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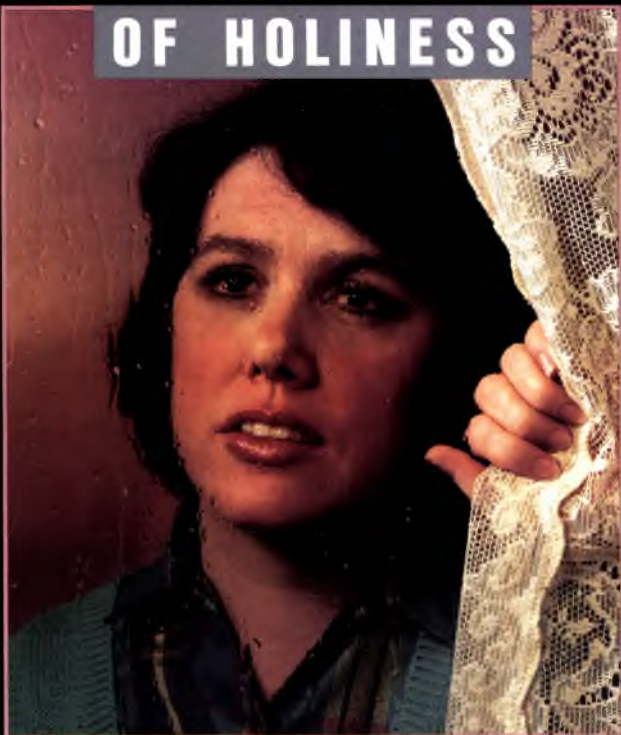
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CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

HERALD OF HOLINESS



CHRIST: An All-Weather Friend

SEP 26 '88

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THE NAZARENE

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CHRIST OUR SUFFICIENCY



WILLIAM M. GREATHOUSE
General Superintendent

Dr. Charles Trumbull, attending the first world missionary conference in Edinburgh, was intrigued by the subject announced by the Sunday afternoon preacher: "The Resources of the Christian Life." A young Christian yearning for the fullness of Christ's blessing, Trumbull arrived early to get a front seat. Ready with

pen and notebook he was expecting some sound practical advice. When the preacher stood, he paused a moment and then announced, "The resources of the Christian life, my friends, are simply—Jesus Christ."

"You are in Christ Jesus," says St. Paul, "who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30, NIV).

Christ is our wisdom. In Him are "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:4, NIV). Christ is the Way without whom there is no going, the Truth without whom there is no knowing, and the Life without whom there is no living.

Christ is our righteousness. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV). In Christ God has reconciled me to himself—this I know.

*I know not how that Bethlehem's Babe
Could in the Godhead be,
I only know the Manger Child
Has brought God's Life to me.*

Harry Webb Farrington

Christ is our holiness. "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and [we] have been given fullness in Christ" (Colossians 2:9-10, NIV). "We have no inherent holiness," says F. E. Marsh; "we are holy as we are possessed by the Holy Presence. We are holy in His holiness, loving in His love, strong in His strength, tender in His tenderness, patient in His patience, calm in His calm, and consecrated in His consecration."

Christ is our hope of final redemption: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). "In Christ [God] anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:21-22, NIV).

*Once heaven seemed a far-off place,
Till Jesus showed His smiling face.
Now it's begun within my soul:
'Twill last while endless ages roll.*

C. F. Butler

The glory of Christianity is its utter simplicity: "Christ is all" (Colossians 3:11). "How I long for [you] to experience the wealth of conviction which is brought by understanding—that [you] may come to know more fully God's great secret, Christ himself!" (Colossians 2:2, Phillips).

*Jesus Christ is made to me
All I need, all I need . . .
Wisdom, Righteousness, and Power,
Holiness forevermore,
My Redemption full and sure—
He is all I need!*

Al Smith

H

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Editor

W. E. McCumber

Office Editor

Ivan A. Beals

Editorial Assistant

Mabel Adamson

General Superintendents

Eugene L. Stowe

Charles H. Strickland

William M. Greathouse

Jerald D. Johnson

John A. Knight

Raymond W. Hurn

Cover Design:

by Royce Ratcliff

Magazine Design:

Rick Day

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18



The John Leavell family: John, his wife Nancy, and sons Mark and Matt.

SECOND CHANCE

I am a C4/C5 quadriplegic, which means that I cannot feel or move anything at all below the top of my shoulders. I am totally dependent on others for even the most basic needs. I am confined to an electric wheelchair that I operate with my chin. Having lots of time to think and look back I see a definite pattern in my life. All my needs have been met with some “extras” thrown in, sometimes almost in spite of my efforts to foul it up. Nearly every major event that affected my ability to live and function in a positive manner, since my accident in July 1982, was beyond my control. Many of the things that I planned turned out poorly.

Before my accident I thought I was totally self-sufficient. Friendship and help were things I offered to other people; I could not imagine myself relying on anybody at any time for anything for any reason. I could do anything I wanted to or had to—or so I

thought. At 28 I had everything—an attractive, loving wife, Nancy; two sons, Mark (six) and Matt (three); a promising career; a very good salary; and two homes—a three bedroom ranch with a swimming pool, where we were living, in Monroe, Mich., and a two bedroom frame that we were using as a rental unit in our hometown of Redkey, Ind. Little did I realize how fast all of that was going to change.

The day of the accident was hot and sunny, perfect for the cookout and pool party we had planned. Before guests arrived I was showing Mark how to enter the water head first and come to the surface swimming. Since he couldn’t swim, I was using the shallow end of the pool.

Standing at the edge of the pool, my arms extended over my head, I leaned into the water. The next thing I knew, I was floating face down and could see my arms and legs, but couldn’t feel or move them. I could see the edge of the pool and the pool ladder, but I could not move to reach them, nor could I lift my head out of the water to breathe.

I knew that I couldn’t hold my breath much longer, but I was very calm, and three thoughts ran through my mind: (1) If Mark doesn’t realize that I’m in trouble, I’m probably going to die. (2) Will my whole life flash before my eyes? (3) Will it hurt when I inhale water? Thoughts of God or eternity didn’t enter my mind.

I ran out of time. In addition to breaking my neck, I had inhaled water and in effect, drowned.

Mark did not realize that I was in trouble; in fact he thought that I was holding my breath. When Nancy came out of the house she found me floating in the pool. I had lost consciousness, stopped breathing, and was blue and swollen from the water that I had inhaled. She began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and sent Mark to the neighbors for help. Nobody was home, but a teenager walking by heard Nancy’s yell for help and called an ambulance. In the meantime a couple of our friends arrived, and one helped with the boys and one helped my wife until the ambulance arrived.

The next thing I remember was the emergency room at Memorial Hospital in Monroe. A doctor was yelling in my ear, “You have broken your neck and we have to transfer you to another hospital.” I was taken by helicopter to University of Michigan hospital in Ann Arbor. I could only hear very loud sounds and could not see, speak, or feel at all. Consciousness was brief; most of the day was spent unconscious. At the University of Michigan emergency

room, I recall a doctor bolting something onto my head. Ironically, on the only place of my body that I could feel, a doctor was tightening the screw on a skeletal halo.

Unknown to me at the time, in addition to the nerve damage and complications, the chlorinated water had burned my lungs and had given me instantaneous pneumonia. The pneumonia had caused a fever so high that I had to be packed in ice and a cooling blanket in an effort to get me stable. The hospital staff had a real mess on their hands. I was hooked up to more tubes, wires, and monitors than seemed possible, and sandwiched in a bed called a Stryker frame that was flipped every two hours. I alternated between staring at the floor and staring at the ceiling. I was in cervical traction and the only things that could move were my eyes and lips. For several weeks I could communicate only with my eyes and by forming soundless words with my lips. It was then that a portex talking trach was installed.

During the first week in the hospital, a member of the neurosurgical staff informed my family that if I lived I would have to be confined to a nursing home, and that I probably would not be able to get off the respirator. At best I would have to be respirator-dependent at night. Three and a half months later I was transferred out of the neurological intensive care unit completely free of the respirator. Another three and a half months would pass before I could return home—my home, not a nursing home. Although I still cannot feel or move below my shoulders, I surpassed the doctors' expectations on several occasions.

While in the hospital, I realized that the company I worked for was not obligated to me for salary or disability benefits. I didn't know that I would be eligible for Social Security after six months. Thinking that I would be without any income and knowing that welfare would help with rent but not house payments, I decided to list both houses with a realtor.

Neither house sold. Unable to maintain two houses while waiting on a buyer, we reached an agreement with the former owners of the home in Monroe. We signed a quit claim, returning the home at a considerable loss. We chose to remodel the smaller home in Redkey, which "just happens" to be only two blocks from one of the few accessible churches in town.

In spite of all the losses and changes, I was reasonably happy. But I was getting fed up; something needed to change. I thought about going to church. How could I do that now? I didn't go when I was healthy; if I went now everyone would think I was looking for sympathy or that I was just going because I hoped to be healed.

I ran out of excuses when our sons were involved in a Vacation Bible School program. We attended that service and nearly every service since. Our home is two blocks from Redkey Church of the Nazarene. During nice weather we "walk" to church; during bad weather we use our van that Redkey and surrounding communities very generously provided for us via multiple fund-raisers.

