

JULY-SEPTEMBER 1994

EQ
COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY



PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS

LOVE LETTERS

“Please don’t let the sun set.”

Till Morning Breaks

by
Elaine Egbert

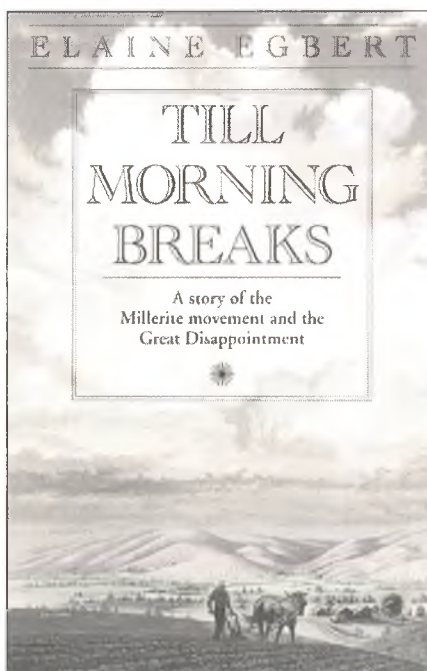
But the sun did set on October 22, 1844. And with it went the dashed hopes of thousands who had staked everything they had on Jesus’ return.

What was it like to live through that shattering time? To sacrifice not only possessions but also the closest of human relations in preparation for meeting Jesus face to face?

Till Morning Breaks is a dramatic retelling of this heart-wrenching experience. Through the eyes, ears, and hearts of the Fletcher family and others, you will relive that traumatic time and taste the advent believers’ passion for their Saviour. By doing so, perhaps your own passion to see Jesus will be rekindled.

US\$10.95/Cdn\$14.80.

**To order, call toll free
1-800-765-6955, or
visit your local ABC.**



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 547/9833



PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS: LOVE LETTERS

JULY - SEPTEMBER 1994

Staff

Editor: Gary B. Swanson

Editorial Assistant: Shirlee J. Ingram

Reading Committee

Marlynn E. M. Banta
Richard Barron
Stefan Bruggemann
Lyndelle Chiomenti
George Gainer
Erwin R. Gane

Pat Habada
Rick Kajjura
Gary Krause
Stacey Kuhlman
Israel Leito
Doug McLeod

Marco Menna
Rebecca O'Ffill
Richard O'Ffill
Tim Poirier
Joel Garbutt-Quistiano
Darcy Smith

Tom Smith
Michael D. Welch
Ted Wick
Myron Widmer
Melvin Wolford

CQ is written by Seventh-day Adventist young adults and their friends around the world.

Editorial Office: Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.

Place orders with: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., P.O. Box 7000, Boise, ID 83707, U.S.A.

Other than the King James Version, Scripture versions used in this quarterly are as follows:

LIVING BIBLE (TLB)

Verses marked TLB are taken from The Living Bible, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. Used by permission.

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE (NASB)

Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the New American Standard Bible, © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977.

NEW ENGLISH BIBLE (NEB)

Scriptures quoted from NEB are from The New English Bible, copyright © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

Scriptures quoted from NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NKJV)

Scriptures quoted from NKJV are from The New King James Version, copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

REVISED STANDARD VERSION (RSV)

Scriptures quoted from RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission.

CQ (ISSN 0744-2939). Volume 17, No. 3. Published quarterly by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.; and printed by Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 North Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687, U.S.A. Place orders with Pacific Press Pub. Assn., P.O. Box 7000, Boise, ID 83707, U.S.A. One-year subscription in U.S.A., \$11.95; single copy, \$5.75. One-year subscription in countries outside U.S.A., \$14.95; single copy, \$5.75. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Nampa, ID 83687.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to CQ, P.O. Box 7000, Boise, ID 83707, U.S.A. Send editorial inquiries to CQ, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A. Send circulation inquiries to Pacific Press Publishing Association, P.O. Box 7000, Boise, ID 83707, U.S.A. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

Copyright © 1994 by the Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA.



LOVE LETTERS



Contents & Contributors

- 1 Crossing the Finish Line** _____ **8**
**South Atlantic Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,
Atlanta, Georgia**
Editor: V. J. Mendinghall
Contributors:
Lisa Applewhite Sheldon Jefferson Shederick A. McClendon
Karen Fray Kempthorne Johnson V. J. Mendinghall
- 2 The Words of God's Prisoner** _____ **16**
Avondale College, Cooranbong, N.S.W., Australia
Editor: Robert K. McIver
Contributors:
Alan Lindsay Julie Squire Mark Wilson
Robert McIver Gwen Wilkinson Norman H. Young
- 3 What's the Big Difference?** _____ **24**
**General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,
Silver Spring, Maryland**
Editor: Gary B. Swanson
Contributors:
Dave Foreman Lisl H. Moyer Jeff Scoggins
Victoria Graham Thomas R. Neslund Martin Weber
- 4 Doing the Right Thing** _____ **32**
Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts
Editor: Richard Trott
Contributors:
Gwen Ashley Paula Perrone Kristin M. Viana
D. Robert Kennedy Douglas Robertson
- 5 Watching the Horizon** _____ **40**
North York Branson Hospital, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Editor: Shelley Nolan
Contributors:
Brian Fenton John Lim Shelley Nolan
Zoran Krkljus Sam Mathi Rex Strom

- 6 **Everything You Need** _____ 48
Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland
Editor: George Gainer
Contributors:
José H. Cortés, Jr. Friederich E. Herlinger Darcy Smith
Melvyn E. F. Hayden III Darlene Schoonover Roger Williams
- 7 **Salvation Is for Losers** _____ 56
Pacific Union College, Angwin, California
Editor: Mike Dunn
Contributors:
Teresa Byrne Keith Potts Dottie Ross
DeEtte M. DeVille Kent Rathbun Dan Savino
- 8 **Hoping Against Hope** _____ 64
Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio
Editor: Dan Solis
Contributors:
Robert Dunn Donald R. Martin Dan Solis
Will Eva
- 9 **God's Survival Kit** _____ 72
**British Isles Headquarters Seventh-day Adventist Church,
Watford, Hertfordshire, England**
Editor: Paul D. Tompkins
Contributors:
Velettia Davis Alvern McCrow Cedric Vine
Richard Johnson Robert Surrige Karen Weekes
- 10 **The Quick Fix** _____ 80
- 11 **God's Hand-Me-Down** _____ 88
Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska
Editor: Rich Carlson
Contributors:
Unetta Campbell Craig Hagelgantz Scott Morton
Rich Carlson Tom Hinde, Jr. Ralph E. Neall
Helen Cassidy Wendy Huffman David H. Thiele
Kristine M. Elving Michaele Lawrence Janelle Wolfe
- 12 **Whatever It Takes** _____ 96
- 13 **Many Friends, Many Ways** _____ 104
Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington
Editor: John Cress
Contributors:
Karen Dawes Sallye Pershall Brenda Royer
Ingrid de Graaff Julie Rathjen Marc Wall
Becky Guth Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid Bert Wredberg
Carrie Oellrich Wendy Rittenbach

This Quarter's Artist



Jacquie Hammonds currently lives in Indianapolis, Indiana, and makes her living there as a graphic artist/typesetter/illustrator. She has done freelance work for the Indiana and Lake Union Conferences, as well as local and out-of-state businesses and organizations.

Jacquie has a BFA in fine arts with concentrations in painting, drawing, and printmaking from Herron School of Art, a division of Indiana University in Indianapolis. She gained much of her graphic art experience from being an art director at a small-town weekly newspaper.

She keeps busy in her home church, helping in the Sabbath School divisions and music ministry. She is also involved with women's ministries at the local and union levels.

She enjoys singing, sailing, writing, hiking, photography, computers, good competition, and good friends. She hopes someday to illustrate and write children's books.

Getting the Most Out of *CQ*

Facts You Should Know

CQ is based on the conviction that the Word of God offers transforming power and that group study is one important way to tap into that power. *CQ*'s purpose is to provide Seventh-day Adventist young adults with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed each week in Sabbath School. Many who use the adult quarterly find that, because *CQ* deals with the same topics as the adult quarterly, it enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist young-adult groups work together in producing this quarterly. More than 200 individuals contribute to *CQ* each year. The wide variety—and occasional repetition—of the content reflects the great diversity of its contributors around the world as they respond creatively and individually to the subject.

Circulation of *CQ* is about 35,000.

Pointers for Study

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

2. The Bible passage on which each week's lesson is based appears in bold type in the "Logos" pages (Monday's portion of the lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

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

4. Read remaining sections for the week with the perspective you have gained from your own study of the biblical passage.

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

"Introduction" (Sunday) is designed to stimulate your interest 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 a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective.

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

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

CQ and the Church

CQ is the General Conference-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.*

CROSSING THE FINISH LINE



“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

“A Good Work”

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Phil. 1:6

As Paul walks down the hill from the church he has just started, ten armored guards carrying chains confront him. As they announce their reason for approach (to jail him for spreading the gospel of Christ), they bind him and lead him to prison to await trial for preaching and teaching the Word of God.

This was not Paul's first time in prison since he had begun to preach the truth. Since then the jail had become an all too familiar place to him. Paul knew all about the conflicts he would encounter when preaching the gospel. After all, was not he the once-famous Saul of Tarsus who had harassed and killed many followers of Christ? Did he not know that the same people with whom he conspired to kill the Christians were now pursuing him? Then why did he continue to preach God's Word? Why didn't he stop teaching God's love, knowing that his life was constantly in danger?

Was it because of a reward he would receive when he had completed his mission? Could it be that he had nothing else to do with his time than to travel to

Paul would have died for Jesus on any given day.

different countries, telling people about a God who loves and died for them? On the contrary! Ever since Paul had had a calling from God, he had made a lifelong commitment to Christ to be used by Him. Thus, because of Paul's genuine love for Christ and sincere faith in Him, he firmly acted upon his convictions and carried out the duties God had given to him.

Paul would have died for Jesus on any given day, and he showed that dedication by preaching and teaching God's Word even though it was not in accordance with the laws of many professed religious people. Paul's perfect conduct often called for his arrest or some type of punishment by those professed godly people in high positions. However, instead of weakening Paul's stand for Christ, imprisonment, death threats, or personal loss only strengthened his convictions for Christ.

While Paul was in jail, he wrote one of the most encouraging letters to his brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul's joy, even though he was in prison, flowed from his awareness of the presence of Jesus, his confidence that he was in Christ's hands, his pleasure over the advancement of the gospel, and his single-minded desire to know Jesus.

By Karen Fray, a sophomore nursing major at Clayton State College, Morrow, Georgia.

Hanging Tough

LOGOS

Phil. 4:4

In the summer of 1972 our church in Charlotte, North Carolina, received a letter of invitation to send two delegates to a music festival at Camp Kulaqua, Florida. Hundreds of strapping young people with different backgrounds from around the union were packed into the auditorium. Enthusiasm and excitement were in the air. Elder John Thurber, former second tenor with the Voice of Prophecy quartet, was the featured presenter and chorister.

For many years we'd enjoyed a repertoire of dozens of favorite hymns and songs of praise—tired and worn favorites that had molded and inspired our hearts. But on this night Elder Thurber introduced a new song with a different tempo and lyrics, that even today, decades later, carries a tremendous message of good counsel, cheer, hope, and encouragement—a song filled with meaning and freshness. It defies the long, sullen expressions on the faces of some Christians today. It says that regardless of the situation or circumstances, we can choose to be joyous. I can almost hear the words right now:

“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!”

All the females would twice ring out these beautiful words in alto and soprano voices. Then the strong males' pipes would respond in round, with baritone and deep bass voices.

I had never experienced such a moment of connection with other people who were so convincingly joyful. The music and words impacted my soul to such degree that I actually felt like running and sharing with the nearest stranger my joy in the Lord.

Paul's experience and discovery of joy as a state of being, a condition of the mind and soul, certainly comes through his letter to the Philippians. After spending many years chasing Christians and terrorizing them with Gestapolike tactics, incarcerating and killing men, women, and children who believed differently from the establishment, now to find himself in the same situation in which he himself had once put others, must have been a humbling and growing experience, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3).

Now to be placed in jail with the cold, damp, dark walls his only companions was an education that needed no repeating. The smell of mildew and body waste had squelched the perfumed memory of honeysuckle and lilac from his nostrils.

The magnified sound of rats and mice in the stillness of the night, not knowing whether they were twelve feet or twelve inches from the delicate linings of his eyes. Cool nights with inadequate blankets forced a physically mature man to sleep in the fetal position to try to conserve body heat. The food was so bad that his already small frame was now beginning to suffer from a significant loss of body fat and muscle. Alone, but with an indelible sense of Divine presence, Paul was able to reflect on the goodness of God, to the extent that his environment became secondary to his relationship. His circumstance became secondary to his connec-

tion with Christ. His situation became secondary to his significant other. From what appears to be the worst predicament in which one could possibly find himself, Paul is able to sing like those young people at Camp Kulaqua:

“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!”

This state of being is a mystery to those who know not Christ. How is it possible to experience joy in tribulation? How can one sing while being persecuted? Paul himself had found it impossible to answer these questions just a few years earlier, but now he could say, like Habakkuk, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (3:17, 18).

This spirit, this attitude, can come only when one’s relationship with the Lord has developed to the extent that he or she is able to center his or her attention beyond

I had never experienced such a moment of connection with other people who were so convincingly joyful.

today’s personal circumstance and with joyful heart focus on the larger picture, which is preparation for the second coming of Christ. The answer lies in the ability to see beyond the tribulation of the moment and to live for the return of our Lord. It is rejoicing today with confident expectation of the eternal joy to come in an atmosphere and community where peace and gladness will forever be taken for granted simply because Jesus Christ is there.

REACT

1. In practical terms how do the words of Philippians 4:4 apply to stress in one’s life?
2. List some specific ways in which a person can “rejoice in the Lord.”
3. What is the difference, if any, between joy and happiness?
4. List some examples from Jesus’ life in which He demonstrated joy.

By V. J. Mendinghall, youth-ministries director of the South Atlantic Conference, Atlanta, Georgia.

Righteousness by Grace

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 1 Cor. 15:10

Grace is God's unmerited favor extended toward all of us. Through grace we can receive salvation (Acts 15:11), justification (Rom. 3:23, 24), and forgiveness (Eph. 1:7). Because of the abundance and manifold power of God's grace, we can experience the change in character and purpose of which Paul testifies in today's key text. "The grace of Christ with its purifying, ennobling influence will do more for us than all the worldly education upon etiquette that is made so essential."¹

"Through the grace of Christ, the highest attainments in character are possible; for every soul who comes under the molding influence of the Spirit of God, may be transformed in mind and heart. In order to understand your condition, it is necessary to study the Bible, and to watch unto prayer."²

"As we discern the perfection of our Saviour's character we shall desire to become wholly transformed and renewed in the image of His purity. The more we

Sensing a need in our soul for righteousness is evidence that the Holy Spirit is directing us to Christ.

know of God, the higher will be our ideal of character and the more earnest our longing to reflect His likeness. A divine element combines with the human when the soul reaches out after God."³

Sensing a need in our soul for righteousness, like a hunger or thirst, is evidence that the Holy Spirit is directing us to Christ, who will do those things which we cannot do by ourselves. The fruits of righteousness can be secured by God's grace, which is available to us by "[rising] a little higher in the pathway of faith."⁴

"The words of God are the wellsprings of life. . . . Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect, texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning as a flash of light, you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you, a divine Teacher is at your side."⁵

REACT

How can grace be obtained to achieve spiritual blamelessness?

1. *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 195, 196.
2. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 214.
3. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 19.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

By Lisa Applewhite, a Ph.D. student in developmental/biochemical biology at Clark-Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia.

Imprisoned Christians

EVIDENCE

Key Text: 1 Pet. 5:8

After being thrown into prison, Paul wrote to the church he had established at Philippi. And despite the shadows of imprisonment, Paul acted upon what he had spoken in 2 Corinthians 7:4 by writing inspired words of grace, peace, and thanksgiving that served as a vehicle in which Paul could escape the depressing scenes of imprisonment he was suffering for Christ's sake.

Have you ever been in prison? Are you presently in prison? No, not the dirty, man-made, concrete cubicles enclosed by iron bars, but the prison of spiritual complacency! Many of God's people are in the prison of stonehearted complacency. Yet, in contrast to Paul's imprisonment experience, the prison of spiritual complacency is created by one's self—and the suffering experienced within is not for Christ's sake.

But why have God's people been tranquilized by the devil's inebriating shot of complacency? "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roar-

Have you ever been in prison? Are you presently in prison?

ing lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Here Peter counsels us to be sober (serious, grave), and vigilant (on alert, watchful). But why?

Envision yourself walking through the tall, grassy plains of southeast Africa. There seems to be no apparent danger, so you decrease your watchfulness, increase your relaxation, and enjoy the scenery. A band of zebra gallop by ahead of you. Not a sound of human civilization can be heard. The silhouette of a giraffe graces your view of what is to become a picture-perfect sunset. "It's been a good walk," you say as you turn casually to retrace your steps. Unperceived by your senses, the grassy brush is slowly being parted 60 feet away, along the trail you have just trod. Four hundred pounds, nine feet long, four feet tall, and hungry. At the sight of the lion, you wish that you had increased your watchfulness instead of your relaxation.

Far worse is the case on the field of life when we are not sober or vigilant, because the devil is stalking us. As we look at the scenery, we become relaxed and unaware of certain danger. But by being sober and vigilant we will not become spiritually complacent, thus making ourselves less likely to be the prize of one likened unto a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

REACT

1. In a Christian context what is the difference, if any, between complacency and serenity?
2. How does one overcome spiritual complacency?

By Shelden Jefferson, a sophomore physical-therapy student at Clayton State College, Morrow, Georgia.

Winning the Struggle

HOW-TO

Key Text: Phil. 1:10, 11

The Christian experience can be frustrating sometimes, because when we measure ourselves up to Jesus Christ, we are so un-Christlike. But we should let the spiritual blamelessness that characterized Christ's life motivate our struggle to employ the "fruits of righteousness." Unfortunately, many Christians do not take hold of the mighty power God has promised them when He said He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). So, how do we reach victory over sin?

1. Constant fellowship with Jesus. The awesome power in prayer brings victories, for prayer is real fellowship with Jesus. We must not be content simply to say our daily prayers by rote memory. Instead, we must unwearingly persist in prayer because the more earnestly and steadfastly we ask, the closer will be our spiritual union with Christ. To receive power for victory over sin, we must plug in the cord and turn on the switch that will connect us with Heaven's powerhouse.

2. Surround yourself with positive peers. We gain strength to live holy when we are around other Christians who are striving to live right. Their experiences help

It's comforting to find a friend in someone who is struggling with the same problem you have.

us, and our lives can be a witness to them. This exchange makes the Christian experience a little less frustrating. It's also comforting to find a friend in someone who is struggling with the same problem you have. That is a perfect opportunity to establish a prayer partner and a friend to help keep you spiritually motivated. It is normal for us to experience spiritual highs and lows, but when we surround ourselves with positive peers, we are destined to have a more stable spiritual life.

3. Learn from your mistakes. We must use our past experiences as lessons to live by. We should make a particular mistake only once, because each mistake matures us. This can often be a painful growing process, but in the end it helps more than it hurts. We should also welcome constructive criticism. Also, we must never become discouraged when we stumble in sin. We must simply learn from our mistakes and get up fighting.

REACT

1. Explain why you agree or disagree that God's expectations of us are impossible to reach.
2. To what extent should the need for "positive peers" influence our choice of friends?
3. How does peer pressure, both positive and negative, affect an adult's life?

By Shederick A. McClendon, a graduate student in public health at Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia.

I Can Accomplish That!

OPINION

Key Text: Prov. 29:18

Do you know of anyone who became a vegetarian after eating meat for many years?

Perhaps you know of someone who went on a diet and was able to keep the weight off. We have all heard stories or know someone personally who overcame odds. Why were these individuals able to achieve success? These individuals were able to attain success by setting goals.

Goals are important for several reasons. First, they define clearly what we are trying to accomplish. We'll have a clearer picture of what we want to do, and the goal becomes more manageable. Second, when goals are in place, we are able to measure where we are and what has to be done to achieve them. Third, by having goals in place, we can determine a plan of action to achieve them.

Christ has a task He would like us to accomplish: to tell others of His love and to win souls for Him. Wow! That seems pretty hard to do, doesn't it? I can't give

Goals define clearly what we are trying to accomplish.

Bible studies, so how can I win souls for Christ? But wait a minute. Earlier on we said that a task can become manageable if goals are set.

Here is how it works. Let's say your goal is to win two souls for Christ in a year's time. That could mean you need to win one soul every six months.

If you were to bring 10 friends to church in the first six-month period, at least one of them may be baptized. So your plan could be to bring two different friends to church each month for five months. The Holy Spirit will work on their hearts, and at least one could accept the message and be baptized.

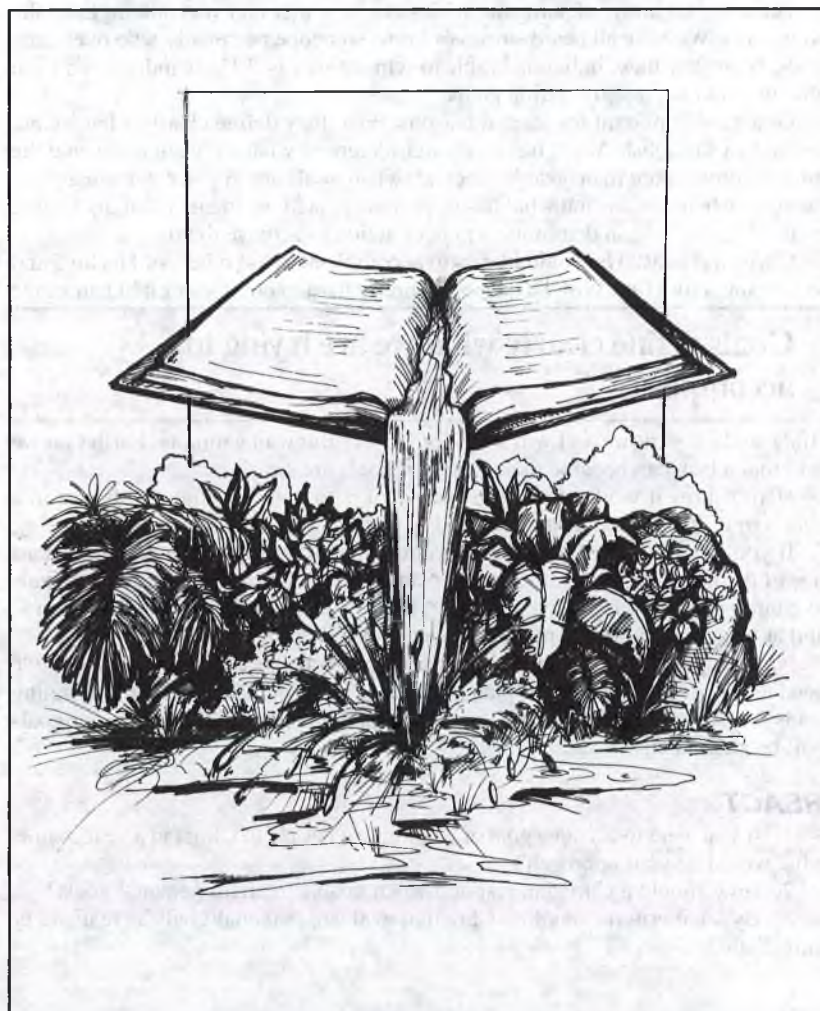
Not many of us have the talent to spread the gospel as Paul did. Therefore, we need to set goals and develop a plan if we are to reach our full potential in winning souls for Christ. We know that Christ will supply the power. Therefore, our goals will be attainable.

REACT

1. If you were to accept a goal of leading two people to Christ in a year's time, what would be your approach?
2. How should a Christian respond when unable to attain personal goals?
3. By what criteria should a Christian evaluate personal goals as realistic or unrealistic?

By Kempthorne Johnson, a graduate student in business administration and finance at Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia.

THE WORDS OF GOD'S PRISONER



“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

The Man in the Cell

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Phil. 1:12-14

There is a small room. Inside it is a small man. He has piercing eyes and thinning gray hair, and his quick movements suggest an energetic and sometimes overbearing manner. He is currently marching up and down in his cramped surroundings, dictating some sort of correspondence to a quiet figure hunched over a scroll. His voice is that of a practiced orator, compelling and articulate, and his dark eyes dart as he speaks. He pauses periodically to squint out the window.

At the door stands a guard, a swarthy, bulky man. His face is also dark, but his eyes are dull, the result of an over-familiarity with violence and violent men. In boredom he begins to listen to the man speaking inside the cell. His eyes lose their focus as he concentrates. His curiosity mounts as he listens. The small man is speaking of being a prisoner, and someone called Christ, and his joy at the situation he is in. The guard cannot help smiling at this, for the prisoner is not the only one pleased with the arrangement. Every week there has been fierce competition in the guardroom over who is to be rostered the duty for this particular cell. Some like

Mealtime comes, and the guard ushers out the prisoner's quiet companion.

to speak with the small man; others, like himself, enjoy the restfulness of the assignment. This prisoner, unlike most, is no trouble; he does not complain, he is not violent, and his visitors are peaceful.

Mealtime comes, and the guard ushers out the prisoner's quiet companion. The prisoner bids him a boisterous farewell, then strikes up small talk with the guard. They speak of military matters and troubles in the guardroom. The guard is pleased, and he smiles. His eyes seem to brighten a bit.

If someone had been on hand to tell him that his very own uniform would be preached about for the next 2000 years, or that the cell he was guarding would inspire some of the most profound thoughts on the nature of Christ ever put to paper, or that the little speech he had just heard would buoy the spirits of suffering Christians for centuries to come, he would have laughed out loud and felt a lot better about life. May God bless us similarly as we too hear the words of a man very close to His heart. Like Caesar's guard, may we listen with open ears to the words of God's prisoner.

By Julie Squire, a senior religion major, Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Without Batting an Eye

LOGOS

Phil. 1:12-30

By the time the city fell to the invading army, the only remaining citizen was an old priest. A soldier found him praying in the church. Menacingly he said to the priest, "You are looking at a man who could run you through without batting an eye."

To which the priest replied, "Sir, you are looking at a man who could be run through without batting an eye." Faith in God has frequently produced courageous people, so it was in the case of the apostle Paul.

Prison Ministry

"Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (Phil. 1:12, NIV).

Paul's imprisonment proved to be an opportunity for God's glory to outshine adversity. Instead of curbing his ministry, as one might expect, Paul's bonds promoted the gospel (verse 12). Paul's testimony before governors and kings (Acts 24-26) had made his case well known.

Furthermore, Paul's courage had made most of his fellow-believers "much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1:14, KJV). Some, it is true, were preaching Christ from motives of rivalry to add to Paul's affliction (verses 15-17). But he was just glad the gospel was being preached (verse 18).

Paul had hoped to be released and thereby vindicated (verse 19).¹ It would be a tangible proof that Christians did not deserve the state's wrath (2:14-16). He planned to rejoin the Philippians after his release and experience fruitful labor among them (1:25, 26). Paul believed his future release would result from the prayers of the Philippians (verse 19). But another prospect was possible, and Paul faced it optimistically.

A Living Libation

"But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you" (Phil. 2:17, NIV).

Paul did not hope for freedom because he feared martyrdom, but because his release would vindicate the gospel from any charge of being socially subversive. He was ready to die for Christ with the same courageous witness with which he had lived for Him (1:20).

For Paul life was Christ (verse 21). All he did was directed by his faith in Christ. That did not mean life was easy, but that it was Christ-centered. But how would Paul's death be an advantage? (verse 21).

Paul intended to glorify Christ in death with the same commitment he had shown in life. The way in which he died would thus advance the gospel. R. P. Martin expresses it well: "The best sense is, 'For me to live is to glorify Christ; that is why, if I die and thereby glorify him, that will be a gain to me, a thing which I desire as it will bring to a close my whole life of service for him.'"²

For Paul to remain alive would have been an advantage to the Philippians, for

he could then continue to minister with and for them (verses 22, 24, 25). Yet despite the advantages, Paul also desires to depart from this present life and be with Christ (verse 23), not some morbid death-wish, but a desire for the transformation of “our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (3:21).

