarism. That was never taught to me when I was growing up. I never heard that I could be an instrument that God could use to change the world. All I was told was that being a Christian meant I would go to heaven when I died. I was never told that the primary reason Jesus saved me was to make me into somebody whom He could use to change the world into the kind of world He willed for it to be when He created it. I was never told that Christians are called to be angry with the injustices which anger God. . . .

God wants to do great things through you. I don't want you just to believe in Him; I want you to be committed to Him. I want you to be ready to say, "Jesus, I'm ready to do what You would do if You were in my shoes. Come into my life and empower me to do it. I want to know your joy. I want to experience your sorrows. I want to feel your anger. I want to be a person through whom You can express your love to a world that needs You."

"I was never told that Christians are called to be angry with the injustices which anger God."

REACT

1. Discuss ways in which you and those with whom you associate can make a greater impact on the world through Christian caring.
2. Is it really worthwhile for Christians to become deeply involved in societal problems such as poverty and injustice in view of the fact that there will always be evil and suffering in the world until Jesus returns?

From You Can Make A Difference by Tony Campolo, pp. 27-37, copyright © 1984, used by permission of Word Books, Publisher, Waco Texas 76796

Pursuing the Best

“Turn from the wayward impulses of youth and pursue justice, integrity, love and peace with all who invoke the Lord in singleness of mind” (2 Timothy 2:22, NEB).



Equipped to Heal

by Marion Verrill Poos

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 2:22-26

If you have ever suffered from a serious illness, or known someone who has, you will appreciate the powerful influence that attitudes play in the healing process. Research shows that people who are optimistic tend to stay more healthy and that when stricken with disease, their perceptions play a vital role in how their bodies fight the illness. Moreover, the immune system seems to respond dramatically to either the depression or the peace of mind of the person. The way we think has a lot of influence on the way our whole body functions. The way we feel affects the way we heal. As such, it becomes part of our Christian responsibility to promote the entire range of positive emotions. Faith, love, peace, and righteousness are some examples of attitudes which are basic to wholeness.

One of my favorite pastimes is working as a clown. There is a certain simple delight

which a clown portrays unlike any other character. Even in the face of terrible life problems, most people are touched by the warmth and gentleness of a clown.

I use the role of a clown to teach others about attitudes and the power of emotions in healing. Donning rainbow hair, a multicolored suit, huge tennis shoes, and leading an invisible dog named Fido, my job is to go into hospitals and nursing homes with a message that everybody is powerfully equipped to heal. Each of us has a marvelous store of chemicals innate to our beings which can soothe pain, calm tensions, repair injury, and promote a sense of well-being.

By fostering faith, love, and peace as Paul urges Timothy to do, we become physicians for souls. We become mediums of healing and wholeness. And we become a revolutionary presence in a world which is dominated by mistrust, hatred, strife, and suffering but which aches for the faith, love, peace, and healing we offer.

INTRODUCTION

Marion Verrill Poos is a doctoral student in health education at Loma Linda University.

Sunday, June 2 91

Pitfalls and Priorities

LOGOS

Theme: Christians are to pursue the centralities of the kingdom of God—righteousness, faith, love, and peace—thereby avoiding the devil's pitfalls.

1. The Pitfalls (read 2 Tim. 2:22-26)

"Flee the evil desires of youth. . . . Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel" (2:22-24, NIV).

Paul's specific advice regarding the pitfalls Timothy must avoid can be separated into two distinct categories. The first admonition, to "flee the evil desires of youth" or "youthful lusts" (KJV) encompasses a number of errors that, in Paul's mind, youth are particularly susceptible to. Although Timothy cannot be considered a youth in the strictest sense, he is probably under 40, and thus in Paul's fatherly perspective still vulnerable to these temptations.

What exactly are the "youthful lusts" referred to here? Barclay comments, "They are far more than the lusts and passions of the flesh. They include that *impatience*, which has never learned to hasten slowly, and which has still to discover that too much hurry can do far more harm than good; that *self-assertion*, which is intolerant in its opinions, and arrogant in its expression of them, and which has not yet learned to sympathize with and to see the good in points of view other than its own; that *love of disputation*, which tends to argue long and to act little, which is in love with mental acrobatics, and which will talk the night away and be left with nothing but a litter of unsolved problems; that *love of novelty*, which tends to condemn a thing simply because it is old and desire a thing simply because it is new, underrating the value of experience, and brands as old-fashioned that in which a former generation believed. One thing is to be noted—the faults of youth are the faults of idealism. It is simply the newness and the freshness and the intensity of the vision which makes youth run into these mistakes. Such faults are not matters for austere condemnation, but for sympathetic correction, for every one of them is a fault which has a virtue hidden beneath it."¹

The second admonition is related to the first, but more specific. Christians, and especially Christian leaders, should give wide berth to arguments over questions which are not central to the gospel. Arguments, by their very nature, rarely produce positive outcomes even when they are over cardinal points. Arguments over "foolish and stupid" subjects cannot hope to bring mutual tolerance, much less consensus. Therefore, these arguments absorb time that could be spent for more useful purposes, and also tend to spread dissension and discontent. Ready illustrations attesting to the accuracy of Paul's observation abound in the history of our church.

Could increased awareness and enhanced personal study be a posi-

tive effect of "foolish and stupid arguments"? Can this outweigh the negative effects?

2. Priorities

"Pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

"Be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful" (2:22, 24, NIV).

Having carefully illuminated the various pitfalls that conceivably lay in Timothy's path, Paul proceeds to list the qualities that he should pursue as his highest priorities. Timothy, and all Christians, are to "aim at *righteousness*, which means giving both to men and to God their due; at *faith*, which means loyalty and reliability which both come from trust in God; at *love*, which is the utter determination never to seek anything but the highest good of our fellow-men, no matter what they do to us; . . . at *peace*, which is the right relationship of loving fellowship with God and with men."² This quest will join us with others seeking the same qualities, forming a crucial bond of fellowship. For the "Christian must never seek to live alone, detached and aloof from his fellow men. He must find his strength, his joy, his support in the Christian fellowship. As John Wesley said: 'A man must have friends or make friends; for no one ever went to heaven alone.'"³

Furthermore, we, along with Timothy, are counseled to "be kind to everyone" and "able to teach." We must not only experience God's love, but also demonstrate it, even as we must communicate the truth, not just know it. The emphasis is upon action—the way Christ exhibited it in tireless labor. And like him too, we should avoid resentfulness, but instead respond to insults, slights, and humiliation with the warmth of love. We must love, not batter, people into submission to truth.

In view of Paul's counsel in these verses, should Christians be involved in competition, such as in sports, or for grades, or for jobs, or for Ingathering and baptism goals?

L. R. C.

1. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. (First Edition). pp. 206, 207.
2. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*. p. 180.
3. *Ibid.* p. 181.

The High Ideal

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Ephesians
6:10-18

In this his last letter to Timothy, Paul held up before the younger worker a high ideal, pointing out the duties devolving on him as a minister of Christ. "Study to show thyself approved unto God," the apostle wrote, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." . . .