I considered myself a good person, but that was not enough. Each time I attended church, Rev. Tubbs' sermons evoked feelings that I had never shared with anyone. God was dealing with me. Finally I felt as if I needed to make a commitment: If I was going to choose God, it was now or never! In August 1984, Nancy and I found the Lord in the same service and found a peace beyond compare.

Looking back I see many things that I can take little or no credit for. The events that kept me alive the day of the accident fit together like clockwork. A few more moments between any of them would have cost me my life.

- Nancy just happened to come out of the house in time.
- A teenager just happened to be passing by.
- Friends just happened to return in time to help.
- Ambulance and paramedics arrived just in time.
- My employer just happened to change insurance policies, and the new one was better.
- My employer just happened to establish a disability policy.
- The house we tried to sell would not sell and we now live in it, and it just happens to be only two blocks from our church.

The list could get quite long. Just happened? Coincidence? Lucky? I don't believe so! Even before I started going to church I thought that God had kept me alive for a reason. I had always used the Bible quote, "You will not be tempted beyond what you can bear." You may not like it, and it is not always easy, but you *can* go through it. I must admit, there are times when instead of feeling saved from death, I feel more like punished for life. Fortunately these times don't last too long. You can't go to heaven just to escape this world; you must be prepared to serve.

Before I made my commitment to serve God during the summer of 1984, I had used all of the classic excuses and cover-ups. I would make a commitment "later" when I was ready and before I died. After all, I was only 28. "Later" came in the pool, and I didn't have time. I thank God for the second chance.

H

Saved
from
death
or
punished
for
life?



BY JOHN A. LEAVELL
*Member of Redkey, Indiana,
Church of the Nazarene.*

When *LIFE* Tumbles In

God is good" our pastor said. "No matter how difficult the circumstances you face, God is good." Little did I realize that I would have to face that truth head-on. I knew it in theory, when life was on an uphill trend, but is He good when my world is falling apart?

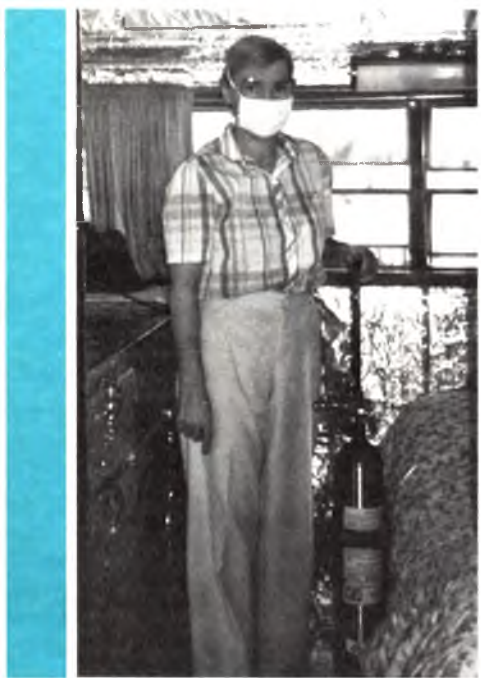
"Denise, maybe you should reconsider coming to visit us. Your mother has taken a turn for the worse, and I am in the process of putting a trip together so that I can take her to a warmer, drier climate for survival. Things are very hectic around our household right now." These were the words of my husband as he talked to our daughter on the phone. Our daughter, 900 miles away, felt impressed by the Lord to pay us a visit.

As I laid on the sofa, too weak to

move, she packed our camper-trailer with items she knew we would need. Somehow she knew we wouldn't be returning to our home in Nebraska.

My husband took a 90-day leave of absence from his job, but he realized that he wouldn't be returning to that job unless a miracle took place in my life.

For four years I had gone to many doctors, unable to find the cause of my illness. It wasn't until September 1986 that I learned the nature of it. I am a victim of environmental illness, a disease of the 20th century. Dr. William Rea of the Environmental Health Center in Dallas, Tex., says that "about 24 million Americans have symptoms of environmental illness." About 10% of the victims suffer from symptoms severe enough to send



(Above) Marie must wear her mask most of the time, but even that does not keep the chemicals from harming her. She often has to take oxygen. (r.) Marie Emerson does most of the cooking outdoors so the odors won't harm her.



them into isolation. If untreated it can cause death.

Environmental illness has made me chemically sensitive to all kinds of fumes, foods, and fibers. I must eat chemically clean, unprocessed foods and rotate the foods that I can tolerate, so as not to become sensitized to them. I have to avoid certain scents, as in household cleaners, room fresheners, cosmetics, tissue, and laundry detergents. My body reacts to the electrical fields in modern appliances, therefore our cooking has to be done outside. I have no other choice because gas and propane are much too toxic to use for cooking or heating.

My health problems began after we purchased a house, and I was exposed to formaldehyde. Dr. Joseph McGovern of the Environmental Illness Association in Oakland, Calif., says that "the leading cause of environmental illness is exposure to formaldehyde." The main treatment is time spent away from the things that make the victims ill. "This disease damages the body's immune system. When the immune system fails, the body acts as though it is overloaded and seeks to reject everything, even essentials like food and water."

My life since has been a nightmare. The physical and mental pressures issuing from this illness drive many to suicide. Some of the bizarre reactions are short-term memory loss, depression, lack of coordination, and seizures. God has been my comforter and sustainer.

After a very life-threatening incident, my husband made the difficult choice to leave a lucrative job and move me to the desert of Arizona, 1,100 miles from home. We said goodbye to our daughter and started toward an unknown destination. By then my body was reacting to nearly everything. I couldn't tolerate a motel room or even our camper-trailer, so I had no choice but to sleep in the cab of our pickup when we stopped for the night's rest.

The Lord had given me a promise that He would "put us in a spacious place," and we ended up in a park 20 miles south of Tucson, Ariz., where

there is room for 300 motor homes. Because of offending odors, we were assigned a place away from the other campers, but next to a lady from Hawaii who has the same illness.

My husband proceeded to take out everything in the trailer that I was reacting to, and by the fourth night I was able to sleep in a bed again.

My life is very restricted. I cannot go into public places. Stores and offices are filled with chemicals and odors, both on the people, as well as in the buildings. I have been forced to make a life for myself away from the world and the people that I love.

The outdoors is my oasis. Fresh air and a clean environment are essential to my becoming well again.

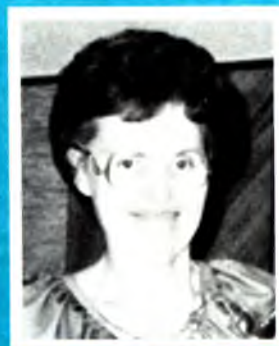
I have been a Nazarene for many years but can no longer attend church because of the violent reactions I suffer. I cannot tolerate perfumes, cosmetics, and all the other chemicals people wear. I miss the fellowship of the believers more than any other thing.

This is a very lonely life, and it is only the grace of God and the encouragement of my faithful Christian husband that helps me to endure this monastic life-style.

God's promises are my greatest source of encouragement. One that He reminds me of daily is Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (NIV). To a couple who had to give up their home, a lucrative job, and have faced the reality of death, those words are priceless.

It takes from two to seven years to recover from this illness. I am looking forward to the time when I can return to the mainstream of life and become active in helping others. Until then I will continue to treasure the blessed fellowship of my Heavenly Father, who has promised to never leave me nor forsake me.

I know the prayers of God's people have been a contributing factor in my survival. My gratitude goes out to them. **H**



BY MARIE EMERSON

Resident of an R.V. park in Green Valley, Arizona. She and her husband, Willard, earlier served as pastors in the Church of the Nazarene.

"For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11, NIV

"ALL Glorious WITHIN"



BY EVELYN KNOWLTON

Serves First Baptist Church of Fenton, Missouri, as secretary of music and education. She resides in Manchester, Missouri.

I left home filled with excitement, anticipating my first day as secretary to the president of a Christian college and seminary. As I drove through an intersection a few blocks from home, a white Volkswagen materialized from a snowbank. Suddenly it was there, bearing down upon me with incredible speed. I thought, "Oh God, he's going to hit me!" Sounds of crashing metal rent the December morning.

I was first aware of a warm, wet, sticky sensation about my face and neck. Struggling to full consciousness, I realized that blood was streaming from my shattered face and pooling inside the collar of my new coat. I was crumpled on the floor beneath the glove compartment. Turning to reach the door handle behind me, I saw the middle frame bent and twisted and the rear door pushed almost to the center of the car.

There had to be another way out. I struggled out the undamaged driver's side, over the steering column pushed into the seat where I'd been sitting.

Helping hands reached for me and kind voices soothed my mounting anxiety.

A paramedic pressed a compress to my face as the ambulance sped through the crisp morning, its siren demanding right of way. In the emergency room the resident physician examined me, then instructed the attending nurse: "Don't let anyone touch her; she must have plastic surgery. See that she is not bleeding and does not go into shock. I have called the surgeon, and he's on the way."

