

The TENTH MEETING

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

Psalm 66:16

Christine Ewing

Josh Sink

John G. DePalma

Sylvia A. Germany

Lorin Wentland

Andy Moore

Margarita Jones

Donald W. Maddy

Stephen L. McPherson

Lorna Baker



A TEXTBOOK CASE

By Christine Ewing

IT HAS been a very exciting time to be a member of the Traverse City Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more than a year we have been raising funds for a building program to erect a new church that can accommodate our growing community. We have been amazed to watch the Lord work in magnificent ways to turn our meager efforts into milestones.

Throughout this process I had been questioning my part in this divine adventure. How could I, a struggling college student, help? In December 1999 we had our Covenant of the Heart Sabbath to lay our faith on the table, so to speak. Knowing that I would be going off to school soon, I made a pledge of \$360. A dollar a day wasn't much but I wanted to give back to my Lord who has brought me so far.

Soon however, I learned that the pledge wasn't for a year; it was needed in four months. If the ground breaking was going to take place in the spring, the money had to be in by April. Prior to that special Sabbath of committing ourselves, as a church, to God's work in Traverse City, I had made a personal commitment of \$140 to the building fund. I now had a \$500 commitment and felt unsure of how it would be fulfilled in just a little over a month before I headed back to school. I prayed that the Lord would help me to keep my pledge. I had made it with a sincere passion for the work going on in Traverse City.

After my bills were paid I set aside everything I earned for the building fund. When it was time to leave for college I was excited to have fulfilled my pledge and even have \$20 in my pocket. My delight soon turned to consternation. I had forgotten about buying my college textbooks. Where was I going to get the money? I prayed again, asking God to help me to get the books I needed. I knew that it was up to God.

The morning came to leave for college. The car was packed and my mother and I were just about to walk out the door when the phone rang. It was my uncle asking if we had time before we left town to stop by his house. When we arrived I found that my aunt and uncle had prepared a "boodle box" for me, full of food and other things that become luxuries to a college student. We visited for only a short time and as I was putting on my coat to leave, my uncle handed me an envelope. He said, "This is just a little something to help you out. I know sometimes it would be nice to buy a pizza or do something fun." I took the envelope and hugged them both with gratitude.

As my mother and I drove out of town I looked at the envelope lying on my lap. I felt full of the love with which it had been given me. I turned it over and opened it up. Inside were five one hundred-dollar bills. My eyes filled with tears

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as my heart filled with the love of my Heavenly Father who had, through my aunt and uncle, given back *everything* I had given in faith to Him. But He gave me much more than money. He gave me a real, experiential demonstration of His unfailing love and concern for me. He had been working out a plan for me before I even knew I had a need. On April 2, 2000 the ground-breaking ceremony for our new church was held. I am thankful for this personal illustration that I will always remember, a time when I was poignantly reminded of Who is in charge of my life and to Whom my money truly belongs.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:38, NIV.

Christine Ewing is a junior at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. She is a member of the Traverse City, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church.



GOD IS NOT MY CO-PILOT

By Josh Sink

FLYING has been my passion from a very early age. While children typically change occupational choices a dozen times, I was settled from the moment I could walk that someday I would be an airline pilot. Not only did I want to fly above the clouds, but I wanted to take other people there, too.

Upon reaching adulthood I realized that very few Adventists are in the airline industry. People have often talked about how hard it would be to get Sabbaths off, so that alone scared them away from trying.

I see the airline industry as a wide-open field, and I believe that God wants witnesses for Him among those who work in the air as well as on the ground.

A popular bumper sticker reads, “God is my copilot.” I don’t really agree with that level of self-sufficiency. In effect, it is saying, “God, when I can’t handle the control panel anymore, I’ll let You take over!” I think God wants a little bigger role than that. He has to be my pilot, and *I’ll* do whatever *He* asks.

One thing He has asked me to do is keep His seventh-day Sabbath holy, and the following story is an example of how God made it possible to do that, even when it seemed impossible.

I planned to complete my training at a well-known airline company in the summer of 1998 after receiving assurances that there wouldn’t be any classes or instruction on Saturdays. I dived into my training full speed ahead.

That all came to an abrupt halt one Monday afternoon. The director of the training program announced that a very important class was to be held the

following Saturday, and we were required to attend. In the airline industry, if a student misses any classes, he's out. If I missed this class, my dreams of becoming an airline pilot would be virtually thrown out.

"God," I prayed, "You have led me to this very point, and I can't believe I'm supposed to turn around and go back home!" I reflected on my progress so far. I had gotten my private pilot's license before I got my driver's license, when I was seventeen. After graduating from high school, I moved to Andrews University to attend the flight school. A few weeks after graduation I married a beautiful woman, also a pilot, whom I met while being a student missionary in Guam. A short time later I was accepted into the training program for a regional airline company. And now it seemed, after all that, I was staring at exit doors.

