

*Come and hear,
all ye that fear
God, and I will
declare what
he hath done for
my soul.*

Psalms 66:16

The FOURTH MEETING

Raymond J. Hamblin

Pauline Lewis

Herman Bauman

Mitchell F. Henson

Suk Ki Kim

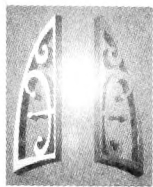
Marvin S. Grady

Kay Kuzma

George and Tena Baehm

Richard C. Osborn

Denzil D. McNeilus



I THOUGHT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME

By Raymond J. Hamblin

YOU SHOULD hold a Revelation Seminar in your town.” Our conference ministerial secretary was gently urging me to get involved in witnessing. I had just finished attending a lay-training session at our small church in Adrian, Michigan.

This guy is crazy, I thought. Doesn't he know I have a growing business? Can't he realize I'm busy? I simply don't have the time.

As a business owner, I frantically worked hard to build myself an empire, clawing my way up the ladder of success. And frankly, I didn't believe in mixing business and religion. I didn't have a neat and tidy 9-to-5 job with free evenings for good works. Sometimes I worked 18-hour days. I had convinced myself it was unrealistic to commit to teaching a Bible seminar three nights a week for six weeks.

But the Holy Spirit was speaking to me, and I couldn't put the idea of holding a seminar out of my mind.

The next month after the lay training session my wife and I attended our first ASI convention in Hawaii. ASI is a group of Adventist business professionals who teach people like me how to share Christ in the marketplace.

I came home from that convention with a zeal I had never known before. I promised God that I would witness for Him. And I began praying and asking the Lord to lead me to what He wanted me to do. Within two months, with the help of my wife and church family, I was teaching a Revelation Seminar—three nights a week.

I held three complete seminars that year. And when my first student was baptized, I experienced a thrill I'll never be able to explain this side of heaven. Subsequently, more than 15 people joined the church. Amazingly, my business flourished and grew in spite of the fact that I spent much less time working.

As I look back now, I can see how God rewarded my faith and commitment of time and energy to Him.

Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Deuteronomy 31:6.

Raymond J. Hamblin is president of The Hamblin Company (an integrated communications company) in Tecumseh, Michigan. He is a member of the Adrian, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church.



I CAN DO THAT

By Pauline Lewis

I BECAME a member of the Adventist Church in my late twenties and began to tithe. The Lord blessed from the beginning. When I had no money to buy my daughter a spring coat, a nice lady gave us not one, but two, new coats.

A few years later a man from the conference came to the church to talk about stewardship. He spoke about the idea of returning a double tithe. I thought, *I can do that*. Then he told how the children of Israel sometimes gave 25 percent or more. And I thought, *I can do that*.

At the time I was a housewife and a baby-sitter. The company where my husband worked was about to close, and he would lose a good job. So now came testing time. Would I return the full tithes and offerings that God had already prompted me to give? I decided to give the full amount and put my trust in the Lord.

My husband worked what he thought was his last week and was able to put in a lot of overtime. Then the office lady said, "I don't know why, but you are to work one more week." The pay for that week was almost double his normal salary. After finishing that week and thinking he would now be laid off, he went to the office to pick up his check. The lady said, "I can't understand what is happening. You are to work next week too." At the end of the third "extra" week, the plant finally closed, and my husband was given three weeks' pay for vacation. We paid all our bills and went to Florida to visit my parents. When we got home, my husband quickly found a job and went to work the following Monday.

I know all these blessings came because I decided to be faithful to my commitment with the Lord.

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I have hope in Him."
Lamentations 3:24, NASB.

Pauline Lewis is a retired colporteur in St. Joseph, Missouri. She is a member of the Three Angels Seventh-day Adventist Church in St. Joseph.