I felt no pain. I wanted desperately to look in a mirror, but my feeble request was denied. One eye would not open; my mouth refused to function; speaking was difficult; it required an enormous amount of energy just to breathe!

I heard my husband's voice before my one eye could focus upon his face. He squeezed my hand and said, "Hi, kid. It's a good thing you got hit in the head, or you might have gotten hurt!" He was smiling as usual, the dimple evident in his right cheek, but his blue eyes were glazed with unshed tears.

After surgery I awoke in my hospital room to find my boss, the college president, sitting quietly beside my bed. He assured me my job would be waiting whenever I felt ready to come to work. Before leaving, he took my hand and asked God to care for me and work His perfect will in my life. No boss had ever done that before!

A few days later the surgeon removed the bandage from my injured eye and asked me to blink. As I opened and closed my eye, he glowed with satisfaction. "The eyelid was completely severed," he said. "I was afraid I might have to sew it permanently open!" He had reattached my nose, repaired an ear that had been split open, zig-zagged an otherwise straight cut across my cheek "to give accordion action," and repaired my upper lip that was split open in several directions.

Glass from the windshield had shaved the hair cleanly back from my forehead, and there were numerous minor cuts about the face, a laceration on one knee, and a severely strained sternum, which accounted for my difficulty in breathing. There was no lung damage, no broken bones, no internal injuries, only a broken front tooth that would need to be pulled and replaced when my lip had healed enough for access to the mouth.

Later, when my husband and I looked at the mangled mass of metal that had been our station wagon, we marveled that I had survived. My car had careened madly across the inter-

section, somehow missing a tree, a light pole, and a mail box before coming to a stop partially inside a house. Providentially I, a faithful seatbelt wearer, had not been buckled up that morning, allowing me to be thrown sideways and clear of the steering wheel that would surely have crushed out my life as it buried itself in the back of the driver's seat. We silently thanked God for His protection.

On Sunday morning, alone in the house, I stood before the mirror with a critical eye. More than a hundred stitches marched across my face; my eyes were tiny slits in the swollen, discolored tissue. Surveying the damage I could hear in my mind echoes of compliments I had come to take for granted. I recalled my mother's sage advice as I approached womanhood. "You have a beautiful face," she'd said, "but always remember that 'beauty is as beauty does.'"

I had, during the past few days, come to accept the fact that I would go through the rest of my life hideously scarred. It was not a pleasant thought, but it was a small price to pay for my life, and since I had no power to change it, I was resigned to making the best of it. I began by informing my boss I would be at work on Monday morning. When he protested, I explained that I needed to face the world as quickly as possible. "You're the one who must look at me," I quipped. "After all, from where I look, I'm altogether gorgeous inside!"

But was I? I stared at my distorted image. The thought came to me slowly, unfolding like a bud: "God does not want to take away my outward beauty; He wants to take away my inner ugliness!" That day I determined to become beautiful on the inside, making people forget the ugly scars on my face. I claimed for my own Psalm 45:13: "The king's daughter is all glorious within."

I set about searching the Scriptures to cultivate inward beauty. The clay cannot shape itself; only the Master Potter could reshape this broken lump of clay into a "useful vessel" as I became pliant and yielded to His skillful touch. "He's just taking the lumps out," I decided. The molding process had begun, but it would not be complete until, like David, I could say, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15).

It didn't happen overnight. I had much to learn, and God would need to deal harshly with me at times to overcome my stubbornness. As physical healing progressed, a healing process was taking place inside as well—beauty from brokenness.

Time and three operations by a skilled plastic surgeon have worked as tools in God's hand to almost totally erase the marks of disfigurement from my face. The surgeon attributed my remarkable recovery to "a positive attitude and self-image." I know, however, that it was the work of the Great Physician, and it happened only when I stopped looking at myself and fixed my eyes upon Jesus.

At a recent family get-together, one of my four sons chuckled me under the chin and joked, "Hey, Ma, when are you going to get a face lift?"

Memories of the automobile accident came rushing back. "I've thought about it," I confessed, "but I've decided to teach the world to appreciate wrinkles and sagging jowls instead. You see," I continued, "from where I look I'm altogether—"

"I know," he interrupted, and brushed a kiss lightly across my cheek. "Inside, you're altogether gorgeous!" **H**

*Disfigured
but not
defeated*

His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful

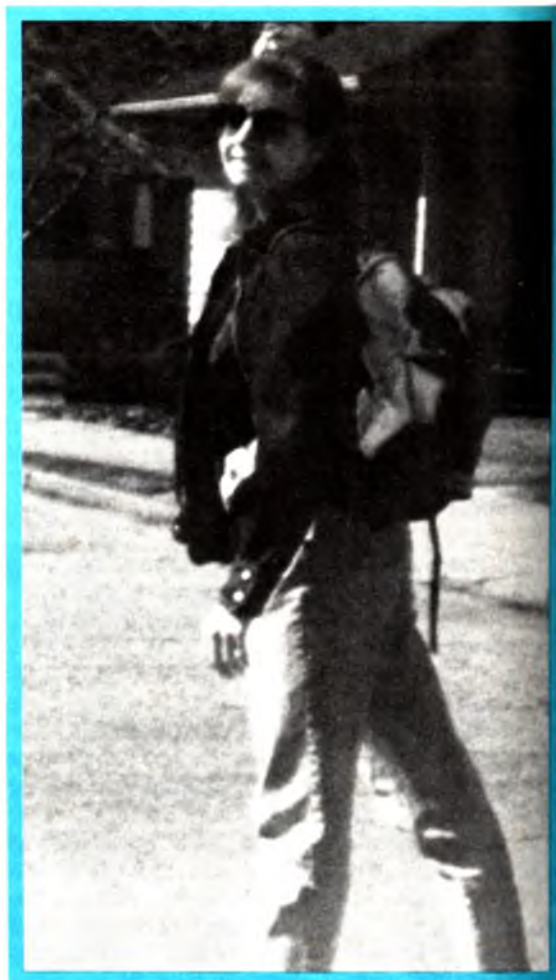
*The name of Jesus is a cry for mercy;
The name of Jesus is a word of power;
The name of Jesus is a healing potion;
The name of Jesus is a mighty tower.*

*I breathe that name when I am brokenhearted;
I whisper it when I am in despair;
And when before the throne I go for cleansing,
I plead it, and the Father hears my prayer.*

*And when I come to make the final crossing,
My shrinking feet pressed to death's icy stream,
My dimming eyes will search, and I'll cry, "Jesus!"
And joy of joys! I'll hear Him call my name.*

—E. RUTH GLOVER
Lake Elsinore, California

"ALL THINGS," LORD?



Gretchen Moran

July 2, 1985, was a day of excitement and celebration. After six years of night school at the big University in Pittsburgh, our Daddy (my husband) was finally getting his degree. While he went to his final conference with advisors, the girls and I strolled around the campus. It was almost time to meet back together for our festive lunch when out of the blue a blunt force fell against me, knocking me to the floor. I could feel my hands and knees burn as they scraped across the carpet.

Searching quickly for the children I suddenly noticed our oldest daughter, Gretchen, struggling on the floor. Panic swept over me as I bent down to hold her shaking body. I now knew that her dead weight had fallen into me. After we helped her up, it was a limping, subdued group who met the smiling graduate.

The next day the doctor gave us the diagnosis of epilepsy and ordered hospital tests over the next several days. During that time Gretchen had two more attacks. Her body was covered with bruises. In one fall she chipped a front tooth to the nerve, which necessitated an emergency trip to the dentist. We were afraid to leave her alone on the stairs or let her cross a street, and she was 15 years old. I cried every time I thought of her abused body. I felt her life was ruined and despair enveloped me like a suffocating blanket.

Saturday was our opening night of camp meeting in Mount Chestnut. The highlight of the evening was to be the monologue of Carlton Mills in the role of Uncle Buddy Robinson. I had been looking forward to this night, but now I went reluctantly because I didn't feel in the spirit of camp meeting. The monologue began with some basic statistics, and then came the bolt of lightning. "All of his life Uncle Buddy suffered with epilepsy. Often his body would be covered with bumps and bruises when the seizures would throw him down." I couldn't believe it. Did I hear correctly? *The Uncle Buddy*, who preached to thousands, had epilepsy? Relief washed over me. The Comforter had come. It was going to be OK.

During the next six months it was often difficult to remember that assurance, for the medication caused large mood swings and extreme sleepiness during school hours. We had to cancel her driver's ed course, and while the gym class took swimming, Gretchen sat on the sidelines. But eventually life began to moderate for us once again.

Gretchen is now a student at the same university where her dad attended. She manages her own apartment and drives a car. Since she is

considered handicapped, the state of Pennsylvania gives her a grant each year to further her education. Doing so, she has met and helped people with various special problems.

Her epilepsy was not the end of the world but the beginning of a different one. Romans 8:28 is being proved. *All things work together for good by the grace of God.* **H**



BY EMILY MORAN

Director of children's church, College Hill Church of the Nazarene, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, and free-lance writer.