But when does Paul expect to be with Christ, immediately following his decease or at the advent of Christ? Paul assures his readers that “we will *be with the Lord forever*” (1 Thess. 4:17). Philippians 1:23 has a similar phrase—“*to be with Christ*” (KJV). Paul also comforts the Thessalonians that whether awake (in life) or asleep (in death), they would “live together with him” (1 Thess. 5:10, NIV).

The context in 1 Thessalonians relates this being with the Lord to the time of the resurrection at the Second Advent. The same is true for Philippians 1:23, but with the additional thought that even death cannot break the believer’s bond with his Lord (compare Rom. 8:38, 39). Paul’s present pain was assured of future gain in

Paul did not hope for freedom because he feared martyrdom.

the resurrection because his suffering and death was in fellowship with that of Christ (Phil. 3:10, 11).

The Philippians’ Part

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phil. 1:27).

Chuck Colson’s conviction for his part in the American “Watergate Scandal” of the Nixon era coincided with his conversion. In prison he conducted himself in a way worthy of his new faith in Christ. Paul’s Christian witness in bonds was a model for the Philippians in their own tribulation to follow (1:29, 30; 3:17).

By God’s providence Paul was put in prison “for the defense of the gospel” (1:16) and likewise the Philippians are to contend as one person “for the faith of the gospel” (verse 27). Their testimony was to be given in a hostile environment similar to Paul’s; for God had also granted them the same privilege of suffering for Christ (verse 29). It is, not that the Philippians sought persecution by their pagan compatriots, but that for Christ’s sake they would endure it to the glory of God (verses 29, 30).

The Philippians’ steadfastness points to their ultimate vindication, whereas the hostility of their opponents is an omen of future destruction (verse 28). It is a serious thing in God’s eyes to afflict the innocent.

REACT

1. How is one’s way of death an indication of his or her belief?
2. What is the relation, if any, between belief and suffering?

1. The Greek word in Philippians 1:19b [soterian], which usually means “salvation,” is correctly translated here by the NIV as “deliverance,” for Paul is thinking of his present situation and not his salvation in the final judgment.

2. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Philippians*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 79.

By Norman H. Young, New Testament teacher at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Disappointment—His Appointments

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Phil. 1:12, 13

When you are in prison, it takes faith to say, “What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” (Phil. 1:12, NIV). Paul would have been only human to think he could work for God more effectually as a preacher than as a prisoner.

“At the very time when it seemed that the apostle’s labors were most needed to strengthen the tried and persecuted church, his liberty was taken away, and he was bound in chains. But this was the time for the Lord to work, and precious were the victories won. When to all appearance Paul was able to do the least, then it was that the truth found an entrance into the royal palace. Not Paul’s masterly sermons before these great men, but his bonds attracted their attention. Through his captivity he was a conqueror for Christ. The patience and meekness with which he submitted to his long and unjust confinement, set these men to weighing character. . . .

“We have a lesson to learn from this history, revealing as it does God’s way of working. . . . If He sees fit to cut off our usefulness in some line, we mourn and

“Often the afflicted one can preach a more effectual sermon from his sick-bed than ever he preached from the pulpit.”

lament. We do not stop to consider that this may be God’s way of working.”¹

“Because a man is sick, God does not lay him aside; He makes use of the sickness. The man who exercises unshaken faith under suffering, exercises a more telling influence than he could possibly do in health. Often the afflicted one can preach a more effectual sermon from his sickbed than ever he preached from the pulpit.”²

“The Christian who manifests patience and cheerfulness under bereavement and suffering, who meets even death itself with the peace and calmness of an unwavering faith, may accomplish for the gospel more than he could have effected by a long life of faithful labor. Often when the servant of God is withdrawn from active duty, the mysterious providence which our shortsighted vision would lament is designed by God to accomplish a work that otherwise would never have been done.”³

REACT

1. How may we preach more effectually from our sickbed than from the pulpit?
2. How do you know when disappointment is God’s appointment?

1. Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, February 21, 1900.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 465.

By A. G. Lindsay, director of the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Center, Avondale Campus, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Because of the Cause

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Phil. 1:27

Causes. We are subjected to them, challenged by them, and, at times, committed to them. Causes aim to improve the welfare of the disadvantaged, save the environment, make lives more comfortable, and promote various beliefs and values, to name but a few. Although some causes try to promote dubious philosophies, others have great merit and deserve our support. But is any cause worth dying for?

Paul believed so. He had found a cause that, for him, was bigger than life itself. He was so committed to the cause of the gospel that he was willing to be imprisoned for it. If preaching spiritual freedom in Christ resulted in being physically chained in prison, he still felt it was worthwhile—and in fact thought it was cause to rejoice. If preaching life in Christ resulted in death by humans, he still felt it was worthwhile—and in fact considered it could be beneficial, as it would end the suffering that seemed to go along with belief in Christ.

So rather than wallow in self-pity, Paul focused on the positive aspects of his situation, and he challenged the Christian church to do likewise. By his actions he

If preaching life in Christ resulted in death by humans, he still felt it was worthwhile.

empowered others to continue to preach the gospel and, irrespective of the motives behind such preaching, rejoiced because Christ was being preached.

Because of the cause, Paul was willing to do anything that would advance the gospel, even if it brought personal suffering. He accepted that being a Christian involved a struggle, because believing in Christ was also a call to suffer for Him. Yet through all this adversity, imprisonment, and suffering, Paul admitted that he was still rejoicing. Could he be for real about that, or is there a bigger idea here? He obviously saw something in the gospel that was greater than life itself, than any suffering and persecution, than time, culture, experience, or philosophy. Could it be because the cause was more than a cause, it was something that could transcend the human parameters of thinking and transform Paul's world view? Now suffering and adversity had new meaning. Surely this must be a cause to beat all causes.

REACT

1. What did Paul see in the gospel that led him so willingly to accept his difficulties?
2. What sort of suffering does believing in the gospel bring to us?
3. Will suffering or hardship necessarily bring us into an understanding of the gospel? Explain your answer.

By Gwen Wilkinson, head of department of nursing, Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Living for Christ

HOW TO

Phil. 1:21

In a damp, dark dungeon with the cold manacles rattling from his wrists, Paul's future looked foreboding. He was cut off from the stage of action, with only a few loyal disciples to comfort him. He had suffered loss for the sake of the gospel. He had been beaten, whipped, and stoned. Yet in the cold silence of a dungeon cell he could write, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Margaret McLaughlan, 63, and Margaret Wilson, 18, were martyred for their faith in Wigtown Harbor on May 11, 1686. They were Scottish Covenantors who refused to yield their faith to the dictates of King Charles II. Captured by the king's dragoons as they left one of the conventicals in the moors, they were promptly sentenced to death. The older woman was tied to a stake in Wigtown Harbor in a position where she would drown first. This was in the hope that the older woman's

Margaret McLaughlan was tied to a stake in Wigtown Harbor in a position where she would drown first.

death would frighten the young girl to recant. But her resolve only strengthened. The testimony of her soul was, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

It was a privilege for the two Margarets to glorify their Lord in death, as it was for Paul, but it is just as much a privilege to glorify our Lord in life. How may we live for Christ and glorify Him in life?

The only way to live for Christ is to be in union with Him. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But what does it mean? Union with Christ means complete self-surrender to Him in all aspects of life. It means that we live in constant communion with Him. It means we surrender our will to Him in every decision, in every temptation, in every choice, every day, and in every way. How often do you consider Christ in your decisions? Do you surrender your will to Him, praying that His will be done in every decision and choice in life, from the smallest matters to the greatest? Or do you make your own decisions? Who runs your life when Christ does not make your choices and decisions for you?

Seek His will in every aspect of life. Pray without ceasing. Then the language of your soul will be, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

REACT

1. What should you do when faced with a decision or choice in life?
2. How may I bring my will into harmony with Christ's will?
3. What benefits are there in seeking the will of God in even the smallest matters?

By Mark Wilson, a senior theology student at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Motivated by Spite!

OPINION

Key Text: Phil. 1:15

Is it possible to be working for God for the wrong reasons? Is it even possible that some preach about Jesus because they are motivated by spite, not a love for their Lord? Paul thought so, and this should not be surprising. Even at our best, our motives are a mixture of good and bad, and over time the bad can predominate, even in those who began with the best intentions.

I am fascinated by Paul's response, though, because this problem is not something confined to his time. Today as then, those who work for God have a mixture of good and bad motives. One even suspects that some are like Paul's opponents, motivated by completely inappropriate reasons. Jealousy and spite are not unknown in the local church, or even among the professional ministry of the church. It is always difficult to know how to handle such people, so observing how Paul reacted might give us some guidance.

Paul's response was pleasure because Jesus was being proclaimed, however this came about. In fact, he says that he rejoices in this (Phil. 1:18). This is not a

Even at our best, our motives are a mixture of good and bad.

typical reaction. But Paul rejoiced. Does this mean we should not worry about those who try to work for God for the wrong reasons? Paul's reaction is unusual enough to make us ask what is the right way to handle such concerns.

The first thing we should probably do is to examine our own motivation. If we are feeling a great deal of frustration and anger, does this flow from God? Or does it flow from some of our own less desirable motives? Is our concern for the church swamped by our jealousy that somebody else is getting more attention?

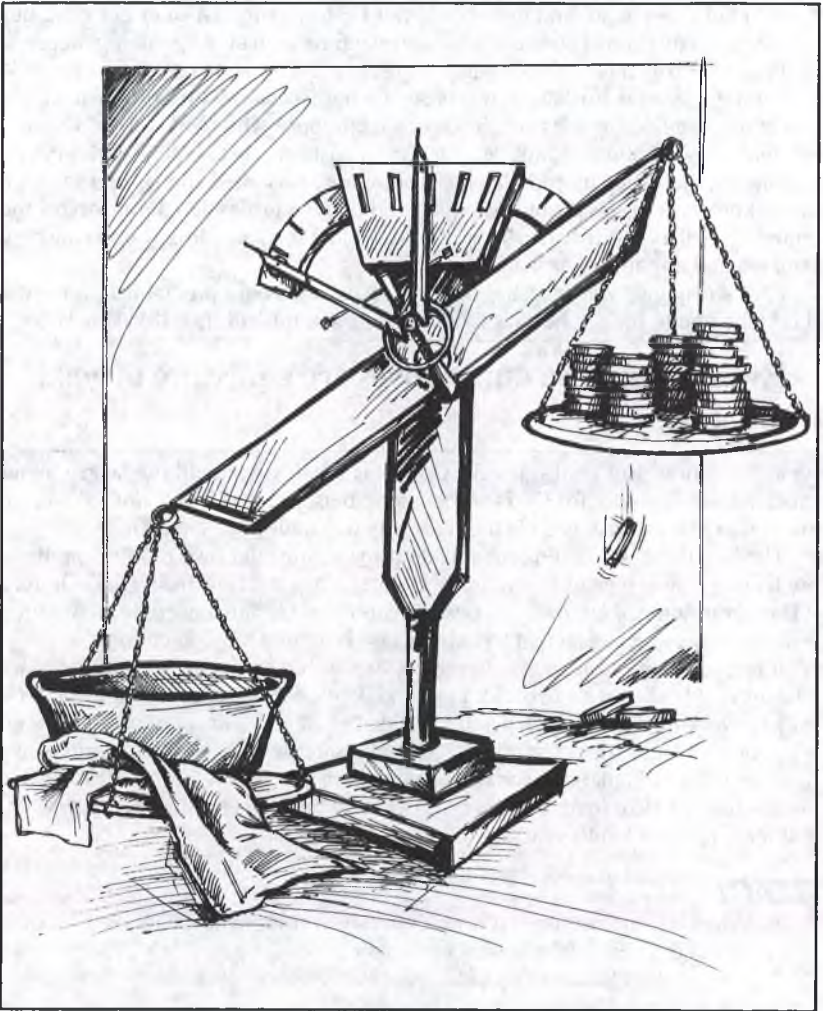
It appears that our response to other Christians whose practices we may not find agreeable should be twofold. First, like Paul, we can acknowledge that God may be working through such people, and that good may even come of it. Second, we should examine our own motives to make sure they are pure. Sometimes we have to decide whether someone is acceptable in our group, but we must always do this in Christlike love. For the rest, God will bring everything into judgment. Till then, perhaps Paul's reaction may well be our guide.

REACT

1. When was the last time I was really annoyed at something a fellow Christian or a minister did? Exactly why was I so angry?
2. A local church leader (e.g., elder, Sabbath School superintendent) is apparently acting out of spite. How should you react?

By Robert K. McIver, New Testament teacher at Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

WHAT'S THE BIG DIFFERENCE?



“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

Unity Versus Individuality

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Phil. 2:5

Lucifer worked well in God's government—until he decided he could do a better job than God. Others, like Jim Jones and David Koresh, thought they had better ideas too. But what about Martin Luther? He went against the established church, and today he has been awarded hero status among Protestants. And think about Paul; he definitely had a few arguments with the elders of his time. Jesus Himself was a rebel as far as His church leaders were concerned. How far can we go with our convictions and still “be of one accord”? It's kind of hard to draw a line between individual conviction and church unity, isn't it?

Actually, it's not!

The answer is found in Philippians 2:5—Christ's example. The reason Jesus got into trouble with the church leaders of His day was that He cut through all

Just because two basketball players have different playing styles doesn't mean they can't work together.

their ceremony and got to the first bare premise. The reason that upset the leaders was that it did away with all of their self-serving rules. Not only were they afraid of losing power among the people but also their self-righteousness was at stake.

So, what is the bare premise that Jesus used? It is the reason behind every action. That's what the leaders missed. They didn't look at why Jesus did what He did. They stopped at what He did, then looked it up to see whether it was on the approved list.

Unity comes from having a common bond, and as long as each person has a brain all to himself there are going to be individual ideas. The only way to find that bond is to cut to why we as Adventists live the way we do, and you will find that bond is love.

Even when people love each other, individuality, and even some disagreement, doesn't cease to exist. But the goal hasn't changed. Just because two basketball players have different playing styles doesn't mean they can't work together. The idea is still to get the ball through the hoop, and there is unity in that purpose.

Lucifer rebelled out of desire for power. Luther rebelled because his church had lost sight of a loving Saviour. The actions were much the same, but the reasons were opposite.

Why do you do what you do? Is it because you can't stand being told you can't, or is it because you really believe God would approve? Is it because you really think you are being a Christian example or because you enjoy the attention? Is it because you're supposed to or because you are truly thankful for what Jesus did and still does for you?

By Jeff Scoggins, publications editor for Philanthropic Service for Institutions of the North American Division, Silver Spring, Maryland.

David Koresh, Lucifer, and Jesus Christ

LOGOS

Phil. 2:1-11

As federal investigators sifted through the rubble of the Mount Carmel compound outside Waco, Texas, thoughtful Christians began their own analysis of the fallen kingdom of David Koresh. While the coroner determined Koresh died of a gunshot wound, a spiritual autopsy indicates that long before the fatal bullet entered his mind, something else destroyed it: pride.

Koresh, who claimed to be the Messiah, evoked images of someone else who aspired to the place of Jesus. The Bible says of Lucifer: “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned. . . . I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High’ ” (Isa. 14:13, 14, NIV).

Koresh and Lucifer not only failed in their celestial ambitions, but they also misunderstood what it meant to be like the Most High. The real Jesus, “being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Phil. 2:6, 7).

Jesus humbly exchanged His divine privileges to become one of us. The Creator became the created, taking the form of a servant—quite a contrast to the self-serving attitude of Lucifer and David Koresh. But Christ went even farther: “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (verse 8).

Thanks to Calvary, none of us ever will have to die on a cross for our sins. Yet there is a cross for us to carry day by day. God calls us to crucify our selfishness and care about others as Jesus did: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (verse 4).

David Koresh seemed to care only about himself. He indulged himself and deprived his disciples. He slept past noon while his deluded devotees milked the cows and weeded the tomato patch. He roared off in his hot black Camaro to Waco’s bars and nightclubs, leaving followers instructions to build the barn and dig holes for fence posts. Commanding them to adopt a Spartan lifestyle, he hoarded a private store of goodies for himself. He even required the men to live as celibates in dormitories while he ravished their wives in his passion penthouse.

Koresh was simply taking to extreme the prevailing mind set in our super-aggressive, dog-eat-dog society. People tend to enrich themselves at the expense of those less fortunate, at least to the extent they can get away with it. But in the body of Christ, any advantage we may have makes us the servant of those who lack what we have. In other words, you can’t be like Jesus by sitting under the peach tree in your backyard Sabbath by Sabbath. Fellow Christians at church need your smiles and affirmations, and you need theirs, as well. Unbelieving family members, friends, and even enemies are candidates for the kingdom of God. As we follow Christ’s example of loving service, we discover for ourselves the truth of what William Arthur Ward observed: “The surest cure for loneliness, the quickest way to happiness, is found in this, a simple creed: Go serve someone in greater need.”

Christian service goes beyond outward actions, to one's inner attitude. The Bible says: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves" (verse 3).

What's going on here? Is God trying to destroy our self-worth by making us inferior to others? Not at all. Being secure in Christ, we don't need to exalt ourselves or to prove our worth to everybody. In God's sight everyone is equal—equally saved in Christ, equally lost without Him. Whatever our looks, wealth, or accomplishments, there's no need to feel inferior to anyone, anywhere.

If you are struggling with those stubborn extra pounds, don't feel like a substandard human compared with those swim-suited cover girls. Remember, we have nothing to prove to the people around us. We just love them in Christ, and they're supposed to love us in return.

But what if they don't? Well, "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31, KJV).

A wonderful thing happens when God's people forsake their own agendas and surrender to His plans and purposes. Unity blossoms. We are "like-minded, having

**We can live in unity without demanding uniformity.
We can even disagree without becoming disagreeable.**

the same love, being one in spirit and purpose" (Phil. 2:2, NIV). This doesn't mean we forfeit our own identities or unique personalities. God does not want us to goose step along in mindless uniformity like Hitler's storm troopers. Never should we surrender personal convictions for the sake of peace, lest we become like the brainwashed cultists of the Mount Carmel compound. Being like-minded in Christ means we love people enough to tolerate their variant viewpoints. We can live in unity without demanding uniformity. We can even disagree without becoming disagreeable.

Christ warned that if we are selfish with life we will lose it; but when we lose life for His sake we discover its true fulfillment (Matt. 10:39). The fiery hell outside Waco was a portent of what will befall Lucifer and his followers.

And what happened to Jesus, who lost His life for our sake? "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil. 2:9, 10). As for Christ's followers, "they will reign for ever and ever" with Him (Rev. 22:5).

The Power of Christ's Example

TESTIMONY

Key Text: John 13:34

Jesus' life on earth is our guide toward a life of self-sacrifice, love, humility, and unity—qualities that protect against the temptations of power. "Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today."¹

"Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service—service to God and to their fellow men. . . . The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men."² Ellen White additionally counsels against the abuse of power in the example of the Pharisees. The Pharisees refused to follow Jesus' example and instead "trusted to self, and prided themselves on their goodness; but they set the commands of God at defiance. They refused to do the work which God had appointed them, and because of their transgression the Lord was about to divorce Himself from the disobedient nation."³

Christ "came to our world to give us an example of how we should work, and what spirit we should bring into our labor,"⁴ therefore, "If we follow Christ's

"When . . . love makes fragrant the life—it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul."

example in doing good, hearts will open to us as they did to Him."⁵

Throughout Scripture we see illustrations of Jesus' selfless love to humanity. This, then, should be our example. "Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life—it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognized as laborers together with God."⁶

Ellen White urges us to follow Jesus' leading in all areas, and proclaims the rewards we will reap as a result: "When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world."⁷

1. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 282.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 326.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 331.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 339.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 402.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

By Lisl H. Moyer, information office manager for Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Silver Spring, Maryland.

We Are One in the Lord

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Phil. 2:1-7

The encouragement of the Christian community to unite in oneness is a recurring theme throughout Paul's writings. In the first chapter of 1 Corinthians Paul appeals to church members to agree and be united in mind and judgment (verse 10). In Romans he expresses his wish that church members live in harmony with each other and glorify God (15:5, 6). Further, he advises church members to accurately identify and avoid those who create dissensions and difficulties (16:17). Paul's view of a church community is one of unity and love.

What type of unity was Paul describing in his phrases, "together you may with one voice glorify . . . God" (15:5, RSV), and "that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment"? (1 Cor. 1:10). Is Paul referring to oneness in terms of explicit doctrinal agreement or in terms of spirit and love? Do all Christians agree? If not, then are we a split voice or a divided church?

With the many individual differences—family and educational background, varied interests and experiences—could it ever be possible that all Christians could

The Christian community must treasure the differences in individuals.

come to a complete unity of understanding and oneness?

To demonstrate a spirit of oneness, the Christian community must treasure the differences in individuals as opposed to demanding conformity. We must see individuals the way Christ sees them, with open eyes and open hearts. Reflect on Mark's story of Christ's healing the blind man in Bethesda (8:22-26). The blind man came to Christ begging Christ to touch him. Christ led him out of the village, spit in his eyes, and touched him. When Christ asked him whether he could see, the blind man said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around" (8:24, NIV). So Christ touched him a second time and asked him once again whether he could see. After Christ's second touch the blind man's vision was completely restored.

As Christians seeking unity, we must not settle for a blurred picture of people, but instead ask Christ for a second touch. Christ's second touch will empower Christians with the freedom to love and see others as clearly as Christ saw them. Christ's second touch will inspire and restore unity and oneness of spirit.

REACT

1. How is unity affected by those who feel that they are having to do more than their share of the church's work?
2. How are unity and humility related?
3. According to today's key text, what are four motives for unity?

By Victoria Graham, who works in the evaluation department of Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Interests of Others

HOW-TO

Key Text: Phil. 2:4

The temperature was 78 degrees, the sun was shining, and the soft trade winds were bringing a cooling breeze from the Atlantic. It was a perfect day to spend on the black, volcanic sand beach at Argyle. So why was I staring at a ceiling six feet above my head, arms aching from pushing the paint roller back and forth at the end of a makeshift extension pole? This trip to St. Vincent was not primarily for “the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4, NIV)—in this case, the Adventist school in Richland Park.

Giving attention to the interests of others certainly does not mean your life will be one of drudgery. Instead, as I have found, when you give of yourself to bless others, you receive a blessing in return. And not a skimpy blessing either, but one that is “a good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over” (Luke 6:38).

Here are some practical ways of becoming involved with the interests of others:

1. Volunteer. Become involved with a group in your school, your church, or your

It can be hard to think of the needs of others when you have the wrong role model.

community that helps people who need assistance. You will not only be bearing another’s burden (Gal. 6:2), but in the process, may find a new interest or talent.

2. Hone your skills and learn how to teach them to others. Teaching is not always easy; it is not a talent everyone possesses, but don’t be scared. When you share know-how with others, you enable them to serve others and thus widen the circle of blessing-givers.

3. Remember your example—Jesus. It can be hard to think of the needs of others when you have the wrong role model. Instead of listening to the siren song of selfishness, keep your eyes fixed on Christ (Heb. 12:2, 3; Rom. 12:2).

4. Be adventurous. Be willing to visit a new part of town or a new part of the world. Enjoy the challenges of serving others. And most of all, remember to have fun. The joy that comes from helping someone else is the best kind of joy there is.

And if you ever get to St. Vincent, visit the beach at Argyle.

REACT

1. What are some of the ways in which Jesus looked to the interests of others?
2. How could your Sabbath School class be a blessing to others?
3. What could you personally do?

By Dave Foreman, a CPA employed by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Silver Spring, Maryland.

The Citadel of the Mind

OPINION

Key Text: Phil 4:4-7

Several facts leap out at even the casual reader of Philippians 4. First are the cords of love that span the separation between Paul and his converts in Philippi, followed by his appeal for unity, peace, and cooperation within the church.

While Paul's counsel in these two areas is cardinal for the growth of the church, we are hammered by a third and fourth appeal: the rules for living and for thinking. These go beyond godlessness as it might be displayed in a storefront window, and touch the heart of where we live—the citadel of the mind.

Paul touches ten divisive-but-relevant areas applicable to twenty-first century humanity (verses 4-7). He launches his rules for living by focusing our attention on the heart (verse 4) and by concluding with the legacy of Christ (verse 7). Paul alerts us with the statement that "the Lord is near" (verse 5, NIV), and where the Lord is,

Have you ever set a place for the Lord at your table, or designated a chair for Him in the family room?

gentleness is evident (see Matthew 18:20). Think about it: the presence of Jesus near you. While you may believe He is coming back to this planet at some future time, have you ever consciously practiced the presence of Jesus with you today? Have you ever set a place for the Lord at your table, or designated a chair for Him in the family room, or entertained Him while traveling to and from a distant destination? If Paul's words "The Lord is near" were taken seriously and applied to our lives, we would all become much more careful as to our lifestyles.

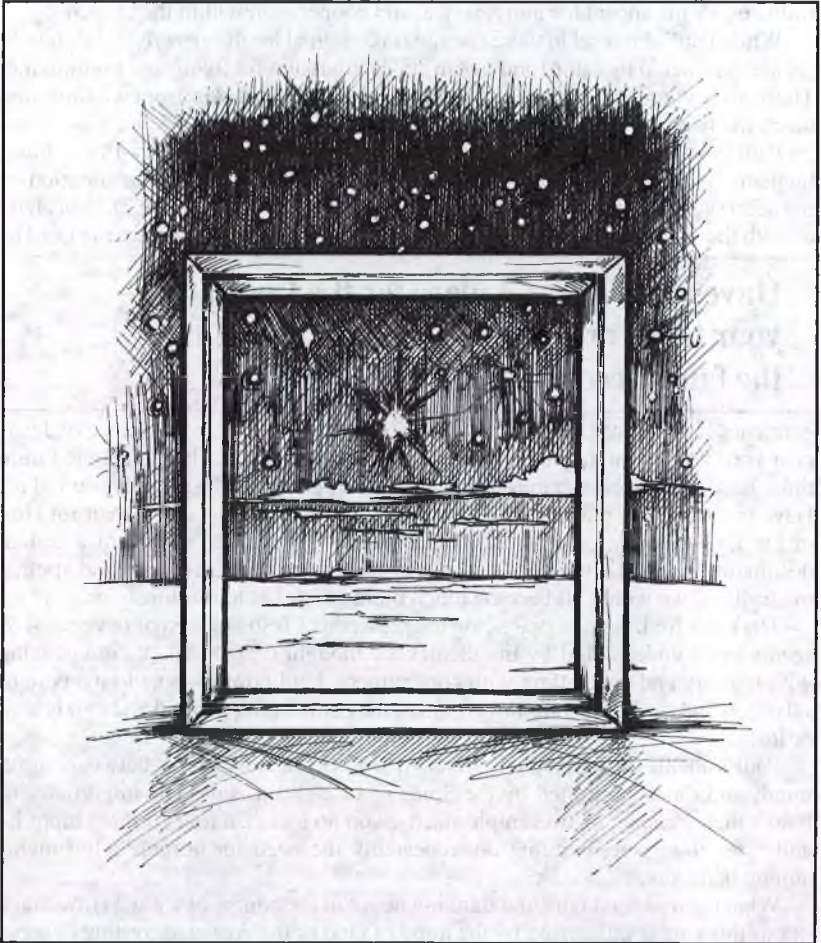
The rules for living, or practicing the presence of Jesus spoken of in verses 4-7, seems to be underscored by the themes for thought (verses 8-11), commencing with honesty and concluding with contentment. Paul now takes us to the core of salvation and deals with our minds, where the battle between good and evil is won or lost.

Paul's themes for thoughts point out significant differences between sinful minds and those controlled by the Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:6). The importance of Paul's theme cannot be overemphasized, as on no less than four congregations he addresses this issue, pointing out repeatedly the need for attitude adjustments among believers.

What do we spend our time thinking about in the course of a day? How much of our thinking is influenced by the mind of God or the gospel according to some news magazine or the latest movie from Hollywood? What the world needs now is an active demonstration of the rules for living, practicing the presence of Jesus by a mind controlled by the spirit of God.

By Thomas R. Neslund, executive director of the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency, Silver Spring, Maryland.

DOING THE RIGHT THING



“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9).

Why Can't You Be More Like That?