YOU CAN'T OUTGIVE GOD

By Herman Bauman

SEMINARY was a wonderful academic and spiritual experience. Financially it was a challenge. My conference sponsorship gave me a full \$16.67 per month. My wife worked full-time, and I worked three part-time jobs. We had

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very little, but my wife and I tithed faithfully. This was something we both had learned from childhood, and nothing could keep us from making it top priority.

Our first appointment in full-time ministry was in a large city in the Midwest. We lived in the attic of the church for several weeks while we looked for a furnished apartment. After we had failed to find anything, the senior pastor advised that we rent an unfurnished apartment and order some of the bare necessities. The pastor assured us that the conference would give us a small loan to help us pay for the furniture. Unfortunately, that loan never materialized, and we were left to beg a few dollars to pay for part of the furniture we had ordered. We now had no money left. We hoped to have enough food to last until the next payday.

At 5:00 a.m. the telephone rang. My wife's brother back on the East Coast told us that their youngest brother had just died. We had to go back for the funeral and to be with the family. We borrowed some money to make the trip—just enough for gas and a little bit of food. Though my wife was eight months pregnant, we did not stop at motels because we simply couldn't afford to.

On our return, as we were nearing home, we realized we had spent our last money for gas. The gas would get us and our little Volkswagen back home, but how would we pay back the money we had borrowed?

God is always good and generous, and His promises are always sure. When we walked into the little apartment complex and opened our mailbox, we found it stuffed full of letters. We opened the first one. Inside was a dollar bill. As we opened more we found more money—five one-dollar bills and even a ten-dollar bill or two. We hadn't asked for anything, but the news about the death in the family had gotten out, and kind people wanted to help.

We returned tithe on the money we received, paid back the loan we had taken for the trip, and still had a few dollars left to buy food until the next payday.

Does God take care of those who trust Him first? I'll say He does!

The greatest evidence in our lives of God's care and blessing occurred a couple years later. We had just concluded an evangelistic series. Sunday was cleanup day at the hall. When I got home, my wife told me that our second son, now nine months old, was very sick.

We rushed him to the hospital, but our family doctor was out of state. Another doctor was covering for him. They put our little guy into bed and began to minister to him, but he obviously was not getting any better. The doctor threw up his hands and said, "I don't know what to do." Perspiration stood out in beads on his forehead.

Several times our son began to turn blue. He was dying. When the nurse saw him, she ran out of the room crying for help, but there seemed to be no help.

In desperation I called the conference president to ask if he knew someone who might help us. He referred us to a pediatric specialist at the university hospital. I got in touch with that doctor, who gave some instructions. There was no time to waste.

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The university specialist told the local doctor that he should feed the baby intravenously. Without any kind of anesthetic to deaden the pain, the doctor cut into the baby's ankle and probed to get the needle into a vein, but without success. He made another cut in the ankle and probed, again without success. He cut the other ankle; still no success.

My wife and I slipped off to a quiet place, fell on our knees, and prayed earnestly that God would heal our precious little baby. Suddenly the doctor was successful in getting the needle into a vein. Life began to flow back into that little body. A week later we were able to take our little boy home. He did not regain his full strength for a long time, but with God's blessings he did.

But God wasn't finished showing us His mercy. Three specialists had worked on our baby. We knew the cost would be huge, and no way could we find the money to pay for their services. The hospital bill, too, was a large one. How would we find the money to pay for it? God had a plan. He never knows when to stop giving. None of the three doctors sent us a bill for services rendered. The hospital bill was covered when money came from a completely unexpected source. I praise God for His love, His generosity, and His faithfulness.

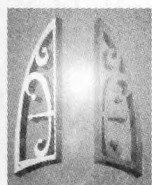
When I think back on how God has blessed so wonderfully, I can't help but cry out, "Thank You, Lord, for being so good and generous with me."

People ask me, "How can you afford to tithe?" My answer always is, "I couldn't afford not to."

You see, I have discovered I can never outgive God.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. Psalm 37:25.

Herman Bauman is president of the Arizona Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Scottsdale, Arizona.