INTERRUPTED MELODY



I watched from my window as icicles formed on the huge blue spruce out front, reminding me that we were headed for another cold, damp November day. How I dreaded the thought of winter in northern Indiana! For me, it meant months of aches, stiffness, and sharp, debilitating pain. The keeping of our house often proved painful, and it was getting more difficult to play the piano and organ; I'd wince with pain as I endeavored to move my fingers along the keyboard.

After getting the two older children off to school, I fed and dressed our 18-month-old twins. It took so long to push those little buttons through the buttonholes! I hurried to make my doctor's appointment, anxious to hear the results of tests taken the week before.

That morning I heard the most devastating news a musician could hear. As the doctor stood staring out the window, he hesitantly began. "Nancy, I am sorry to have to tell you this . . . You have rheumatoid arthritis. We will treat you as best we can until you reach the point where you'll need to see a specialist."

I didn't hear another word. My mind was reeling from person to person whom I had known who suffered with rheumatoid arthritis. I didn't want to be a burden on anyone nor did I want anyone else caring for my family. "No, God! It can't be . . . not me! My hands! Father, my hands!" My mind and heart went numb. Angry at God, I felt He had betrayed me. I was bitter and resentful and eaten up with self-pity. Someday a wheelchair; my hands gnarled and twisted so badly I'd never be able to touch the piano or organ! "But why, Lord? You have blessed me with the ability to glorify You at the keyboard! It's not fair!"

The next few months found me miserable, not realizing that I didn't have to accept this defeat. I was frightened at

the thought that God might be slipping out of my life. Or was He? Could it be He was simply challenging me to draw closer to Him? I had always loved Jesus, and as I sought more of Him, it became clear that He wanted more of me. He led me to a church family who prayed, praised God, and knew Him personally.

It was during fall revival that I learned about sanctification. I asked God to sanctify my life *and* my music. Our pastor began having healing services. Excitement ran through me as I realized that, as a child of God, I was entitled to ask for healing from my rheumatoid arthritis! I eagerly made my way to the altar to ask for healing that September 29, 1985. I had been praying and reading His Word and other books on healing, and I knew in my heart that He was going to instantly heal me. I wanted to feel His physical touch throughout my body. I wanted to feel the pain leave my spine, to feel my fingers straighten. I was confident that He wanted me healed, and I was ready to accept His gift of grace and healing.

I did not feel His "touch." Being a newly dedicated Christian, I was confused and disappointed when I wasn't healed. All night I pleaded for understanding, guidance, and peace about what was and wasn't happening to me. The next night, as I dried my hair before going to bed, I turned on the TV to the Christian station in hope of finding some encouragement. A young woman was giving her personal testimony of being healed—of rheumatoid arthritis! I knew I was meant to see that program. For years, she had prayed and praised God, thanking Him for her healing and joyously giving herself to Him. My peace and understanding came through this young woman's testimony. Healing would come in His way and in His timing. Only when my desire for Him was greater than my desire for healing would healing begin. To be near Him was all I wanted.

My healing did come, a measure at a time. All the while I was falling deeper and deeper in love with Him. His love and grace were more important than healing. I was no longer just His instrument; He became my joy and my music!

Three months later, as I sat in the doctor's office in mid-December, I could hardly contain myself. The doctor entered the room and asked how I was doing. I replied, "I'm just fine! I'm terrific!" as I tickled an imaginary keyboard. "Then why are you here?" he asked. I told him of my healing and gave him permission to run the necessary tests for proof should he so desire. He needed no proof and spent the next half hour sharing his faith with me. God was glorified that afternoon!

A new spring, a new me! The spruce once laden with icicles now nested sparrows and robins. I knelt in my flower bed, pushing the earth with agile fingers, planting and weeding with a song of thanksgiving in my heart! My fingers would praise Him forever, as would my whole being. The waking earth was bursting with praise and my heart was beating to the joyous rhythm of life.

Jesus is all the missing notes in my melody of life, and I practice each day to keep in tune with the greatest Composer of all. **H**



BY NANCY A. BRUBAKER

Pianist for the Church of the Nazarene, Valparaiso, Indiana.

I sat by my mother's bedside in the nursing home. I tried for the 10th time to leave. Every effort to do so brought me back as she sobbed and begged me not to leave her. "I get scared at night when it's dark. Stay with me," she implored.

I managed to quiet her down and left reluctantly, my own emotions in turmoil. I had checked out that nursing home; it was a reliable one. Friends who visited Mom immediately after I left reported to me that my mother had settled down, and told me not to worry.

I realized that due to medication and brain damage, she hallucinated at night when it was dark and the normal daily activities of the home ceased. I also realized that even if I were there it would probably not help. But still, she was my mother, and I loved her. I didn't want her to be frightened or feel abandoned.

I struggled with this for several weeks. Talking with my minister and praying gave me an idea.

I went back to see my mother on the normal visiting day. The visit started off pleasantly enough. Mom looked well, was neatly dressed, and excitedly grabbed the cookies and ice



Last picture of
Mrs. Roselind Gray,
with her grandson,
Jeffrey.

THE NIGHT VISITOR

cream I brought. All went well until it was time to leave. Then the crying began. I listened as she told me that she saw things at night. They were around her bed and they scared her. She didn't want to be left alone.

Then I believe the Holy Spirit gave me words to say. "But Mother, remember, Jesus is here; you are not alone." She looked at me in confusion, but she listened! "Here's what I want you to do," I continued. "Starting tonight, when it gets dark and they put the lights out, I want you to see Jesus standing here by your bed. I want you to stretch out your hand tonight and think of Him holding it. I want you to talk to Him and tell him how you feel. Will you do that for me, Mother?" She nodded her assent, and before I left I prayed with her. As I released

myself from her grasp, I said, "I'm going, Mom, but Jesus is taking over. He's right here, Mom. He's going to stay with you tonight." Feeling a bit foolish, I gathered my things together and left.

The next time I visited, the nurse called me over to talk to me. "I can't understand what has come over your mother," she said. "She always gave us a fit at night, and we couldn't quiet her down. But lately—in fact, it was right after your last visit—she settled down, and we haven't had any problems with her." The nurse paused for a moment, then continued, "It's a funny thing though—seems almost unearthly—but we looked in on her last night. She was so quiet we thought something was wrong. She was lying on her side facing the door. Her hand was hanging out from the side of the bed like she was holding on to something. She was talking intelligently to someone. It seemed so real I felt that someone was actually there. When I asked her about it she said that her visitor came to see her every night. He came when her daughter couldn't be here. She said that she wouldn't need to be alone anymore."

I turned away, too choked up to speak. I hurried down the hall to see Mom. It was my turn now. The Lord had kept His part of the bargain; now I would keep mine. **H**

Darkness Brought Fear



BY ROSE MARIE GRAY

Medical auditor for a hospital consulting firm and chaplaincy associate at Howard County Hospital in Columbia, Maryland.

TIME DOES NOT HEAL

How then
can we
help the
“walking
wounded”?

Give yourself time, because time heals everything.” People give this advice when others are divorced, have a death in the family, lose their jobs, or experience personal rejection. It sounds good and seems to comfort many people. But how can time heal our hurts?

Apparently “time heals” means that in time one forgets and the hurt goes away. All of us know that even when we “forget,” the mind stores the data in its memory file. In time we rummage through that file and discover the hurt is still there. “Forgetting” is not the same as healing. Time has no healing properties for the hurts of life.

When some people lose a loved one in death, they are still hurting after 20 years. Where is time, the great healer? Divorce devastates many people who are still among the walking wounded after many years. Parents and children hurt each other and neither geographical separation nor the passage of time brings healing. An elderly man may still remember a verbal wound received when he was a boy. Healing may require time but time has no healing powers.

Counseling one that time heals may lead to a denial of pain. Sometimes we tell a person that after a certain amount of time (say, two years) one should be “over” a divorce. What is the magic of two years’ time? No doubt, with time one may hurt less often and less acutely. However, dulling the pain is a far cry from healing.

If time does not heal, what can one do? First of all, the pain must be accepted. Denial of reality will not heal the wounds. Healing will not come until the wound is acknowledged. The wound is ugly, repugnant, and often incomprehensible. Accepting it is painful and debilitating, but once accepted, the wound belongs to you and loses its awful, dominating power.

Next, one must make a creative response

to pain. Time does not heal, but if suffering is channeled into creative action, healing can occur. John Walsh’s son was stolen and killed; he created an organization to help locate stolen children in the United States. Martin Luther King, Jr., responded to racial discrimination by leading his people to equal status before the law, though the fight resulted in his death. Out of the pain of her husband’s suicide, Helen Steiner Rice began writing poetry, and her greeting cards bring comfort to millions of people.

Creative suffering brings healing for our own wounds. God comforts us so that we can comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:4). We allow our own pain to sensitize us to the needs of others. Using our pain to help others, we find our own healing. Creative action, not time, can heal.

Healing comes when we expose our wounds to God’s grace. God, not time, is the healer. Exposure of our hurts to God’s grace requires a deliberate choice. He wills to heal the wounds, but we have to decide whether we will allow the healing power of God’s grace into our lives.

If time healed, everyone would eventually experience healing. The sad truth is, many people live and die without ever being healed. Indeed, it is a cruel lie to tell the wounded in our world that time will heal everything. We must not attribute to time a power that belongs to God alone. Time heals no one.