I must admit that I wrestled with the idea that this training was just as important on Sabbath as any other day. Since God had obviously led me to this point in my life, surely He wouldn't mind my attending this class, because these circumstances were beyond my control.

God had other ideas. He has magnificent powers beyond all human comprehension.

The week dragged by slowly. Sabbath was looming, and still it seemed that I had no escape from attending that class.

Friday morning our director announced the impossible. There would be no class the next day. The teacher's pregnant wife had gone into premature labor two months before her due date. Of course, I wasn't sure whether I should be happy or sad about this. This was good news for me, because I didn't have to worry about attending the class on Sabbath. But what about that mother and baby? Soon enough, the director announced that they had come through their ordeal safely. But the class still had to be postponed until the middle of the following week.

I am now happily employed with this airline company, and I have had numerous chances to tell many pilots about God. The Lord has rescued me many times from having to work on Sabbath, because He has promised that if He commands me to obey Him, He will make it possible.

God is my pilot. If I had ever let Him be just my "copilot," who knows where I'd be today?

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:31.

Josh Sink is an airline pilot in West Palm Beach, Florida. He is a member of the Communities West Seventh-day Adventist Church in Boca Raton, Florida.



GOD FINDS THE WAY

By John G. DePalma

WHEN I WAS baptized and joined the Adventist Church, I was working as finance director for the city of Portland, Maine.

Baptism, though a freeing experience, brought a host of financial challenges. With a new home to pay for and four children to educate in Adventist schools, I found it difficult to make ends meet. To make matters worse, my wife, a teacher, was not employed at the time. We agreed for her to stay at home with our children. As a result, I became the sole breadwinner for our family.

I realized the devil was not happy with me and was doing all he could to discourage me. And he almost succeeded. I struggled briefly with reducing my tithe and offerings to meet my expenses. But then I remembered the promise that if I was faithful, God would take care of my needs. I claimed that promise, even though I had no clear picture of the way out of my difficulties. But God had a plan already in place.

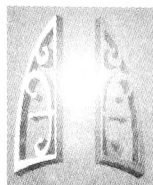
In addition to my responsibilities as finance director, I was also city treasurer and tax collector. By virtue of these positions I became very active in the Treasurers and Tax Collectors Association in the State of Maine. This gave me some recognition among my colleagues and opened the door for God to work His plan.

The University of Maine Governmental Resources Office contacted me and asked me to author a book on fiscal management. This I did and entitled it *Cash Management for Smaller Municipalities*. Shortly after its publication I was again contacted by the university to perform an evaluation of treasury and tax collectors' management procedures in a number of municipalities.

These towns asked me to help them improve their financial systems. For this I received a stipend and expense monies. Every time after that when the end of the month found me short, I was called by the university to teach workshops on municipal finance. All of our needs, and even some of our wants, were met. "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!"

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. Psalm 23:1.

John G. DePalma is secretary-treasurer of the Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Portland, Maine. He is a member of the James White Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Portland.



A NEW WAY OF LIVING

By Sylvia A. Germany

GOOD food often costs more than bad food. I couldn't see how our family budget could be stretched to afford this new way of living. But we knew we needed to make this change.

Our family had spent a few days at a lifestyle center. Just making the decision to go had been a blessing itself, for it prompted us to start better eating habits even before we got there. Usually when our family traveled, we would eat snack food along the way. This time we left the snacks at home. We decided that during our stay at the center we would eat only what we were served in the regular program.

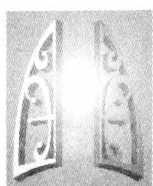
All the good things we learned at the center made me worry about our grocery bill. We would have to dispense with cheaper, less healthy food and "invest" in better food. In the previous year our family had experienced major illness and a loss of income. According to my calculations, our resolve to start eating right would be a financial challenge. But with faith that we were doing what God was calling us to do, we moved ahead.

We started this new way of living, knowing we would see a difference in our health. And even though we are not yet where we need to be, we are not where we used to be. Not only are we experiencing the primary blessing of better health, but we are also seeing the rewards of our good stewardship in other areas. Many times we have been surprised to see how the Lord seems to honor our commitment by stretching our income to cover our increased grocery bill. What we thought would be too expensive for us now seems to fit right into our budget.

So, with faith in God, we press forward in our efforts, with His blessing, to be healthy and fit to do His work. Praise Him!

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. 3 John 2.

Sylvia A. Germany is interim director of human resources at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. She is a member of the Mt. Calvary Seventh-day Adventist Church in Huntsville.