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Phil. 3:9

For the most part, the young people came to be entertained. The leader welcomed the group and introduced the secretary, who was to take the report of missionary activities—the indicators that people were doing the right things. The secretary's expressionless face and monotonous tone reflected how little she relished this task. Reports from past weeks and her knowledge of the youth had taught her that she could expect precious little missionary activity. And what little activity there was usually came from the nerds. The nerds read their Bibles, distributed literature, volunteered for church activities—all the right things the cool young people didn't do. The secretary began taking her report, asking for a show of hands for the several missionary activities on her list. "Number of contacts," "number of persons helped," she paused after each statement, looked up, and counted the raised hands. Usually the same person raised his/her hand for two-thirds of the activities.

But today a new member, Tiffney, raised her hand for every activity, sometimes indicating several instances within a category. Parents perked up. Other young

The nerds read their Bibles, distributed literature, volunteered for church activities.

people were dismayed and awed at the same time, for Tiffney, a newly baptized young woman, was poised, intelligent, enthusiastic—in short, could not be classified by the young people as a nerd. Several parents elbowed their children and whispered, "Why can't you be more like that?" Tiffney was aware of the stir she was causing and over the next several weeks enjoyed the notoriety. Then she stopped making a report. Parents were alarmed; young people were delighted. When a bold member asked Tiffney why she didn't make a missionary report anymore, she said with a mixture of regret and bewilderment in her voice, "I lost interest. When I was baptized, I was told if I wanted to go to heaven I had to do the right things. So I did them. But doing all that stuff got boring."

What is boring or uninteresting about reading the Bible, helping people, sharing our faith? Nothing. The problem is that, for Tiffney and others like her, doing the right things are stand-alone activities—things done in hopes of reaching a desired result, not because of love and concern. The Christian life finds its meaning and makes a difference in us only when we have a connection to Jesus, only when we are motivated by His love for us and our love for Him, only when He is the reason we do the right things and is our source of righteousness. Now, why can't you be more like that?

By Gwen Ashley, administrative assistant to the president of Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Stars in the Night

LOGOS

Phil. 2:12–3:11

The Christian shines like a star in the night. Yet, no matter how much a Christian may shine, the basis of salvation is not oneself; it is Jesus, the Morning Star, who gives righteousness as a gracious gift through faith. This is the message of Philippians 2:12–3:11.

God Ignites the Star (2:12, 13)

At first glance the phrase “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (verse 12, NIV) may be frightening and confusing over what is at stake. Fortunately, however, the context of the entire passage encourages powerful confidence in God.

At the time these words were written, Paul was in prison in Rome. He wanted to go encourage the church at Philippi. But the imperial guard was holding him. So Paul writes this letter and tells the believers they will work out their salvation on their own—without his presence.

The good news, however, is that even though he cannot be there to help them as a minister, salvation comes from God. “It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (verse 13). Responsibility rests with God to ignite the desire and the ability to live the Christian life. Christian living does not depend on Christian ministers—even such talented ones as Paul.

“Fear and trembling” do not mean uncontrolled fright. After all, the Philippians are called to be glad and rejoice (2:17; 3:1). An understanding of God’s willingness to work within one’s life is so overwhelming that one feels a profound sense of respect, awe, and wonder toward God. This is the “fear and trembling” that one has before God. God will direct one in living worthily of the gospel (1:27), looking to the interests of others (2:4), and having the attitude of Jesus (verses 5-8). Human creatureliness, weakness, and dependence push us to seek the power of God, who can work within to do His good purpose.

How important are pastors to the salvation of the members of their churches?

The Star Shines in the Night (2:14-18)

Ethics and attitudes of the God-directed person contrast with the ways of perversity. The difference is like that of shining stars against the night. Jesus’ approach to life is better and more responsible. In the shining-star kind of life one faces problems without a lot of murmuring. The Philippians may face difficulties or suffering. But they should hold on to the Word of life. If the Philippians will but hold on, then Paul, while facing execution, can experience gladness and rejoicing (verses 16, 17).

When things are going wrong, what are Christians supposed to do?

The Star Glistens in a Constellation (2:19–3:1)

Two individuals stand out in the way they allowed God to work in them in the interest of others. They were stars that glistened as they genuinely served others.

Timothy, the first, was like a son to Paul. He had traveled with him on missionary journeys. He had done follow-up ministry in cities after Paul had moved on. He was genuinely concerned about the welfare of the Philippians. He had the same kind of mind that Jesus had (2:4, 5) in his willingness to seek the interest of others. Paul intended to send Timothy to Philippi as soon as his own future was resolved.

Epaphroditus, the second, had come as a messenger to Paul from his home church at Philippi. He had chosen to stay and minister to Paul in his imprisonment. While giving this service, however, Epaphroditus had fallen very ill. When he recovered and heard of the anxiety his illness had caused back in Philippi, he wanted to return home so all could rejoice at his recovered health. Further, he wanted to provide spiritual ministry there and alleviate some of Paul's concern for the Philippians.

Is it surprising that Paul could find few people to care as did Timothy and Epaphroditus? Should Christians try to live with a sense of impending martyrdom

Responsibility rests with God to ignite the desire and the ability to live the Christian life.

as Paul was experiencing as he wrote this letter? How does this attitude affect the life?

The Morning Star Surpasses All (3:2-11)

All the good works, all the righteousness, all obedience to the law, and all the observance of ceremonies that a Christian may experience, however, are not the way to obtain perfect righteousness.

The Christian should experience a kind of spiritual circumcision. Spiritual circumcision means worshiping in the spirit of God and placing one's pride in Jesus Christ. The ancient rite of physical circumcision is now no reason for confidence. Paul even labels the physical rite a kind of mutilation.

Religion that emphasizes external rites, behaviors, zeal, and even obedience can give a sense of control and confidence. But such confidence is misplaced. Paul once had confidence in his own abilities. He was a born member of a tribe that had stood faithfully with the Davidic kingship. He had been a leader in a zealous religious group. He had persecuted those who threatened his faith.

Then Paul found a Morning Star that surpassed anything he had done or could do to find righteousness. Knowing Jesus Christ was greater than his own righteousness. He now simply regarded his former achievements as rubbish in comparison to an infinitely superior righteousness. Real righteousness comes as a gift from God. Acceptance of that gift is by faith in Jesus Christ. So radically different is righteousness by faith that receiving it is like dying and being resurrected to a new life.

What role, if any, should self-reliance play in a Christian's life? How does it feel to know that righteousness comes as a gift and is not based on one's own unaided behavior?

By Douglas Robertson, religion teacher and director of Honors Core at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Why My God Isn't on Television

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Rom. 3:29

Before becoming an Adventist, when I had nothing else to do, I would flip through the stations on television and laugh at the televangelists. I'd even turn the sound down and give my own sermons. Yes, if Jimmy Swaggart had heard me, I'd have been a heathen. I'd have been condemned.

But I don't think Jesus feels the same as Jimmy Swaggart. Ellen White has an interesting thought on this subject: "Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world."^{*}

Like the Pharisees, most of these preachers hang on to power—not Christlike at all in the way they use it! They have power to take money from the sick and the poor. They claim salvation through this money. As in the Middle Ages, the uninformed are paying their indulgences to the hypocrisy of so many religions; they're

If Jimmy Swaggart had heard me, I'd have been a heathen. I'd have been condemned.

attempting to buy souls from Satan. Righteousness with these people, if mentioned at all, is reserved for those who are "good."

Hold on! The Jesus I know never quite said that. With the first advent, it is true, Jesus did not throw out God's laws. It is still a transgression to kill, to commit adultery, to lie. But we aren't told by these evangelists what we are told by Paul and divine inspiration: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). We are saved by faith! We have been saved by the Son of God! My faith goes beyond that of a man on a television screen saying that the Lord will take him if he doesn't get a certain amount of money in the next hour. My Lord will forgive me if I transgress, not in turn for money or power or humiliation, but just because He knows I am sorry. To be righteous, I just have to believe in Jesus. Yes, I believe in the God who so loved the world. Jesus is there for everyone—providing righteousness and love.

REACT

1. How can we give nonbelievers the good news of righteousness by faith?
2. Why isn't it enough just to be a "good" person?

^{*} *The Desire of Ages*, p. 310.

By Kristin M. Viana, a sophomore English/secondary-education major at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

The Word and Righteousness

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Phil. 2:16

Paul told the Philippians how to maintain faith by saying, “It is by holding fast to the word of God.” This is significant. Amos said, “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Sovereign Lord, ‘when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord’ ” (8:11, NIV). What can be expected when this famine occurs is:

1. Diminished spiritual insight.
2. Loss of the most extensive source of divine revelation.
3. A falling back into sin.
4. Loss of a map to give direction to life.
5. Loss of the most profound source of mental development.
6. Loss of a source through which the divine mysteries can be recognized.
7. Loss of a center that can inspire the thoughts.
8. Loss of the source of truth that stimulates us to righteousness.
9. Loss of that source through which we can be made wise unto salvation.
10. Loss of a source for moral judgment and correct ethical decision.

There are many losses, and you can add to the list when the Word of God is de-

Paul could not maintain and celebrate his faith without holding fast to the Word of God.

emphasized. The brilliant, wise, and educated apostle Paul could not maintain and celebrate his faith without holding fast to the Word of God. Neither can you.

The lives that boast no need of faith have no foundation stone.
 Their minds can never be at ease no matter where they roam.
 Without a knowledge sure and true—that God is everywhere.
 A life—in time of sorrow—can be plunged into despair.
 There must be faith to bring the joy that we seek every day.
 The quiet understanding that brings peace at work or play.
 No one can build on shifting sand and hope to survive.
 There must be deep foundations to keep your dream alive.*

REACT

1. What role does God’s Word play in spiritual growth?
2. What part does the Bible play in helping you make decisions?
3. List three other sources in helping to make decisions.

* Francis Gay, *The Friendship Book* (London: D. C. Thompson Co., Ltd., 1976).

By D. Robert Kennedy, associate professor of religion, religion department, Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

The Practical Evidence of Righteousness

HOW-TO

Key Text: Phil. 2:19-22

One of the lives that testified to the profound working of grace was Timothy. Paul says, "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 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. 2:19-22, NIV).

I know somewhat of Timothy's weaknesses from other scriptural passages. He was shy, retreating, physically affected, and sometimes easily frustrated (1 Tim. 4:12; 5:23). But these weaknesses were no handicap. For on the other hand he was loving, tender, affectionate, sympathetic, humble, and friendly. It is believed that his character perfectly fitted the model Paul was seeking when he wanted a trusted person to send to the difficult churches.

In writing to Timothy Paul had this comment, "From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in

Timothy was shy, retreating, physically affected, and sometimes easily frustrated.

Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 3:15). This latter comment leads to the one question that is most pressing to us this week, namely "What are the sources or resources one needs to produce the fruits of righteousness (as evidenced, for example, in the life of Timothy)?" I list the following for your consideration:

1. Place your life in Christ. This suggestion that giving ourselves to Christ completely will make us righteous might seem simplistic. But one never knows of the power of the gospel until one is willing to trust his/her weakness to Christ.

2. Study the sacred writings. This suggestion seems ridiculous too, but it is still true that the study of Scripture points us to the divine existence, the divine character, and the truthfulness of the divine word, and brings into focus the reality of our own righteousness.

REACT

1. In practical terms, how is human righteousness transformed into true fruits of righteousness?

2. What role does the Bible play in my life?

3. If Timothy were sent to serve your own congregation, what three specific things would you assign him to concentrate on?

By D. Robert Kennedy, associate professor of religion, Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Minds on Heavenly Things

OPINION

Key Text: Col. 3:12-14

In his books Paul was trying to teach people how to prepare their personalities and attitudes for Christ's second coming. Our lives today are to prepare us for heaven. As Christians our lives must do justice to the gospel.

Our church today needs the qualities that Paul encouraged in the churches of Philippi and Colossae. He is telling them to be compassionate, kind, and loving, as our Saviour Jesus Christ was on earth. We are to be mature, true, honest, just, and pure. We always hear complaints of hypocrisy, prejudice, and unforgiving hearts. Why are these problems in our church? Paul is telling the Colossians the true trait of a Christian—*Christlikeness*.

We should not act from selfish desires. We need to have a humble attitude in service to others. At the same time we need to be united to do God's will as Christ did. With that as our motivation, God will work through us. It is with Jesus Christ that we grow, not on our own.

These traits were hard to find even in Paul's time. In his letter to the Philippians he writes, "For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ"

We need to go beyond our trivial trials and focus on the only important aspect of our life.

(2:21, NIV). There were also those who "live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things" (3:18, 19).

We need to lift our hearts and minds to heavenly things. Our desire should be to be like Christ. Christ treated each individual with love. He did not accuse people. So what if someone says one thing but does another? That is not our concern. We cannot rely on ourselves, and we should try to be innocent, not accusatory. We are to let God deal with those people. We should carry on with our own lives and just keep on loving, even if we are stabbed in the back.

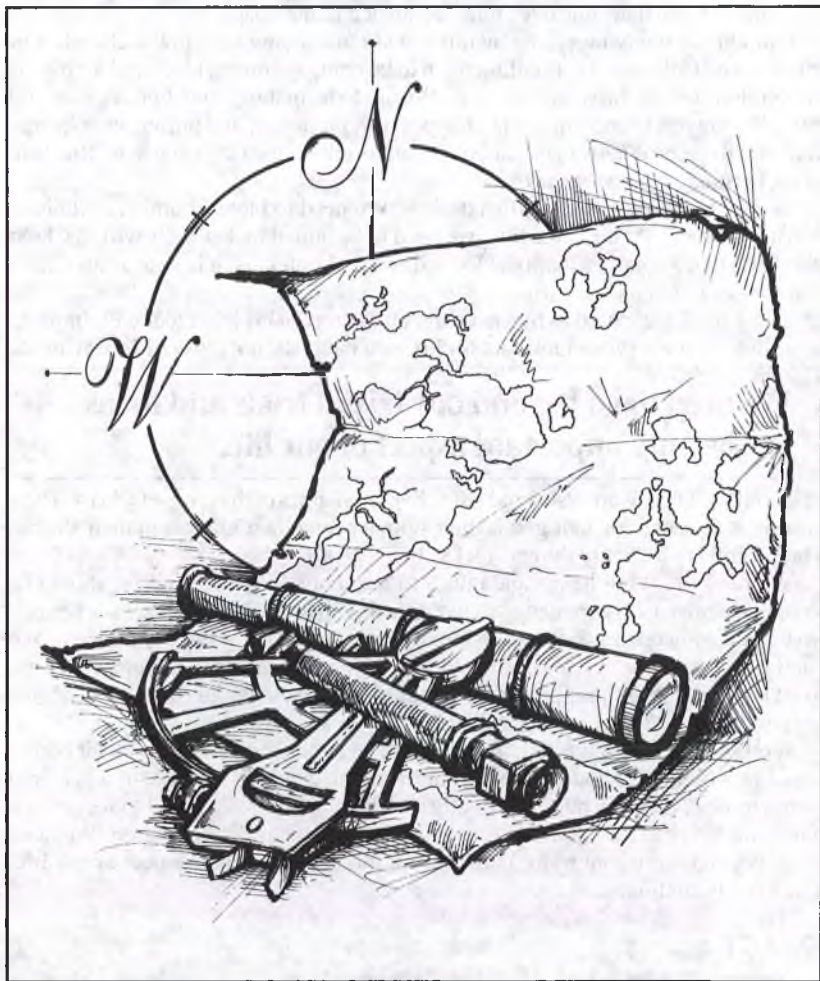
If others do not forgive you, then that will wear on their soul. Don't let it bother you. Put it in God's hands. If you are discriminated against because of a personal characteristic, don't be hurt. It is another's loss, not yours. We need to forget past hurts and strive to the future, letting everyone know our determination. We need to go beyond our trivial trials and focus on the only important aspect of our life. The Lord is coming.

REACT

In everyday terms, how can a Christian keep from being caught up in earthly things?

By Paula Perrone, a senior nursing student at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

WATCHING THE HORIZON



“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (Phil. 3:12, RSV).

One Thing . . .

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Acts 27:23-26

I was not hallucinating this time. The land we were finally seeing was real. The sight infused us with new hope and Olympian energy. Our desperate search was over.

Like the other 350 people on this 20-meter fishing boat, my lips were blistered from lack of water. I hadn't drunk anything for the last six days and hadn't eaten for so long that I didn't even feel hunger pangs anymore. All the water of the South China Sea that surrounded us could not help to quench our thirst. The tropical sun intensified our suffering. In our minds was only one thought: land.

The land we were now seeing was a group of islands. Covered with wild grass and tall coconut trees, they stood out in the vast blue sea. Along the shore of one of the larger islands, a shiny white-sand beach glittered in the scorching sun, drawing us like the island's welcome mat. For the second time in history, I thought, a new world had been discovered. It certainly was a new world for us.

After surveying the island from a distance, we decided to head on toward the beach. For a brief moment, the excited commotion subsided as every eye fixed on

All the water of the South China Sea that surrounded us could not help to quench our thirst.

the unfamiliar territory on which we were soon to set foot. The clanging engine of our boat, which had labored nonstop for the past week, seemed to gather a final burst of speed, as if to promise, "I will take you there!"

The boat didn't get as close as we would have liked before it hit a coral reef. We felt as if someone had suddenly stepped on the brake. There were a few abrupt jolts. Then the hull cracked and water mercilessly gushed in. Panic overtook our excitement, and we scrambled to evacuate the sinking vessel. Those who could swim helped the others to make the remaining short distance to shore. We forgot that we hadn't eaten for days; we forgot that we were physically weak. We even ignored the pain from the cuts on our feet caused by walking on the sharp coral. We had only one goal in mind: getting to land.

Like my tempestuous journey from Vietnam to a remote island of Indonesia, our heavenward journey is also a difficult one. It requires nothing less of us than a laser-sharp focus to press on despite the diversions of life that constantly fight to diffuse our concentration on Jesus (Phil. 3:13, 14).

In every verse of this week's lesson, Paul presents the challenge before us: the uncompromising call to become like Christ.

By John Lim, who recently returned from the Thailand Mission and now resides in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The Upward Call

LOGOS

Phil. 3:12-21

As we look at Philippians 3:12, Paul almost seems to be promoting perfection as the route to salvation. Looking at this verse alone, we might envision Paul trying day by day to rid the last sin from his life in hopes of one day qualifying for salvation. This vision of Paul is in stark contrast to the picture we might get in other epistles he wrote. In fact, if we examine verse 12 in the context of the rest of the chapter, we see a completely different picture.

Paul has tried righteousness by works. If it could have been achieved, he says he would have done it (verse 4). He was born in the right family, obeyed all the required rites and ceremonies. He went beyond all this and zealously defended the law (persecuted the Christians). He passed no opportunity however small to do something for which he might obtain credit. When he met Christ, Paul realized these things were useless; he counted them “loss for Christ” (see verse 7). His righteousness was not “of the law” but “through the faith in Christ” (verse 9, NIV).

If Paul is not describing a works-oriented system of salvation, what is it he is so urgently trying to lay hold of? What has he yet to attain, if he has been given salvation? We find the answer in verse 10. Paul wants to “know him and the power of His resurrection, and . . . share his sufferings” (RSV).

Christian life for Paul is not sitting back with the knowledge that he has it made because salvation is a gift. Paul has the assurance of salvation. But that assurance, rather than making him complacent, has lit a fire. He wants to know his Saviour. He cannot be satisfied with an intellectual knowledge that he has been saved. He must have that experiential knowledge that Christ offers.

Forgetting What Is Behind

Christ continually makes an upward call that Paul must follow (verse 14). Paul can never be satisfied with the level he has attained so far (verse 12). At each upward step he hears the call more clearly. In hearing the call Paul forgets what is behind. Only his knowledge of Christ’s forgiveness and acceptance allows this to happen. He has forgotten the previous motivation of rewards for works. He is now responding in love to the person calling.

Christ’s love not only makes Paul forget his previous motivation, but frees him from his guilt. In his previous zeal, Paul did some terrible things. His knowledge of complete forgiveness and acceptance allows him to forget his sins and go on with life. The persecutor and murderer can now confront sin without shame. He is not paralyzed by guilt and remorse, but is responding each day to Christ’s call.

Paul also has freedom from the results of both successes and failures. It is Christ who works in him (2:13). If Paul speaks to the people and they stone him, he will go on preaching with the knowledge that they were in a very real way doing it to Christ. He knows “the fellowship of His sufferings” (3:10, KJV). If he heals people or even raises the dead, he takes no credit. Christ has done it. In tragedy and triumph Paul can forget what is behind and press on toward the upward call.

Christ Calls Me

The call that Paul experiences is not something that is unique to him. He asks the Philippians to heed the same call. A changed life is not an option for a Christian. Nor is it a requirement. A new life is a result—Christ’s work in those who accept His salvation. Paul does not expect to see the same changes happening in the lives of all the Philippians. He does, however, urge them not to turn back, but to walk at the level to which Christ has led them so far (verse 16).

Though we do not earn salvation by our successes nor lose it by our failures, we may become “enemies of the cross of Christ” (verse 18, NIV) by spurning the call of Christ. Just as those described in Philippians 3:19, we may end up replacing the God of heaven with the god of appetite.

The salvation offered us is ultimately obtained when Christ returns. But salvation is much more than being saved from death. Being saved from death without being saved from sin would be of no benefit to us. Jesus wants to save us from

Christian life for Paul is not sitting back with the knowledge that he has it made because salvation is a gift.

sin. As we sing in the familiar hymn “Rock of Ages,” He would “save us from its guilt and power.”

We may experience this today. As Christ calls me to lay aside my guilt, anger, and self-centeredness, I am saved today from each of these sins. As He calls me to give and to serve, I experience the joy of salvation from an empty and meaningless life.

The gift is free, and He wants me to have it now. Jesus does not offer me a smorgasbord, where I can choose one part of His gift and reject another. In accepting His gift of salvation, I accept the renewal of life He offers. I become a citizen of heaven (3:20), and He begins the process of transformation (verse 21) that will be completed when He comes to take me to my new home.

REACT

1. How is Paul’s response to Christ’s call different from his obedience prior to his conversion?
2. How could the things we do make us “enemies of the cross of Christ”?

“I Can Do All Things Through Christ”

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Phil. 3:12

In his Epistle Paul acknowledges his true spiritual condition: that he is the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). He knows Christ’s goal for him is perfection (2 Tim. 3:17). He realizes he has not reached this goal (Phil. 3:12). But he is determined to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). Christ’s goal for us also is perfection (Matt. 5:48).

“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. . . . This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble.”¹

If we yield to God’s guiding hand, then His values will become our values. “As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His bid- dings are enablings.”²

Our efforts to conform to God’s will can be successful only if we are motivated by love for God. Jesus said, “If ye love me, you will keep my commandments”

If we yield to God’s guiding hand, then His values will become our values.

(John 14:15, RSV). He didn’t say, “Keep My commandments and then you will love Me.”

Jesus has provided the means by which we can travel on the road to perfection: His presence and assistance. “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20, KJV). This gift is priceless because it cost Him His life. Yet it is free for the asking.

Perfection is not achieved merely through adherence to a set of rules. Rather, it is the outcome of a loving relationship that we have developed with Christ. “The truth as it is in Jesus can be experienced, but never explained. Its height and breadth and depth pass our knowledge.”³

REACT

1. Does perfection involve more than refraining from sinning? Why or why not?
2. How are you characterized by those closest to you? By your do’s and don’ts or by your love?

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 623.

2. *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 333.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

By Zoran Krkljus, a member of the Willowdale SDA Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Transforming Into Perfection

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Phil. 3:20, 21

The Meaning of Perfection

There appears to have been some dispute in the church at Philippi as to what perfection really means. In Philippians 3:15-17, against the backdrop of controversy, Paul calls for unity. Apparently some members of the church were teaching that it was possible to be completely perfect here on earth.

The apostle denied that it was possible to experience true perfection in our present state. This debate was closely related to the question of circumcision. Since Jewish men were already circumcised, only Gentiles needed to be circumcised after conversion. This suggested that only Gentiles were in need of transformation, and fed the belief for some Jews that they were well positioned to become perfect here on earth.

With its reference to the resurrection of the dead, Philippians 3:11 suggests that the type of perfection Paul had in mind was the perfection that would be his only at the resurrection. There is a limited human perfection which Paul himself

We become the same substance as Christ through His death.

knew and expected of his converts. Since there will always be room for progress, final perfection cannot be expected in this life.

Transformation

Paul is discussing the transformation from one state of being to another, in which we become the same substance as Christ through His death. Paul says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2, NIV). But there is more than just simple renewal. Paul writes, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:10, 11).

Paul suggests that this change is brought about by faith in Christ: "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (verses 20, 21). Through Christ's grace, we have the assurance of obtaining a new spiritual body.

REACT

1. In what sense is the new being the same substance as Christ's?
2. In your own words describe the limited perfection we experience on earth.

By Sam Mathi, a systems design engineer at the IBM Toronto Laboratory, Ontario, Canada.

Inner Space

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 6:31-33

In his book *Making All Things New*, Henri Nouwen reflects on the frantic pace of modern society: “Worrying has become such a part and parcel of our daily life that a life without worries seems not only impossible, but even undesirable. We have a suspicion that to be carefree is unrealistic and—worse—dangerous. Our worries motivate us to work hard, to prepare ourselves for the future, and to arm ourselves against impending threats. Yet Jesus says, ‘Do not worry; do not say, “What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?” . . . Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on his kingdom first . . . and all these other things will be given you as well.’”¹

“Jesus wants us to move from the ‘many things’ to the ‘one necessary thing.’ It is important for us to realize that Jesus in no way wants us to leave our many-faceted world. Rather, he wants us to live in it, but firmly rooted in the center of all things. Jesus does not speak about a change of activities, a change in contact, or

“Jesus wants us to move from the ‘many things’ to the ‘one necessary thing.’”

even a change of pace. He speaks about a change of heart.”²

Nouwen describes Jesus’ spiritual life as uninterrupted attentiveness to God. We can reach the same relationship, he says, through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

“A hard struggle is required. It is the struggle to allow God’s Spirit to work in us and recreate us. But this struggle is not beyond our strength. It calls for some very specific, well-planned steps. It calls for a few moments a day in the presence of God when we can listen to his voice precisely in the midst of our many concerns [the discipline of solitude]. It also calls for the persistent endeavor to be with others in a new way by seeing them not as people to whom we can cling in fear, but as fellow human beings with whom we can create new space for God [the discipline of community]. These well-planned steps, these disciplines, are the concrete ways of ‘setting your hearts on his kingdom,’ and they can slowly dismantle the power of our worries and thus lead us to unceasing prayer.”³

1. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Making All Things New* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1981), pp. 15, 16.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95.

By Shelley Nolan, director of community relations at North York Branson Hospital, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Perfection: Mission Impossible?

OPINION

Key Text: Heb. 12:1

Is life like a race? In a race the goal is to finish. For some, that means to finish first; for others, just to finish. What are the results of preparing for the goal in a race? If you set a goal just before the race begins, what are your chances? If it is just to start the race but not finish, perhaps you will achieve your goal. But if the goal is to run a good race and complete the course, then there is a lot more than starting and finishing.

If you are committed to the race, you will set the goal of finishing. You probably even have a specific finish in mind. This goal then controls your preparation. The race is not won just on the day of the event, but in the months and years leading up to it.

In life it is not the results of a given day or year that count, but rather the years of preparation and effort expended in achieving our goals.

Various individuals in the Bible were preparing for and running races of their own. Noah, Moses, David, Solomon, and Daniel—all had a mission or goal they

Aside from his own family, he couldn't convince even one other human to join him on board.

were working toward. To achieve perfection was not their all-consuming goal, but rather to live lives dedicated to the fulfillment of goals they felt God had for them.

Noah had a mission to save the people of the world and the animals from a flood. He preached, warned, and built in preparation for the Flood. When the boat was finally ready, only his own family and the animals directed by God heeded Noah's warnings. Was Noah a success in achieving his mission? Aside from his own family, he couldn't convince even one other human to join him on board—somewhat of a failure as an evangelist, I should think.