Wounds are inescapable. Loving others makes us susceptible to being wounded. We cannot isolate or insulate ourselves well enough to avoid the “slings and arrows” of this life. We must not be deceived into believing that time is the great healer.

Accept the pain, own it as your own. Stop fighting against the wounds you have received and take positive, creative steps to deal with the pain. Expose yourself to God’s unfailing grace. Time does not heal, but God’s grace does! **H**



BY JERRY W. McCANT

Professor of religion at Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego, California.

A doctor discovers a sure cure

PRESCRIPTION *for* BITTERNESS

I was stunned by the poor woman's outpouring of her suffering. She had been married three times, and each husband had abused her cruelly. With six children to care for she felt trapped. Suddenly, my picture of her desperation snapped into focus, and I interrupted: "You certainly have a lot to be angry about, but are your boiling feelings bringing justice on the heads of those who hurt you?"

She admitted, "No."

"Then who are your feelings hurting?"

"Me," she acknowledged.

"Then it would seem that the most beneficial thing you could do is to forgive," I suggested.

"But," she said, "I simply can't forgive; they hurt me too much."

At that time, I was unable to show her what I thought was obvious, that when we are unable, this is precisely where God wants to come to our rescue. He enables us to forgive. This has become one of the most precious miracles that God performs in me.

But, further, I am now seeing the failure to forgive as the root of one of the greatest miscarriages of justice man perpetrates. A man is hurt, perhaps grievously, and because he cannot forgive, he poisons his own soul year after year, and the one guilty of inflicting the original pain suffers little if any. The victim suffers initially from a persecutor, but then the victim victimizes himself, unjustly suffering from the boomerang effect of his own anger. He may think he is "getting even," but his anger eats away at his own soul.

One day I was trying to pray and not succeeding. I finally said, "What's the matter, Lord?"

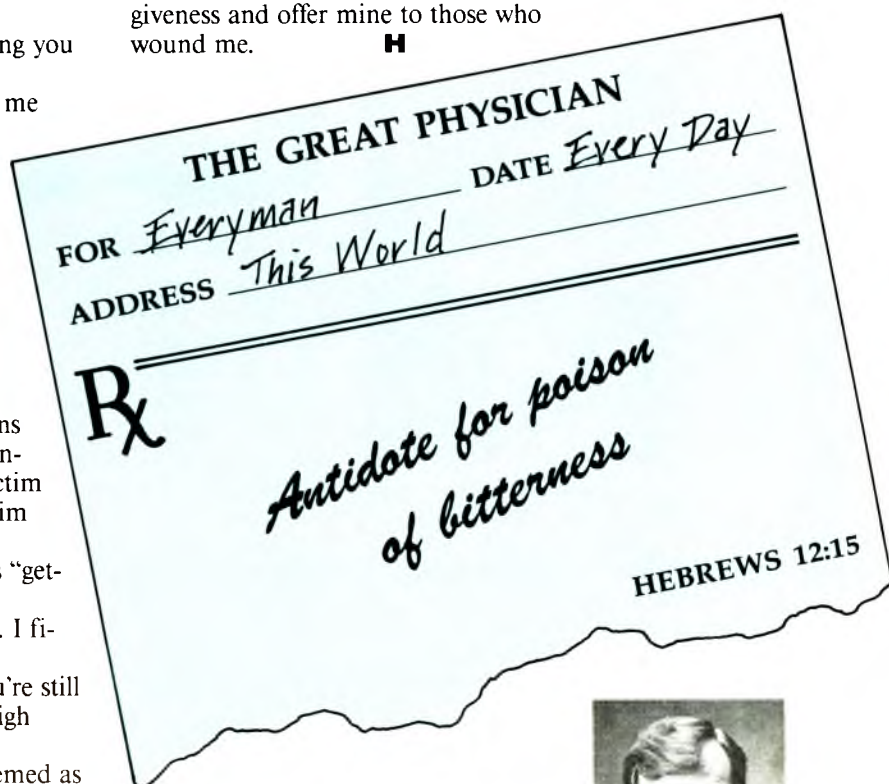
The crystal-clear answer came immediately, "You're still holding bitterness in your heart for the way your high school classmates belittled you."

Twenty years had passed, but the humiliation seemed as though it had just happened. I argued about the justice of my case (totally blind to the miscarriage of justice I was perpetrating on myself). I saw that the Lord was serious, that He was insistent that I forgive. I confessed my total inability to "walk in the light" in my own power. After a week of struggling, I simply yielded and felt His forgiveness

flow through me and awaken my own forgiveness. The pain, the embarrassment, the bitterness were all gone. My self-punishment was over.

After many years in the general practice of medicine, I am convinced that the poison of forgiveness-failure not only results in physical illness, but also destroys the most precious of God's creations—the human spirit. And for what? A man victimizes himself because another made him a victim! It boils down to this: I don't need to punish myself, because Jesus bore it all. I need to accept His forgiveness and offer mine to those who wound me.

H



BY R. GUILFORD FITZ, M.D.

Former medical missionary to South Africa, now in family practice in Redding, California.



Turn off
the tape
recorder
and listen
to God.



GUILT

FACT OR FEELING?



BY LESLIE PARROT III

Psychologist working with a public school and a counseling center in California. He is a Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary. He resides in Pasadena.

A letter addressed to "Uncle Sam" said, "My conscience has been working on me, so to quiet it, I'm sending you this money order for \$200." It was signed, "One of your conscience-stricken nephews." A postscript was added, saying, "P.S.: If I still feel guilty, I'll send in the other \$200."

It all began in the 1800s when someone sent a few cents to the United States Treasury Department. The enclosed note read: "This is payment for a reused postage stamp. It wasn't canceled so I peeled it off and used it again. The money is to ease my conscience." The government, not knowing what to do with those few pennies, created the Conscience Fund. To date that fund has received over \$5 million.

Everyone alive experiences guilt now and then. If we fall short of a goal, raising the "perfect" child for example, we shame ourselves. If we

don't make the grade we think we could have, or we don't get the promotion at work we were aiming for, we punish ourselves. We turn on our mental tape player and hear it say, "I'm a terrible parent," "I'm dumb," or "I'm a loser." We try so hard to be what we ought to be that we sometimes lose touch with what we are.

There is a difference between *feeling* guilty and *being* guilty. If you were to steal a loaf of bread from your local grocer, you would be guilty, whether you felt so or not. The laws of society and the words of the Bible make this clear: Stealing is against the law and is morally wrong. And this is guilt as a fact—to be in violation of moral law.

On the other hand, just because you *feel* guilty doesn't mean you are, in fact, guilty. There is a story of a mother who gave her son a red shirt and a blue shirt for his birthday. The next day he came down to breakfast wearing the red shirt. The first words

his mother said were: "So I see you don't like the blue shirt I gave you!" Because she made him feel guilty does not mean that he had broken a moral law.

It is possible to *be* guilty without feeling it, and *feel* guilty without need. In fact, Paul's reference to those who "delight in self abasement" (Colossians 2:18), and the fact that the believer is unconditionally loved by God, seem to indicate that guilt feelings that are not based on the fact of guilt have absolutely no place in the sanctified life. Satan, not the Holy Spirit, is the "accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10).

The following tips are designed to help those who struggle with *feelings* of guilt.

1. Pay attention to your uncomfortable feelings. Guilt, like physical pain, may be a signal that something is wrong.

2. Are your guilt feelings realistic or are your personal expectations unreasonable? Ask yourself objectively: Why do I feel guilty and should I feel guilty?

3. Remember that you are human. Punishing yourself for human errors is useless. Correct them and move on.

4. If your guilt feelings are a result of sin and you have done something morally wrong, ask God to forgive you, accept His cleansing love, correct the misdeed if possible, and forget it. This is not a way of "getting God off your back"; it serves as a springboard to help you jump over your guilty past into the present love of God.

5. Recognize that "telling all" can be a way of inflicting more punishment on yourself. This only eases your sense of guilt for the moment. For permanent relief from moral guilt, God's forgiveness, not public confession, is needed to wipe the slate clean.

6. If your guilt feelings are unrealistic, turn off the mental tape player that keeps accusing you. Ask God for strength to do this. If you are unable to do so, seek help from your minister or some other professional counselor.

7. Realize that you can feel sorry without condemning yourself. The apostle Paul says, "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10, NIV).

Christ didn't come to condemn us and make us feel guilty. He came to set us free from sin and the uncomfortable emotion of guilt. **H**

GUILT IS GONE!

*My tongue has felt the bitter taste of guilt
As I have taken of forbidden fruit.
The pangs of wounded conscience I have felt
As God the reaping for my sin did suit.
The taste has been as wormwood, and as gall.
The fruit, once sweet, has now at last turned sour;
I find no thing of joy in sin at all;
I want it not another single hour.*

*And, oh, 'tis good at last to understand
That guilt can go; the spirit can be free.
For there has been reached out to us a Hand
That bids us back, and asks our Guide to be.
I come! On Thee, O Lord, I cast my all;
Guilt gone, because I've listened to Thy call.*

—J. MELTON THOMAS
Nampa, Idaho



Home on the Range," that great song of the old West, includes a few words about roaming buffalo and about never hearing a discouraging word. Hence the following story.