"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse," he continued, "deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. . . . All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world. The Bible is the armory where we may equip for the struggle. Our loins must be girt about with the truth. Our breastplate must be righteousness. The shield of faith must be in our hand, the helmet of salvation on our brow; and with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we are to cut our way through the obstructions and entanglements of sin. . . .

"God has provided abundant means for successful warfare against the evil that is in the world."

Fearing that Timothy's mild, yielding disposition might lead him to shun an essential part of his work, Paul exhorted him to be faithful in reproving sin and even to rebuke with sharpness those who were guilty of gross evils. Yet he was to do this "with all long-suffering and doctrine." He was to reveal the patience and love of Christ, explaining and enforcing his reproofs by the truths of the Word.

To hate and reprove sin, and at the same time to show pity and tenderness for the sinner, is a difficult attainment. The more earnest our own efforts to attain to holiness of heart and life, the more acute will be our perception of sin and the more decided our disapproval of any deviation from the right. We must guard against undue severity toward the wrongdoer; but we must also be careful not to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. There is need of showing Christlike patience and love for the erring one, but there is also danger of showing so great toleration for his error that he will look upon himself as undeserving of reproof, and will reject it as uncalled for and unjust.

Excerpted from *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 501-504.

Ethnic Jokes and the Inner Spotlight

by Bruce Wilcox

The gospel addresses deep human needs; needs that were placed in us by our Creator. One of our needs is to have a future. We all want to know that the immediate is not "all there is," to use Peggy Lee's plaintive phrase. We also want to live well in the here and now. Every one of us wants, in the heart of hearts, to be a beautiful human being.

Paul's letters address both of those needs. In Philippians 4:8 he gives an important clue about living well: he tells us to focus our thoughts on the best.

About five years ago Harry Stein began writing an "Ethics" column for *Esquire* magazine. In 1982 he collected some of his columns into a book and published them along with a short essay describing the effect of writing the column on his own perceptions and some of the responses he provoked by asking and trying to answer ethical questions. He writes, "The mail response to the column—and there was a great deal—revealed the vastness of the reservoir of hope and conscience that still exists in this land."¹ That response, it seems to me, is an expression of the widespread human desire to be a good, beautiful person.

One of Harry Stein's columns talks about "Racial Slurs, Ethnic Jokes." After discussing the usual "it doesn't hurt anyone" arguments, he makes two points. First, "slowly, over a period of years, the jokes take on a credibility of their own." That is, they *do* hurt people. Second, he talks about the effect on the people who make the jokes. "It is one of the melancholy facts of life that virtually all of us harbor some degree of prejudice. But if we accept the premise that this does not reflect the best in ourselves, then we should not give in to it so readily, should certainly not glory in it, should, perhaps, even try to change it."²

Both the apostle Paul and Harry Stein are telling us that living the abundant life is a matter of choosing to act and speak in ways that reflect the best that is in us. Sadly enough, we each carry inside us much that is bad. But we can choose not to express it. We don't need to make light of it or try to glory in it. We might even try to change it.

Mahatma Gandhi said "turn the spotlight inward." Sometimes that spotlight should be focused on the ugly, festering spots that need to be cut out or healed by the Holy Spirit. But that should be done in solitude and in prayer. In public, in the family, wherever we exist in relationship with another person, the spotlight should focus on the best that is in us. We should offer our best to each other.

REACT

1. Is focusing our "inner spotlight" on the negative aspects of our characters ever an effective means of bringing about change? Do you agree that focus on the negative in our experience should only take place in solitude?

EVIDENCE
Key text:
Philippians 4:8

"Over a period of years, the jokes take on a credibility of their own."

1. Harry Stein, *Ethics (and other Liabilities)*, p. 7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

Bruce Wilcox is professor of biochemistry at Loma Linda University.

Go For It!

by Lorraine Kokinos

HOW TO

Key text:
2 Timothy
2:22-26

My favorite stationery, created by Sandra Boynton, has this scene across the top of it: a mouse dragging an upside-down elephant by the tail. "Go for it!" is the charge accompanying the picture. How do Christians "go for it" when pursuing the qualities of 2 Timothy 2:22-26: righteousness, faith, love, peace, kindness, apt teaching, forbearing, and correcting with gentleness?

1. **Realize that such qualities are a way of life, not only feeling.** If a random desire to pursue the best is all that's needed, then the Christian life would be so much simpler, yet so much shallower. To "go for" righteousness, faith, kindness, and gentleness will often bring conflict. Not many people are seeking such things, for it takes great discipline to set aside our own self-interests and do what's right.

2. **Acknowledge that to attain the best requires a single devotion.** Paul wisely advises Timothy to pursue the best, fully realizing that such a course will choke out youthful passions, stupid, senseless controversies, and a quarrelsome spirit (2 Tim. 2:22, 23). Olympic contenders fully realize that the attainment of a gold medal requires a singular devotion. Christians must be as fully prepared for rigorous moral training, for the best is never quickly or easily gained. Both athletes pursuing physical greatness and Christians pursuing moral greatness must realize that such a commitment will begin to squeeze other things out of their lives.

3. **Remember you're not in this alone.** Paul's counsel to Timothy to pursue the best is also God's will for your life. If you aim to love, give peace, and correct with gentleness, be assured that God also desires these things for you. If God is for you and you're on his side, then what is to prevent you from achieving such noble qualities?

REACT

Are there social dimensions to the pursuit of righteousness, love, and peace, as well as personal ones?

Lorraine Kokinos is a graduate student at Loma Linda University pursuing an Ed.S. in school psychology.

Hypocrites Are Welcome

by Bruce Wilcox

It seems to me that there are good and bad hypocrites, and that most hypocrites are in fact a mixture. Bad hypocrites try to appear to be something they aren't just to get some benefit, with no desire or intention to change for the better. Good hypocrites wish they were better people—so they try to look better than they are—and change if they can.

We are all two-faced, to some degree. Go ahead and show your good face to the world. God gave you that "face"—it is mostly not your own doing—it is his part in you. True, you are fallen. You have an ugly "face," too. But it gives no glory to God for you to *show* that "face." He didn't give it to you. In fact, he has promised to remove it and to remodel your good "face," if you will let him. When he is finished, you will reflect his glory in a special and unique way.

Furthermore, he gives you the privilege of helping him in his work of recreation. Especially, you can help the other persons in your life show their good faces. Reinforce their good behavior; don't reinforce their bad. If your brother has a vicious sense of humor or is an incurable gossip, don't encourage these failings by laughing at his mean jokes or acting interested in his gossip. If your best friend has trouble with procrastination, don't invite her to the snack bar just after she finally settles down to writing her term paper. This is particularly important when you are parenting. To point out the faults in a child often reinforces them. If you express approval and gratitude for good behavior, you are far more likely to see change for the better.

It is true that Jesus defeated death, and that we can't earn salvation, we can only accept it. But we do have to live out our lives on this earth. Who wants to keep on living a wretched life? Who wouldn't rather be sweet-tempered, brave, outgoing, friendly, and trustworthy? The good news is that we can begin to change in that direction. Now.

REACT

1. Is someone with a genuine desire to change the bad aspects of his character really a hypocrite?
2. Shouldn't we be open with one another about our weaknesses, rather than just showing our "good face"?