A DREAM TO SERVE

By Lorin Wentland

MY WIFE and I attended a regional Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries convention at Sun Valley, Idaho. We were inspired as we heard a

T H E T E N T H M E E T I N G

prominent Adventist businessman whom I had long admired tell of how God had blessed his business. Clearly God was using him as a channel through which His blessing could flow on to others. As I heard this man tell of his involvement in building mission churches in many Third World countries, I was moved to do the same.

I had a dream not only of participating in building a church with Maranatha Volunteers International but funding a church entirely as well. My family caught the vision, and we figured how much we would need to fully fund a church and pay the transportation cost for our family of six. Our business had never before seen that much profit in one year. We knew that God is pleased when we expect great things from Him, and we asked the Lord to bless as we began to set money aside for this dream. The account grew steadily, and we eagerly awaited the Maranatha newsletter to see what projects might be available.

In August we saw in the newsletter that Maranatha was making plans to build fifteen churches in Belize, some of them during the Christmas holiday. I called the Maranatha office and shared my dream with the staff. I learned that they didn't have the funding in place yet, but they were going forward in faith with these projects. I told them that, Lord willing, we would like to take one of the churches on as a project, to which they agreed. Now we were committed. However, we actually had only 60 percent of the money in hand and only two months to come up with the rest.

I knew that with God's help we could do it. In seven months we had been able to set aside 60 percent of the money, and I had made no change in the management of my business. If God wanted us to build a church in Belize, He would find a way to come up with the balance by October.

We eagerly watched our financial statement to see how much money we could set aside. Early in October God worked it out. The money was in hand.

But we also needed a minimum of 25 people to build the church. We were sure that our relatives and friends at church would readily participate. We made up some flyers on our color printer, complete with pictures and maps. Many people were interested, but only a few made a commitment to go.

The deadline was fast approaching for finalizing our project with Maranatha. We had been praying earnestly that God would direct us to people who would like to share in our project. We had only a few more days, and we had only ten people committed and about twelve or thirteen "maybes." Even if they all decided to go, we still didn't have the 25 people necessary for the building project. And none of the "maybes" were skilled builders.

The deadline arrived. Greatly discouraged, I called the Maranatha office and told the staff that even though we had the money in hand, we were going to have to cancel because we didn't have enough people, either skilled or unskilled.

Late that afternoon I received a return call from the Maranatha office. They told me there was a group from Canada who also was planning to go to Belize

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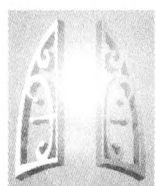
during the Christmas holiday. They, too, were recruiting people but were also short of the necessary 25. We were put in contact with each other and decided to join our two groups. This turned out to be a double blessing, because several of their group were professional builders as well as some having the other skills that we needed.

As the work on that little church went forward over that Christmas season, I marveled at how the Lord had brought these people together. We had among us an engineer, a mason, a welder, builders, an administrator, a doctor, a dentist, a nurse, a cook, a VBS leader, a bus driver, and plenty of young and willing workers for all the general labor of building the church.

As we worked, played, and prayed together, we experienced the joy of being *together* in the service of our Lord.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:11, 12, NIV.

Lorin Wentland is the owner and general manager of Wentland Diesel Service, Inc., in Milton-Freewater, Oregon. He is a member of the Milton Seventh-day Adventist Church.



THE GUARANTEE

By Andy Moore

IN THE spring of 1970 I was a research mechanic for Lockheed Aircraft Corporation and also in a baptismal class, preparing to become an Adventist.

At Sabbath school one day, the lesson study was about stewardship. It was taught by a very seasoned colporteur from India. As a relatively new Christian, I was uncertain about the idea that "all we have belongs to God."

The teacher gave us a challenge: "Don't take my word for it," he said. "Put your trust in God. Take the biggest, not the smallest, bill in your wallet and put it in the church offering. I guarantee you that before the week is over, it will return to you tenfold!" In retrospect, I'm not sure everyone would agree with the teacher's guarantee, but I was a new Christian and had no reason to question his certainty.

At the time, my wife and son were out of town visiting relatives. I had only one twenty-dollar bill in my wallet. It was all I had for gas and food for the next week until payday. I was driving a 1965 Dodge Charger that got about eight miles to the gallon of gas. I was 30 miles from home with a whole week ahead to drive to work on one tank of gas.

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When the time came to give my offering, I was sweating profusely! I took my twenty-dollar bill and put it into God's hands. I have never felt so relieved and at peace as I was just then.

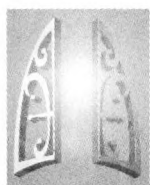
When I got home, I found a letter in the mail from Boeing Aircraft Company, where I previously worked. I was stunned to find a check for a savings investment in the amount of \$257. Immediately I called my wife and told her what had happened. She knew God and rejoiced with me.