It seems two buffalo were grazing lazily out on the prairie. One of them suddenly raised its head and listened intently. The other buffalo said, "What's the matter?"

"Shhhh," whispered the first buffalo. "I thought I heard a discouraging word."

Well, you don't have to strain your ears to hear a discouraging word these days. Prophets of gloom abound. "The world is falling apart." "Our nation is going to the dogs." "Your plan won't work."

Sometimes words of discouragement are spoken on the inside. "I can't make it." "I'm no good." "I quit!"

Think of the destructive power of a well-aimed word of discouragement. Or a word of criticism. Or complaint. Or gossip. Speaking the wrong word at the wrong time can wipe the smile from a shining face. It can cause shoulders to droop. It can make springing spirits sag. Negative words can destroy happiness, crush motivation, ruin reputation, shatter hope, and smash dreams.

Yesterday I was doing fine until I answered the telephone. For five minutes I listened to a string of complaints and discouraging remarks. By the time I hung up, my mind was filled with gloom. I was down all day. That night I tossed and turned as I fretted over the negative words.

My profession as a writer has put me in the limelight where I have felt the power of criticism. I have learned firsthand that one negative comment outweighs a dozen kindly remarks.

NICE TALK

If words can kill happiness, they also have power to create happiness. The opening chapter of the Bible describes God as the Creator. We read, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." A few choice words transformed darkness into light.

It is said that words are cheap. Not so. What price can you put on the right words spoken at just the right time? It was Solomon who said, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver" (Proverbs 25:11, RSV).

A few well-chosen words can make all the difference. Words of hope, en-

couragement, congratulation, affirmation, compassion, love. Wonderful words of life!

One summer our family spent a few days vacationing in the Colorado Rockies. The man who owned the cabins stopped by one evening for a little chat. As he was leaving, my four-year-old son darted after him calling, "Wait, I want to tell you something."

Mr. Davis stopped and bent down to get on eye level. "What is it?" he asked.

"I love you."

We were all stunned. After hugging and thanking Jonathan, our friend went on his way.

"That was a nice thing to say to Mr. Davis," I said. "But why did you want to tell him that?"

"Because he talked nice to the man by the swings."

My mind went back to a scene I had observed earlier that day. Jonathan was swinging on the swing set. Twenty feet away, Mr. Davis was talking with another camper. Unbeknown to them, the little boy was listening, taking it all in.

As I reflected on this incident, two lessons came home to me. First, little children absorb more than we often think they do. Second, little children like people who talk nice.

The same goes for adults. We are easily influenced, especially by the words of others. And, like children, we want to be around people who talk nice.

I don't know how many words I will utter during my life, or how many thoughts I will entertain in my mind. But this I know, it's only as the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart are acceptable to God that I can bring encouragement and happiness to those around me. God wants us to talk nice. **H**



BY G. ROGER SCHOENHALS

Free-lance writer and director of Seattle Pacific Foundation, endowment management arm of Seattle Pacific University, Washington.

TREATMENT *for* WORRYWARTS

Some people are by nature "worrywarts" while others seem to live with a "couldn't care less" attitude. Most of us identify with the former group. A man named J. Arthur Rank had a lot to worry him so he set aside Wednesday as a day he called "Worrying Wednesday." Only on that day would he allow his troubles to bother him. He found that by Wednesday most of the things he feared had either happened, and there was no need to worry, or they had passed without bad results.

In Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus tells us five times not to worry. The RSV uses the word "anxious" and the NKJV uses the word "worry," but we get the idea that worry is not something we should do. How can we avoid it? Let me offer a method that might help. Classify your worries into one of four groups.

One would likely be *Life-Threatening Worries*. You are waiting for the doctor to give you the results of a biopsy from a tumor. Now that is understandably a cause for great concern for you and your family. You will need the support of a loving family, pastor, and church when your worries are of this magnitude. But is what you are worried about that serious? Most of our worries are not life-threatening.

Second is the *Future-Threatening Worries*. While your life may not be hanging in the balance, perhaps your job or your home is. You may be facing a crippling illness that, while not fatal, could take away your ability to earn a living. You, or someone you love, are facing issues that will forever alter your life-style.

Third, we might classify our worries as *Major Aggravation Worries*. Not life-threatening or even future-threatening, they may be of such proportions that they keep you awake at night, upset your stomach, and give you headaches. Maybe your neighbor is putting up an undesirable business right next to your lovely home. Or perhaps a truck sideswiped your beautiful new automobile two days after you brought it home. That is not life-threatening or future-threatening, but it sure did spoil your day—maybe several days.

The fourth category is *Minor Inconvenience Worries*. While on vacation with the family your automobile transmission tears up, costing a bundle of money and resulting

*"Worrywart—one
who is inclined to
worry unduly."*

in the loss of a day's vacation. Or was it a leaky roof that ruined the ceiling in the living room and spotted the carpet? Then you found that your insurance would not cover it.

Adopting this fourfold grouping, think about the things that worry you. Honestly, isn't it true that most of the things that are eating us up on the inside are in the fourth group? The problem is, we take the minor inconveniences of life and blow

them up until they seem life-threatening. Quietly sit down and analyze the things you are worrying about; write them down in a list. Now divide them up into the four major headings suggested. Be honest about each one. If it is life-threatening your pastor and doctor and family will help you deal with it. Likewise, if the problem is future-threatening. But 98 percent of the things that give people ulcers will be in the last two groups. And 85 percent are actually only minor inconveniences.

By classifying your worries as "minor" it becomes obvious that they are really not worth the attention you are giving them. They will pass in a few days and you will forget what it was that upset you. But the damage you do to your body—especially to your stomach and heart—may not be so easily forgotten.

I have found great help in the fourth chapter of Philippians. Between verses 6 and 19 are some promises that have given me victory over many of life's hard places—major and minor. "Be anxious for nothing." "I have learned to be content" "I can do all things." "My God shall supply all your need." Take your Bible and read the whole text and it will lighten life's burdens.

Worry is an exercise in futility. It doesn't help. Faith in God is the alternative. Trust Him and worry will vanish.

H



BY ROBERT E. MANER

Nazarene evangelist who resides in Fitzgerald, Georgia.

When BOOM

Do Christians ever fail?

It was the thrill of a lifetime, the culmination of years of dreams. Finally, after wondering whether the opportunity would ever come, we owned our own business.

Oh, it was only a small retail store, and we knew from the start that we'd never get rich from that one outlet in a small rural Oklahoma town. Still, at the beginning the future seemed as limitless as our dreams.

And we'd done it right. Much prayer went into the decision to leave a secure, solid, income-producing job. Other opportunities had been bypassed because God had closed the door. We had waited for His direction and it came with certainty. He was with us and we were confident.

Three years (and many thousands of dollars) later, the business has expired. What happened?

Well, all the usual factors were present. We knew that we had been somewhat undercapitalized and, though I had run businesses for others, it was our first actual self-employment experience. All of these

factors had been considered at the beginning, however.

What we hadn't known was that the economy of rural Oklahoma, dominated by oil and agriculture, was about to be crushed by a variety of factors. Anyone who reads newspapers should now be aware of the farm crisis and the depressed oil prices of recent years. Farmer suicides and bankrupted oil concerns have shared economic headlines in our area only with bank failures, usually precipitated by the problems of those two industries. One consequence of all this has been the failure of many small businesses like ours, as well as unemployment for many who lost their jobs. This economic displacement has affected many lives, including those of many Christians.

A funny thing happens within the church. We sometimes get so caught up in our emphasis on the good things God gives us, that we forget (or fail to learn) how to deal with earthly failure. We reject the popular "success" theologies, and then we seem to practice them by shunning the idea of a Christian failing. Even in the Church of the Nazarene there are some who immediately question the level of faith and the certainty of God's leadership when any Christian experiences earthly failure. It is assumed that this earthly failure has resulted from spiritual failure.

I would not dispute that this has sometimes been the case. Surely there are times when good people fail because they reject God's way. That is, however, not always the case. In a time when many businesses fail and many jobs are lost, it is inevitable that Christians will be involved. Realizing this, there are some things the church should understand.

(1) Earthly failure and spiritual failure are not the same thing, nor are they always tied together.

Scripture reveals many instances where God's people experienced times of failure. Paul was stoned more than



Opening day for the Joseph Shrefflers

comes BUST

once for his efforts to spread the gospel. Jesus taught His disciples how to respond when their message was rejected by a community. Many leaders of the Early Church lost their lives in pursuit of their calling. Christ himself was rejected by many and gave His life on a cross. The spiritual credentials of these men are unquestioned. At the same time, it is clear that they all experienced failure as it is measured by the world.

(2) God's definition of success is based on a future that we cannot see.

There are times when the earthly failure we experience is merely a steppingstone to the success God has planned. It may seem catastrophic to us at the time, but there can be profit in every loss.