THE DAY MAMA WENT ON STRIKE

By Mitchell F. Henson

SUNDAY mornings on the farm were busy. We were either planting or canning, cutting wood for the winter or cleaning up for the spring.

But not this Sunday. Things were quiet, and children notice when things are quiet. Where was Mama? We couldn't find her. Someone said she was in the living room, but nobody ever went in the living room in our house unless there was company, and there was no company.

Mama's in the living room? We peeked through the window. Mama was sitting

on the couch with her arms folded and a strange look on her face. We went to Daddy and asked, "What's wrong?"

Daddy said, "You boys go outside."

"What's wrong, Daddy, what's wrong?"

"You'd better go outside—and whatever you do, don't go in that living room!"

Dad was what we would call a chauvinist today. And Mama had always endured him with great grace.

"Well, what's wrong with her, Daddy?"

"She stopped."

"What do you mean, she stopped?"

"I think she's on strike."

Mama's on strike! Wonder why? Wonder who caused it?

Mama was like a windup that never needed to be wound up. She was a dynamo of energy. When she was cooking and working, the house ran like clockwork! I was 14, my brother was 15, and at least three times a day we were really interested in Mama, because it was time to eat. When you're 14, it's almost always time to eat. So we were really worried.

I can't remember exactly when she went back to work that Sunday. We never asked what caused her strike. The only thing we noticed was that in about a week Mama had a new dress. And in a few more days flowers were planted in front of the house. That's right! My daddy planted something you couldn't eat. He planted flowers. It had never happened before.

Word was that one of the boys had said to Mama in the hallway of the house that Sunday morning, "Pick up my socks!" And that broke something in Mama. Or maybe it fixed something. Because Mama noticed a flaw in her son that she had always tolerated in her husband. And she knew that she better nip this in the bud, or the first thing you'd know, she'd have three masters instead of one. So she went on strike.

Somewhere along the line she started hearing demands with no "thank you's." Only complaints, and no gratitude; only orders, and no cooperation. And she just quit. Just like many people who used to serve the church. They stopped hearing joy. They stopped hearing compliments. They stopped hearing welcomes. And they just quit, or they just drifted away.

I have an idea. How about the stewardship of compliments? That's right. Make yourself a committee of one to see that the people who do an act of kindness or assume leadership or do a job hear they are appreciated. I have never heard of a church or a home where there were too many compliments, have you?

Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. Proverbs 16:24, RSV.

Mitchell F. Henson is senior pastor of the Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church in Glendale, California.



BABY'S MILK, A PIGGY BANK, AND TITHE

By Suk Ki Kim

WHILE I was an intern in the early 1970s, our financial situation was tight. When I entered an anesthesiology residency program after my rotating internship, things got worse. I took a drastic one-third cut in salary and also bore additional expense for housing, which our former program had provided. On top of this, my wife had just given birth to our third child.

My wife and I had argued every payday over tithe, but with the change in our salary, our arguments were more bitter. While we scarcely managed a hand-to-mouth existence and worried over how we would buy next week's groceries, my wife could not comprehend how I could still insist on taking 10 percent out of our meager income and giving it to the church. She threatened. She cried. She begged me to be reasonable. Things reached a critical point when it came down to two choices: Return tithe or buy the baby's milk. We again returned tithe that Sabbath.

Our oldest child, who was 4 years old, had been collecting spare change around the house. She took great pride in dropping the coins into the piggy bank I had given her. We had no other option but to ask my daughter if we could use the money in her piggy bank to buy milk for the baby.

She tried hard not to cry, but I saw the tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Are you sure you want to give up your piggy bank?" my wife asked. The situation was desperate, and it really was not a matter of choice. I said nothing.

My daughter vigorously nodded her head and then began to sob. With the pennies, nickels, and dimes (minus the shiny buttons and other noncurrency) we bought milk.

A few days later my father sent us \$20,000 to hold or to use until his immigration from Korea.

Several years and many blessings later in 1993, my wife and I became involved in helping to organize the Louisville Korean Adventist Church. After a couple years the members felt compelled to have their own church building.