OPINION

Key text:
Daniel 12:3;
Revelation 3:12

Bruce Wilcox is a professor of biochemistry at Loma Linda University.

Friday, June 7 97

Apart From God

"You were immersed in this world, without hope and without God. But now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart have been brought very close"
(Ephesians 2:12, 13, Jerusalem Bible).



Success In Higher Education

by Sandra May

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 3:1-9

I had never been to New England before, much less attended an Ivy League School. But there I sat in my dorm room looking at an undeniably familiar mug smiling out cautiously from the Harvard Student Directory. It was the big change I had wanted after an all-Adventist education—to live with people “of the world” and experience my Christianity in a secular environment.

I had long played over in my mind Milton's quote, “I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out to see her adversary.”¹ So curiosity had led me capriciously across the states and deposited me at Cambridge.

The first weeks were great. Newness has an alluring quality—a subtle suggestion of improvement. By the second month, with studies running long and heavy, I felt a degree of settling in with new friends and routines. Yet, some quality was missing. In my classes, and with each new acquaintance, there was an air of weightiness about our purpose there. The need to excel and become successful was ever present. From the distinguished lecturers to the prestigious clubs, the same message emanated—success breeds here. Don't be a disappointment!

I saw it in Matt's eyes when he had stayed up all night to

finish an architectural drawing. I heard it from Rita, my colorful, feminist roommate, when results from the statistics class came out. From David of Singapore, Mpra of Africa, and Ken from Wyoming, it came through clearly: we were there, first and foremost, to “make it.” Jason put it in its barest form one early morning, saying through bleary eyes, “I've been up for 36 hours and can hardly think straight, but you just have to do it to survive. There's no other way. You just psych yourself up, and in three years you'll have it made. But you've got to remember that now. Talk to yourself, keep yourself up.”

I ambled back to my room thinking about that. Few things in life I had wanted *that* much. I watched the squirrels jump, limb to limb, outside the window and thought about what lay ahead of me. I thought about the striving and achieving which is such a part of life. I could not help but compare the energy expended to succeed here, and the energy called for in seeking to know God. I remembered God's promise, that he would be found, if I searched with all my heart. And what was the abundant life he offered? Would it mean more than my degree from Harvard? Could I have both? Was there time for both?

While the squirrels scampered and my mind wandered, a familiar tune came to me from the gentle Praise

INTRO- DUCTION

At the time of this writing, Sandra May was a seventh-grade teacher in Calimesa, Calif.

Album. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Yes, I believed there was room for both, but priorities were needed. I could seek success by the world's standards, apart from God, then offer my academically successful life to him; or I could give him my life now, and let him help me discover what success would be for me.

It seemed one of Satan's most subtle snares, believing that I could do it on my own if I "psyched myself up." The

natural outcome obviously would follow, that the credit belonged to me also, and I could become self-sufficient, self-directed, self-satisfied, or self-destructive. Scripture says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25). To our confusion then, as to what *is* the way, Christ answers so simply, "I am" (John 14:6). When my strivings would be losings, he offers me the ultimate in higher education, "Come . . . , and learn of me" (Matt. 11:28, 29).

1. John Milton,
Aeropagitica.

Last-day Dangers

LOGOS

Theme: Life apart from God is expressed in various ways, such as selfishness, hedonism, formalistic religion, and false teaching; all of which Christians are vulnerable to if they neglect their relationship with Christ.

1. Perils of the Last Days (read 2 Tim. 3:1-5)

"Mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days" (3:1, NIV).

Since the early church grew out of Judaism it, to a large degree, assimilated the Jewish view of eschatology: "The Jews divided all time into *this present age* and *the age to come*. This present age was altogether evil; and the age to come would be the golden age of God. In between the two ages there was *The Day of the Lord*. . . . That Day of the Lord was to be preceded by a time of terror; a time when evil would gather itself for its last and final assault and the world would be shaken to its moral and physical foundations. It is in terms of these last times that Paul is thinking in this passage."¹

Paul goes on to list some of the last-day sins. As we look about and see these occurring with increasing frequency this list takes on special significance. Donald Guthrie comments: "The first two, (*philautoi*) [lovers of themselves] and (*philarguroi*) [lovers of money], supply the key to the rest of the list. . . . Moral corruption follows from love falsely directed. Self-centeredness, and material advantages, when they become the chief objects of affection, destroy all moral values, and the subsequent list of vices is their natural fruit. It is significant that the list ends with a similar pair of words compounded with *philo*—[lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God]." This is "expressive of the Greek and implies . . . that pleasure was regarded as a substitute for God. Basically, materialism is opposed to piety, and is bound to end in irreligion."²

2. Avoiding the Perils

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Eze. 36:26, 27, NIV).

Ezekiel gives an excellent summary of what Paul might have said had he chosen to spell out the means of avoiding last day perils. As Ezekiel observes, a new heart, controlled by the love of God and oriented toward the will of God, is the only antidote for sin in our lives. And of course—like everything God has for us—it's a gift.

Is it possible to have a spiritually hybrid heart—part new, part old? Is this the condition of those "having a form of godliness but denying its power"?

L. R. C.

1. William Barclay *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 182.
2. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistle*, pp. 156, 157.

Heeding the Great Moral Looking Glass

selected by Mike Boyko

TESTIMONY

Key text:
James 1:21-25

With the growing contempt for God's law there is an increasing distaste for religion, an increase of pride, love of pleasure, disobedience to parents, and self-indulgence; and thoughtful minds everywhere are anxiously inquiring, What can be done to correct these alarming evils? The answer is found in Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Preach the word." In the Bible are found the only safe principles of action. It is a transcript of the will of God, an expression of divine wisdom. It opens to man's understanding the great problems of life, and to all who heed its precepts it will prove an unerring guide, keeping them from wasting their lives in misdirected effort.¹

If Christ's words were received into the soul, there would be a much higher intelligence, and a much deeper spiritual knowledge of what constitutes one a disciple and a sincere follower of Christ. When the test and trial comes to every soul, there will be apostasies. Traitors, heady, highminded and self-sufficient men will turn away from the truth, making shipwreck of their faith. Why?—Because they did not dig deep, and make their foundation sure. They were not riveted to the eternal Rock. When the words of the Lord, through His chosen messengers, are brought to them, they murmur and think the way is made too strait. Like those who were thought to be the disciples of Christ, but who were displeased by His words, and walked no more with Him, they will turn away from Christ. . . .

"In the Bible are found the only safe principles of action."

There are men who hear, but who do not learn the lesson as diligent students. They have a form of godliness, but are not believers. They know not the truth they practice. They receive not the engrafted word. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." He did not receive the impression made upon his mind when comparing his course of action with the great moral looking glass. He did not see his defects of character. He did not reform, and forgetting all about the impression made, he went not God's way, but his way, continuing to be unreformed.²

REACT

Do you think the emphasis on righteousness by faith in the church during recent years has tended to make people more "hearers of the word" rather than "doers"?

¹ *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 506.

² *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 460.

Mike Boyko is a dentist and a part-time instructor in oral surgery at Loma Linda University.