Does that mean God causes these failure experiences to teach us something? I cannot reconcile this philosophy with my image of God. I believe that when an omnipotent God wants to teach us something, He will have a way. If we are experiencing earthly success, He will use that to teach us. The reverse is just as true. I do not believe that God causes our failures, but He will certainly act within them for our good.

(3) Present circumstances are not final circumstances.

The reason we so often feel led to give up in times of trouble is that we say to ourselves, "So this is what it was all leading up to." We accept present circumstances as final circumstances. It's hard to look beyond the present difficulty.

God clearly doesn't see things in this light. Our lives are limited to 70 years or so, but His experience is one of eternity. Having viewed the whole passage of time for His creation, He sees the consecutive nature of events. One occurrence leads to another, and that to yet another, and so on. In His omniscience, He knows the chain of events. We must learn to see that time goes on and God's plan continues.

This is reassuring in times of failure, but it is equally important in our successes.

(4) God views earthly success and earthly failure in the same light. He is not so much concerned with what happens to us as how we respond to it.

If it's easy to see failure as a final circumstance, how much easier to see success as a final circumstance.

Clearly, we want it to be final. Once achieved, we want success to stay with us forever. The fact is, though, that success, like failure, is merely a steppingstone along the journey. Most of us will experience both in our lifetime.

I do not think that God designates one or the other for each of us. We all have our share of each according to the circumstances we face and the way we face them. God doesn't cause success or failure, but He will guide us through both. His concern is what we do with the guidance He gives us.

The question should not be, "Do Christians ever fail?" Rather, we should be alert to God's question: "What will you do with what you have?" Our answer, if we are yielded to His will, can turn earthly failure to spiritual success. **H**

BY JOSEPH M. SHREFFLER

Insurance agent and layman in the Ponca City, Oklahoma, Church of the Nazarene.



Joseph M. Shreffler, wife Margie, and sons Joey and Robbie.

SECURITY

*Last year
I doubled my assets.
It was hard work,
It didn't just happen,
But now I'm secure
And have twenty years.*

Am I sure?

*This year
I must concentrate
On the assets
Christ gave me—
The gifts and fruits
Of the Spirit.*

*Spiritual assets
Don't appreciate
By themselves
Either.*

—MERLE LAMPRECHT
Ciskei, South Africa

Suffering and Service

TURNING LIFE'S NEGATIVES INTO POSITIVES



Some people have a rough time in life. One friend of mine often came to me for prayer and comfort. Her husband, who was a drunkard and gambler, treated her and their children badly at times, and their finances were often low. As a result of the tension under which she lived, she suffered many physical ailments.

Sybil wouldn't allow herself to become bitter, though. "I'm trying to keep looking to the Lord," she said. "Just continue praying for Phil and me and the children."

Then one day Sybil's prayers were answered in a strange way. Her husband suffered a serious accident. He finally took stock of himself and turned his life over to the Lord. God's transforming grace gave Sybil a new husband.

She became the teacher of a large Sunday School class of women. Because of her own difficult experiences and the way she came through them, she had the understanding, sympathy, and love to help those in her class who needed comfort and counsel.

Owen Meredith said, "Sorrows humanize our race; tears are the showers that fertilize the world."

Many who read this article may be going through some trial. You or a loved one may be seriously ill or handicapped. Or you may have lost your mate through death or divorce. Your child may have gone astray, into sin, drug abuse, a false religion. Few of us get through this life, especially in these days, without going through some difficult times. If we take them as Sybil did—not allowing them to make us bitter, but continually looking to the Lord—we will become strong Christians with caring hearts.

The apostle James wrote an amazing thing to suffering Christians: "Consider it

pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (1:2-4, NIV).

Sometimes I've looked back on my own life and thought what a good "soap opera" it would make! But where people in soap operas don't have the Lord to lean on in their time of trouble, I did. My old Bible is full of dates next to verses I felt the Lord gave me to lift me out of the morass of self-pity and depression and cleanse me of bitterness and resentment.

David's psalms, often written during his times of trial, can especially comfort and encourage us because we can relate to the various tribulations he endured. His psalms are full of "Why, Lord?" questions. How like us that is! Yet David ends them by expressing his absolute faith that God will deliver and help him. By doing this, he lifts us out of ourselves and into comforting faith and peace!

I remember when I had good reason to believe God had answered my years of prayers for a baby. But I fell down some stairs one day shortly thereafter and began to show signs I might lose the tiny bit of life that had started in me. I was alone when it happened, and indescribable grief filled my heart. "Why, Lord," I wept. "Why?" Then I looked up and cried, "Help me, Lord!"

Suddenly my heart was filled with God's peace that passes all understanding! When the doctor came, she was amazed, for she knew how much I had wanted that baby. The peace that God gave me was a testimony to her. Ever since then I've been able to comfort and encourage women in similar situations. (Six years later I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.)

For a number of years now I've been able to translate all my various sufferings into a service of counseling, comfort, and prayer.

BY MURIEL LARSON

Author of 16 books and 4,500 articles, and a church organist, residing in Greenville, South Carolina.

Two VIPs

The phone rang in my office. When I answered, the man on the line asked, "What kind of service do you conduct?"

My answer was, "In relationship to what?"

He had been attending a church where their loud praying—everyone actually yelling at God at the same time—disoriented and frustrated him, for he was unable to see what was actually going on.



Tandy and Wanda

He took me up on my invitation to "come and see." After a few weeks, he said he needed to talk with me. I made an appointment with him and his wife brought him to my office.

We talked and prayed and he accepted Christ. "Now," he said, "we need to work on my wife."

Wanda, his wife, attended the other church and cared for the nursery. She was confined to a wheelchair, having been born with hardly any legs. She dropped Tandy off at our church on Sunday morning and then went to her church. Once in a while she would stay with Tandy, however, and gradually she got acquainted with the people.

One Wednesday night, Wanda came with Tandy to prayer meeting and they wanted to talk with me before the service. As it happened, we never made it to the service. Wanda prayed through and was saved in my office.

Wanda now takes care of our nursery. She also comes down to the church office each week and helps with our newsletter. She comes to the church each Monday and Thursday evening and watches our exercise class.

Tandy recently had back surgery and the church people rallied around them. They need help doing some things, but most of the time, they are completely self-sufficient.

It is amazing to see them come to the services, Wanda in her wheelchair, and Tandy pushing her. She is his eyes, he is her feet.

When people make excuses for not coming to church, I always think of Wanda and Tandy. They are inspiring. They are so thankful to have each other, and so happy to be in a church that really cares and loves them. **H**



BY JESSE L. BUCHANAN

Pastor of the Tampa, Florida, Town and Country Church of the Nazarene.

Who can relate better to someone else than one who has had a similar experience? For the past six years I've served as a counselor for a nightly two-hour program on our local Christian television station, where a bank of 16 counselors keep busy on the phones comforting and praying with callers.

Frederic D. Huntington said, "Sorrow is our John the Baptist, clad in grim garments, with rough arms, a son of the wilderness, baptizing us with bitter tears, preaching repentance; and behind him comes the gracious, affectionate, healing Lord, speaking peace and joy to the soul."

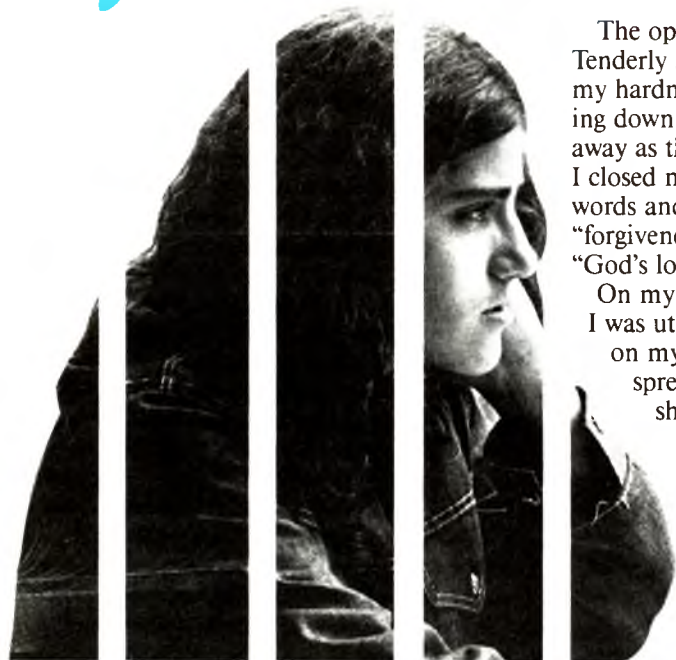
Our Lord didn't promise His followers an easy time in this world, for it is not our home—we're just passing through. He himself was born in a manger to a poor family, and He suffered terribly on the Cross because of His love for us.

Hebrews 2:10 says, "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering" (NIV). If this is true of our Lord, certainly it is true of us who follow Him.

The example of our Savior and His sufferings strengthens each one of us in our times of trouble and sorrow. If we reject bitterness and choose rather to trust in the Lord, then times of affliction not only mature us as Christians, but prepare us to be understanding, sympathetic helpers and comforters of others.