We spent many hours, days, and weeks in prayer. Our prayers were answered when we found a beautiful church offered at an unbelievably low market price. The church members pledged as much as they were able and even more. Yet we could not get close to reaching our goal. I went to other members of my family to solicit pledges.

From the outset I had kept my daughter, who was finishing law school, informed of the progress toward our new church building. After some initial skepticism she became enthusiastic about the project. I asked if she would

make a pledge. She sold her stocks. This time she gave without tears.

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Deuteronomy 4:9, NIV.

Suk Ki Kim is a physician in Owensboro, Kentucky. He is a member of the Louisville Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church.



WATCHING AND WAITING

By Marvin S. Grady

HOW COULD this happen after 28 years with the same company? What did I do wrong? Why, God, would You let them take away my job?

Anger against my employer, along with fear, filled my heart. What would we do? Could I find another job? Would someone hire a 50-year-old business unit manager? Would we have to leave family and friends behind?

I could see no explanation for this. We had been blessed financially. We had given faithfully and liberally to our Lord, we thought. He had given much to us. But all of this came into question. What was wrong?

The journey of uncertainty began with a job search. My heart was not in it. I was angry. Yet there was a peace in me that was not typical. Some acquaintances expected me to lash out at God, but I did not. Instead I asked God to show me what He wanted me to do. That was more than two years ago. No wet fleece has appeared to confirm God's plan for me. Attempts to start my own business have not yet yielded fruit. We have been forced to live on stock options we purchased from my previous employer. These will run out. What is God doing?

What has He done to help me cope with this situation? Two months after I left the company I received my final bonus check. It was larger than any I had received. We paid off all debts but our mortgage. I had several stock options to exercise but didn't have the money to make the purchases. The company treasurer discovered a method to exercise, on paper, all the stock and to sell enough to cover the cost of the investment and to cover the taxes. What a blessing! I sold that stock later at a record high price. Since then God has stretched every one of those dollars well beyond our expectations.

Recently we received a reminder that we had not paid our commitment on an academy building project. My wife mailed it in. One week later we received a check in the mail for the exact amount.

Do we know what the future holds? No. Will my business provide for our needs? Is there a job somewhere for me?

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Only God knows the answers to these questions. In the meantime I'm content to live each day as God graciously gives it to me—and wait and watch.

But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, the Lord is a light for me. . . . He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness. Micah 7:7-9, NASB.

Marvin S. Grady is a management consultant in Springboro, Ohio. He is a member of the Centerville, Ohio, Seventh-day Adventist Church.



GOD CAN TAKE CARE OF YOU

By Kay Kuzma

IN FEBRUARY 1996 the *Got a Minute for Your Family?* syndicated radio program was airing on 130 outlets across the country. In addition to producing this radio program, I was heavily immersed in my writing, and almost every weekend I had speaking appointments. The writing and speaking brought in the necessary funds to keep the radio program on the air.

Then on the icy, cold night of February 8, my 59-year-old husband, Jan, had a massive stroke. Nothing could have been more shocking. Jan had been the specimen of health, except for a heart defect that caused an irregular heartbeat—and threw a clot.

At that moment, 7:20 p.m., life as I had known it for the past five years just stopped. I cradled my husband in my arms as we waited for the ambulance, wondering what would happen to us. Later that night I left him in ICU and returned to a cold house and lonely bed, where I tossed and turned until dawn. Then, as the sun began to poke through the fog, I left the house and my desk piled with unfinished work, and I didn't return home again for a week.

I'll never forget the awful empty feeling when I learned that the damage was severe and that there was little hope. Jan had lost all left-side movement, and there was evidence of difficulty with spatial perceptions, time, and analytic thinking; and he had attention deficit. The doctor advised that he should apply for permanent disability.

That next week I spent my nights on a hospital cot next to his bed. When he was restless, I pushed the tubes out of the way and crawled in beside him to cuddle or read to him. My only thought was "What can I do to help Jan recover his normal functions?"