Affirming the Power

by Dorene B. Sample

How can a Christian spend a whole week on a passage like 2 Timothy 3:1-9 without getting depressed?

It's an ugly picture Paul paints. It would be bad enough if the list of follies involved only "worldings." But Paul makes it plain that Christians are vulnerable. Our religion may be only intellectual lip service—we may have a form of godliness, but deny its power (vs. 5).

Paul himself felt the tug of despair as he pondered his own sinfulness. He cried out, "I have the desire to do what is good, but cannot carry it out." "In my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body . . . making me a prisoner of the law of sin. . . . What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:18, 22-24, NIV).

But Paul's courage revived as he exclaimed, "Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! . . . because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 7:24-8:2, 6, NIV).

The solution to Paul's dilemma was to allow his mind to be controlled by the Spirit of life. He recommends the same solution for us: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2, NIV). God has promised to write his laws in our minds (see Heb. 8:10).

Paul states triumphantly, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV).

Jesus referred to this transformation as a new birth, being born again of the Spirit (see John 3:3-8).

Jesus, born of the Holy Spirit, was the Son of God (see Matt. 1:18, 20). By being born again of the Holy Spirit, we too become sons of God. "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14, NIV). "To all who received him [Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12, 13, NIV).

As children of God, through the power of God's Spirit, we are given a new, spiritual heredity, and a new, spiritual environment to grow in. "Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church."¹

Through the power of God's Spirit, we have the joyous privilege of rising above the corruption Paul describes in 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 12:2

¹ *The Desire of Ages*,
p. 671

At the time of this writing, Dorene B. Sample was working as a demonstrator for Worthington Foods.

A Standing Denial

by Sandra May

HOW TO

Key text:

2 Timothy 3:4, 5

Living apart from God is not as easy as some would have us believe. It takes ingenuity, distortion, subtle deception, and perseverance, to mention but a few. But it can be done. Careful, consistent misunderstanding, pride, and selfishness will be your greatest assets—cultivate them thoroughly.

Any thinking individual will recognize communication as the foundation of relationships, so we will first direct our energies there.

1. **Crowd your days.** Use work, activities of daily living, social gatherings, schemes to get ahead in life—anything which will squeeze out time alone with God. *Do not pray*, you may come to depend on it.

2. **Avoid commitment.** A healthy cynicism will keep you free from whole-hearted involvement. Your criticism may even pass for concerned interest and discourage countless projects, as well as their leaders. Commitment involves responsibility and faithfulness. Who needs either? Marriage for life? Be serious; who knows what—or who—may come along in five years? Teach a Sabbath School lesson for a year? What if it's a perfect beach day?

3. **Resist Change.*** There are a few simple rules here:

a. Stifle creative ideas of worship.

b. Insist on conformity.

c. Emphasize "religion, good religion like it used to be."

4. **Keep it superficial.** In your line of work, it may, unfortunately, be necessary to familiarize yourself with Bible references or biblical characters. If this unlucky predicament is yours, the following advice may be helpful: Read, but *do not* digest the material. Once you've got the facts straight and can defend your position, underline the main thoughts and be done with it. (A yellow marker is clearly visible three pews back if others are to notice.)

5. **Avoid relevancy.** If asked to present any type of lesson at church, a clever, witty presentation will keep the mood from touching hearts. An excellent alternative is the metaphysical approach, elevating the discussion to sail just over their heads. Avoid practical applications or familiar instances. Clichés are an effective lubricant. They smooth over everything, but never clarify anything.

6. **If losing, make others feel worse.** Finally, if despite your noblest efforts, you are failing and find yourself being drawn to God, longing to live a life with him, there is still one last hope. Take pride in your lofty principles and capitalize on every instance which allows your high standards to denigrate and alienate others. This is a poor alternative, because you may really believe you are living a life in God. But wait a minute! If you can, "... put pleasure in the place of God . . . preserve an outward form of religion, but [be] a standing denial of its reality" (2 Tim. 3:5, NEB). Then you will have done it! Brilliant, who would have thought it? Living *in* the church, life apart from God.

*Do not open this subject for discussion among youth!!!

Sandra May, living in Loma Linda, California, tries hard not to follow her own advice.

Ground Level Power

by Ross Calkins

A few weeks ago I was with our youth group at a mission school on the Baja peninsula of Mexico. The school's 10,000-gallon water tank needed repairs. It was a concrete monster with a leaky bottom. Our mission was to fix it by manually cracking out the steel-reinforced slab that formed the old floor, so a new one could be poured.

Our equipment was basic—one sledge hammer for six guys! So, we had to take turns. Well, it didn't take long at this routine before we hit upon what we thought might be the panacea. Besides the manual tools, we also had an electric hammer drill. Our idea was to bore holes in the slab so it would crack away without so much hammering.

Placing the bit on a strategic spot I pulled the trigger, and the motor started to fly. I held on with both hands and leaned onto the thing as it bit into the hardened cement. I continued to exert pressure on the machine while carefully guiding its descent. Gradually my arms began to tire. It didn't seem like this magic tool was very swift. I got sick of inhaling the fine concrete dust that kept drifting up into my face.

Finally I stopped and pulled out the bit to check my progress. Surprisingly, after all that time, I had gone only a couple of inches into the slab.

Thinking back now, I have learned a great lesson about power. And the lesson is simply this: Anytime there is power, it demands something *from* you—even if it is working *for* you. In spite of the fact that it was a motor-driven tool, it took energy on my part to stay with it so it could do its work.

Which takes us back to our lesson theme about the games church people play (2 Tim. 3:1-5) when they adopt the form of religion but refuse its power. They are living apart from God. They appear to be Christians but aren't plugged in. The lives they live are kind of like posing with the power drill for a Mission Spotlight picture; they look fine for the slide report on Sabbath, but there's no progress. Somehow, it's more comfortable to rest than to ride the power.

When God comes and offers me power to repair my life, I have to make a choice. Will I try to swing my way through my own problems? Will I just ignore the problems? Or will I hang on to him while he does the work? If I do, somehow through the hardness of my life, God's mighty power will do the work he wants done.

REACT

How would you describe the relationship between divine power and human effort in living the Christian life? Do we have to do anything more than just "hang on to him and let God do the work?"

OPINION

Key text:
Ephesians
3:20, 21

"The lives they live are kind of like posing with the power drill for a Mission Spotlight picture."

Ross Calkins is a youth pastor in Loma Linda, California.

Keeping the Faith

**"I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"
(2 Timothy 4:7, NIV).**



Living Not in Vain

by Martin Luther King, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 4:1-7

Perhaps no American in this century has dared more boldly to preach, regardless of the unpopularity of his message or the violence of the opposition, than Martin Luther King, Jr. A few months before he was shot, perhaps in a moment of prescience, he spoke these words, eloquently expressing the desire to, like the apostle Paul, face death having "fought a good fight."

Every now and then I guess we all think realistically about that day when we will be victimized with what is life's final common denominator—that something we call death. We all think about it. And every now and then I think about my own death, and I think about my own funeral. And I don't think of it in a morbid sense. Every now and then I ask myself, "What is it that I would want said?" And I leave the word to you this morning.