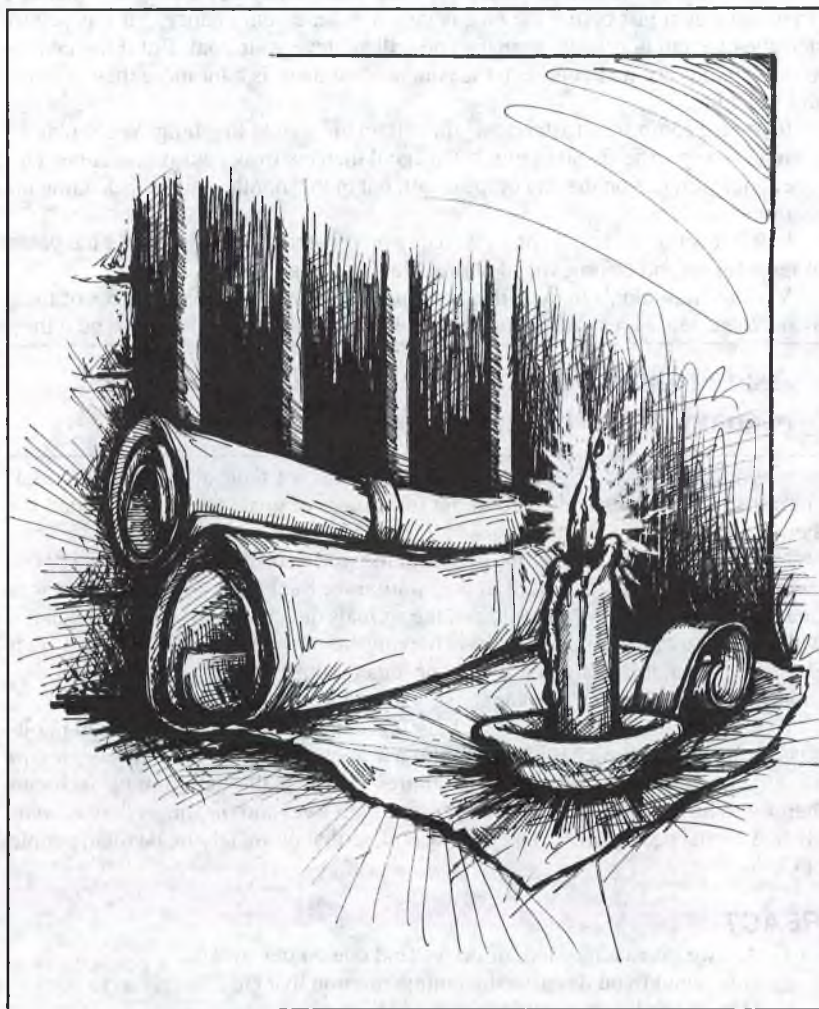
If others are not interested in the beliefs we try to share, have we failed in our mission? Most of the characters mentioned above failed to a certain degree in the attainment of their goals. Their failures were not the determining factor in their lives, however, but the overall thrust of their lives and the things they accomplished for the people around them. It was these that ultimately made them people of God.

REACT

1. Are we given a mission, or do we find one on our own?
2. How would you describe the unique mission that God has given to you?
3. How is life like a race? How is it unlike a race?

By Brian Fenton, vice-president of diagnostic and support services, North York Branson Hospital, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED



“I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13, NIV).

Block Party

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Phil. 4:13

I stepped off a bus onto the cobblestone streets of Totonicapan, a pueblo 8,000 feet up in the mountains of Guatemala. What surprises would this year's short-term mission project hold in store for me? I have always loved Maranatha trips. It's not just the adventure of meeting a new culture, but the experience of working harder than I ever thought was physically possible.

On the second day, I was assigned to the "block party." It looked as though it would be a fun time—or so I thought. My arms disagreed with the party concept, especially after moving more than 2,000 concrete blocks. Sure, I was a little sore, but there is something about a mission trip that makes work less painful. I experienced strength, not sacrifice. I witnessed God's power physically in myself, but it hardly measured against the tremendous Spirit present in our brothers and sisters of Totonicapan.

The school we were building didn't begin with the bricks we laid. It started in the vision and prayers of the Adventists there. Dedicated to provide a nurturing

I was a little sore, but there is something about a mission trip that makes work less painful.

environment for their children in which to study about God, they trusted in Him to provide what seemed the impossible—a school.

In faith, they gave all they had to see the project through. Countless times their selflessness displayed itself. While working on the kitchen crew, I learned that our three stoves and three refrigerators were on loan. Church members had taken them out of their homes for us to use. Every Sunday they rolled up their sleeves and worked alongside us at the construction site. The women even hand-stitched more than 50 wall hangings that read "Recuerdo Colegio Maranatha" (Remember Maranatha School), so we each would have a remembrance of our week with them.

I was speechless after they told me how the school was named. When they first bought the property, they had found the name "Maranatha" painted on a rock. This was *before* they had heard of Maranatha Volunteers and had been offered the construction of a school. How can we help being reminded of how great God is and how safe we are when we trust our lives to Him?

Our last night in Totonicapan I witnessed the complete joy of a father depending on God. As he prayed with us, his voice cracked and tears escaped. His trust had been rewarded. He knew his children would have the school they needed to be brought to a life with Christ.

I wonder whether our Father cries tears of joy when He sees us allow change in our lives so that we may know Him and the plans chosen for each of us.

By Darlene Schoonover, a senior elementary-education major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Talking About Peace

LOGOS

Phil. 4:1-23

I still remember how I felt at the age of 13 when I first saw my father's name printed in a book. I smiled. I laughed. I rejoiced over the fact that my father's name was in a book. The authors of the book had used his name as an example of success and spirituality.

Years later I experienced what it means to see your own name in print. It did not matter whether it was *Who's Who*, The Dean's List, or *Collegiate Quarterly*. What mattered was that my name was printed in a book. I smiled, I laughed, I rejoiced over the fact that my name was in a book.

After going through these experiences, I understood better how the members of the church at Philippi felt when they read the last chapter of Paul's letter. "Help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3, NIV).

I can see them reading the letter Paul sent them; and then when they get to this part, I can see them smiling and laughing joyfully, knowing their names are written in the book of life. In the ancient free cities roll books contained the names of all having the right to citizenship.* In one of the government buildings of the city of Philippi, they had a roll book containing the names of every citizen of the city. Therefore, the members of the Philippi church knew what Paul was saying to them: "Your names are written in the book of life; you are citizens of the kingdom of God."

Paul continues his letter saying, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (verse 4).

I see Paul saying, "Wake up, Christians. You are saved, your names are written in the book of life. Smile, laugh, rejoice in the Lord. You don't need to have a long face. Just rejoice. And, if you want, I say it one more time, Rejoice!" When there is assurance of salvation in Jesus Christ, when people know their names are written in the book, there is no other reaction. Laughing, smiling, singing, praising, and rejoicing in the Lord are the result of knowing about salvation.

But that is not all, Paul continues to say, "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near" (verse 5). Once we know we are saved and begin rejoicing at all times because of it, we have the responsibility to let others know about it. We need to let others know about that salvation because "the Lord is near."

Finally, Paul says something that became very significant to me since I read it: "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (verse 7). Paul wanted the members of the Philippian church to have peace, and he gave them the key:

1. You are important; your names are written today—now—in the book of life. You are being saved in Christ.
2. Don't be walking around with a straight face. You are being saved.
3. You have something great that not everybody else knows about. Let others know with your example because the Lord is near.

As Christians we need to know we are important. Our names are written in a

book, the book of salvation. We are citizens of the kingdom of God in the present time. It is not something to come. It is present. Our names are written in the book of life.

I had the privilege of preaching in a church of immigrants. Some don't even hold a legal document to be in this country. I told them, "You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people" (Eph. 2:19).

The reaction to this promise was great. I thought the building would come down as they said a loud "amen." The smiles could not be contained. That is what happens when we know our names are written in God's book. The books of earth become old and eventually disappear; the book of life is eternal.

Our main interest should be to know that our names are in the book of life, that we are saved. To know this will make us rejoice and be happy because there is no other reaction to salvation. To know this will make us live to show others that salvation is real. We will have peace from God, which is more important than anything else in this world. Please, do yourself a favor. Listen to Paul's advice. In

Years later I experienced what it means to see your own name in print.

your experience what have been the physical and psychological effects of rejoicing and praising God? By contrast, what have been the effects of worry and depression?

REACT

1. How can we cooperate with God in keeping our minds focused on pure, beautiful things?
2. In everyday terms on this earth, what does it mean to have your name written in the book of life?
3. How would you describe this knowledge to an atheist? An agnostic?

* *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 175.

By José H. Cortés, Jr., a junior theology major and communications minor at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

God Has Promised

TESTIMONY

Key Text: John 14:12-14

“All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul.”¹

How many of us truly believe God will give us whatever we ask for? It’s easy to recite promises, but actually believing them is a lot more challenging. How do you *know* God will answer your prayers?

First of all, it takes faith because “without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb. 11:6). Just use the same faith you depend on every day with paper money or credit cards, knowing that when you use it, you will receive something in return. Make your request known unto Him, and He will “supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). “Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing.”²

To have assurance in God’s word, you must have a personal relationship with God. Establishing this relationship is similar to a growing relationship with a

You can’t trust in anything you haven’t experienced.

friend. You have to spend quality time in communicating. Spend time listening to God talk to you by reading the Bible.

I can tell you all about an orange—its color, shape, texture—and even describe to you how it tastes, but unless you behold it with your own eyes and sink your own teeth into it, you won’t have an experiential knowledge of an orange. An experiential knowledge of Jesus is essential. That’s what Christianity is all about—an experience. “O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Ps. 34:8). You can’t trust in anything you haven’t experienced. But after you give God a chance, you will see for yourself that every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before. This gives birth to the faith needed actually to believe you can do all things through Christ.

REACT

Do I really know Jesus? Does Jesus know me?

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 140.
2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 330.

By Melvyn E. F. Hayden III, a theology major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The Sword and the Lord

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Zech. 4:6

Modern Olympic fencing . . . pure-white uniforms . . . quick snick of steel blades . . . iron wrists . . . brains behind masks. It's a doers' sport, not witnessed on ESPN, a demanding sport requiring technical excellence, strategic brilliance, and grueling endurance. After seven years of competition and a string of regional "gold," I qualified for the national championships and was eliminated in the first round. The difference: *strength*. Strength—the muscular ability to exert force, accomplish tasks more efficiently with less expended energy. The top athletes have it. Carpenters use it. Everyone needs more.

Degree of muscular strength is dependent on: (1) available energy sources from stored foodstuffs called substrates, (2) anxiety states, (3) leverage, (4) genetics, (5) relative fitness level, (6) rest, recovery, or relaxation, (7) overall nutrition, (8) abuse of chemicals, (9) efficiency of movement/skill, (10) motivation.

Scripture is resplendent with allusions to physical strength: "He trains my hands for war, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze" (2 Sam. 22:35, RSV);

**The top athletes have it. Carpenters use it.
Everyone needs more.**

"Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion" (Isa. 52:1); and many others. Fortunately, our spiritual strength is dependent on only one Source.

The strength from heaven helps us to keep going in the face of humiliation or public failure, in depressed solitude, after frustrated human effort, in the cold light of sinfulness, or in a victimizing society. The arm of the Lord lifts us up. His hand guides us, giving us a reason to breathe, to hope, to share, to love and care. As every spiritual human impulse for good comes from the mercy seat, the strength for human completion of that impulse comes from the throne. There is no despair, problem, worry, or grief that is not fully understood and appreciated by the God-man who experienced corporately the exhaustion of the flesh.

Our Example taught us much that mankind is incapable of duplicating, and He set a precedent that classic literature often copies. Henrik Ibsen wrote, in *An Enemy of the People*, "The strongest man on earth is he who stands alone" (the image of Gethsemane). "What is strength without a double store of wisdom?" from Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. And for today's maddening world, "Strong men can always afford to be gentle. Only the weak are intent on giving as good as they get" (Elbert Hubbard, *The Notebook*, [1927]).

REACT

1. What gives you the strength to persevere in adversity?
2. What do our social concerns tell us about personal weakness?

By Friederich E. Herlinger, chair of the physical-education department, Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Toothpaste in the Sink

HOW-TO

Key Text: Phil. 4:6

How many times during the course of your week do you come across a problem you feel God doesn't have the time to deal with? Perhaps it's the chemistry test you've been fearing all semester. Maybe it's your boss at work. How about that roommate who always leaves toothpaste in the sink? If you are anything like me, there are times when you truly believe that, with all that is going on, God has more to worry about than my petty problems. You can't read a newspaper or look at the news on the TV without learning of some new tragedy causing major destruction or loss of life. You wonder, *Is it fair to expect help in dealing with my roommate's toothpaste problem when people are dying from starvation in Third World countries?*

We as Christians sometimes fall into a pattern of asking for the Lord's help only in problems that we feel are worthy of His intervention. You know the routine: *Looks as though this problem is too much for me to handle; I'd better ask the Lord*

We wait for the situation to reach “Code Red” before asking for God to take over.

for some help. We wait for the situation to reach “Code Red” before asking for God to take over.

Paul writes to the brethren at Philippi from his prison cell in Rome. In his letter he gives some very good advice on when to ask for God's help. “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6, RSV). Two key words stand out in this text: *anything* and *everything*. The parameters of the words *anything* and *everything* cover quite a bit. World hunger and chemistry tests fall between anything and everything. Comfort during a personal tragedy or toothpaste in a sink falls between anything and everything. “Lord, be with me today and let the decisions I make bring glory to Your name, no matter how big or small they seem to be,” most definitely falls within the parameters of anything and everything. Here are a few more examples of anything and everything:

1. “Lord, please bless my old car; You know it's all I have to get me back and forth to work.”
2. “Lord, give me the patience to deal with my boss; allow me to react in such a way that he can see only You in my life.”
3. “Lord, help my roommate to understand that cleanliness is next to godliness.”

Isn't it wonderful to have a God who is sincerely interested in every aspect of our lives—including toothpaste in the sink?

By Roger Williams, a junior theology/history major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Never Limit Yourself

OPINION

Key Text: Phil. 4:13

Philippians 4:13 is a great text, isn't it? You probably learned it when you were a kid, and couldn't forget it to this day even if you wanted to, right? I know, because it's a part of my memory chips too.

I can't help but wonder, though, if we really believe what the text says; do you or I have the guts—or faith—to take it at face value? As I look around me in this world, I would say that too often the answer is No. I may know the text by heart, but I don't know it *in my heart*.

Case in point. Doesn't it seem like never a day goes by without hearing—or saying—one of these phrases: “I can't . . .”; “I wish I could . . .”; “unfortunately, I've never been good at that . . .”; “some things are just impossible for me . . .”; and on goes the list. Some phrases tell of inferiority complexes, others speak insecurity, and still others may masquerade as false humility. Whatever the cause for state-

Some people didn't expect me to accomplish much, turn out normal—or even live.

ments such as these, I believe they really don't need to be found in a Christian's vocabulary. You really *can* do all things through Christ.

Never limit yourself. You can do anything in this life that you really want to. I've always believed this; maybe it's because as a little kid, I got a rough start. I had a lot of physical handicaps, and some people didn't expect me to accomplish much, turn out normal—or even live.

Maybe God used this in my life to help me rely on Him more.

Maybe that's where we lose it in life. We rely on ourselves too much, and then—of course—we are limited. But the text says, “Do all things *through Him*.” To me, He is the focus.

If Paul can say this so confidently, if he can do anything with Christ's help, why can't you and I? You know he had his troubles, his “thorns in the flesh,” and his faulty tenancies, but he kept looking at Christ, and trusting that if Christ wanted him to do it—no matter what “it” was—then he could. And he did.

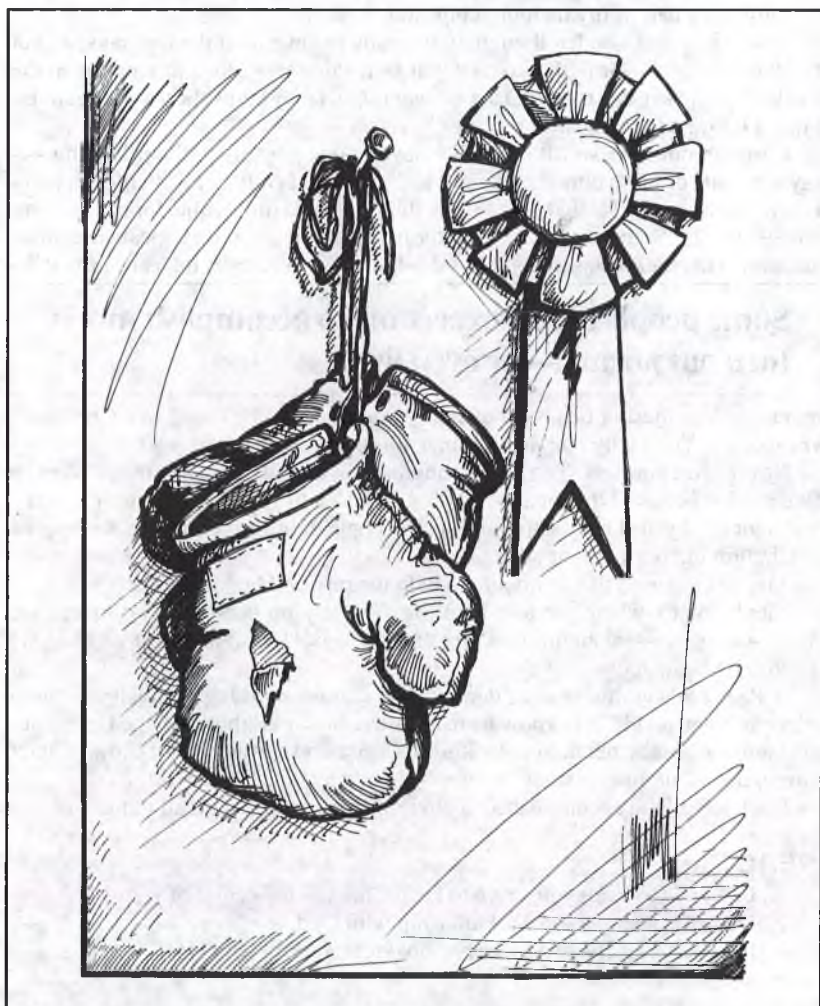
Look what Paul accomplished. Through Christ, you can do all things!

REACT

1. In what ways can you strive to keep Christ as the center of your life?
2. Describe your personal relationship with God.
3. How can you create a more personal relationship with God?

By Darcy Smith, administrative office assistant for Global Mission, Silver Spring, Maryland.

SALVATION IS FOR LOSERS



**“For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell”
(Col. 1:19, RSV).**

It's a Normal Day

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Col. 1:13, 14

Sam is perfect. You know, one of those guys in college who has everything. He drives a BMW 535i. He gets up and jogs five miles before going to the caf. Once he gets there, the cook himself comes out and offers to cook Sam anything he wants. After paying for his food, he is bombarded by beautiful women, all asking whether he would sit with them. It's a normal day in Sam's life.

Doug is the not-so-perfect guy. You know, one of those guys who has very little. He drives a Dodge Colt. He wakes up to find that he forgot to set his alarm clock and is running late. He squeezes into his jeans and throws on a hat. He runs to the caf, where he finds they've already changed the breakfast items to the lunch items, so instead of having eggs and potatoes with a couple of Stripples, he is offered cottage-cheese loaf and peas. He looks out over the caf, hoping he'll recognize someone; he doesn't, so he sits in the back alone. It's a normal day in Doug's life.

After breakfast Sam goes to his biophysics class and upon arriving finds that there are no more seats; that's all right because one of the varsity football players

As the class begins, the teacher announces a five-page pop quiz of short-answer questions.

offers him his seat. As the class begins, the teacher announces a five-page pop quiz of short-answer questions. The whole class groans. Sam raises his hand and informs the teacher that the class is tired of quizzes and that in fact they are tired of his teaching methods altogether. The teacher, realizing that he is in fact a bore, dismisses the class for a week. The class applauds. It's a normal day in Sam's life.

Doug finds himself sitting on the floor in chem class and, because he was late, is not allowed to take the quiz that could have saved his failing grade. As he is taking notes, unbeknown to him, his pen leaks. His nose itches, so he scratches—smearing black ink across his face. It's a normal day in Doug's life.

Which one are you? Sam, the guy wearing a Polo shirt, or Doug, the guy wearing a T-shirt from Bob's Plumbing? How would God view Sam and Doug? It might be easy to see how one might save Sam, but what about Doug? How could one save him?

By Dan Savino, associate pastor of Simi Valley (California) Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It's Who You Know

LOGOS

Col. 1:1-20

Paul's introduction to the Colossians includes a greeting and a prayer for spiritual wisdom and strength for these brothers and sisters in Christ. Though Paul had never visited Colossae (the church was evidently founded by Epaphras and other converts from Paul's missionary travels), he expresses concern for them.

Paul's Greeting

Not being one of the original 12 disciples, Paul likes to clarify that his credentials as an apostle of Christ Jesus are based on the will of God. Timothy was with Paul, as he was when Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon. Paul is writing to the faithful saints, the ones who chose to trust God. He affirms that grace and peace come from God.

Paul's Prayer for the Colossian Believers

Paul reassures the Colossians by telling them that not only do he and Timothy pray for them on a regular basis but also they listened to news concerning them from Epaphras. Paul has heard that the Colossians have faith in Christ Jesus and love for their fellow believers as a result of hearing and embracing the good news concerning Jesus. This is a positive example of looking for the good in others.

When Paul says our hope is laid up in heaven, he is emphasizing the security of the believer. Because we know our future destination and salvation are sure, we are free to live for Christ and love others (1 Pet. 1:3, 4). Believing in the good news was not just for information; it was for transformation. The Colossians, as part of the world movement, were bearing the fruit of a changed purpose for living. They no longer sought to serve themselves, but to emulate Christ by bearing the fruit of a changed direction, attitude, and behavior.

Paul's prayer is that the Colossians will have a true knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, a growing knowledge of God. At this point, it is a good idea to look ahead to Colossians 2:4 and understand that throughout this letter Paul combats a heresy related to gnosticism. Gnostics believed it took special knowledge to be accepted by God; for them, even if they claimed to be Christians, Christ alone was not the way of salvation—knowledge was. This was heresy. "The Gnostics took over only the idea of a redemption through Christ, not the full Christian doctrine, for they made it rather a redemption of the philosophers from matter (which was evil), than a redemption of mankind from sin."^{*} It has also been said that the intellectual pride of the gnostics refined away the Gospel into a philosophy. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* tells us that "these little Gnostic sects and groups all lived in the conviction that they possessed a secret and mysterious knowledge, in no way accessible to those outside, which was not to be proved or propagated, but believed in by the initiated, and anxiously guarded as a secret." Knowledge is not something merely to accumulate; it should give us direction for living. The Gospel is to be given to all the world (Matt. 28:19). The Gospel is to be proclaimed.

Paul reminds the Colossians that they receive strength from God to endure

everything and to make the necessary changes in their lives. This permits them to live joy-filled lives and to give thanks to the Father, who has delivered them from their old selfish ways to the ways of Jesus' kingdom. Paul defines this redemption, or deliverance, as the forgiveness of sins.

Some Misconceptions

The Colossian church, influenced by gnosticism, was suffering from several misconceptions about Christ that Paul directly refutes. Because they believed that matter was evil, they said God would not have come to earth as a true human being in bodily form. Paul states that Christ, Himself God, is the exact likeness of the Father, and yet died on the cross as a human being. The Colossians also believed that God did not create the world, because He would not have created evil. Paul affirms Jesus Christ as the Creator of both heaven and earth. Another misconception was their refusal to see Christ as the source of salvation. Here they rely on

Believing in the good news was not just for information; it was for transformation.

secret information and revelations. Paul states that salvation is through Christ alone. The warning is to beware of deceptive philosophy (Col. 2:8).

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul gives strong evidence of the divine nature of Christ. Jesus is equal to God (2:6). Jesus reflects and reveals God (John 10:30, 38; 12:45, 14:1-11). He came from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). He is Lord of all (Rom. 9:5, 10:11-13, Rev. 1:5; 17:14). The central truth of Christianity is that Jesus is God. We can know God by knowing Jesus. By studying the life of Jesus, we have a model for our lives. By studying His death, we see the awful consequences of sin. We long to be one with the Father. Reconciliation begins. Our sins are forgiven, and we are no longer separated from God. We are then free to grow to the full potential He has planned for each of us, to commune with Him, to ask Him questions, to get answers, to be loved and to love. It's Who you know.

REACT

1. How would you answer the gnostics' assertion that Christ could not be human and divine?
2. Why is this such an important distinction?
3. What is the relationship between Christ as Creator and Christ as Reconciler?

* Henry Melvill Gwatkin, *Early Church History* (New York: AMS Press, 1974).

By Dottie Ross, a graduate student in reading at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.

Christ in the Ring

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Job 22:21, 22

Life makes sense when you play by God's rules. As Job indicates, agreeing with God brings peace and goodwill. Though we are sinners stumbling through life, we have Someone who made the move to save us and who daily works to bring our lives in line with His plans.

As Ellen White notes, "Christ has made ample provision to impart new vigor and divine strength at every advance step in the divine life."¹ So we can choose to lose by shoving Jesus out of our lives, or we can accept what He offers us and be winners.

Daily, Christ and Satan fight in the ring for our lives. Though we all feel the effects of sin, Jesus is the one who will lead us triumphantly through in the long run. Colossians points out that Jesus' death on the cross "made peace" (1:20).

Jesus constantly calls for you and me to be at peace with Him and His Father. "[Jesus] intercedes before the Father as our Mediator, pleading not as a petitioner,

Daily, Christ and Satan fight in the ring for our lives.

but as conqueror who would claim that which is His own."²

When was the last time you balanced your checkbook and bank statement and felt a sense of relief when all the figures came out right? Reconciliation is being in harmony and unity with God. "[Christ] forms the connecting link between two worlds. He brings the love and condescension of God to man, and brings man up through His merits to meet the reconciliation of God."³

Finally, Ellen White, recognizing that "reconciliation means that every barrier between the soul and God is removed," becomes personal: "Christ died to save me. The Lord's desire is that I should be saved, and I will come to Jesus just as I am without delay."⁴

REACT

1. What sins have you discovered are keeping you from being at peace with God?
2. Considering the fact that, with Jesus, you can be a winner, what will it take to give those sins up?

1. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 193.

2. *Messages to Young People*, p. 407.

3. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, p. 193.

4. *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 396.

By Keith Potts, a free-lance writer from Silver Spring, Maryland.

A Question of Identity

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 1:13, 14

“All persons identified as citizens of Her Majesty’s United Kingdom must surrender themselves into the custody of Iraqi soldiers . . .” droned the British-embassy official, with about as much feeling as a wet rag. From day one of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein had positioned troops at the borders to prevent Western nationals from escaping. Not content with holding them hostage inside Kuwait, Saddam intended to take them to Baghdad as human shields.

“Any British citizen who does not report to the hotel by seven o’clock this evening will be arrested on sight, and their safety cannot be guaranteed,” the official finished.

I couldn’t help thinking of something my mother used to say, “Teresa, always remember *who* you are.” British, she meant—my distinct identity, a lineage rich

Has it ever crossed your mind that life might be easier if you weren’t identified as a Christian?

with culture, and I was proud of it!

Hearing Saddam’s demand for my capture poured cold water on my pride. For the first time in my life, I’d have given anything not to be identified as a citizen of the United Kingdom. What made it worse was that I knew there was absolutely nothing I could do to change *who* I was. My identity made me nothing more than a pawn in Saddam’s brutal war.

Have you ever felt like a pawn in Satan’s futile battle against God? Just when you think you’ve got it together as a Christian, your money runs out before the month does, your grades plummet to an all-time low, or someone else gets that promotion you’ve worked so hard for. Has it ever crossed your mind that life might be easier if you weren’t identified as a Christian? Think about this: *Who* we are is intrinsically linked to that day on Calvary when Jesus *made peace* (Col. 1:20), and through His blood He paid the price for what He already owned—us!

There’s more! Because of His victory, we live on earth as *saints in light* (verse 12). In Christ we can see where we’re ultimately going. We’re no longer in the dark about our future. The only thing is, faith is the path we must walk. It’s strewn with rocks and potholes. But it’s lit up with the glory of Christ’s victory!

My mother’s words have taken on new meaning since I met Christ. The difference is: as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom, I *can* change *who* I am, anytime! I just don’t want to. Do you?