The Lord was merciful. That week we experienced a miracle. Much of Jan's left-side functions returned.

Doubtless, Jan's previous healthy lifestyle was a contributing factor, but still the cardiologist was amazed at his incredible recovery. The neurologist used the word "luck" when explaining how the clot must have rapidly disintegrated. The radiologist said, "The human brain has incredible potential, but this was certainly an act of God."

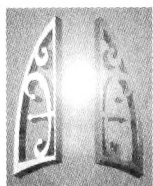
I canceled most of my speaking appointments for 1996. Instead, for weeks I chauffeured Jan to physical, speech, and occupational therapy. We traveled to places where he could have the benefit of warm weather and water therapy. In effect, I gave up my ministry.

A year later, Family Matters was in incredibly good shape. Not only was it still alive, but it was thriving. In January 1997 I began taking speaking appointments once again, with Jan now accompanying me. He helped to sell books and supported me with his indomitable optimism. Soon almost every weekend was booked! In the first few months of 1997 ten new books I had either written or edited came off the press, and in just 15 months the radio program had jumped from 130 to 578 outlets.

I've learned one thing: If you keep your priorities straight and put God and your family first, God can take care of the rest.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink. . . . Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Matthew 6:25, 26, NKJV.

Kay Kuzma is president of Family Matters in Cleveland, Tennessee. She is a member of the Bowman Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Cleveland.



SERVING ONE ANOTHER

By George and Tena Baehm

WHEN JESUS was here on earth, He went about doing good, preaching good news, healing the sick, and ministering to people's needs. God created us to give, share, and help others. We have found that when we do something for others, we are blessed personally.

After our retirement from a family business of three generations, Baehm Paper Co., we wanted to find something where we could give of ourselves in witnessing and helping others.

Both of us are dwarfs. George is 4 feet tall, Tena 3 feet 9 inches tall. We felt our stature had no bearing on what we could do, since we were successful in our business, where we worked many years.

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In 1994 we became involved with Maranatha Volunteers International. Our first project was in Bariloche, Argentina, with 96 volunteers from all over the world. After two days of working on the site, building youth cabins, we said, "This is thrilling. There's nothing else like it." Few things in life can compare with the joy of working side by side with people of another culture, to see the smiles on their faces for what we are able to do, and to learn from them. It is down-to-earth, practical experience, where you get in touch with the basics of Christianity.

We soon went on another project, this time in Tanzania, where we built a medical clinic, lived in mud-thatched huts, accepted cold showers, and enjoyed the food cooked by the nationals.

One of our greatest joys was working in El Salvador at the Hogar Escuela Adventista, a small orphanage outside San Salvador. We built homes to house 100 children who have been abandoned by their parents. We grew to love these dear little ones and are sponsors of one little girl. Several children have been baptized. Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me" (Mark 9:37, NIV).

As little people, we are able to work as any other Maranatha volunteer, mixing cement, laying bricks, striking bricks, painting, nailing, cleaning up to prevent accidents, and helping in the kitchen. No job is too big or too small for us to handle.

It has been a real thrill to know that we had a small part in erecting buildings that will open up many opportunities for the future growth of God's work. We have now enjoyed working shoulder to shoulder with dedicated, lovable brothers and sisters on trips to Argentina, Africa (twice), Panama, El Salvador (twice), and many projects in the United States.

God has entrusted each of us with gifts to share. Our gift may be talents, opportunities, or wealth. It may be nothing more than an ability to share ourselves. That too is stewardship.

Through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13, NKJV.

George and Tena Baehm are retired and live in Great Neck, New York. They are members of the Old Westbury, New York, Seventh-day Adventist Church.



KEEPING THE TRUST IN “TRUSTEE”

By Richard C. Osborn

TWO YEARS after graduating from Columbia Union College I received an unexpected invitation to serve a five-year term as a member of my alma mater’s board of trustees. The turbulent 1960s had ended. To help heal the divisions created during those years, it was common for college boards to broaden representation to include more young people, lay people, minorities, and women.