If any of you are around when I have to meet my day, I don't want a long funeral. And if you get somebody to deliver the eulogy, tell them not to talk too long. Every now and then I wonder what I want them to say. Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace Prize, that isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards, that's not important. Tell them not to mention where I went to school.

I'd like somebody to men-

tion that day, that . . . "Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to give his life serving others." I'd like for somebody to say that day, that . . . "Martin Luther King, Jr., tried to love somebody." I want you to say that day, that . . . "I tried to be right on the war question." I want you to be able to say that day, that . . . "I did try to feed the hungry." And I want you to be able to say that day, that . . . "I did try, in my life, to clothe those who were naked." I want you to say, on that day, that . . . "I did try, in my life, to visit those who were in prison." I want you to say that . . . "I tried to love and serve humanity."

Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice; say that I was a drum major for peace; I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter. I won't have any money to leave behind. I won't have the fine and luxurious things of life to leave behind. But I just want to leave a committed life behind.

And that's all I want to say . . . if I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or song, if I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain. If I can do my duty as a Christian ought, if I can bring salvation to a world once wrought, if I can spread the message as the master taught, then my living will not be in vain.

Excerpted from the sermon "I've Been to the Mountaintop," preached by Dr. King on February 4, 1968. Cited in Coretta Scott King, *My Life With Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), pp. 348, 349.

I Have Kept the Faith

LOGOS Theme: Paul summarizes his message to Timothy by challenging him to proclaim the Word, uphold the truth, and steadfastly keep the faith.

1. Preaching the Word

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tim. 4:1, 2, NIV).

Paul now comes to the end of his letter and prepares to deliver his parting counsel to Timothy. His words intensify with a sense of reluctant deliberation and finality. He realizes that he may never communicate with Timothy again, so his words take on an enhanced significance.

Therefore, the importance of "preaching the Word," to Timothy as well as to us, cannot be overestimated. It is our solemn responsibility, and must be undertaken with energy: its effects can be universal. "When Lord Robert Cecil was asked to say what he considered the most useful thing the churches could do to aid the cause of world peace, he replied, 'Preach the gospel.'"¹ Our message is to be one of reassurance, inner peace, and hope in the life to come. Thus, "Life is not a meaningless tragedy but a glorious fellowship with the Father. Duty is not a dull drudgery, but a chance to be a fellow worker with God. Sin need not be endless slavery to evil, for Christ came into the world to save sinners. Death is not defeat . . . for the gift of God is eternal life. This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith (1 John 5:4). An essential element in the fulfillment of all our highest hopes is the proclamation of this word."²

The phrase "in season and out of season" is better understood as an admonition to take—and even make—all opportunities to express the gospel. "It was said of George Morrison of Wellington Church in Glasgow that with him wherever the conversation started, it went straight across to Christ. This does not mean that we will not choose our time to speak, for there is a courtesy in evangelism as there is in every other human contact; but it does mean that it may well be that we are far too shy in speaking to others about Jesus Christ."³

Do you feel that you are too shy in speaking about Christ? What might be done to increase one's confidence?

2. Teaching the Truth

"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do

the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry" (2 Tim. 4:3-5, NIV).

The teachers Paul refers to here were common in his era, offering false wisdom for pay. Plato described them as "making money by a scientific use of quibbles in private conversation, while quite aware that what they are teaching is wrong."⁴ Our modern variation is a penchant for fads and crazes—in every area of life, including religion. So Paul advised, "Keep your head in all situations." This is crucial in avoiding drastic fluctuations of faith, so common all around. The true Christian "is not the victim of crazes; stability is his badge in an unbalanced and often insane world."⁵

How do you distinguish between a religious "fad" and a new idea or movement of genuine worth?

3. Keeping the Faith

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6, 7, NIV).

Now Paul comes to the climax of his message—and his life. He knows that his time is ending and turns to face death with the same courage and enthusiasm with which he encountered life. For he "did not think of himself as going to be executed; he thought of himself as going to offer his life to God. Ever since his conversion, he had offered everything to God—his money, his scholarship, his strength, his time, the vigour of his body, the acuteness of his mind, the devotion of his heart. Only life itself was left to offer, and gladly Paul was going to lay it down."⁶

To sum up his life, Paul employs his favorite metaphors with dramatic force. He is, in rising crescendo, the triumphant soldier, the victorious athlete, the persevering Christian. For he indeed had kept the faith, meaning that "through thick and thin, in freedom and in imprisonment, in all his perils by land and sea, and now in the very face of death, he had never lost his trust in Jesus Christ."⁷ A fitting requiem for one of God's heroes.

Will the same be said of us?

L. R. C.

1. *Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 11, p. 508.
2. *Ibid.*
3. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 204.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

The Need Today

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians
6:3-10

Paul was about to finish his course, and he desired Timothy to take his place, guarding the church from the fables and heresies by which the enemy, in various ways, would endeavor to lead them from the simplicity of the gospel. He admonished him to shun all temporal pursuits and entanglements that would prevent him from giving himself wholly to his work for God; to endure with cheerfulness the opposition, reproach, and persecution to which his faithfulness would expose him; to make full proof of his ministry by employing every means within his reach of doing good to those for whom Christ died.

**“For want of
such workers
the cause
of God
languishes.”**

Paul's life was an exemplification of the truths he taught, and herein lay his power. His heart was filled with a deep, abiding sense of his responsibility, and he labored in close communion with Him who is the fountain of justice, mercy, and truth. He clung to the cross of Christ as his only guarantee of success. The love of the Saviour was the undying motive that upheld him in his conflicts with self and in his struggles against evil as in the service of Christ he pressed forward against the unfriendliness of the world and the opposition of his enemies.

What the church needs in these days of peril is an army of workers who, like Paul, have educated themselves for usefulness, who have a deep experience in the things of God, and who are filled with earnestness and zeal. Sanctified, self-sacrificing men are needed; men who will not shun trial and responsibility; men who are brave and true; men in whose hearts Christ is formed “the hope of glory,” and who with lips touched with holy fire will “preach the word.” For want of such workers the cause of God languishes, and fatal errors, like a deadly poison, taint the morals and blight the hopes of a large part of the human race.

As the faithful, toil-worn standard-bearers are offering up their lives for the truth's sake, who will come forward to take their place? Will our young men accept the holy trust at the hands of their fathers? Are they preparing to fill the vacancies made by the death of the faithful? Will the apostle's charge be heeded, the call to duty be heard, amidst the incitements to selfishness and ambition that allure the youth?

Excerpted from *The Acts
of the Apostles*, pp.
506-508.

The Wisdom of a Great Mentor

by Don McAdams

Phillipe Aries, one of the most influential historians of the 20th century, began writing on the family, attitudes toward death, and human development in 1948. In the 1970s his books were translated into English to the acclaim of the critics, and his ideas began to influence the popular press in America. Scholars like Professor Aries have helped us to understand that people pass through many stages in their lives. The Freudian emphasis on the early years has been replaced with a realization that there are many stages of development and transition. People can and do change.