REACT

When life doesn’t go the way I want it to, what can I do to make sure I don’t change *who* I am?

By Teresa Byrne, director for fund-raising for Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, Silver Spring, Maryland.

When Other Christians Are Wrong

HOW-TO

Key Text: 1 Cor. 1:10

The problem facing the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1:11-13 still plagues Christians almost two thousand years later; we do not always agree on points of religion. Even within our single denomination arguments abound.

Paul's desire for the Corinthians was that they "may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (verse 10, NIV). The same applies to modern Christians. Because Christ reconciles everyone to Him, those who are close to the Lord should be able to agree with one another about the way Christ wants our lives to be lived. So what happens when Christians have disputes?

Several steps can be taken to discuss and resolve differing religious opinions:

1. Mind set is everything. Remember that all human beings are capable of error in theology. Do not be too quick to block the ideas of another.

2. The gospel is the bottom line. As Paul explained, Christ is the foundation for all we believe. No matter what issue you are arguing, remember that in the

Christians can respect each other with Christ's love pulling us together regardless of our differences.

cosmic scope of things all that matters is that each of us accepts our Saviour's gift of life. Based on the gospel, the Bible, and as much prayer as you can give, discuss and explore with the person who disagrees with you what God wants for His people. God will show you His intentions if you are willing to look.

3. Agree to disagree. When calm discussion and serious prayer show no truth on which you and your friend can agree, remember that you are each sincerely following the Lord the way you believe He wants you to. The Christian comedian Mike Warnke speaks about God giving him the strength to love conservatives. It is hoped that Christians can respect each other with Christ's love pulling us together regardless of our differences.

Keeping Paul's words to the Corinthians in mind, Christians can always work to maintain unity in our churches and relationships.

REACT

1. To what extent should a Christian seek to reconcile two friends who have become angry with each other?

2. If a human being can never attain perfection, how can he ever hope for reconciliation with a perfect God?

3. How much diversity, of what kinds, can the Christian community allow?

By DeEtte M. DeVille, a junior pre-medical student, majoring in advertising design at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.

Pleased to Dwell

OPINION

Key Text: Col. 1:19

Another angry wave smashes into the wall, slowly kicking the house off its foundation. A mountain vomits its fiery contents, quickly coloring a lush forest ashen gray. A hurtling planet flies no faster than it is allowed. The sun and every other star go where they are told. In the cosmic view we, and our mound of mud, are a small part of our solar system, a tiny particle of our galaxy, which is only a freckle on the face of the universe. How powerful must be the pull that unerringly places the feet of these cosmic dancers in their assigned position. How infinitely wise must be the choreographer of this celestial ballet.

The daisy, the platypus, the elephant, the tiger, the toucan, and the dragon fly, though amazing, hardly hint at His creativity. Diamondlike dew on the grass each morning, photons, protons, and snowflakes are all pieces of an ingenious plan by a creative God.

The power that maintains the universe, the mind that created it, comes to live as humanity. One would suppose (correctly) that this God-man would have a huge

Photons, protons, and snowflakes are all pieces of an ingenious plan by a creative God.

impact on this world. One would guess that He would become the greatest warrior of all time, the most magnificent king ever to hold a scepter, famous the world over for His wisdom. It was not so.

Saying, "Blessed are the meek," "blessed are the pure in heart," "blessed are the peacemakers," "blessed are you who are persecuted for righteousness," he broke another piece of bread off the loaf and placed it in the basket of the nearest disciple.

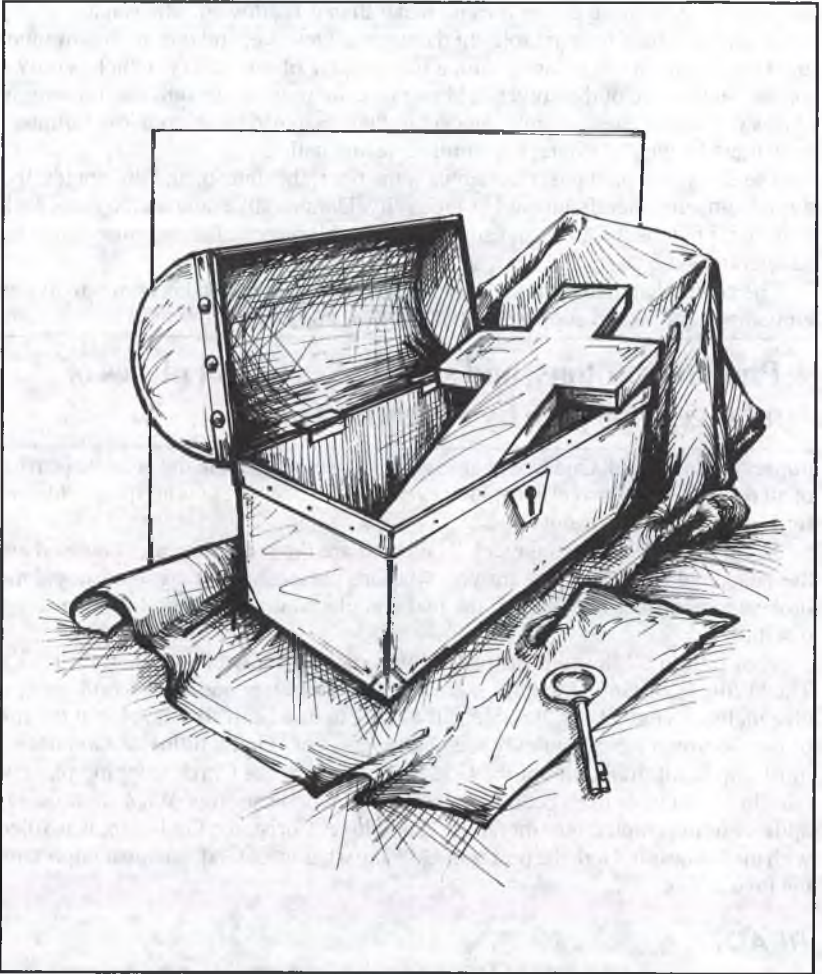
"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19, RSV). The "fullness of God" includes more than God's power and God's brilliance; it also includes God's kind, humble spirit—His loving heart. By looking at the life of the God-man we can quickly see what aspects of "God's fullness" God deems most important. In the life of the God-man we never see Christ stopping planets, building rockets, or even becoming famous for wood carvings. What we do see is a life of uninterrupted humility, purity, and love. Christ, the God-man, was filled with the fullness of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God, but most important, the love of God.

REACT

If we practiced the kind of love Christ did, how would we be different individually? As a church? As a society? As a world?

By A. Kent Rathbun, a junior psychology major at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California.

HOPING AGAINST HOPE



“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27, NIV).

The Mystery

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Eph. 3:16-20

“‘Christ in you the hope of glory.’ What does that mean?” She was asking him, and he sensed he was not impressing her with his wisdom, or of the fact that he might hold in his soul the key to such a mystery. He felt he should know all about such things. Besides, she was attractive, and he wanted to impress her.

He ended up in the library, searching out an answer striking enough for her. And what he had not expected began to happen. He hadn’t allowed himself to realize it, but as he searched for answers for her, he began actually to face his own disquieting inner dissatisfaction and inadequacy.

As he began to yield to those realizations, he was encouraged to notice that in his younger days he would have brushed these feelings off in one casual, careless way or another. But now his world, and for that matter the world as a whole, had moved along to the place that such feelings could not be ignored. He was glad he was giving them their due weight.

Somehow, as he searched, he came to this: “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteous-

He ended up in the library, searching out an answer striking enough for her.

ness” (1 Pet, 2:24, KJV). “Should live unto righteousness.” That struck his conscience hard. And a great longing to live that way came over him.

But quickly the question of How? surfaced, especially as he looked at his own carefully hidden, consistent failures.

Then her question returned: “‘Christ in you the hope of glory.’ What does that mean?”

And then he found this: “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. . . . That you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory . . .” (Eph. 3:16-20, NIV).

There it was. He allowed the full impact of each word, and of the whole passage, to strike his soul. He didn’t wait to feel any great rush of emotion; he simply called out quietly with the little faith that was in him, “O Lord come to me and live within me.” And God came to him.

It was now not so mysterious. And he didn’t want so much to impress her as simply to tell her what had happened to him.

By Will Eva, senior pastor, Kettering (Ohio) Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Nothing More, Nothing Less

LOGOS

Col. 1:21–2:7

Leviticus 11:45

Paul makes a series of assertions about Jesus Christ on the opening pages of his letter. Jesus is the Deliverer (Col. 1:13), the Lord of Creation (verse 15), the Head of the church (verse 18), the Reconciler of all (verse 20), and finally the Great Sanctifier, the One who makes His people holy (verse 22).

Christ alone created us, delivered us, reconciled us, and now sanctifies us. Through His death at Calvary He crashed the walls of Satan's prison and emptied the cells. He led a people out to live free and productive lives. He planted in them dreams and aspirations that should never be imprisoned by Satan again.

Now He offers to complete the work that He began and to present to the universe those He has freed as trophies of His cross. This, and nothing less, is Christ's ambition for His people. He will never turn back, give up, or allow this mission to fail. The jailbreak has occurred, and now we are encouraged to follow Christ through to the successful conclusion. Sin is so degrading and dehumanizing that Jesus will not allow Satan to make slaves of us again. This, and nothing less, is His promise to those who will accept His terms.

Galatians 2:20

What is the secret that makes it possible for Christ to present us as His trophies? What is the key to the successful completion of His mission? *Christ in you, the hope of glory.* Paul repeats this theme over and over in his letters. The "old me" is dead and the new life I now lead is God's special gift, by His grace. Christ is living in me. A few years earlier Paul had written to the believers in Rome and told them that in living by Christ's Spirit they would see the righteous requirements of God "fulfilled in us" (Rom. 8:1-11).

In saying that "we are debtors, not to the flesh," he clearly implies where our debt lies; our debt is to Christ, who paid the ultimate price by making the ultimate sacrifice. Romans 8:10 says that when Christ is in us the overwhelming pull of our natural evil tendencies dies and the Holy Spirit gives us new life and direction. "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe." "Christ in me is to live, to die is to gain." These are the treasures that Paul wants his readers to hold on to. Even though he has never had the opportunity of visiting the Colossian church, he guards this treasure as if it were an only child's inheritance.

How important was this treasure to Paul? So important that he had given his life to it. He was writing this letter from prison, and it was not the first time he had been imprisoned or suffered other hardships. Yet more distressing to Paul than any pain he had endured was the news brought to him by Epaphras that some believers apparently felt these riches were not enough. Some were carried away by self-centered philosophies, worldly principles, human regulations, religious ritual, and ascetic practices. Paul answers the challenge with this theme: Christ and nothing more. Christ alone is sufficient to supply the overflowing life that soars above the potholed highway of sin. Nothing can be added to what He has done.

Matthew 13:44

Here is a mystery! I have two sons who enjoy eating. The more they eat, the more they grow. The more they grow, the larger their appetites become. You guessed it: the larger their appetites, the more they eat and the more they grow. This is how it is with those who have found spiritual treasure. The more you have, the more you want. Only those with fool's gold lose interest in the search for more treasure.

Even though Paul cannot be with the Colossians, he commends them for their good order and steadfastness. Here he is borrowing military language used to describe a well-ordered battalion in parade formation (2:5). He calls on the Christian to pursue and value a pure life lived in Christ. "Live holy" and "walk purely"—what strange concepts in a religious milieu that says one can live any way he or she pleases and still fly on the *Grace 747*, the wide way. Motto: We love to sin and it shows.

Instead, Paul tells the Colossians to walk in Christ, sink your roots in Christ, be built up in Christ in the same way you first accepted Him (verses 6, 7). Jesus

Christ alone is sufficient to supply the overflowing life that soars above the potholed highway of sin.

invites us to dream with Him, fly with Him, explore with Him, live with Him, rest in Him. Nothing more, nothing less.

REACT

1. Explore what each of the following descriptions tells us about Christ: "the Deliverer"; "the Lord of Creation"; "the Head of the church"; "the Reconciler of all"; and "the Great Sanctifier."

2. In everyday terms what does it mean to have Christ "in you"?
3. How would you answer someone who asked, "How can I get to know God?"
4. In what sense are our sufferings an extension of Jesus' sufferings?
5. How is finding Christ like uncovering buried treasure?

By Dan Solis, chaplain and counselor at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.

Human Fragrances and Blooms

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 2 Cor. 2:14, 15

“When a crisis comes into the life of any soul, and you attempt to give counsel or admonition, your words will have only the weight of influence for good that your own example and spirit have gained for you. You must *be* good before you can *do* good. You cannot exert an influence that will transform others until your own heart has been humbled and refined and made tender by the grace of Christ. When this change has been wrought in you, it will be as natural for you to live to bless others as it is for the rose bush to yield its fragrant bloom or the vine its purple clusters.

“If Christ is in you ‘the hope of glory,’ you will have no disposition to watch others, to expose their errors. Instead of seeking to accuse and condemn, it will be your object to help, to bless, and to save. In dealing with those who are in error, you will heed the injunction, Consider ‘thyself, lest thou also be tempted’ Galatians 6:1. You will call to mind the many times you have erred and how hard it was to

“You must *be* good before you can *do* good.”

find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger.

“He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary’s cross.”¹

“Paul carried with him the atmosphere of heaven. All who associated with him felt the influence of his union with Christ. The fact that his own life exemplified the truth he proclaimed, gave convincing power to his preaching. Here lies the power of the truth. The unstudied, unconscious influence of a holy life is the most convincing sermon that can be given in favor of Christianity. Argument, even when unanswerable, may provoke only opposition; but a godly example has a power that it is impossible wholly to resist.”²

REACT

1. What is the difference between *being* good and *doing* good?
2. In what ways is a Christian’s life like that of a fragrant flower?
3. How would you define “the hope of glory”?

1. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 127, 128.

2. *Gospel Workers*, p. 59.

By Dan Solis, chaplain and counselor at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.

Christ: Universal, Personal, Total

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 1:21-23

After describing the universal supremacy of Christ, Paul focuses in Colossians 1:21-23 on a personal description of the sinner's experience. Formerly captive to a hostility lived out in a philosophy of life that affects the way we think and perceive, as well as our overall lifestyle, Paul describes the personal struggle of every believer. We engage in the foolish attempt to find a substitute for Christ. Substitutes can be self-centered pursuits for pleasure or status, pseudo-intellectualism, including humanism and secularism, and even spiritual journeys whose focus appears beautiful, idealistic, attractive, compelling, supernaturally oriented.

Many popular spiritually oriented psychics, who teach that there is no evil or devil, fit the latter description. What they hold in common is that about which Paul speaks to the Colossians. The belief and focus on the essential teaching on the centrality of Christ is absent—an absence sometimes subtle, sometimes blatant. It is crucial to the understanding of our problem and need, and the only truthful solution is our understanding of the accomplishment of Christ in our behalf.

Concern is expressed "that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments" (2:4, NIV). Any distraction from experiencing the saving truth and mean-

You are a saint clothed in the righteousness of Christ because of your faith.

ing of Christ as described by Paul is unfortunate and life threatening. The message of being reconciled by Christ's physical body through death, given in chapter 1:22, is the expression of the sinner's only solution.

The mention of the physical body is believed by many to be a reference to those whose view at the time taught that anything physical or material was evil. Therefore they denied the idea of an incarnate or "God in the flesh" teaching. Paul did not teach that we are saved from the flesh, but in the flesh. God's created work lost in sin cannot be denied. The world and everything in it comes from matter; God's intention is to reclaim that which was lost.

The idea that Paul describes of being presented "holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (1:22, NIV), is a profound thought. The overall statement of truth must not be missed. It is through Christ solely and His substitutionary sacrifice that any of us can stand before the accuser (believed to be Satan). This thought gives a greater and more universal context for the sin problem (than just from our perspective) for God to deal with, that the adversary is silenced and we are reconciled. You are a saint clothed in the righteousness of Christ because of your faith and reclaimed as His friend. Because of this there is no possibility that the adversary can bring a valid charge against you.

By Robert Dunn, professor of religion at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.

Stop, Listen, and Act

HOW-TO

Key Text: Acts 9:36

If you want to improve your lot in life, build a service station on it. A flash flood had swept over a neighborhood in northwestern Indiana, displacing hundreds of people. The water level had reached the roofs of the homes, damaging everything from the ground up. The flood had come suddenly, and residents were fortunate that they had gotten out with their lives. They had not been able to save their belongings. It was only a few weeks before Christmas when it happened, and even the children's Christmas surprises had been washed away.

The conference's mobile disaster unit was dispatched to the area, carrying supplies of clothing, bedding, and personal items for the victims. Volunteers from a number of area churches had assembled to distribute the items. Lines of people began to form. They were tired, depressed, in shock. Most of them were not adequately insured to sustain their losses. Dean was one of the volunteers who came to minister to the many needs of these people.

A young mother and her preschool-age daughter came to the disaster unit in search of assistance. The daughter was clinging to her mother, almost hidden in

We cannot truly pray "Our Father" and then go out and live an orphaned life.

the folds of her coat. An interviewer took their background information and sent a request form out to the semitrailer to be filled. When the request had been processed and the mother was picking up her items, the little girl began tugging at her mother's coat to gain her attention. As mother bent down, Dean overheard the little girl whisper, "See, Mommy, I told you Jesus would take care of us!"

There is no clearer mark of new life in Christ and our brotherhood with Him than Christian service. If you want to be great in God's kingdom learn to be the servant of all. Become involved in a community tutoring program, community services or disaster response, Pathfinderism or scouting leadership, shelter and street ministry.

"Those who aren't fired with enthusiasm, will be fired—with enthusiasm."

The employer made his point. The word *enthusiasm* comes from two Greek words: *en* (in) and *theos* (God). We think of an enthusiastic person as someone with fervor, someone inspired. When we are in Christ and Christ is in us, should it be any other way? *Praying*, telling God your joys, needs, and cares; *listening*, by reading the Bible and following His providence; and *believing* His promises to us—these are the means by which "Christ in you" becomes reality. We cannot truly pray "Our Father" and then go out and live an orphaned life. Prayer is the true source of enthusiasm, the fire that makes life joyful.

By Dan Solis, chaplain and counselor at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.

Does God Require Humility?

OPINION

Key Text: Col. 1:28

Seventh-day Adventists express the idea that Christ's life is to be reproduced in us. If humility is a necessary part of Jesus' character, does He give us the will or the power to be truly humble?

Humility does not come easily to most of us. Many Christians who come from damaged or dysfunctional families do not have the freedom to trust, feel, or share. The garden of low self-esteem produces weeds of little trust, high hopes, and great fears. Humility does not grow well in the garden of the religious. It is choked out by weeds of greed, power, and self-centeredness—weeds that self-fertilize. The insecure are more likely to go into hiding and not let others know, even those close to them, what they really think or feel.

Humility does not mean thinking less of one's self; it means thinking less about ourselves. That is hard to do when one feels inadequate.

Humility coexists with confidence. It is a quality that grows more easily in people blessed with high self-esteem and self-confidence. It is a byproduct, the

The garden of low self-esteem produces weeds of little trust, high hopes, and great fears.

psychological and spiritual offspring of knowing one's place in the family, in the world, and in the universe. The power to be submissive and deferent comes from inner security.

One of the most humble men in the world had to be Mohandas K. Gandhi. His lifestyle, his great fasts, and his violent death came from an inner sense of commitment to a cause for which he was willing to die.

So it was for Jesus Christ. He knew who He was, why He was here, and where and how His life would end. He knew that, in the end, He would be victorious.

It is difficult to shake the confidence of those who know they will reach their goals. Christians need more confidence in themselves and in their Saviour. When we, individually, come to understand our deep need of Jesus Christ and our necessary dependence on His power, then humility and salvation will follow.

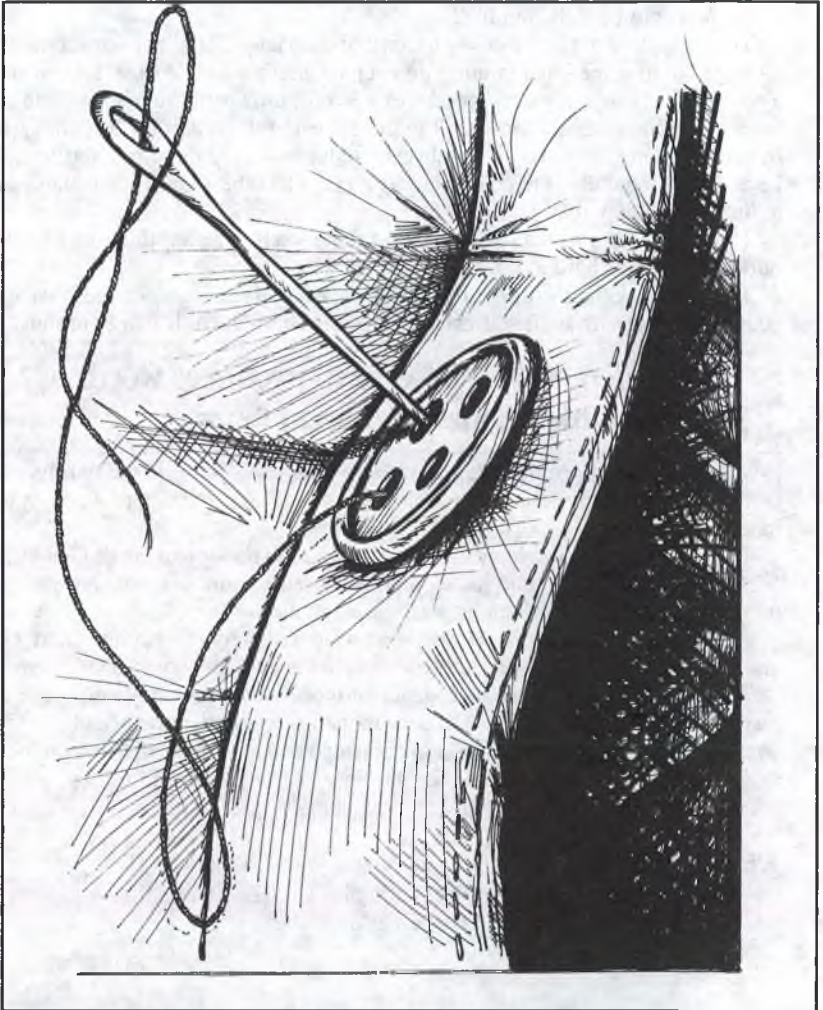
Humility does not come easily to most of us.

REACT

1. What role, if any, should ambition play in a Christian's life?
2. How does humility relate to achievement?

By Donald R. Martin, humanities professor at Kettering College of Medical Arts, Kettering, Ohio.

GOD'S SURVIVAL KIT



“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10).

Do It Yourself

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Col. 2:8

Ivor Yearning, whose full name was actually Donald Ivor Yearning (or DIY for short) had always been taught, “If you want a job done well, **Do It Yourself.**”

In fact, Ivor had learned to do things himself because his growing-up experience taught him that this was expected of him. He had looked particularly to his father for help and advice. He would ask for help, but his requests seemed to fall on deaf ears. His father was evidently always too busy doing other things and, apparently, had no time and didn’t care much for Ivor’s constant flow of questions and requests. So Ivor learned to trust in himself.

There was one small problem. Ivor wasn’t very good at doing things himself. To cap it all, if ever things went wrong you can bet that Ivor was involved. If the rocks were going to fall on someone, “Watch out, Ivor!”

Whenever Ivor bought anything, something was always missing: like that DIY chest of drawers with no drawer handles, the cassette player with no volume

The ill-fitting shoes meant he always had an excuse to walk only as far as *he* wanted to.

control, the shoes with no laces, the shirt with no buttons—the list was endless. Even when Ivor received a gift (which he was a bit skeptical about—at the time anyway) something was missing—at least, it didn’t seem to work the way he wanted it to work.

Ivor was too proud and too self-sufficient to take things back to the maker. The last thing he wanted was for people to think he was a complainer or that he may have been responsible for the things that were missing.

Anyway, things suited Ivor the way they were. There were things shut away in the chest of drawers that he didn’t want others to see. He had adjusted the cassette player so it was permanently very loud. It helped to block out those “subtle suggestions” that, for some strange and exasperating reason, could still be heard long after they had been spoken. The ill-fitting shoes meant he always had an excuse to walk only as far as *he* wanted to. And the shirt with no buttons? Well, people could think what they liked. If he wanted to be different from others, so what?

Every morning, as he dressed and looked at himself in the mirror, Ivor would say to himself, “No doubt you’ll find something else missing today, Donald Ivor Yearning, old son. Still, if you want to find fulfillment in life, just **do it yourself.**”

Somehow Ivor never noticed that something was missing from the face in the mirror, as well . . . or did he?

By Alvern McCrow, youth sponsor for the Welsh Mission, who lives in Cardiff, Wales.

No Red Tape

LOGOS

Col. 2:8-15

The Castle

In his grim classic *The Castle*, Franz Kafka relates the tale of a little man overwhelmed and finally defeated by bureaucracy. The hero goes to the castle to see someone of importance who has the authority to deal with his case. At every turn, however, he is frustrated by underlings and minions who exist only to prevent people from gaining access to those in power. Although at one stage he seems to be moving up through the densely layered power structure, he never gains access to anyone who can help him.

The Letter

Paul wrote his Colossian letter from his prison cell because he had heard of the establishment of a new church in Colosse. He wanted to encourage them, but also to warn them against a dangerous heresy that was gaining some acceptance among them. This false teaching attacked the supremacy of Christ and taught the necessity of angelic intermediaries between man and God. Some at Colosse were adding requirements to salvation, such as circumcision and Jewish festivals.

Paul was wise enough not to attack these false beliefs head on. He concentrated on explaining the qualification and sufficiency of Jesus as the Saviour. He says, In Jesus “*all* the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (2:9, NIV). Jesus is totally God, supreme in power and authority. Then Paul explains what this means to Christians. We are completed and fulfilled *in* Him. Moffatt’s translation renders the key phrase “It is in Him that you reach your full life.” This comes not from the achievements of law keeping (legalism) or through specialized knowledge (gnosticism). Rather it is something done *to* us. In verse 10 the Greek word for *filled* is passive, hence the NIV translates it “you have *been given* fullness.” Just like eternal life, this fullness of life is an unearned gift of God’s. From verse 11 Paul outlines how every aspect of our conversion and spiritual life has direct linkage with Jesus. It is through Him that we have died to sin, been raised to new life, been “spiritually circumcised,” and been freed from the deception of trying to achieve salvation through law keeping without Christ.

What’s more, Jesus dominates all other powers and authorities. In verse 10 Paul tells us that Jesus is “head” of these things, but in verse 15 he goes farther. Christ has disarmed the “principalities and powers” (KJV). He has “made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them.” So it is not only the angelic hosts over which Jesus has power. He has incapacitated the forces of evil too. They need no longer hold any sway over us. All power is ultimately subject to His will.

The Relevance

Just as there was no need for angelic intermediaries then, there is no need for spiritual props and bureaucratic hurdles now. We need only Christ. He alone is our Saviour, teacher, and guide. We do not gain completeness, salvation, or perfection through the Bible, Ellen White, the Ten Commandments, communion, baptism, or membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are complete in Him—in

Jesus. Without a personal, daily relationship with Jesus, we will be overwhelmed by “hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition” (verse 8). This was what had happened to the Jews in Paul’s day (and was about to happen to the Colossians). Satan exploited their weakness for scoring points by keeping the parts of the law that appealed to them. He also encouraged their pride in being the chosen people. This drove a wedge between them and their God. Could that happen today? Has it already?

Paul uses a series of positive building words to describe the Christian’s relationship with Jesus from verses 6-10: “rooted” (NIV), “built up,” “strengthened,” “taught,” “completed” (KJV). Paul’s emphasis on Christ is consistent with his non-confrontational approach to the Colossians. We don’t get far in our spiritual life by running down others or confronting them with their sin, but rather in focusing on Jesus. The bottom line in Paul’s letter to the church at Colossae was that Jesus

There are no barriers between us and Christ except the ones we put there.

was qualified to forgive our sins, heal our diseased minds, and reconcile our divorce from God. Only Jesus had this qualification.