God's Word says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2, NIV). **H**

From Jail to JUBILATION



Thomas E. Soner

They took my fingerprints and followed with the mug shots on that hot Sunday morning.

Then a uniformed female officer escorted me to the women's "tank." There I was shown a cell and was told my bunk would be the floor.

Never, in all my well-formulated planning to leave home to be on my own, had I made any provision for being incarcerated. I had no reason to anticipate such a thing happening to me.

Midmorning, a tall, stately woman entered the main room of the tank. Songbooks were passed around to the inmates. When I inquired of another inmate what was going on, she explained that an evangelist, Ann Gaines, was here to hold a Sunday morning religious service. Everything in me recoiled at the word *religious*. I wanted no part of it, so I sat as far away from the speaker as I could, hoping I couldn't hear what she had to say.

The opening hymn was "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling." In spite of my hardness, I felt warm tears coursing down my cheeks. I brushed them away as the evangelist began to speak. I closed my ears but I did catch such words and phrases as "sin," "Jesus," "forgiveness," "the Cross," "salvation," "God's love," and "born-again."

On my bed on the floor that night, I was utterly frustrated. When I left on my 3,300-mile hitchhiking spree across the United States, I shook my fist at God and swore that I would die on the steps of a church before I would ever enter one again. Hadn't I prayed thousands of times without any results? Did not I know, from my background, who Jesus was? He was the

second person of the Trinity, born in a manger on Christmas Eve, died on the Cross on Good Friday for the sins of the whole world, rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Though as a teenager I had three crucifixes hanging on my bedroom walls, I never really knew Him.

Who was this Jesus that Ann Gaines had talked about? Why would He die for me—for my personal sins? It was too much for me to comprehend; nevertheless, I could not get it out of my mind so as to sleep. Something within my being was urging me to give Jesus a chance.

Monday morning I was taken before the judge, charged with vagrancy. He sentenced me to 15 days in jail, with 3 off for good behavior.

During the nights that followed, I slept fitfully. I was so confused and frustrated. I did, however, make a decision to find this Gaines woman after my release and talk with her about this Jesus she seemed to know

so well. I had no idea how I could get in touch with her, but God was way ahead of me and had His plans all laid out.

A couple of weeks after my release from jail, I had the opportunity to talk with Ann Gaines. As she led me into a small room where we could be alone, I sensed such a warmth and glow about her that I wondered if perhaps God had sent an angel down to talk to me.

As I sat down on the bed, I blurted out my rebellion against my religious background. Almost in the same breath, I asked Ann to tell me about Jesus and explain what this salvation business was all about. I cannot recall all that she told me for, before I knew what was happening, I was on my knees. With tears running down my face, I confessed to Jesus all my remembered sins and asked His forgiveness for each one. I asked Jesus to come into my heart and help me change my ways. I truly desired to live a different life.

In a matter of minutes I was on my feet, thanking and praising the Lord. Jesus had come into my heart, forgiven my sins, and made me a child of God. My heavy load was lifted and I felt I had made my peace with God the Father and had been made an heir of heaven.

My knowledge of Scripture was almost nil. After I became a Christian and began to study the Bible, I read that no one can come to God the Father except through Jesus Christ. That was the reason I had not been able to reach God and find peace in my soul. I had not known Jesus Christ.

Over 40 years have passed since I gave Jesus a chance to help and save me. I have never regretted it. **H**



BY JOANN WOLLAM

A retired nurse whose present vocation is writing. She resides in Anacortes, Washington.

A DEATH SENTENCE TO A BETTER LIFE

Dying Unafraid



— David Dunnaway —

He was the happiest person on death's row I had ever seen! David Dunnaway had been reared in a Christian home. His parents, Thurman and Norma Dunnaway, are firm believers in Christ. Becoming a believer during his childhood, David maintained his faith throughout high school and attended church regularly with his father and mother. Nevertheless, shortly after graduation, David drifted away from church and lost all interest in things spiritual.

Smitten with heartache and grave concern, David's parents were driven to intercessory prayer. They also enlisted the prayers of others. They wanted their son saved at any cost.

Some years later, when David met and married a Christian girl who had influenced him to attend church again, his parents felt their prayers were being answered. But as David discovered, one may attend church regularly, live a good moral life, and still fail to have a vital and rewarding spiritual relationship with the Lord.

Upon returning home one day, David and his wife found their mobile home destroyed by a windstorm. Although there were hundreds of mobile homes in the same park, theirs was the only one that had been damaged.

Placing another mobile home upon the same concrete slab, the installers took special precaution to securely anchor the unit with cables to a firm foundation. Now it should withstand strong winds without being damaged. But exactly six months later, on the same day of the week and at the same time of day, their mobile home was again destroyed by a tornado. This time they were in it! David's wife suffered a broken back. He received cuts and bruises. Just as before, theirs was the only home damaged.

Upon recovering from their injuries, and now firmly convinced that living in a mobile home was not safe for them, they moved into a house. But a worse calamity was yet to come. David was stricken with a dreadful disease.

After six months at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Mo., David was sent back home to Decatur, Ill., to die. As I walked down a corridor in Decatur Memorial Hospital to visit him, I was apprehensive. What could I say to comfort a 30-year-old man who was on his deathbed and knew it?

My fears proved to be totally unwarranted.

When I entered his room, David greeted me with a robust smile and a joyful spirit that defied his dying body. I could hardly believe my ears when he testified: "I'm glad I came down with leukemia. If I hadn't, I might have lost my soul. Now I know where I'm going. I'll soon be in a better world and be well forever."

During David's confinement at Barnes, he had come to full grips with death and eternity. He embraced Jesus

as his Lord and Savior in a vital and more meaningful spiritual relationship than ever before. Christ and eternal life had become as real to him as the dreadful disease that was destroying him physically. Neither his emaciated body nor his approaching death could stifle his joy and assurance in the Lord. David had become a convincing witness of God's sustaining grace to everyone who entered his room. When the nurses at Barnes bade him farewell, they wept openly. His happy spirit and glowing testimony had touched their hearts deeply. No one who conversed with David could ever forget him.

As I left David that day, I realized that he would probably be gone before another visit—and he was. But I left his room lifted in spirit. I had come to help him and he had helped me immensely instead. I had witnessed firsthand, in a more dramatic way than I had ever seen before, the full impact of 1 Corinthians 15:55-57: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (NASB).

H



BY LESLIE WOOTEN

Pastor of Oak Grove Church of the Nazarene, Decatur, Illinois.

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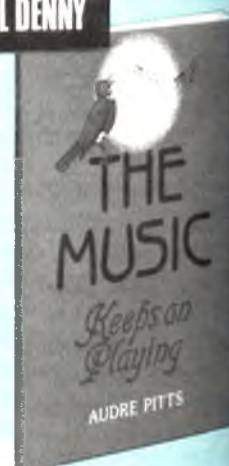
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JESUS CHRIST

Defines Friendship

J

esus called His disciples "my friends."

The meaning of friendship is to be learned from Him, not from dictionaries.

That the Lord is our friend does not exempt us from the troubles that plague other people. To the same disciples, in the same context, Jesus said, "In the world you shall have tribulation."

Being a Christian does not mean that you won't get sick, or lose your job, or sorrow beside a grave, or be swept away by a tornado or flood along with your neighbors. Whatever heartbreaking losses others incur are also experienced by the Lord's people.

But having Jesus Christ as your friend does mean an unfailing, comforting Presence in all the trials through which you pass. It means cheer and strength and freedom in the worst ordeals you will experience. He promises, "I am with you, even to the end of the age." He further promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Those who share the friendship of Christ are victors over, not victims of, circumstances. When life tumbles in and dreams are shattered, they know that they are in His loving and upholding hands, and not in the grip of blind chance or grim fate. God works all things together for the good of those who love and serve Jesus Christ.

The sustaining and reinforcing friendship of Christ is not offered to us unconditionally. To reject Him as Savior is to forfeit Him as Friend. To refuse His Lordship is to lose His friendship. Jesus said quite bluntly to His disciples, "You are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you."

As millions have found, "His commandments are not grievous." He is not a tyrant ruling by force or caprice. "His banner over us is love." Always He seeks our highest welfare, and what He wills for us is infinitely better than anything we could scheme and devise for ourselves. The happiest people in the world are those who live as friends of Christ.

Those who are friends of Christ must live as friends to one another. The scope of our friendship is determined by the range of His friendship, embracing persons from all races and classes. To enclose our friendship within a smaller circle than He draws for His is to betray and deny His love.

His people do for their friends the kinds of things He does for His friends. They are there to offer whatever help they can give at the point of others' hurts and needs. The friends of Christ cannot live selfishly and meanly. They are concerned that the hungry be fed, the naked be clothed, the homeless be sheltered, the oppressed be relieved, the sick be healed, and the lost be saved.

Yes, Christ defines friendship and the church offers that friendship to its community.

In this issue of our magazine you will find accounts of what the friendship of Christ has meant to people in various trials and stresses. The church wants you to know that He loves you and offers His friendship to you. Trust Him, love Him, follow Him, and your life will be fuller and richer and happier than you ever thought possible.



W. E. McCumber,
editor