A critical period of development is early adulthood, the years from 26-34. During these years young adults need a mentor. Almost every person who has achieved distinction in a professional area has had a mentor. The mentor is one who is older, has achieved, and now has wisdom he wishes to share with a promising acolyte. From the mentor, the younger person learns the subtleties and nuances of the profession and vicariously obtains the experience needed to accept responsibility and move into a position of leadership. The young person *needs* this mentor. Without him he cannot reach the commanding heights of his profession. The mentor also receives benefit from the relationship. He perpetuates himself and his service by passing on to a younger person—one who reminds him of himself in his younger days—the arcane knowledge and instincts that have made him successful.

Paul was Timothy's mentor. The relationship that Paul could not have with John Mark he was able to have with Timothy. Timothy was a young man with great promise, an apt student. Paul had shared everything with Timothy, giving him the opportunity to grow and develop into an effective preacher and pastor. The letters to Timothy show the great love the mentor had for his protégé.

Of course, mentor relationships must end as the mentor reaches retirement or the younger person moves into a leadership position of his own. So the relationship between Paul and Timothy had to end. The apostle, in prison, knew that the time had come for Timothy to assume leadership and work independently. Near the end of his last letter, he spoke in a way that any of us who have been fortunate to have a mentor can recognize as words filled with emotion and with penetrating significance. "And so I solemnly urge you before God and before Jesus Christ," says the apostle, "to preach the word of God, correct and rebuke your people. . . . And don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. . . . I say this because I won't be around to help you very much longer" (2 Tim. 4:1, 2, 5, 6, Living Bible).

The words of Paul come down through the centuries to young people of today as the distilled wisdom of a great mentor: preach the word, don't be afraid, bring others to Christ.

REACT

Can you identify "mentors" in your Christian experience? How have they affected you?

Don McAdams was president of Southwestern Adventist College at the time of this writing.

EVIDENCE

Key text:

2 Timothy 4:5

Enduring Confidence

by Gene Edelbach

HOW TO
Key Text:
Deuteronomy
31:6

Some of the most comprehensive words of advice are spoken during the fading moments of life. It is often at this time that individuals grasp to the fullest extent the true values and meanings of life. They have lived through all the stages of development, and because they have reached the end, they feel a need to summarize their achievements and pass their unfinished work to others.

Thus Paul's final message to Timothy has particular cogency and urgency. In these closing lines he summarizes the issues that he feels are most important to him, and consequently to the work of God.

Although his message was directed specifically to Timothy, several points can be derived that are useful to us in carrying on our portion of God's work effectively.

1. Preach and teach the truth with vigor. It is interesting to note that Paul gave specific instruction as to the method in which the truth was to be spread and did not merely use a generic term ordering the work to proceed. At times many of us, especially those of us who are second- and third-generation Adventists, direct most of our religion-related energies only toward living the truth and forget the preaching and the instruction of truth. Although truth must be lived before an effective witness can take place, maybe some of us should return to the precepts from past generations and generate a more active, verbal witness.

2. Endure in your efforts as Paul endured. Paul had lived a tough, uncompromising existence. His experience as a Christian had not been easy. He had stood for God's cause in the face of every imaginable type of opposition. He wanted Timothy to realize that his job wasn't going to be easily or quickly accomplished.

We too must realize that the Christian walk requires struggle and endurance. Those who persevere, however, are promised fulfillment along the way and a magnificent final reward.

3. Share the confidence Paul had in his choice of life-style. The words, *I have fought, I have finished, I have kept*, are not phrases that tell of a vacillating life filled with indecision. God does not mean for us to be unaware of what our standing is with him. Paul had confidence that his life was in the hands of his Lord, and so should we.

Gene Edelbach is a senior secondary education student at Southwestern Adventist College.

A Convincing Challenge

by Erwin Sicher

People who pay for their belief with suffering are more credible than people who only say they believe. It makes no sense to suffer if one does not fervently believe.

This is one reason why Paul's final, solemn charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:1-7) carries convincing power. He seems to be saying, "I am not asking you, Timothy, to do something I have not believed, something I have not lived, and something I am not shortly going to die for. I am telling you the truth; accept the authenticity of my words and the task I am giving you on the basis of my life."

The task Paul outlined for Timothy was this: preach the Word of God and do it with great urgency. It is a matter of life and death. Work at it incessantly, "in season and out of season," whether the occasion is favorable or not, whether people listen or not.

Timothy must convict sinners and make them aware of their sins. He must rebuke them fearlessly, as Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, and as Ambrose of Milan rebuked the emperor Theodosius for the slaughter of Thessalonians and refused him admission to church until he had done penance. But this convicting and rebuking should not be done in such a way that it drives people to despair, and it should always be tempered by encouragement. Psychologists tell us encouragement is essential to producing personal change. Christians should use it at least as much as they use rebukes.

Finally, the duty of convicting, rebuking, and encouraging must be done with unending patience and perseverance. Timothy, and for that matter all of Christ's workers, must never despair, they must never regard any individual as hopeless and beyond salvation. As William Barclay writes: "The Christian patiently believes in men because he unconquerably believes in the changing power of Christ."¹

The job will not be easy. People will refuse to listen. Rather than listening to the truth, they will follow novelties and myths. But when we do the task we have been assigned, the world benefits. This should be reason enough to do it, but it also gives meaning to our own lives. Dr. Victor Frankl once said, "Until we recognize that life is not just something to be enjoyed but rather is a task that each of us is assigned, we'll never find meaning in our lives and we'll never truly be happy."²

Even when the task is difficult and embraces suffering, there are benefits. Paul said it in another place: "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us" (Rom. 5:3-5, RSV).

REACT

Do you think popular Christianity today has overemphasized positive thinking to the point where there now needs to be more direct rebuking of sin and correction of those who are falling short of biblical standards of behavior?

OPINION

Key Text:
2 Timothy 4:1-7

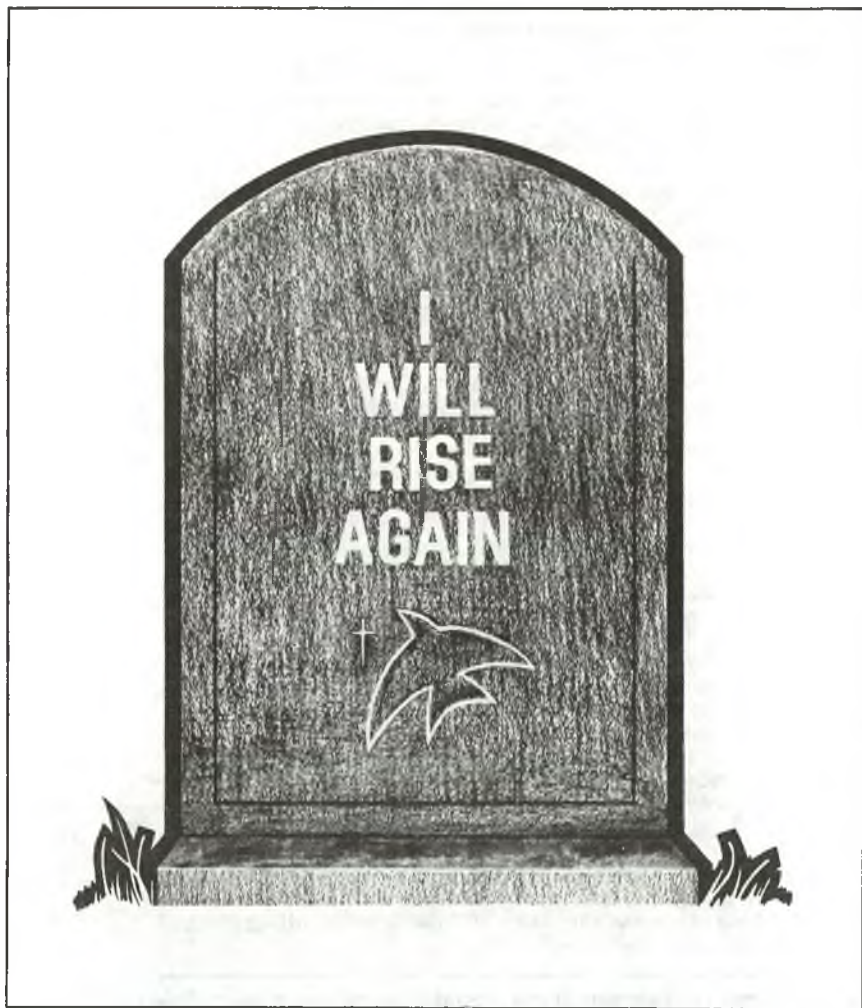
"Life is not just something to be enjoyed but rather is a task."