Disarmament

As we know from recent world events, it takes powerful men to arrange disarmament treaties. Ordinary people cannot do this. They are at the mercy of powerful presidents who will arm or disarm whether or not they agree. Because of His victory on the cross, Jesus holds sway over the powers of the universe. He has disarmed them. He has cut through the barriers that were preventing full access to salvation. He has done this for us. There is no complex procedure or bureaucracy to go through finally to get to Him (as in Kafka’s hideous castle). The how, if, and why of any hierarchy of angels or church leaders or theological knowledge is therefore irrelevant to our salvation. It is only through our relationship with Him that we can receive the “fullness in Christ” (verse 10, NIV).

The Conclusion

There are no barriers between us and Christ except the ones we put there. In Him we have fullness of *eternal* life. He is *the king, the universal president, the chief*, in every sense divine—and He is *your* closest personal friend.

There is no bureaucracy . . .

There is no red tape . . .

There is no entrance exam . . .

There is no castle . . .

The president’s door is always open for you.

By Robert Surridge, a pastor and graduate student at King’s College, London University, London, England.

A Christian Survival Kit

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Phil. 1:6

In his letter to the early Christians Paul gave advice that in today's climate could easily be marketed as a "Christian Survival Kit." If ever there were a time that Paul's counsel was needed, it is surely now.

Western society places increasing pressure to find a sense of completeness within ourselves. We have found an array of distractions that are supposed to aid in our quest for wholeness. Some seek it through a journey to connect with their past; others find confidence in knowing their future. Some seek unison of mind and body through meditation and other mystical spiritual activities; still others opt for more tangible solutions: work, play, material possessions, sex, or drugs. If the condition of the world is any indication, success has been very limited.

Ellen White was in harmony with Paul when she wrote: "He who seeks to quench his thirst at the fountains of this world will drink only to thirst again."

Jesus immediately saw in her a need greater than the water she came to draw.

Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the needs of the soul."¹

In the time when Christ was on earth, men and women were similarly seeking. The woman of Samaria was fortunate enough to meet Jesus at Jacob's well. Jesus immediately saw in her a need greater than the water she came to draw. In the conversation that followed, He was able to offer her water that, if accepted, would make her life complete (John 4:6-15).

"God wishes for us to have mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and cooperation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and the faculties given to man. Of ourselves we are not able to bring the purposes and desires and inclinations into harmony with the will of God, but if we are 'willing to be made willing,' the Saviour will accomplish this for us."²

Paul's letter to the Colossians and ultimately to us, sets a very high standard for those who choose to follow Christ. He who began a good work in us is able to complete it.

REACT

How do we go about allowing Christ to complete His work in us?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.
2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 482.

By Velettia Davis, a primary-school teacher and education coordinator for the London Youth Federation, London, England.

Gnostics and New Agers

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 2:8-15

Paul never actually visited the church at Colossae. However, a theological problem was developing within the church there that Paul felt was so dangerous he had to put the people straight (2:8-15). This problem was “hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (verse 8, NIV).

Paul says if they got involved with these philosophies they would be taken captive (verse 8). He uses the Greek word *sulagogein*, which can mean to be carried off, as by a slave driver. He implies they are returning to spiritual bondage.

Paul is almost certainly referring to the heresy of *Gnosticism*. The Gnostic claimed to have special esoteric, or secret knowledge. This knowledge of password and formulae could be possessed by only a small section of humanity who could be saved.

The Gnostics believed humanity's way to God was barred to all except those

This philosophy meant salvation was intellectual knowledge rather than a gift.

with the esoteric knowledge. This philosophy meant salvation was intellectual knowledge rather than a gift. As a result it was for only a certain few.

They also believed that Jesus was not unique and was not on a level with God. This is why Paul asserts Christ's deity (verse 9). As to how this affected the church, one could imagine people saying, “it's all very well to believe Christ can liberate you through His death, but He can't set you free from the astrological world.”

Does this sort of deception still happen today? In his book “*Deceived by the New Age*” Will Baron discusses his life as a New Age priest turned born-again Christian. He reveals the deception of the so-called Christian New Age movement, whereby one is said to be able to reach a state of spiritual consciousness and become a godlike being while being on this earth. To illustrate this, they use texts like Isaiah 14:13, 14, while ghostly apparitions are also used as the basis for their teachings, even though they are completely contrary to biblical teaching.

In Paul's second letter to Timothy we are warned about such false dogmas. “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” (2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

REACT

How can we make sure that we are not carried off into the bondage of something like a New Age teaching or into a cult as that in Waco, Texas?

By Richard Johnson, a graduate student in chemistry at King's College, London University, London, England.

Disarming the Demonic Forces

HOW-TO

Key Text: Col. 2:10

Paul questions the Colossians about the foolish human additions that they are making to the gospel message. We also need to develop some safeguards to remind us that in Christ we have fullness because He is “the head over every power and authority” (Col. 2:10, NIV).

1. Do not allow deceptive ideas to take over from those of truth. It is necessary in all situations to judge the truth by God’s standards, and not to be led away by the sugar-coated deceit of the adversary.

As a student in a non-Christian university, I face people who are constantly questioning my beliefs. At times I find myself being caught out because I did not know the answers to the questions being posed. This means I have a need to know what truth really is so I will not be caught out by Satan’s counterfeits. It is possible to obtain this knowledge through the intense study of God’s Word and by maintaining a close relationship with Christ.

2. Regard prayer as an essential tool for conquering. Prayer is the tool of communication with Christ, and we should not think ourselves exempt from the

The moment of their supposed victory was actually the moment of their defeat.

need to communicate with Him. (This keeps us “complete” in Him.) He “is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him” (1 Pet. 3:22).

Martha Reapsome writes that those “Christ disarmed and humiliated at the cross included all the demonic forces aligned against him.” These forces thought they had triumphed by killing the Son of God. The moment of their supposed victory was actually the moment of their defeat.* Prayer gives us the connection to that victory so we also may overcome.

3. Keep our consciences clear of unworthiness. Many believers feel condemned by God because of sinfulness, and they believe that it prevents them from being “complete in Him.” Their consciences constantly accuse them of their unworthiness. It is necessary to realize that Christ has canceled all the accusations that anyone might ever make against us, nailing them to the cross. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, KJV).

God now accepts us fully and completely in Christ—not because of who we are, but because of what Christ has done.

* Martha Reapsome, *Finding Fulfillment in Christ*.

By Karen Weekes, a student in combined studies at Nene University College, Northampton, Northamptonshire, England.

Knowing or Hoping?

OPINION

Key Text: Col. 2:13-15; Rom. 3:21-31

Sermons stick in my mind for various reasons. Some elate, warn, or remind; others sadden. One that saddened me in particular was preached by an active and lifelong Christian, who told us he didn't think he would be ready for Christ's return. Christians can be divided into two groups, those who know they are saved and those who hope they are saved. I believe these two groups are based on the different viewpoints of grace, as below:

	<i>Infused Grace</i>	<i>Imputed Grace</i>
<i>Origin of theory</i>	Augustine of Hippo	Martin Luther
<i>God's Role</i>	He works a miracle in our lives, making us worthy of salvation	He credits Christ's righteousness to us
<i>Our Role</i>	Make sure you are worth saving	Accept Christ as your personal Saviour
<i>Saved?</i>	Possibly, let's wait and see	Definitely
<i>Summary</i>	Self-reliance	Christ-reliance

Self-reliance is one of the easiest traps to fall into for the Christian. We are groomed from an early age to become responsible and independent members of

A lifelong Christian told us he didn't think he would be ready for Christ's return.

our society. All too often we try to carry this new independence through into our Christian lives, believing we can give God a hand in the process of changing us for the better.

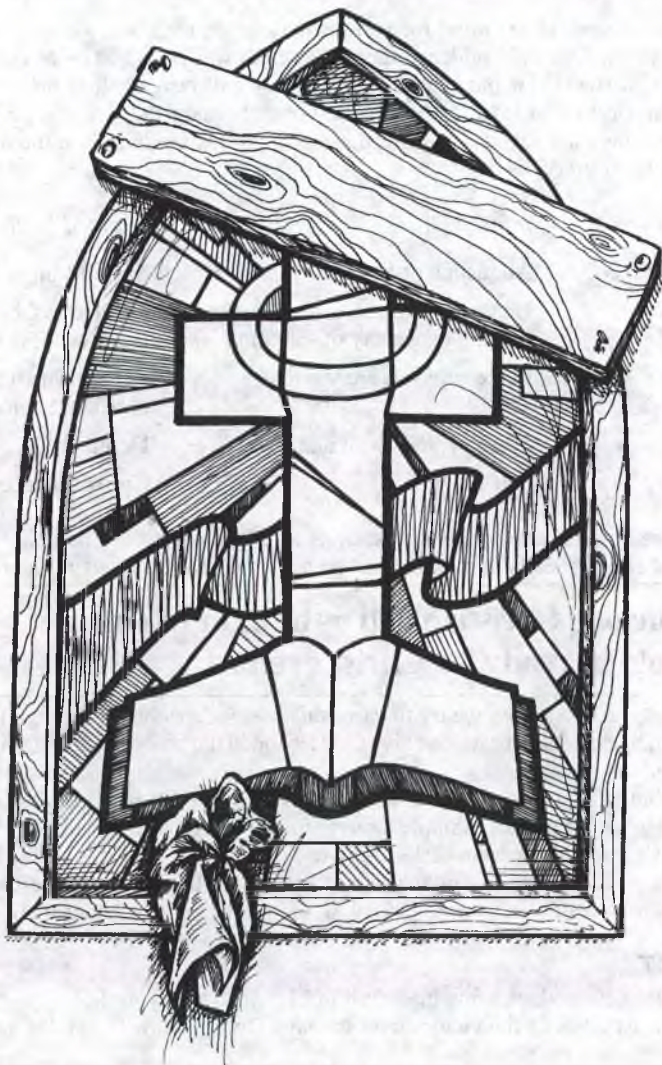
A belief in infused grace leads to the conclusion that Christ's mission on earth was to provide the perfect example for us to follow. I believe that Paul's description of Christ's role in Colossians 2:13-15 gives him a more active role within the salvation process. Christ is given the role of Saviour triumphing on the cross. Fullness in Christ results in a saved Christian, motivated by love rather than fear.

REACT

1. What effect does being made full in Christ have on your life?
2. Christ gives us the victory over the law. Does the law Paul talks about include more than the ritual law?

By Cedric Vine, who is studying business and management studies at Aston University, Birmingham, England.

THE QUICK FIX



“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3, NIV).

Good Advice

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Matt. 7:7, 8

When I was a young boy, one of my father's favorite sayings was "If you can't do the job right, don't do it at all." So often, in the heat of the moment, hearing such advice only added to what I surely believed was an unbearable burden. Whether I was faced with mowing the lawn, weeding several rows in our family garden, or suffering through another math assignment, my efforts concentrated on finding the quick fix. The natural impatience of an 11-year-old tends to search for the fastest solution to all of life's problems.

For many in society today the search for a quick fix to all of life's problems is a daily occurrence. We spend so much time trying to find man-made solutions for the challenges we face every day. The probability for success in these situations is low. Depending upon ourselves makes the task seem only more perplexing and difficult. The whole process becomes bogged down, and total failure is the end result.

The natural impatience of an 11-year-old tends to search for the fastest solution to all of life's problems.

Why do we keep our eyes turned downward? Why is our inclination to depend upon self so natural? Perhaps the answer rests in our use of legalism—dependence on self. Paul offers valuable advice and assurance in dealing with legalism. "Set your minds on things above," Paul states, "not on earthly things" (Col. 3:2, NIV). He then tells us why we should turn our eyes heavenward. "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (verse 3).

Wow! That means my union with Christ makes salvation possible. I'm not alone. I have my best friend to depend upon, and He's never failed me before. He has the perfect track record to prove it. Take a quick moment and read Matthew 7:7, 8. What does it say to you? When faced with a job you can't do right, just ask, seek, and knock. Guidance to meet every task you face is available. Your best friend is just waiting to help. Use Him!

By Tom Hinde, Jr., senior secondary-education and deaning major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Problem With Checklist Religion

LOGOS

Col. 2:16–3:4

Since this Scripture passage begins with “therefore,” it must be read in the light of the preceding verses. Colossians 2:13 says, “God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.” This “written code” was the record of our guilt, our failed obligation to obey God’s law, that Jesus nailed to His cross.

Since we are thus forgiven, Paul warns us not to let anyone judge us with ceremonies that were only a shadow of Christ. God prescribed ceremonies as a way of expressing faith in the Saviour before He came. They were good for their time, but if someone retains them after the Saviour has come, he is saying that Christ has not come, and His work is not enough to save him. He is saying that he has to supplement Christ’s substance with the typical shadows.

What ceremonies was Paul talking about? He mentions festivals, new moons, and sabbaths in verse 16, self-abasement and worship of angels in verse 18, and comments on rules against handling, tasting, and touching in verse 21.

In verse 16 he must be thinking of the festivals and annual sabbaths listed in Leviticus 23. There were seven of these special days of holy convocation: two in connection with Passover (Lev. 23:4-14), one for Pentecost (verse 21), one for the Feast of Trumpets (verses 23-25), one for the Day of Atonement (verse 27), two for the Feast of Tabernacles (verses 34-36). All of them pointed toward Christ, including both His first and His second advents.

These annual holy days were distinct from the weekly Sabbath, which is enshrined in the heart of the Ten Commandments. Their offerings were “in addition to those for the Lord’s Sabbaths” (Lev. 23:38). The seventh-day Sabbath was a memorial of Creation and not a type of Christ to come. The Ten Commandments reveal eternal principles; they point to Christ only in the sense that they demonstrate man’s need of a Saviour.

The false humility and worship of angels in Colossians 2:18 were probably practices brought into the church from pagan sources. At that time a philosophy known as Gnosticism taught that man’s spirit is good but his body bad.

This led to two opposite results. On one hand, some people said they could do as they pleased with their bodies because the body didn’t count anyway. Others said the spirit of man must be trained by punishing the body. They were the ones who starved themselves, lived in filth, went without sleep, and endured severe cold and heat in their effort to achieve righteousness. These people combined Hebrew and Greek ideas in their search for holiness.

There is such a thing as humility that brags about itself. The Pharisees made a point of letting everyone know when they were fasting. Of them Jesus observed with biting irony, “I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full” (Matt. 6:16). Such humility is nothing but disguised pride.

Verses 21-23 refer to external regulations: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” Promoting harsh treatment of their bodies, they thought that controlling the body would purify the soul. They preferred such rules because they

were visible; they could be assembled into checklists for controlling others.

Paul gives three reasons that the Christian need not follow these external practices.

First, he says that those who do these things have “lost connection with the Head” (verse 19). They are substituting other things for Christ.

Second, he says that these things belong to the world and are temporary (verses 20-22).

Third, he says that although they present an appearance of devotion, they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh (verse 23). Rule keepers may appear pious, but the Lord looks on the heart. If they are successful, they become proud; if they fail, they become discouraged. Their religion is worth nothing.

Only the behavior that comes from Christ in the heart is acceptable with God. He is all-sufficient; He is the center of the passage. Not only has He forgiven our sins and nailed them to the cross but He nourishes and knits the whole body with

Rule keepers may appear pious, but the Lord looks on the heart.

growth that is from God (verse 19). The body is the church, His family, which He is preparing for life in heaven.

Finally, we come to Paul’s application in chapter 3. Since we died with Christ and were raised with Him (verses 1, 3) when we were baptized, we have no longer an obligation to earthly things, but to heavenly things. Our death with Christ was a legal event that need not be repeated, and our lives have been hidden with Christ in God—a spiritual event that has continuing effects as long as we live.

The practical effect of this death and life is seen in our thoughts. Dead with Christ, hidden with Christ, raised with Christ, we think about the things of Christ. Our approach is not only to resist evil thoughts, but to fill our thoughts with God.

Those things are spelled out in the rest of the chapter.

REACT

1. How would you answer someone who claims that the Ten Commandments constitute a “checklist religion”?
2. How should a person decide which ceremonial laws in the Old Testament to obey?
3. How would you answer the person who claims that man’s spirit is good but his body is bad?

By Ralph E. Neall, chairman of the department of religion at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

At-one-ment With God

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Col. 2:20, 21

Atonement, at-one-ment with God. There is something special about this word that many Christians don't realize. No, it isn't a secret. No one hid it. Many just never find it. Or it is taken away from them. It's called the *love* of Christ.

This concept remains such a mystery because the false salvation by works maintained by the Jewish priests has taken the place of grace in many Christians' hearts. We need to remember that once we have died in Christ, following the law of God will be natural to us because of love—oneness with God. But note the order of events: first we die in Christ; then we follow the law. Too many new believers are bombarded with the theory that following the law will accomplish what only the death in Christ—or conversion—can. "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20, NKJV). When people confuse this issue, the commandments, which God intended to be a safe-

The Colossians were struggling with the legalism and self-righteousness of the Jewish priests.

guard, become a bondage that holds the soul captive in complacency or continual self-chastisement.

"No one who believes in Jesus Christ is under bondage to the law of God; for His law is a law of life, not of death, to those who obey His precepts."¹

The Colossians were struggling with the legalism and self-righteousness of the Jewish priests, despite their strong faith. By getting caught up in this righteousness by works, the newborn Christians in Colosse were being pulled into the never-ending hardships of the letter of the law—legalistic bondage and self-condemnation. Jewish leaders convinced them that by complying with these self-righteous traditions, they would earn their way to heaven. But what was really happening was a loss in faith and in epidemic discouragement. "The spirit of bondage is engendered by seeking to live in accordance with legal religion, through striving to fulfill the claims of the law in our own strength."² But our own strength can accomplish nothing.

A vital observation concerns the word *atonement*, at-one-ment with God. In focusing on this characteristic of faith and salvation, our lives will be changed. We will want to follow the law, not out of fear but out of love. This is what Paul was trying to tell the Colossians: legal religion is a false humility, a false worship, and a false salvation. Once you die in Christ, the law becomes natural through love for God by faith through Christ.

1. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1077.

2. *Ibid.*

By Janelle Wolfe, a senior international-studies/mathematics-education major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Wrong Half of a Half Truth

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 3:2

When I read through this week's passage, my first reaction was that I was reading counsel against extreme legalism. I had difficulty relating what Paul said to my twentieth-century Adventist outlook. However, when I studied into the reasons that he had written these specific instructions, I was surprised at how relevant this counsel was.

A lot of history has been a swing from one extreme to another, and Paul's time was no exception. Roman civilization before Paul's time had been caught up in Greek philosophy and reason. Because the focus was exclusively on the mind, Paul's generation reacted by being drawn to religion and spiritual ideas. God used this trend as a tool to establish the early Christian church, but Satan also brought on a deluge of counterfeit religions to distract and, if possible, to corrupt God's latest work. One of these religions that Satan used was Judaism itself, clouding the gospel of Jesus with lists of regulations—rules about eating, drinking, reli-

Because the focus was on the mind, Paul's generation was drawn to spiritual ideas.

gious festivals (see Col. 2:16). Another diversion—appealing more to Gentiles—was gnosticism, a combination of many religious ideas. It included ancient Babylonian dualism—the idea that all events are part of a conflict between the forces of a good God and the forces of an evil god. It also borrowed the idea of the seven Roman gods. And it incorporated Christian ideas, such as heaven and Jesus—Jesus, it was said, could not have been human, because flesh is evil, and only “believers” could get into heaven by knowing certain rituals or formulas.

Paul speaks specifically against these ideas in Colossians, exposing the error of beliefs that came out of this, such as the worship of angels (verse 18), rigid abstinence as a way of life (verses 20-23), and Jesus' not being human (verse 9).

Now, in the last decade of the twentieth century, there are myriads of issues to distract me from Jesus. What kind of music is appropriate? What is the difference between a string of pearls and a jeweled broach? What is my responsibility when I see others being abused? How do I truly honor my parents? Paul's answer for all time is “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (3:2, NIV). Focus on God and don't let anything get in between Him and you.

REACT

1. How should a local Adventist congregation deal with members whose biblical interpretation departs from that of mainstream Adventism?
2. On what modern issues in the church can we derive some instruction from the way Paul dealt with gnosticism?

By Wendy Huffman, a junior English and music major, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Freedom of Reality

HOW-TO

Key Text: Col. 2:16–3:4

Earlier in Colossians, it said that the glory of life that we hope for is God Himself actually within us (1:27). We are never alone. Never without the One who died to prove He loved us. His companionship is not just an external reality, but one filling our heart of hearts! But how does this affect our everyday lives? What about the negative, invalidating effect that religion has played in our past experience?

As I read through Colossians 2:16–3:4, I discovered four practical applications to the walk of faith that Paul is describing in the book.

1. Humility (2:16-18). We, as Christians, are not to judge people based on religious standards. Neither do we have to be discouraged when others do. The real issue is knowing Christ Himself, not getting caught up in religious forms. True humility is dependence on Him, not entangling ourselves with invalid standards.

2. Love (2:19). Holding fast to mind sets is much different from holding fast to the truth. Christ is the truth; He is the Head of the church. Our interactions with

What about the negative, invalidating effect that religion has played in our past experience?

one another need to encourage a relationship with Christ based in love, not in forcing opinions. This is the basis of unity and discovering God's blessings.

3. True religion (2:20-23). This is amazing! All the do's and don'ts that we have ever rebelled against can actually become obstacles to the true religion of Christ. To subject ourselves mechanically to regulations is to subject ourselves under the legalistic principles of the world, which makes one thing clear: legalism is not a problem of the church; it is a problem of sinful humanity. And because of this, it really stinks when some pious-sounding individual tries to apply legalism to Christianity—which many have done. According to Paul, this is “self-imposed religion” (verse 23, NKJV).

4. Priorities (3:1, 2). “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” So, once we are free of squelching judgments, limiting mind sets, and frustrating legalism, we can discover the staggering power and incomparable beauty of our true destiny.

REACT

1. Explain what you think is meant by the expression “limiting mind sets.”
2. What role, if any, should opinion play in the Christian experience?

By Scott Morton, a sophomore at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Reality Check

OPINION

Key Text: Col. 2:16, 21-23; 3:1-4

Classes. Quizzes. Tests. Study sessions. Failing a test. Workouts. Having your teeth pulled. Coming down with the flu. Taking a shot. Having a flat tire. Close personal relationships. Taxes. Wrecking your car. Losing one, not two, just one, of your favorite socks in the laundry. Which of these do you prefer? The choice is obvious. Close personal relationships wins out over any and all of these others put together. No contest!

Then why do we seem almost to thrive on the negative when it comes to our Christian lives? Stress, criticism, going to religious ceremonies, getting ahead, looking better than our fellow travelers, and those plain old human works seem to be what we value. When was the last time you really looked at your Christian friends and leaders? I am willing to bet that many of them are stressed out and worried about all the little details in their lives.

Paul was trying to get us into focus. He said, forget what everyone else thinks! Don't let people judge you. If he were here today, perhaps our elders would have

Perhaps our elders would have shown Paul the back door of the church for those statements!

shown him the back door of the church for those statements! He was trying to get us to see that although going to church, dressing modestly, and eating the right foods are important, they are not the reason for our existence. The simple reason we exist is that God loves us, and He wants a close personal relationship with us. Paul said, in a sense, *Wake up! Hello!* Christ is the reality. Christ is the reason for our religion. Nothing we do makes a difference if we don't have Him.

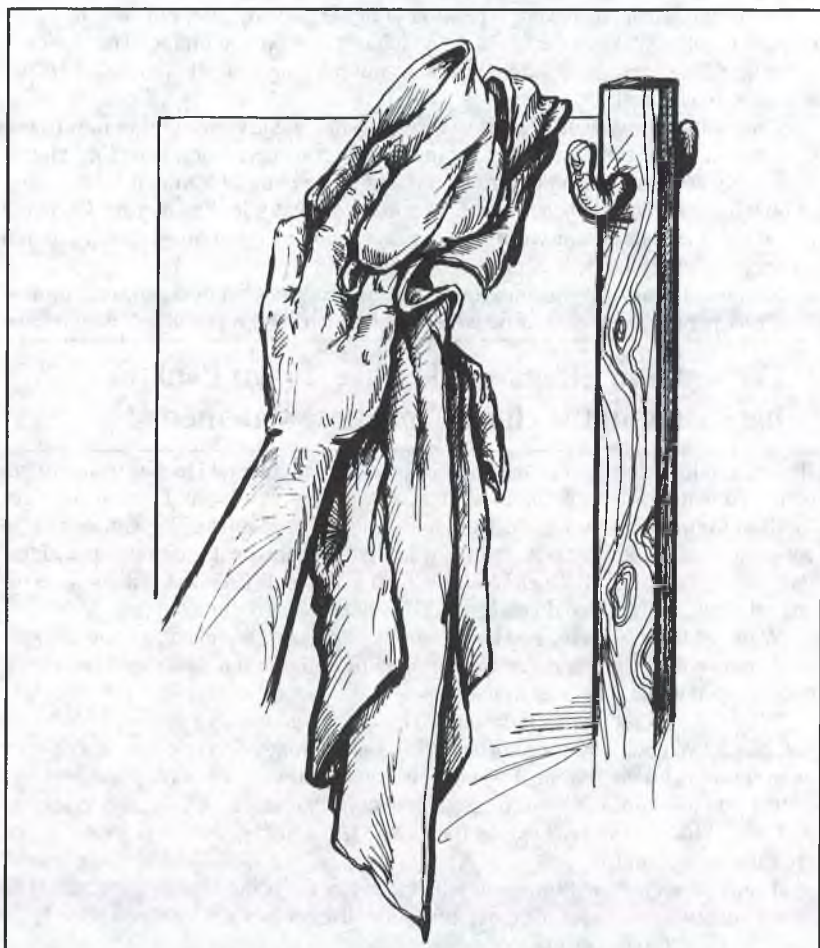
We need to stop, focus, and know who is important. We need to know *why* we believe as we do and *then* act. Stop practicing religion out of habit. Live Christ because that is the only way to live.

Why did you get up this morning? Why do you go through each day? Why do you laugh? Why do you continue studying and learning? Why do you work? Why do you go to church? I hope the reason is not so that you will look good to others or that you just couldn't wait to take that test, or that you really wanted to change that tire. What is your *real* reason for living? If it's not Jesus, then I'm afraid you are missing out on life.

Thank Jesus the next time you talk with Him for being real in your life. He's there, somewhere, under all those religious distractions we've thrown on Him. Let's let Christ live. Let's discover reality.

By Helen Cassidy, director of the Joe Mertz Center for Volunteer Services at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

GOD'S HAND-ME-DOWN



“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Col. 3:9, 10, RSV).

Born Too Late

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Rom. 3:22-24

I missed out. If I had been born just 391 days (a mere 9,384 hours) earlier, I would have been saved from countless embarrassing situations.

I missed out on being the first-born child in our family.

Now you may be wondering how this convenience would have saved me from embarrassing situations. The answer is simple: If I had been born first, I wouldn't have had to face the nightmare that most younger siblings dread—hand-me-downs.

In today's secular society, hand-me-downs are considered second best. But in our Christian journey, the hand-me-downs that God offers us every moment of every day are simply the best.

God offers His robe of righteousness to everyone. All we have to do is accept it. In Colossians 3:5-11, God presents to us (dare I say it?) perfection. After all, since God is perfect, anything from God will not and cannot be less than perfect.

If I had been born first, I wouldn't have had to face the nightmare.

All God asks of us is to accept His generous gift. After we turn our lives completely over to God, He bestows upon us the power to rid ourselves "of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips" (Col. 3:8, NIV).

It is very important to understand that "this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:22-24). When we are in constant communion with this wonderful Saviour, God enters our lives and all pride and hatred are removed from our hearts.

I realize that you probably have heard the statement, "You must have faith," countless times while sitting in church. All these years you were most likely never told *how* to obtain the faith you were challenged to obtain. Ellen G. White explains how we can obtain the seemingly eluding faith. "It is when we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition."* With a God like that, how can you not have faith?

What a terrific God!

* *Steps to Christ*, p. 36.

By Craig Hagelgantz, junior public-relations major, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

There's Got to Be a Change

LOGOS

Col. 3:11

In our attempts to rid ourselves of the legalist label, perhaps we have swung the pendulum to the other extreme of divorcing behavior from religious experience. Because of the absolute truth of righteousness and salvation by faith in Jesus alone, and because of the equally absolute truth that there is nothing we alone can do to improve our standing in God's eyes, we have at times faithfully, fearfully, and fanatically floundered in frustration as we seek to justify "faith without works is dead" (see James 2:17) with our salvation assurance.