As an idealistic 25-year-old, I went to my first board meeting determined to make a difference. I even found courage to speak passionately on an agenda item. When I finished my speech, one of the wealthiest lay trustees stood up and said in strong tones: “I think new board members should shut up for the first three years,” and then he dramatically sat down.

I was devastated. First, my parents had taught me never to use the words “shut up,” even in private; and I, perhaps naively, assumed everyone agreed. Second, I wondered if my service would really be helpful.

However, I was soon comforted by several trustees who told me I shouldn’t be intimidated. The board needed my contributions, and that other trustee’s speech against me was typical of his usual behavior.

During my five-year term, I took the advice found in 1 Timothy 4:12 (NIV), “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” I learned to modify some of my approaches as trustee. And at the request of the board chairman, I even made some formal board presentations before my term ended.

In the years since, I have served on dozens of boards and committees. And as a result of that first traumatic experience, I have tried to mentor new members, especially those who are just beginning their service to the church.

A key concept that has helped me understand my spiritual role was a presentation I heard years later to that same college board by David McKenna, a prominent Christian college president. He stressed that each trustee has a responsibility of stewardship, first defined at Creation, when God commanded Adam and Eve to care and tend for the earth.

We are stewards or partners in the continuing creation of the church and its institutions when we serve as board/committee members, McKenna said. We hold those institutions “in trust” for God and our fellow members who entrusted us with that stewardship responsibility. McKenna told all of us who serve on boards or committees: “Our joy is in our servanthood, not in our power, our

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prestige, or our position. This original mandate for our stewardship has never been canceled. We are the heirs of that sacred trust in our generation.”

We shall never see the complete results of our stewardship, but with God’s help we can care and tend the gardens under our responsibility as a sacred trust.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Genesis 2:15, NIV.

Richard C. Osborn is vice president for education of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is a member of Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church in Takoma Park, Maryland.



CONCRETE BLESSINGS

By Denzil D. McNeilus

MY FATHER started a business called McNeilus Truck & Manufacturing in the early 1970s. Throughout many years of hard work and the Lord’s blessings the company flourished. McNeilus Truck & Manufacturing became incorporated with McNeilus Companies, a privately held family business.

In our first years the primary business was the manufacture of concrete-mixer bodies. Our company was considered in ninth place out of nine manufacturers. My father, with strong conviction, incorporated tithes and offerings into the operation of the company. At the start of the business we were able to give these only at the company’s year end. Throughout the year we tried to give to various projects as needed.

Soon, as a family, we felt impressed to do more. With much thought, prayer, and careful consideration we took a step of faith and decided to change our system of giving. We decided that, for every individual concrete mixer and mixer truck sold, the company would give a specified amount to the church. We committed to this plan, and our business grew far above our expectations. So we doubled the amount we had initially set. Our company grew again. We again doubled the amount given.

As our company continued to grow and diversify we developed new products. Our first priority on any new product was to decide what our tithe and offering for that item would be. So as the company grew, so did the amount we gave to the Lord’s work. When we eventually sold the company we were the largest concrete-mixer manufacturer in the world.

We truly believe that God blessed our company and families so that we may continue to support the Great Commission. I can’t begin to list all of the blessings. God watched over us and blessed us with good health so that we were able to work the long days needed. He blessed us with patient, faithful spouses who support us through good and hard times. He blessed us with healthy, beautiful children who

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were born to us or entered our lives through adoption. But most important, He blessed us with the honor of being used by Him. As God continues to bless us in our various work, we are committed to deepening our stewardship relationship with Him.

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. Luke 6:38.

Denzil D. McNeilus is a businessman in Dodge Center, Minnesota. He is a member of the Dodge Center Seventh-day Adventist Church.

*You have a stewardship testimony you need to share
and we need to read. See page 224 for details.*