1. William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 237.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back*, p. 186.

Erwin Sicher is chairman of the Social Science and History Department at Southwestern Adventist College.

Hope That Doesn't Disappoint

"God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27, NIV).



A Torch Passing

by Don Pate

INTRO- DUCTION

This Week's Scripture:
2 Timothy 4:8, 16-18

I suppose that I would write differently if the shadow of Nero's sword were laying upon my page. I suppose my words would become more intense if I were waiting to hear the executioner rattle the keys in the lock of my cell door.

Paul was incredible, but we would be incredulous (or perhaps feel cheated somehow) if he had concluded this last letter with a lot of flowery palaver and not with a wrenching intensity born of a sense of eternity and a life work brilliantly completed.

What a life! Enough living for 20 men . . . educated at the feet of Gamaliel . . . a Sanhedrin expert on the commentaries and arguments of the fathers . . . a stoning pit in Jerusalem . . . Damascus road . . . lonely Arabia

. . . shipwrecks and persecutions, jails and baptisms . . . precious children of the faith spread to every corner of the empire. How many of these had preceded him in martyrdom and now were held in the promise of the resurrection?

What a life!

From the sunset horizon of life a generative and venerable old man now casts his shadow over the faithful for the last time. What would I say?

What would be your benedictory if you were the giant so soon to fall?

In 2 Timothy 4 the Patriarch rips back the walls of dungeon and death to shout victory. As I look at the page I sense very deeply that I must slow down, be quiet, and listen with a hunger.

After all, he's not going to be able to tell me anything more after this.

Don Pate is the chaplain at Chisholm Trail Academy and stands in awe of the transformation and growth of Paul.

We Have This Hope

LOGOS Theme: Christians may face the future, death, and judgment with a hope solidly grounded in Christ—his saving deeds in history and his presence in their lives.

1. Paul's Hope (read 2 Tim. 4:8, 16-18)

"Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me" (vs. 8, NIV).

Paul, in reviewing his life, is confident of what is to come. He has lived his life in harmony with God's will; and knowing how God has worked in his life, he is sure of his reward. He is confident that the Lord will rescue him from every evil attack and bring him safely into the kingdom (vs. 18) where, on that day, he will receive the crown of righteousness which is given to all the faithful. This does not mean he expects to be delivered from death or hardship, but rather that his salvation for the kingdom is assured.

In reviewing your past, do you receive similar assurance to that of Paul's? If not, how can such assurance be realized?

2. The Basis for Hope (read Romans 5:1-5)

"Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (vs. 5, NIV).

Paul's hope is a reasoned hope that is well-grounded. It is not founded in his love for God, but in God's love for him. This love suffers no fluctuation or reverse. Thus the hope which this love promises is as irreversible as the love itself. All have access to this same hope. Through being justified by faith we have peace through Jesus Christ, so that in all situations we can rejoice. We rejoice in the hope of the coming glory (vs. 2) and even in suffering (vs. 3).

How does one rejoice in suffering, such as the suicide of a friend or relative, the agony of cancer, the break-up of a home, or an individual's rejection of Christ? What consolation does the hope of Christ afford?

3. The Basis of Hope Internalized (read Col. 1:27; Phil. 1:20, 21).

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21, NIV).

When we have been justified and thus have obtained the peace of Jesus Christ, hope is internalized. Christ lives in us. Being filled with his life gives us the hope of sharing in the fullness of his glory, both here and hereafter. So no matter the circumstances, hope remains sure because in Christ to live or die has the same reward—sharing in his glory.

How can one share Christ's glory here and now? What is the glory of Christ now, and in his coming kingdom?

E. R. M.

Focus on the Future

by Marti Thurber

"Ransomed by the sacrifice of Christ, washed from sin in His blood, and clothed in His righteousness, Paul has the witness in himself that his soul is precious in the sight of his Redeemer. His life is hid with Christ in God, and he is persuaded that He who has conquered death is able to keep that which is committed to His trust. His mind grasps the Saviour's promise, 'I will raise him up at the last day.' John 6:40. His thoughts and hopes are centered on the second coming of his Lord."¹

Paul always kept a sharp focus on the glory of the second coming. In all his communication he refers to the event and the fulfillment of hope and joy that it will bring. All of the sacrifice and benevolence of the Godhead will culminate in this grand "parousia." Having received reconciliation with God in the present (Romans 5:10, 11), Paul looked forward to the ultimate reconciliation with God forever. He longed for the day when he could walk with his Lord in heaven.

"The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love,—love that 'vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil' (1 Cor. 13:4, 5),—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity. This spirit was made manifest in the life of Paul. . . . 'Christ shall be magnified in my body,' he said, 'whether it be by life or by death.' Phil. 1:21, 20."²

All God's children will manifest this same spirit of self-sacrificing love, the love that places others first. The law of love is in their hearts and their hopes are fulfilled in Jesus. When Jesus returns, and they "enter into the city, the crown of the overcomer is placed upon their heads. . . . All heaven is filled with rich music, and with songs of praise to the Lamb. Saved, everlastingly saved, in the kingdom of glory! To have a life that measures with the life of God—that is the reward."³

TESTIMONY

Key Text:
2 Timothy 4:8

"To have a life that measures with the life of God—that is the reward."

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 512, 513.
2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 549.
3. *Seventh-day Adventists Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 982.

Marti Thurber was a senior ministerial student at Southwestern Adventist College at the time of this writing.

The Unshakable Hope

by Rene Quispe

EVIDENCE

Key Text:
1 Corinthians
15:12-22

Hope has been defined as a "desire accompanied by expectation," or "interest or desire whose fulfillment is cherished."¹ This experience of hope permeates the pages of the Bible, and there is no other Bible writer that conveys such a dynamic hope as Paul does. He considers the future with the same assurance that motivates his present life. For him "hope" involves all facets of his relationship with God. Paul believes the source and ground of hope is the "God of hope" (Rom. 15:13). Hope rests upon God's calling and upon his promise (Rom. 4:17-21). The gospel mediates hope (Col. 1:23), and the Holy Spirit conveys the indwelling Christ, who is "in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27, NIV).