The warm feelings accompanying that assurance are abruptly inverted as we attempt to come to grips with the admonitions of Paul in our scripture for this week. He delivers a driving discourse on the outward demonstrations that distinguish the "new self" from the "old self" (verses 9, 10). The inclusiveness of his instructions, as illustrated in verse 11 (NIV), indicates that irrespective of national distinction (Greek or Jew), religious uniqueness (circumcised or uncircumcised), behavioral background (barbarian or Scythian), or social standing (slave or free), because "Christ is all, and is in all," there will be a change in the life.

Because "Christ is in all," the result seems to be very proactive and dynamic.

1. We must put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature (verse 5). This process does not guarantee a greater level of salvation, but prevents further scarring in our lives and opens a window to show us the potential God has for us.

2. We must rid ourselves of all such things as these (verse 8). Avoiding these does not cause God to love us more, but ensures us of a happier life here on this earth. It's not that everything goes just right for the Christian, but God provides an inner peace to cope with every situation. Bad is eliminated in our earthly lives by allowing God to replace it with good.

3. We must not lie to each other (verse 9). Transparent honesty earns no merit in God's salvation system. But it provides personal relief and freedom from the stress of deception and from the need to perpetuate a lie to cover a lie. God not only desires our eternal happiness provided by salvation in Him alone, but our earthly happiness and contentment are provided also by Him alone.

Because we "have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (verse 10), being concluded, is "Christ . . . in all" (verse 11), we have the decision, the process, and the solution.

The decision: We must choose to take off the "old self with its practices" (verse 9) and "put on the new self" (verse 10). This is a conscious choice. But the taking off and the putting on is a gift of God, performed by Him as an act of love toward His children. He will do it, but we must choose it.

The process: We must identify behavior that is uncharacteristic of those who claim Jesus as Saviour and Lord of their lives (verses 5 and 8) and remove it from our lives. The ability to identify this behavior is stimulated by the Holy Spirit and comes from looking at Jesus and seeing the difference. Removing it is, again, a gift from God.

The solution: We must acknowledge that any behavioral change that is attainable in the human sphere is at best external and temporary. Lasting, permanent

change comes only when I rely on Paul's conclusion—Christ who *is* all and is *in* all, provides all the strength, all the heart changes, all the proper motives, and deserves all the credit.

Change must and will take place only through Christ. When used as an adverb, "all" most accurately describes God's character and His role in the process of solving the faith-and-works debate. Because He is all-present (omnipresent), we have access to Him in any circumstance, in any place, or in any condition. Because He is all-knowing (omniscient), He understands our condition and our need completely. Because He is all-powerful (omnipotent), He is our source of victory and the solution to understanding the change necessary, not *for* salvation, but *in response* to it.

We must challenge ourselves to holy living. Christ in us can make a difference in our daily lives so that we can be more effective witnesses. The contentment that comes from holy living will provide the motivation to continue on, even when we have to face the tough spots that life throws our way. Inherent in Paul's challenge

Perhaps we have swung the pendulum to the other extreme of divorcing behavior from religious experience.

is his perpetual theme of Christ, "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2, KJV). "He who began a good work . . . [the ability to believe and accept His salvation] will carry it on to completion [in a life changed from the old sinful self to a content and happy life, experiencing more and more of the joys God intended for us]" (Phil. 1:6, NIV).

We don't have to sacrifice God's ideal for our lives simply because we fear legalism in the name of salvation by faith. As we bask in the blessings of God's love and salvation through Christ alone, let us challenge ourselves to the joy and satisfaction that comes through holy living (*in Christ!*).

REACT

1. What is the role of behavior in a Christian's life?
2. What is the connection, if any, between choice and salvation?

Renewed in Knowledge

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Prov. 4:23

“But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander” (Matt. 15:18, 19, NIV).

Both these words to Jesus’ disciples and Paul’s to the Colossians demand perfection. However, putting to death all evil and impure thoughts is impossible unless the heart reflects the image of God. And the image of God is invisible unless the heart is filled with His knowledge.

The knowledge of how to “guard your heart” lies in the source of life. “Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all. Jesus is the source of power, the fountain of life.”¹ Therefore, accepting the righteousness of Jesus, who is “the embodiment of purity,”² allows Him to cleanse the heart with the pure water of His knowledge.

Furthermore, this renewal is a continuous process. The knowledge of God is a fountain, not a flood. “The Christian is not therefore to fold his hands, content

“Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all.”

with that which has been accomplished for him. . . . Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle with evil. Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is ever to be on guard, striving in Christ’s strength for victory.”³

“The nearer we live to Jesus, the more will we partake of His pure and holy character; and the more offensive sin appears to us, the more exalted and desirable will appear the purity and brightness of Christ.”⁴ “[A consecrated Christian life] is full of Christ, and leaves a track of light wherever its possessor may go.”⁵ “The believer will reveal in his daily life mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, forbearance, and the love of Christ.”⁶

-
1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 478.
 2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 243.
 3. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 476, 477.
 4. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 141.
 5. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 667.
 6. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 478.

By Kristine M. Elving, an English and commercial-art major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Death by Shame in a Life of Obedience

EVIDENCE

Key Texts: Col. 3:5, 10; Rom. 8:13; Ezek. 18:31

Some time ago I saw a T-shirt that I would be proud to wear. It had a man with outstretched arms, a crown of thorns, and blood everywhere. Underneath the hanging form were the words, "If I'm OK and you're OK, then explain this." In an age when one's opinion of oneself is worshiped, we must realize we have only two options: mortify Christ or mortify self.

Mortification is not fun. Yet it is an inevitable part of life on this sinful planet. It takes place on physiological, emotional, and spiritual levels. When gangrene sets in, physiological mortification takes place. When my high school "buddies" pulled my pants down and threw me out of the locker room, emotional mortification set in. When I transgressed God's law of love, spiritual mortification set in. But how could I possibly mortify God, who is immortal?

The first of God's commandments is, "Respect My supremacy." When I broke His law of love, I humiliated God by taking away His supreme authority over my

Mortification is not fun. Yet it is an inevitable part of life on this sinful planet.

life. When I crucified Christ on that hateful Friday, God suffered the greatest mortification I could bestow upon Him. But does God allow me, a creature sustained by His life, to die eternally with His Son, the Creator, of my life? The answer is emphatically and unequivocally *Yes*. For self will be mortified. I can do it now, through the power of grace, and live eternally with Him, or I will have it done at the second resurrection, to my eternal damnation. It's not that God wants me always to feel guilty for sin, but that He desires to free me and the universe from sin. And He asks for my cooperation. He asks me to prove my loyalty.

"God reveals Christ to the sinner, and he beholds him dying upon Calvary for the sin of His creature. He then understands how he is condemned by the law of God, for the Spirit works upon his conscience, enforcing the claim of the broken law. He is then given the opportunity of defying the law, of rejecting the Saviour, or of yielding to its claims, and receiving Christ as his Redeemer. God will not compel the service of any man, but He reveals to him his obligation, unfolds to him the requirements of His holy law, and sets before him the result of his choice—to obey and live, or to disobey and perish."*

If I truly love God for proving His love to me, I will cooperate with Him and divine grace in mortifying my members—revoking and subjecting their authority over me—and granting Christ lordship over them.

* *Signs of the Times*, Nov. 3, 1890.

Step Up/Conquer Self

HOW-TO

Key Text: Rev. 3:19, 20

Each morning I say to myself: “Today is the day I am going to stop . . .” Unfortunately, my day usually ends in failure. It seems the more I concentrate on the don’ts, the more I do! I find in my heart the “anger, rage, malice, slander,” and the “filthy language” on my lips of which Paul says we must rid ourselves (Col. 3:8). Is it a losing battle? The answer is a resounding No.

Here are four steps toward daily conquering self.

1. Recognize need for change. For Elijah, God was not in the fire or the strong wind; rather the Spirit spoke in a still, small voice. “By beholding we become changed.”* Prayerful meditation each new day will make us aware of our need. Jesus stands at the door of our hearts, knocking. He waits patiently for an answer. Only through quiet study are we able to hear the tapping. Recognition of need is the first step toward conquering self.

2. Consecrate daily. The familiar story goes something like this: Once upon a time a gruff man and his wife of 20 years sat in the office of a marriage coun-

**“I told her I loved her on the day we got married,
and I haven’t changed my mind.”**

selor. “He never tells me he loves me,” wept the wife.

“I don’t understand!” exclaimed the husband. “I told her I loved her on the day we got married, and I haven’t changed my mind. I don’t see why I should have to keep repeating myself.”

It might seem funny, but it isn’t enough to worship once a week at church. A close relationship with Jesus necessitates communication on a daily basis. Without Him supporting us, we are powerless against the evils that surround us.

3. Be on guard. “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes (Eph. 6:11, NIV). God offers us the protection to fight against the forces of self. Be prepared. Satan is looking for those who think they can defend themselves by relying on their own power (1 Pet. 5:8).

4. Concentrate on Jesus. Sometimes the temptations of life seem overwhelming, but by concentrating on Jesus we will be victorious. Ask in Jesus’ name, and the desires of our hearts—the experience of victory over self—will be given us (Matt. 7:7, 8). The disciple Peter asked for the impossible. By forgetting self and looking only at Jesus, he walked on water. You and I can do the same.

Life is a ladder. Each thing we do is either one step up or one step down. Recognize need for change. Consecrate daily. Be on guard. Concentrate on Jesus. Step up—conquer self!

* *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 355.

By Unetta Campbell, a freshman nursing student at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Who's in Charge Here?

OPINION

Key Text: 1 Cor. 15:31

When people let Christ into their hearts, amazing changes can take place. Too often, however, we say we want to be led by Jesus, but we don't let Him change us with His grace.

As humans, we want it both ways; we want to be heirs to the kingdom and to maintain control of our lives. Paul explained to the people of Colossae that if they valued the gospel message, they needed to let the Lord change their mind-sets. "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you" (Col. 3:5, RSV).

Often I have received parental advice; sometimes I listen, sometimes I don't. Most of the time that I follow my grandparents' advice, I'm glad. And when I disregard their words of wisdom, I usually end up feeling regretful.

Jesus Christ is the wisest parent ever. His advice never fails. I want the Saviour to lead me on His paths, but sometimes I feel as if I'm in a better position to decide

As humans we want it both ways; we want to be heirs to the kingdom and to maintain control of our lives.

what is best for me. I forget that Jesus knows the past, present, and future; the Lord knows what is best. And He doesn't make decisions based on sinful human drives like jealousy, greed, pride, or desire.

In order to exalt Christ, we need to put him in the driver's seat. He can eliminate old, sinful habits if we let Him. More than once, Paul likened becoming Christlike to death. "I protest, brethren, by my pride in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!" (1 Cor. 15:31).

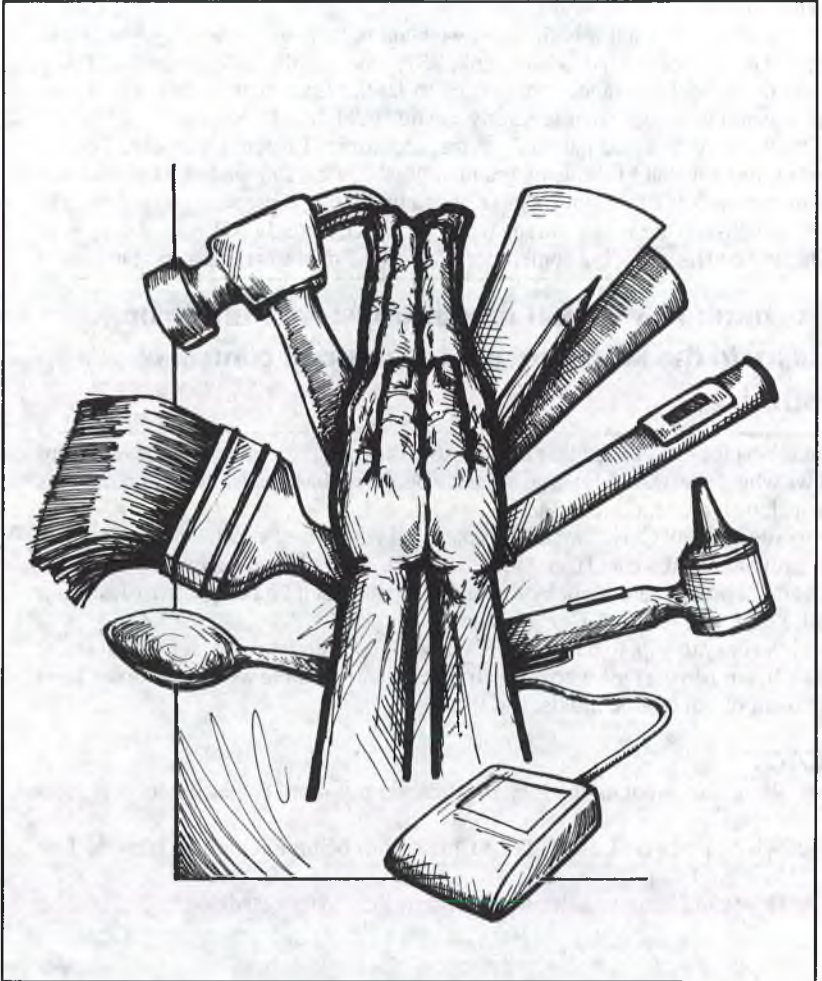
It is so easy to slip, to backslide, if we don't constantly renew our commitment and dedication to the One who is much wiser. Each morning we need to give Christ command of our hearts, minds, and lives.

REACT

1. What sinful habits do I try to break on my own? What habits do I hold on to?
2. What tactics do I use to keep Christ from being in control? Why do I do this? How can I stop?
3. How can I learn to listen to and follow the Saviour's advice?

By Michaele Lawrence, a graduate with a B. A. in communications/public relations from Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

WHATEVER IT TAKES



“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17, RSV).

Dumpster Witnessing

INTRODUCTION

Key Text: Matt. 5:16

I remember the first time I saw him. He was bent over the dumpster outside my dorm-room window, doing what, I didn't know. Who was he? Maybe he was homeless; maybe he was just weird. After a while, I got used to seeing him three or four times a week.

One day Joel, a neighbor, was in my room when I heard the old man outside. I made a comment about how strange this old man was, coming by routinely and going through the trash. Joel asked me whether I knew what he was doing. "Yeah," I said, "going through the trash." Undaunted by my snide remark, he told me what the old man was really doing. He was going through the garbage, picking out all the cans and bottles, and then he would take them to be recycled. He gave the little bit of money he got from recycling to the local church school.

After I heard this, my opinion about the old man changed. No longer did he come across as merely strange. Now I was curious about what motivated him to

What was he thanking me for? He was the one going through the trash.

pick cans out of the garbage. Why didn't he do something more enjoyable with his time? He could donate a couple dollars each week at church and not have to do this dirty job.

I began collecting cans in the corner of my room. The next time I heard him, I grabbed the box and walked out to meet him. He had a startled look on his face when he saw me. "I heard about what you're doing and so I started saving cans for you," I said loudly.

His surprised look changed to one of gratitude, and he said, "Thank you very much, sir." I was a little taken back by this. What was he thanking me for? He was the one going through the trash.

I asked him what made him decide to collect cans out of the dumpster. "I can't do much, but I'm doing what I can," he said. "I need to do my part until the day He comes, know what I mean?" I had read about missionaries in foreign lands. I had discussed in Sabbath School class how to witness, but this old man was doing something. This was real. The old man probably doesn't know it, but he changed my life. Before I met him I didn't really know what having a Christian duty meant. I had been told many times, but it took an old man picking cans out of a dumpster to show me what it takes to be a witness.

By Marc Wall, a junior English major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Stunning Advice

LOGOS

Col. 3:12–4:1

Basic Virtues

In Colossians 3:5-9, the apostle, in negative language, laid out what the new life in Christ consists of. Beginning in verse 12, he outlines the affirmative virtues that must be cultivated. The particular characteristics that set Christians apart from the world should become part and parcel of their lives—they must be “clothed” in them.

In distinction, by contrast to such vices as anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language (verse 8), he calls for compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Willingness to make concessions to bring about harmony is vital. So is patience that will allow the Christian to tolerate wrong even when he has the urge for vengeance.

The ultimate virtue, as always in the Epistles, is love. For Paul this is the bond of perfectness—a wonderful Hebrew idiom for that which binds everything together in harmony. The reference here is not absolute, abstract sinless nature. The context demonstrates that the author’s intent and the meaning of perfection is living by forgiveness. To bear with one’s adversary and to forgive as we have been forgiven by Christ (verse 13) is what it means to be perfect—to be clothed with the virtue of love (verse 14) and ultimately to live in peace (verse 15).

The apostle is anxious that this new life in Christ will penetrate every part of the community of believers’ life together. It will create a life and worship that include psalms from the Hebrew scriptures, expressions of praise, and songs inspired by the Holy Spirit (verse 16). The admonition we find here seems to be a stereotyped order of worship. This may be the intent. But when viewed in the contexts of the Colossians’ heresy (2:8-19) and other practices of other congregations, the imperatives may make sense. Thus, there may be movement away from disorderly ecstatic and spontaneous expressions of worship as was found in Corinth to a much more structured worship form.

Serving Christ, however, cannot be confined to worship performed in church services; it has to embrace the entire life—word, action, everything (3:17).

Domestic Virtues

The “word, action, and everything” is illustrated in Colossians 3:18–4:1. Here we find what is called the Colossians’ *haustafel*, or social code for the household. It follows the pattern of the Greco-Roman Stoic philosophers and later hellenistic Judaism, which developed traditional rules for social relationships.

The Colossians’ code begins with the most intimate family unit and moves toward more distant relationships. Each pair (wife/husband, child/parent, master/slave) begins with the accepted subordinate member and ends with the accepted superior.

The focus of the text is not these particularities. Instead, it is the general principle of serving Jesus or what a new life in Christ should be like. Still, it is natural to be surprised at the ethic enunciated here. These lofty ethical principles do not seem to match modern ethics. This conservatism has been severely criticized.

The teaching here, however, is one of principle, not a timeless ethic eternally binding upon all. These instructions arise out of a mid-first century milieu in which the Colossian Christians are prompted on how best to apply their faith to the social conditions of their environment and specifically to the household as they knew it. The modern reader must remember that the church was formed in the uterus of a civilization in which human subjugation was accepted and sanctioned by law. It was a society in which the entire economic and social system was built upon slavery, and where women were not allowed to meddle in religion and home at any significant level. Although we could criticize the New Testament writer for not attempting to change the system, we must recognize that the church was a very small minority in the Greco-Roman world, and any attempt to impact the society significantly would seem farfetched.

Yet when we look at Paul's writing overall, we find that his Christian faith—his serving of Jesus—led him to practice equality rarely seen even in Christian history. His statement, "For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the

The church was formed in the uterus of a civilization in which human subjugation was accepted and sanctioned by law.

husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does" (1 Cor. 7:4, RSV), must have stunned his readers. And even his much quoted (and misunderstood) statement on silencing women (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11) cannot be read in a vacuum but should be placed in juxtaposition to 1 Corinthians 11:4, 5, in which he approved of women preaching and praying in public.

The virtues outlined in Colossians must be understood as advice that is revolutionary, far beyond the accepted norms. That the weaker group in this passage is given more protection than was usual in the ethic of that era is a testimony to the superiority of Christianity in this social arena. The call for husbands to love their wives was a radical departure from social tradition. The same is true for parents to show love to children by not provoking them or for masters to treat their slaves justly and fairly because they also have a heavenly master.

REACT

1. How are the virtues of love, forgiveness, compassion, meekness, and patience supposed to come to bear on politics and international relations?
2. In what ways can I as an individual, and the church as a body, be ahead of the world?
3. What should the Christian's response be to social injustice?
4. To what extent, if any, should Christianity espouse social issues?

By Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, professor of biblical studies, Walla Walla College School of Theology, College Place, Washington.

Serving Jesus and Each Other

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Gen. 2:23, 24

With about one of two marriages ending in divorce, it sometimes seems marriage is no longer sacred. Indeed, it may be regarded by some as a partnership of convenience. But that was not God's original intent. Part of Paul's letter to the Colossians deals with how to serve Christ through familial relationships. "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them" (Col. 3:18, 19, NIV).

The Spirit of Prophecy has much to say on relationships between husbands and wives. Mrs. White points out that marriage is "a union for life"¹ and that couples will be happiest when they "try to please each other."² She says, "God wants the home to be the happiest place on earth, the very symbol of the home in heaven. Bearing the marriage responsibilities in the home, linking their interests with Jesus Christ, leaning upon His arm and His assurance, husband and wife may share a happiness the angels of God commend."³

Mrs. White also states God's purpose for the husband and wife: "God made from the man a woman, to be a companion and helpmeet for him, . . . to cheer,

"God wants the home to be the happiest place on earth, the very symbol of the home in heaven."

encourage, and bless him, he in his turn to be her strong helper. All who enter into matrimonial relations with a holy purpose—the husband to obtain the pure affections of a woman's heart, the wife to soften and improve her husband's character and give it completeness—fulfill God's purpose for them."⁴ Both husband and wife stand to gain by uniting their lives.

True love is an important element in any marriage. "Love cannot live without action, and every act increases, strengthens, and extends it. Love will gain the victory when argument and authority are powerless. Love works not for profit nor reward; yet God has ordained that great gain shall be the certain result of every labor of love."⁵ "True, pure love is precious. It is heavenly in its influence. It is deep and abiding. It is not spasmodic in its manifestations. It is not a selfish passion. It bears fruit."⁶

1. *The Adventist Home*, p. 95.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 96.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

5. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 135.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 416.

By Karen Dawes, a senior communication major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Getting Along

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 1:13, 26

In the first chapters of Colossians, Paul describes with powerful language the church's new position with God in the realms of heaven. But when the glory of this new position with God and Christ in heaven had been acknowledged, what day-to-day guidelines were left for the first-century Christian? How could they retain the assuring image of being joined with God in heaven and make life on earth a heaven itself during the wait for Christ's return?

Paul gives the first-century Christian a set of table rules for transforming life on earth into heaven (3:12-4:1). He gets down to the bare-bones truth about what this interim life on earth is really about. To Paul, the simple table rules of Colossians 3:12-4:1 are really as extraordinary as what Christ has done to join humanity with divinity. They are the core of Christian living.

Verses 3:12-17 outline simple philosophies on how Christians should live to enjoy the greatest possible happiness here on earth. The concepts are really not all that novel, nor are they mystical. They deal with basic fundamentals of good human relations. However, what Paul does deliver as new is the motivation behind the

Your husband, child, master, or slave might not be a follower, but you must know how to relate to these people.

action. First-century Christians knew about treating other people well, but before knowing Christ they had not felt accountable to a personal Saviour.

Paul offers a realistic translation of the Christian experience for practical, everyday Christian living. Your husband, child, master, or slave might not be a follower, but you must know how to relate to these people. Paul isn't drastically changing society and its structure. He's letting Christians know that beyond this world is something and Someone greater to whom they're accountable (4:1). The whole motivation behind good Christian living is Christ and His Father, the very same mystical deities that snatched the Christians from the power of sin and placed them in heaven's glory.

REACT

1. What relevance, if any, does Paul's counsel regarding master-slave relationships have to modern-day employer-employee relationships? To teacher-student relationships?

2. What difference, if any, would Paul's counsel regarding master-slave relationships have from modern-day parent-child relationships? With husband-wife relationships?

By Sallye Pershall, a junior Spanish and English major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Hands-on Christianity

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 25:35

“Would you like a sandwich, Gary?” one of the academy students asked. I watched the whole-wheat bread pass from the boy’s teenage hands to the homeless man’s worn fingers. I smiled as they continued to talk. It was such a blessing to both the boy and the man.

We piled into the van, late again. It was so hard to get everyone to leave. It was a nice type of problem. I had taken on the challenge of being a religious-activity leader for an academy, and it was amazing to me, all that I was learning.

I can remember the first time we went down on the street to help the homeless. Students felt a strong desire to help others, and yet there was fear. I realized then how hard it is for the majority of us to step out and help. It is not the helping part so much as it is the stepping out.

Often we fear that we might be misunderstood. I didn’t want the people to feel we were there only to get our good deeds done for the week. Rather, I wanted them

I can remember the first time we went down on the street to help the homeless.

to know that we cared about them and respected them as people. Once I was helping them, I knew that they knew I cared and that they were special to me.

We sometimes fear going to a location where we have never been before and meeting new people. I saw this most often in the nursing homes. Many of us are not used to being around people who are older than we are, and we’re not quite sure how to react—at first. Then we soon see what a blessing these people are to us.

Once we realize these fears are real and human, it is much easier to step out and help others. Our own feelings become less intense as we dwell on those around us.

Christ gives us wonderful illustrations to follow in servanthood throughout the Bible. I can see Him down on the streets serving soup to the homeless man or in the nursing home, holding the worn hand of a lady, or in the children’s hospital, playing catch with a boy in a wheelchair. I can see Him there because I have felt Him there.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in” (Matt. 25:35, NIV).

REACT

1. How does fear sometimes prevent Christians from serving others?
2. Explain why you think fear is or is not a sin.

By Wendy Rittenbach, a junior elementary-education and speech-communication major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

My Piggy-Back Picture

OPINION

Key Text: 1 John 3:16-18

I got my first real glimpse of God one year at camp. Our camp director was warm and funny and made us feel that we were the most important kids in the world. But he might have faded into insignificant camp-director history if it weren't for what I saw as the ultimate act of self-sacrifice. It involved rising in the middle of the night to give an embarrassed kid a piggyback ride to the bathroom. I remember thinking God must be a lot like him. His kindness surely cost him valuable sleep, but it spared me acute embarrassment.

Since then, my God picture has been stretched and discolored and recreated. I've groped for a God who fit within the context of the great controversy, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and my own simple life with all of its complex problems. Countless questions later, my picture still resumes its original shape. My God is someone who would do everything for me.

The character of my God ultimately decides how I will serve Him. If He were selfish and egotistical, I would fall all over myself trying to pacify him with my

Merely announcing God's love might not be terribly convincing, especially if He left the lame hobbling in the dust.

petty wealth and inadequate gifts. If I thought the owner of the universe scorned my groveling and actually spent these thousands of years trying to create some kind of master race, a highly selective process in which sinners were easily disqualified, I might be obsessed with laws and their observance.

However, believing as I do that God's character was clearly defined on the cross, the best way I can serve Him is by giving my life to humanity as well.

As it turns out, His laws echo this principle. In His parting words to His disciples, he says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:34, 35, RSV).

What kind of love did Christ's life on earth exemplify? Being God, He realized that merely announcing God's love might not be terribly convincing, especially if He left the lame hobbling in the dust, the blind groping for evidence, and the deaf wondering what He had said in the first place. Rather, He left each one with something tangible and real. He "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7, RSV). He shared everything He had. We have so much to share.

REACT

In one sentence how would you describe God?

By Ingrid de Graaff, a senior elementary-education major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

MANY FRIENDS, MANY WAYS



“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one” (Col. 4:6, RSV).

Two Ways of Looking at Me

INTRODUCTION

Key Text: Prov. 12:18

In high school I had a friend, Ralph, who liked to argue with me about my beliefs. He always questioned why I did not go to dances, why I attended church on Saturdays, why I did not eat meat. He teased me a lot, but I just smiled and usually didn't say much. It seemed he didn't really care what I had to say about it. It was all for fun to him, so it was hard to have a serious discussion with him. I didn't believe he would ever think about what I said. Definitely, he would not change because of it.

Lee was another friend, who was the exact opposite. She asked me questions about my religious beliefs and truly wanted to know the answers. We had good discussions, and I think she really cared about what I had to say about my religion

Lee asked me questions about my religious beliefs and truly wanted to know the answers.

and maybe even thought about it some. It was easy to talk to her about my religious beliefs because she really listened.

There are all kinds of people we'll meet and witness to in some way. Some, like Ralph, won't really care what you say. Others will be easy to talk and witness to. Even though I don't know that what I said changed Lee's ideals and beliefs, I hope she remembers the conversations we had.

Different people require different methods of witnessing. Some will learn by our actions, so we need to be careful in what we do. Others will listen to our words. We should hope God will give us the grace and insight we need to reach people where they are and to give His message to everyone.

By Brenda Royer, a sophomore English major and music minor at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Witnessing for Jesus

LOGOS

Col. 4:2-18

Holistic Christianity

The new ethic for the Christian life is spelled out in some detail in Colossians 3:1–4:1. There is a negative formulation and a positive outlining. The Colossians are being challenged to set their minds on things above (3:2) and are asked to put off evil desires and habits. But on the positive side, they are admonished to acquire compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love. These traits will put them in good standing in all their relationships.

The instructional and paranetic or ethical bulk of the Colossian letter draws to a close with an important summary statement of what immediately precedes. In 4:2-6 the Christian life is summarized as one of prayer, thanksgiving, and witnessing. Although this pastor of the Colossians is not an individualist per se, he begins with a call to personal devotion (verse 2). Throughout his letters Paul significantly emphasizes individual intercession coupled with joy and thanksgiving. This combination is important. The Christian's life should not be one of purely internalized, somber supplications—a long, donkey-faced religion. The devotion to prayer needs to be united with joy, rejoicing, thanksgiving, and happiness.

But the call for this personal devotion to prayer and thanksgiving is a brief phase when compared to the subsequent call for prayer that is, not self-centered, but other-centered (verse 3). He asks the Colossians to pray for him in his incarceration. However, it is not so much for his personal physical pain and discomfort that he requests their prayer, but for the ability and opportunity to witness.

Holistic Witnessing

The concern of the apostle is not limited to his need that the doors be opened to witness in prison. There is a greater desire that his reading audience be involved in the total enterprise of witnessing in the unbarricaded world (verse 5).

One cannot find in the writings of Paul or anywhere else in the New Testament a definition of witnessing that limits it to personal, specific, individual contact with the non-Christian, with the intent of orally proclaiming the gospel through Bible study or public evangelism. What we find, instead, is a more holistic conception and practice of sharing the good news of Christianity. Although oral witnessing is good, important, and can be effective, it seems that lifestyle and body language is even more effective. Thus, the Colossians are called to conduct themselves wisely toward outsiders (verses 5, 6).

This call for wisdom in dealing with those outside the body of believers is important when one recognizes that the lives of the Colossians were possibly the most potent witness they could make for their faith. At the time this Epistle was written, distorted accounts of the behavior and beliefs of the Christians in the Greco-Roman world were increasing. The plea is, therefore, to give no credibility to malicious accusations. The manner of their ordinary daily lives should defuse the lies, and be, instead, simply good examples of what Christianity is all about.

It is important to recognize that this is no call to withdraw physically from evil society. The fact that the early Christian communities recognized themselves as

unique did not lead them to follow the pattern of such groups as the Essenes and communities that dwelt in the caves of Qumran. They did not have a fortress mentality that kept them barricaded behind safe, holy walls and compounds, making excursions every now and then into the world to snatch a sinner from the jaws of death. Early Christianity did not subscribe to the concept that a distinctive identity meant an exclusive sense of existence. Because their witness was more than spoken and because it involved their entire way of living, it would seem they had to live within the evil society to be good examples to non-Christians.

An eschatological, or end-time, urgency to this type of witnessing appears to be indicated in the phrase “making most of the time” (verse 5, RSV). The Greek verb used in this phrase is taken from the commercial language of the marketplace. It conveys a sense of intense activity, a snapping up of every available opportunity. There is the dimension of exploitation, using up something to its fullest. The Colossians are called upon to grasp every opportunity while the time lasts, to invest their energies in ways of witnessing that are attractive and positive and, yes, maybe

It is a call to the Colossians to make their witnessing witty, jovial, lively, and spicy!

even unconventional. When one does not know how long the present age will last, he or she cannot putter around with methods and models of witnessing that are minimal or moderately effective.

One surprising approach suggested in verse 6 is to let one’s speech be “seasoned with salt.” This literal translation of the Greek is an idiomatic expression that means never to be insipid or tasteless. Some interpreters even suggest that it is a call to the Colossians to make their witnessing witty, jovial, lively, and spicy! The Greeks were fascinated by the power of words and appreciated wit in their use. Christians then needed to tap into that mind-set and attitude and utilize it in witnessing.

The New Testament does not call for dull and insipid lifestyles and witnessing models. It calls for the message of Jesus to be attractively attired.

REACT

1. How does one correlate the call to live rurally with the last-day admonition to live in society?
2. List some unconventional methods of witnessing that would be effective in reaching non-Christian college and university young people.
3. How could witnessing be made more witty, jovial, lively, and spicy?

By Pedrito U. Maynard-Reid, professor of biblical studies in the School of Theology at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Witnessing Is Not a Spectator Sport!

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Col. 3:9, 10

The silence is heavy. Every muscle poised and alert—waiting. The starting gun sounds, and the muscles go into action. Each muscle straining, pushing, and pumping, the runner makes his way around the track. Each stretch of the leg takes him a giant step forward. The runner has but one goal—to win the race!

Push! Pound! Each second brings him closer to the finish. Muscles burn, blood surges; this is *the* moment! For years he has trained, has endured pain and setbacks. He has maintained a rigorous lifestyle of self-discipline. All the planning, pain, and sacrifice are wrapped up in this one supreme moment as he approaches the end of the race. He gives everything he has to cross that line first. Push! Pound! Push—and He crosses the line—the winner of the gold medal!

The Athlete approaches you, a citizen of His country. He removes the gold medal from around His neck and gently and lovingly places it around your own neck.

“We pass through this world but once. Let every step taken by those who claim to be sons and daughters of God be forward. Listen to the words of Christ:

All the planning, pain, and sacrifice are wrapped up in this one supreme moment.

He that ‘will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me’ [Matt. 16:24]. This alone will designate each of us as His disciples. Are we witnessing before the angels of heaven and before the worlds unfallen that we as human beings recognize that we understand what this means, ‘Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s’ [1 Cor. 6:19, 20].”*

By living a Christlike life in all its aspects, we are witnessing to others around us. We are like the athlete. We follow a rigorous training program of self-discipline and sacrifice. Each day we become more like the Supreme Athlete—each day we grow in His image. Let each of us remember that spectators in this world and in the universe are watching each one of us. We need to show them that we value the victory—the gold medal—that has already been given to us. Let each step we take push us forward in the track of life so that we may share the gold medal with them!

REACT

Explain how “being renewed” in the image of Christ relates to witnessing to others.

* *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 174.

By Julie Rathjen, a senior elementary-education major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Conversation Worth Listening To

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Col. 4:6

The close of Colossians is a reminder from Paul, a teacher to the people of Colosse, on how Christians should act toward others. One of his directives is, "Let your conversation be always full of grace" (4:6, NIV). The word *grace* can mean many different things.

In one sense it could imply speaking in such a way as to represent a character patterned after God's character. That could mean not interrupting others, realizing they have important things to say.

Another way to look at the term *grace* is in the sense of "gracefulness." People who are graceful are smooth in their motions, people whose skills others admire. Graceful speaking is acceptable and pleasing, not coarse and bumbling.

A third meaning that could be attached to graceful conversation would have to do with the subject of the conversation. The message of Christ's death and resurrection and the chance for forgiveness of sin—both are part of God's grace. When a person speaks of these things, his conversation will be "full of grace."

"Seasoned with salt" (verse 6) also can have many meanings. Today people view salt as a rather mundane seasoning, but in the first century A.D. it was a

Many times soldiers from the Roman legions would be paid with salt instead of coin.

valuable commodity. Many times soldiers from the Roman legions would be paid with salt instead of coin. So when Paul tells people to season their conversation with salt, he is telling them to make it worthwhile.

Seasonings add flavor to the food to which they are added; they bring it to life. How can a person share a topic as important as Christ and be boring? If you were trying to tell a friend about a wonderful new book you had read, you wouldn't describe it in boring terms. Neither should you talk about Christ in boring terms. If you do, who will listen? Rather, you should be enthusiastic when you are witnessing; after all, aren't you talking about an exciting topic?

Salt is also a preservative. During the first century salt added to a dish would keep it from spoiling the food surrounding it. Paul was trying to remind Christians that they are trying to bring life to a dying world, trying to save people from destruction and eternal death. By seasoning their conversation with salt, the Colossians would be trying to save the people around them from eternal death.

Paul probably had all of these ideas in mind when he wrote to the Colossians. If our main goal is to preserve the world around us, we should want to be graceful in our speaking, and we should also want to make our conversation worthwhile, something that benefits others.

By Bert Wredberg, a junior English and history major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Me? Do What?

HOW-TO

Key Text: Acts 22:14, 15

When I think of witnessing, the first image that pops to mind is that of a middle-aged, socially inept, poorly groomed person standing on a downtown street corner, passing out pamphlets that passersby accept only to get him to leave them alone. Recently, my personal definition of witnessing has expanded.

Reading to an AIDS patient, rocking crack-addicted babies, recycling, smiling when you pass someone on the sidewalk—could these be witnessing? The world in which we live faces a frightening array of problems. Sometimes the traditional means of reaching out leaves gaps in the picture of whom it reaches or how it does that reaching.

Witnessing may include handing out publications or putting them on a magazine rack, but it certainly isn't limited to these. Living in a dying, sin-filled world as we do, the opportunities are endless. Being a witness means making a decision

Reading to an AIDS patient, rocking crack-addicted babies, recycling, smiling when you pass someone on the sidewalk—could these be witnessing?

toward actively shining Christ's light through you. As profound and undesirable as this may sound, it is here that we can find our greatest joy. Witnessing, in this context, is as simple as doing things that affect other people positively—going that extra mile, smiling when you don't have to. And when we do push ourselves to do those little things that might make someone else's day, we will find our own day brightened.

Psychologists have said that the best way to improve your state of mind is to improve someone else's. When you feel yourself slipping into self-pity or a rut, check out the existing programs in your area. Does the local Pathfinder club need help? Is there a neighborhood after-school program for elementary or junior high ages? Perhaps you have a neighbor who needs time away from the kids, or whose garden needs weeding. What about volunteering in a disaster-relief effort?

People witness every day whether they know it or not, and these exchanges can be less than inspiring. It is important that we as Christians realize this and do everything within our power to make our interaction with the world a positive and memorable thing for the individuals whose lives we touch. As the key text for today says, God has chosen us to be His witness to the world.

Christ used every opportunity to *be* something to the people he met and talked with. Our chances to show Christ and His love to the masses will present themselves in various ways. Accept the challenge, make the most of that moment in someone's life—it can make the most of yours.

By Carrie Oellrich, a junior art and English major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Opening Doors

OPINION

Key Text: Col. 4:3

Does it simply take a *Listen* magazine left at the laundromat to convert a non-Christian to Christianity? In Colossians 4:3, Paul asks the church to pray that doors will be opened so the message can be spread. How do we, the church, open doors so we can share the message with non-Christians? I have found three specific door-openers.

1. We must meet them where they are. When she walked into my cabin for summer camp, she looked like a boy. She had the legs of her sweats pushed up to her knees, had a blue baseball cap pulled down over her blond bangs, and wore high-topped basketball shoes. If it hadn't been for the tiny diamond studs in her ears, the ponytail sticking out at the back of her baseball cap, and the fact that her name was Renee, I'd never have guessed she was a girl. Her favorite word was *G-narly*, with the "g" pronounced. After the seventh or eighth time she used the word I smiled, and she wrinkled her nose at me. "I'm annoying," she said. When

When we had a talk outside the cabin, Renee said, "You think I'm obnoxious, don't you?"

more girls arrived, she amused them by telling nasty jokes and singing off-color songs. I had to accept and like her as she was, before I could even try to reach her.

2. We must show unconditional love. When we had a talk outside the cabin, Renee said, "You think I'm obnoxious, don't you?" I reassured her that I thought she was very entertaining; we compromised, and I ruffled her hair. I had to pray for patience and an extra measure of love during that week, but it all seemed worthwhile when Renee would sit on my bed, knees clasped to her chest, telling me about her hard-to-please mother and indifferent father.

3. We must not force their action. There were no miraculous changes that week. She still told nasty jokes, and I laughed even though I shouldn't have. She never once went to bed without a struggle. And the Spiritual Decision Form she filled out at the end of the week returned with the blank "I don't want to decide right now" checked.

On the last day of camp Renee ran around frantically trying to find me so she could say goodbye to me and give me a hug. We both held back the tears. The door had been opened, and I believe that through that open door, Jesus will enter Renee's life.

REACT

How can a Christian know what kinds of behavior to ignore in non-Christians and what kinds to try to correct?

By Becky Guth, an elementary-education and English major at Walla Walla College, College Place, Washington.

Next Quarter's Lessons

The Three Angels' Messages

If you have not yet received a copy of *CQ* for fourth quarter 1994, here is a summary of the first two lessons:

Lesson 1: Angels With a Global Mission

Scripture: Rev. 14:1-12; Luke 2:13, 14.

Theme: The three angels' messages of Revelation 14 are meant for everyone in all parts of the world. Because God desires us to share this message, He will give us the resources to help us do so.

Lesson 2: The Everlasting Gospel

Scripture: Rev. 14:6, 7; Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:21-26; 5:1, 2; Col. 1:20-23; 2 Tim. 1:8-11.

Theme: The gospel is the good news that Jesus saves us from sin and restores us to fellowship with God. The cross of Jesus is the focal point of that good news.

To order your personal copy of *CQ*, contact your Adventist Book Center or write:

Pacific Press Publishing Association
P.O. Box 7000
Boise, ID 83707
U.S.A.

Prices: U.S.A.: One-year subscription—\$11.95

Single copy—\$5.75

Outside U.S.A.: One-year subscription—\$14.95

Single copy—\$5.75

Ready for your turn?

■ Each quarter we carefully select lesson topics for CQ that we think you'll find relevant. ■ We work with a staff of designers to bring you the most attractive and accessible Bible study guide possible. ■ And we rely on the input of our reading committee for making sure our lessons are on target. But we can't do everything.

There's one thing we need from you . . .

. . . your byline.

You are the most important ingredient in our CQ formula because you can be the answer to our greatest need—the need for caring, committed contributing writers. If you'd like to take your turn at writing a lesson for CQ, all you have to do is write to us at the **CQ Editorial Office, Department of Church Ministries, General Conference of SDAs, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904, U.S.A.** Or call **(301) 680-6160.**

CQ
COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

Bible Promises for Kids!



Here is a book of Bible promises for early readers that they can call their own. Easy-to-read sentences and colorful photos help children of all backgrounds relate Scripture to the things they do every day.

God's Word will take on new meaning as your child sees how Jesus listens when we pray, forgives us when we disobey, and is always there when we need Him. And the short "promise-a-day" format makes Scripture memory easy and fun.

God's Special Promises to Me, by Charles Mills, encourages a daily habit of Bible reading that is exciting and rewarding.

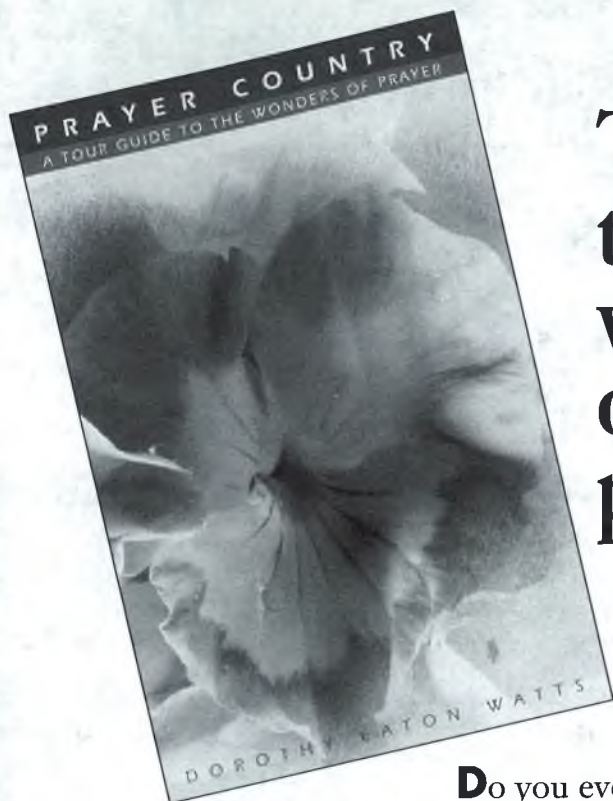
US\$7.95/Cdn\$10.75. Paper.

Ask for it at your local Christian bookstore.



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 553/9833



Tour the wonders of prayer

Do you ever feel like you don't know what to say when you begin your day with God? Or like something is missing from your prayers?

In *Prayer Country*, author Dorothy Watts helps readers experience a refreshing new place, where words flow easily and the prayer life blossoms. Numerous practical exercises will guide you to a place of profound peace, joy, and fulfillment in your communion with God.

US\$8.95/Cdn\$12.10. Paper.

**To order, call toll free
1-800-765-6955,
or visit your local ABC.**



Some things are too bad to be true—
but they are!

Sins of the Father

by Marianne Morris

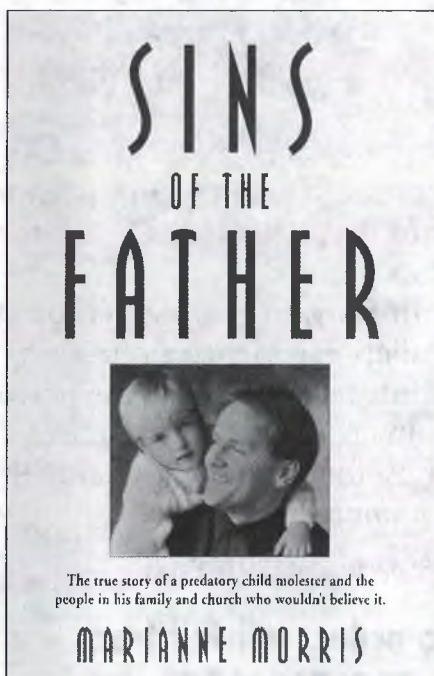
Sins of the Father is the shocking true story of a predatory child molester and the people in his family and church who wouldn't believe it.

It's a story about victims, crime, Christian indifference, and the sin of silence.

Sins of the Father will make you cry. It will make you angry. But it must make you respond to God's call to protect the defenseless and call sin by its name.

US\$9.95/Cdn\$13.45.
Paper.

Available at your local
ABC, or call toll free
1-800-765-6955.



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 488/9832

Warning: explosive material!

Beyond Belief

by Jack Sequeira

The last time the gospel was presented this clearly, they called the resulting explosion Pentecost.

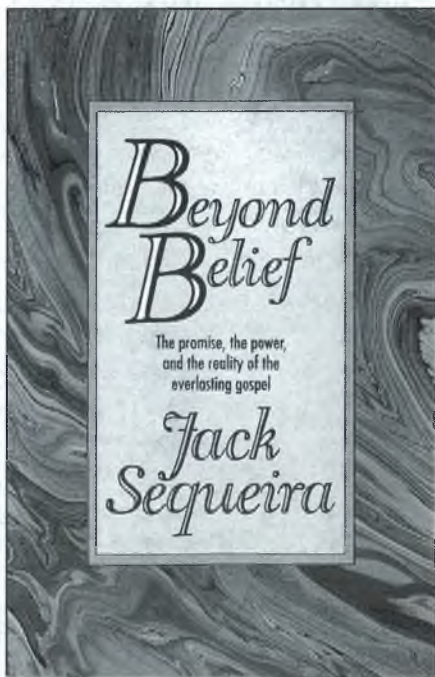
Cutting through the fog and theological mumbo jumbo that so often obscure it, *Beyond Belief* reveals the gospel in such magnificent clarity that it could help detonate Pentecost II.

Everybody knows the gospel means “good news.” But very few know just what incredible and powerful good news it really is. The real truth is breathtaking, stunning, overwhelming. It is almost *Beyond Belief*.

US\$10.95/Cdn\$14.80.

Paper.

Available at your local
ABC, or call toll free
1-800-765-6955.



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 482/9832

Present Truth in the Real World

by
Jon Paulien

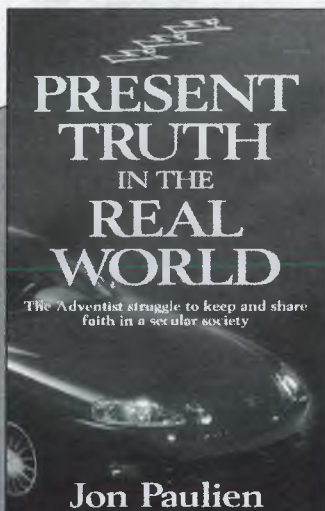
In the ongoing struggle between Christianity and secularism, who's winning? Is the world becoming more like the church, or is it the other way around? How can a church founded in the 1860s compete for the attention of today's secular person?

In this explosive book, Pastor Jon Paulien identifies the task of reaching secular people with the everlasting gospel as the most urgent challenge facing Adventists today. When reading this book, you'll discover:

- Who secular people are and how they think.
- How to meet their felt needs.
- How to live among and work for them without losing your own Christian experience.

This book is too important to pass by. Get yours today!

US\$10.95
Cdn\$14.80



Available at
your local
ABC, or
call toll free:
1-800-765-6955.

Crucial issues facing Christians today

Wrestling With Reality

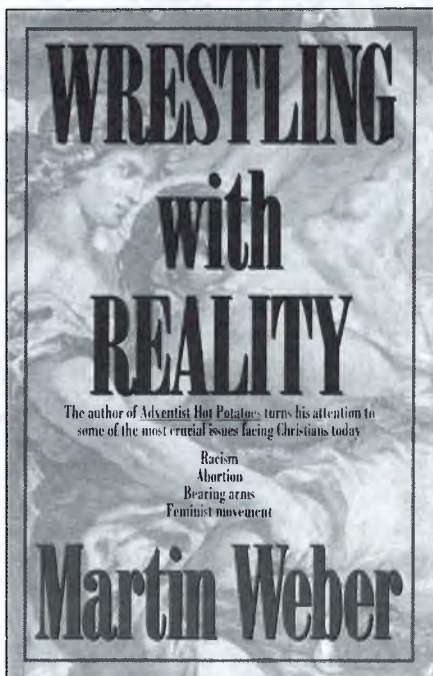
by Martin Weber

The election of a new president promised a turnaround in our nation's problems. But change isn't easy. Especially when the changes most needed are those of the heart and spirit.

Author Martin Weber confronts the issues that are attacking the spirit of our country in his latest book: *Wrestling With Reality*. Abortion, racism, the environment, and capital punishment are just a few of the hot buttons Weber pushes in this timely book for Christians who desire a biblical stance that is relevant for our world today. Don't close your eyes to what's happening in our world. Acquaint yourself with the issues by reading *Wrestling With Reality*, and come away confident that God still has the answers to our problems.

US\$8.95/Cdn\$12.10. Paper.

**Available at
your local ABC,
or call toll free
1-800-765-6955.**



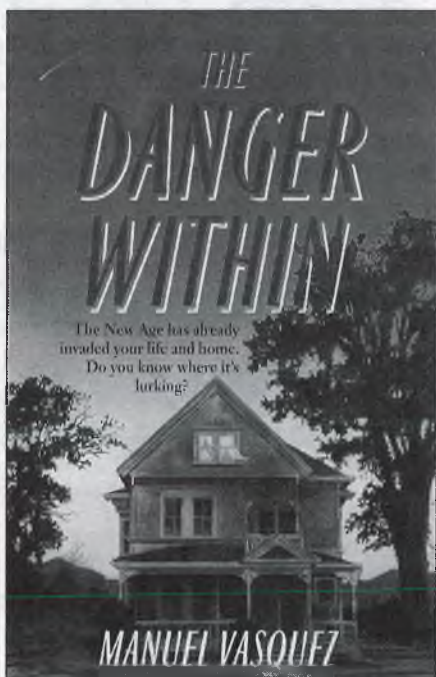
Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 492/9832

The Danger Within

by Manuel Vasquez

Don't bother locking your doors to ward off the intrusion of the New Age movement—it has already been ushered into your house as a welcomed guest. Through TV, Christian meditation, electronic games and toys, and alternative health care, the New Age movement has disguised itself to hit us where we're most vulnerable.



The Danger Within uncovers the New Age's subtle impact on our lives and homes. More than psychics and channelers, crystals and horoscopes, Vasquez's research will reveal how this movement is setting the stage for Satan's grand deception.

US\$8.95/Cdn\$12.10.
Paper.

Available at your local
ABC, or call toll free
1-800-765-6955.



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 490/9832

Yes, you can change!

Never Good Enough

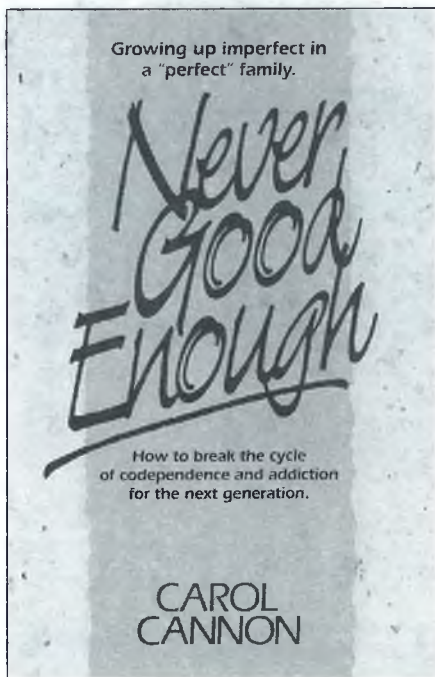
by Carol Cannon

Do you ever feel trapped by behavior patterns that are hurtful to yourself and to others? The continuous cycle of addiction and codependence can make a person feel as though they will never break free.

Never Good Enough, by Carol Cannon, uses actual case histories to explore the reasons behind addictive and codependent behaviors. In the pages of this eye-opening new book, you'll learn that addiction is a no-fault disease and that change is possible.

US\$10.95/Cdn\$14.80.
Paper.

**Available at your
local ABC, or call toll
free 1-800-765-6955.**



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 486/9832

Who cares what God says anymore?

God Says, but I Think

by Morris Venden

What do you believe in and why? Who is setting your spiritual agenda?

Many Christians today are depending on someone else to do their spiritual thinking for them.

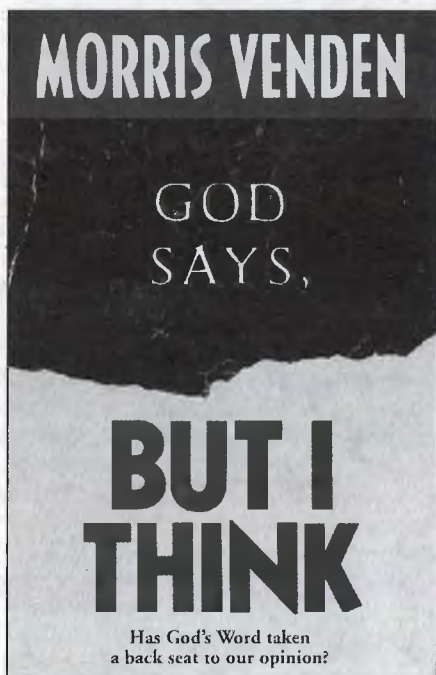
The result is that more and more, God's Word is

taking a back seat to our opinions.

God Says, but I Think is Morris Venden's latest and most urgent challenge to the church to prayerfully return to complete dependence on God in every aspect of faith and life.

US\$8.95/Cdn\$12.10.
Paper.

Available at your
Adventist Book Center,
or call toll free
1-800-765-6955.



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 484/9832

Why is this happening to me, God?

Nowhere to Turn

by Rhonda Graham

Ellen's blank stare followed her husband's figure as he walked out of the house and out of her life. Her head pounded with the same questions over and over. How could this be happening to a pastor's wife? To someone who "played by the rules"?

*When Ellen's
perfect life shatters,
she has...*

Nowhere to Turn

*Divorced by her husband.
Shunned by her church.
Forsaken by God?*



R H O N D A G R A H A M

Nowhere to Turn shares the emotions of a woman going through the pain of divorce and offers hope to Christians enduring crises of faith and family.

US\$9.95/Cdn\$13.95. Paper.

**Available at your
local Christian
bookstore, or
call toll free
1-800-44PRESS.**

Prices subject to change without notice.



Books You Just Can't Put Down
from Pacific Press

© 1993 Pacific Press Publishing Association 487/9832b