As the individual responds to God's loving activity, Paul sees hope closely associated with unshakable confidence (Rom. 4:18; 5:5), rejoicing (Rom. 5:2; 12:12), steadfast endurance (Rom. 5:4; 8:25), boldness (2 Cor. 3:12; Phil. 1:20), peace (Rom. 5:1; 12:16), and love (1 Cor. 13:7). These are not separate virtues, but interacting gifts of the Spirit that come through faith in Christ. Without faith in him there can be no hope, for hope is rooted in Christ alone (Eph. 2:12, 13). Faith without hope would, by itself, be empty and futile (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). The fulfillment of the Christian's hope is the second coming of Christ, "the blessed hope" (Tit. 2:13), when the resurrection of the dead and the inheritance of eternal life will culminate a history of hopeful expectations (1 Cor. 15:51-58). The Christian's hope is therefore based on an act of religious faith and cannot be either proved or disproved by any empirical observation.²

"Faith without hope would, by itself, be empty and futile."

If this is so, can we then talk of Christian hope and non-Christian hope? What were the differences between Paul's hope before and after his Damascus encounter with Christ? Is the hope of the Iranian soldier fighting in the front lines empty?

Some distinctive features of the Christian hope are: 1) Its content. It is never egocentric, but always centered on Christ and his ministry. 2) Its basis. It does not rest on human efforts but on the gracious work of God through Christ. He is "our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1, NIV). 3) Its nature as a gift. Hope is a gift of the Father's grace and, like faith, is aroused through the hearing of the gospel.³ 4) Its growth. It is received as a gift at the time of a personal encounter with Christ and continues to grow as the encounter is repeated daily. A relationship with the Source of all hopes will produce the hope that "does not disappoint us" (Rom. 5:5, RSV).

REACT

1. Do you agree that the Christian's hope cannot be either proved or disproved by any empirical observation? How would you describe the basis for Christian hope, particularly in view of the fact that there have been 2,000 years of sin and suffering since Christ promised to return?
2. Is hope, in the scriptural sense, the same thing as certainty?

Rene Quispe is senior pastor of the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church.

1. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Merrill C. Tenney, ed., vol. III, s.v. Hope.

2. *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, Alan Richardson, ed., s.v. Hope.

3. *The New International Dictionary of N.T. Theology*, Colin Brown, ed., s.v. Hope. Expectation.

A Source of Hope in the 80s

by Laurice Durrant

How can we in the 80s find hope in the face of the most distressing and trying circumstances which prevail all around us? It is my belief that trust in, and communion with God are two main avenues that lead to the certain "hope that doesn't disappoint."

The following two accounts illustrate these two steps which serve as precursors to hope.

1. A father and his nine-year-old daughter were swimming in the ocean. The tide began to go out, and they were separated by a large distance. She needed help to get back to shore. He called to her, "Float and swim quietly; don't be afraid; I'll be back to get you." He hurried for a boat and help. By the time he returned, the girl had been swept far out to sea. When they finally reached her, she was calmly floating around as her father had instructed. Later she was asked how she was able to remain so calm so far out alone. She said, "I just did what Dad told me to do. I knew he'd come back, and I wasn't afraid." Her trust in her father did not leave room for doubt. Hope banishes fear. Hope is kept alive through unwavering trust in God's promises. So never lose sight of the hope in Christ's return as promised in John 14.

2. My Genie garage door opener had faithfully worked, when pressed lightly, for over six years. My hope for an opened garage door was realized every time until one rainy day when the opener refused to work. I pushed, banged, and twisted the Genie, but it was a hopeless situation. Before discarding it I decided to pry it open and look inside. To my surprise I found a dead battery. It needed to be replaced to reconnect the electrodes. Soon it was, thus restoring that connection and, at the gentle pressing of the Genie, the garage door came alive and opened without hesitation, "according to my earnest expectation and my hope" (Phil. 1:20). Unless we are reconnected to the Source of all energy and life, our hope for eternal life is in vain. We can cultivate this hope through a close relationship with God, trusting his word fully and completely. Then we can say with Paul, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:8).

HOW TO
Key text:
Romans 5:5

Laurice Durrant is chairman of the Nursing Department at Southwestern Adventist College.

Hope in the Face of Death

by Gerald Colvin

OPINION

Time kept slipping away from me as I struggled to consciousness in the front seat of my car, only dimly aware that something disturbing and unexpected had taken place. A highway patrolman bent over me, cutting at my seat belt—why, I couldn't fathom. I drifted off again only to awaken on a stretcher with someone asking for my phone number. I missed the last digit! But the doctor somehow reached my wife Gayle, 90 miles away, and as he held the phone to my ear she sought to reassure me that the doctor said I was going to be okay. That's nice, I thought, but what was wrong with me in the first place? How distressing it was not to be able to put my questions into words. Yet I felt absolutely no pain.

When I awoke the next day in the hospital, I heard the words that hundreds of thousands of other car drivers have heard before me: "You were in a terrible car wreck!"

I was? I exclaimed to my wife. But how? Oh my, and had I been at fault? No? Then Gayle patiently explained to me that a truck had swerved from in front of me to avoid colliding with an automobile traveling the wrong way on the highway. He surely must have swerved at the last possible moment, because the only memory of the event that has ever come back to me is a sensation of flashing gray as the car driven by an intoxicated driver plowed headlong into mine.

Never before had I come so close to dying! A friend overheard members of the ambulance team whispering to one another at the hospital that I probably wouldn't make it through the night. But there I was the following afternoon with a collapsed lung, crushed ankle, deep gashes on my neck and chin requiring plastic surgery, scrapes and bruises all over—and asking questions!

Do you think I was disappointed to be alive? Do you think I lay there wishing I'd never come to after that collision so I wouldn't have to endure the pain merely of breathing, or the alarming possibility of amputation? Not at all! Believe me, I felt fortunate! I had come through such an awful crash when my life could easily have been snuffed out, as was the life of the drunken driver!

Yet, when Satan would have destroyed me, "the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me." When my educational ministry could have been prematurely and practically terminated, the Lord miraculously preserved my life, so that through me the message might be more fully proclaimed. He even reestablished the blood supply to my almost-severed ankle! I soon felt like shouting to every hospital visitor, "I was delivered from the lion's mouth"! (2 Tim. 4:17, NIV).

Beyond the hope of earthly preservation, however, each of us may possess a *hope* that contains absolutely no likelihood of disappointment: eternal life (see Rom. 5:5)! Student, scholar, counselor, parent, administrator, this week's lesson reminds us that we all may face the future death and judgment with a hope firmly anchored in Christ—his saving deeds recorded in Scripture and his active presence in our daily lives!

At the time of this writing Gerald Colvin was vice-president for academic affairs and professor of education and psychology at Southwestern Adventist College.

120 Friday, June 28

"I drifted off again to awaken on a stretcher with someone asking for my phone number."













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