Monday morning at work I received a ten-percent incentive pay raise, unusual in aviation. The next Friday I received a seven-percent cost-of-living pay increase.

No surprise that now I trust God with everything.

For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. Psalm 50:10.

Andy Moore is a retired maintenance safety inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration. He lives in Buena Vista, Colorado, and is a member of the Salida, Colorado, Seventh-day Adventist Church.



MY MOTHER'S LEGACY

By Margarita Jones

I GREW UP with a great example of generosity. My mother would bring home struggling families she encountered on the street, sharing with them from her limited income, giving them food, water, or clothing. She didn't belong to any church; she did these things because she cared, not calculating the amount of her kindness to strangers, family, and friends.

I remember her saying that after paying rent, utilities, and groceries, there was always more money left than she expected. Her example has stayed with me since.

I found Jesus as Lord and Savior twelve years ago, and giving to others and returning tithe to the Lord have become a part of my life, built on my mother's legacy.

When our home needed a new roof a few years ago, I found myself studying with the two Hispanic young men who were tearing off the old roof. "Here are two candidates for heaven," I told myself.

A job that normally takes one day or two this time took a month. Bad weather (and the grace of God) made it possible for me to get to know these young men, give them Bible lessons, and take them to church. The Lord even allowed me to pay their salaries from the contractor's amount when he unreasonably withheld their pay.

In time both were baptized into our church! They eventually returned to their home countries, taking with them the seed of the gospel.

O V E R A N D O V E R A G A I N !

God's kindnesses to us continues to flow. During the last week of December 1998, the Lord saw to it that my husband, after an emergency quadruple bypass, also found a new spiritual heart—and celebrated his 67th birthday.

What a great God we serve!

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matthew 25:40.

Margarita Jones is an attendance clerk for the Waco, Texas, Independent School District. She is a member of the Waco Seventh-day Adventist Church.



TURNAROUND IN ARIZONA

By Donald W. Maddy

WHEN I was released from the U.S. Navy in 1956, I decided to leave my parents' home in Ohio and live with my sister and her husband in Scottsdale, Arizona, hoping to find a job there. Traveling with me by car were my mother and my sister, Marge. They planned to visit family there for a few weeks and then return by train.

Marge was the first Adventist from our family of twelve children, and she was conscientious about caring for God's money. The day before she and Mother were to board the train to return to Ohio, she received \$100 with which to buy her \$87 one-way ticket. She faithfully set aside her tithe from the \$100 and then stopped by a store to pick up a few necessities for the journey. Paying for these items took more than she had to spare, however, and left her with less than enough to purchase her \$87 ticket.

Instead of asking to borrow from Mother or me, she decided to claim the promise in Malachi that God would open the windows of heaven. Only she and God knew her plight.

In the meantime, I was dealing with a dilemma of my own. My sister and family in Scottsdale suddenly had decided to move back to Ohio in about a month. Another brother had invited me to join him in California, where he had a job and housing for me, but I didn't feel right about that option.

The next day, as we were loading Mother's and Marge's luggage to go to the station, I felt impressed to return home. After all, most of my loved ones were in Ohio or returning there. I pondered all these things and made up my mind. Surely God could help me find a job at home.

While I helped my sister carry the last of the luggage to the car, I said, "If you will help me pack my things, I'll drive you and Mom back in my car." Her heart nearly stopped!

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As the three of us drove those many miles back to Ohio, I kept saying repeatedly, “I don’t understand why I am doing this!” Then Marge told me her story, with all the details, leading up to that last trip to the car. She was overwhelmed at how God was answering her prayer.

I was impressed also, and after my Scottsdale sister moved back to Ohio, I accepted Bible studies from her husband and was ultimately baptized in 1961. I immediately established the habit of returning tithe, of course!

The costs for that trip back to Ohio came to nearly \$40 (remember, this was 1956!), which my mother and Marge shared, bringing her total travel expense to \$20. Once again, God delighted to bless a faithful steward and those who put their trust in Him.

O taste and see that the Lord is good. Psalm 34:8.

Donald W. Maddy is a semiretired electrician in Wahkiacus, Washington. He is a member of the Wahkiacus Seventh-day Adventist Church.



DIFFICULT, WORTHWHILE, AND BLESSED

By Stephen L. McPherson

ONE hundred thousand dollars seemed like a lot of money to my wife and me. That’s how much we guessed it was going to cost to educate our three sons in the Adventist school system. With me on denominational income and with my wife employed part-time, we knew we faced a big challenge. It seemed we were about to climb a huge mountain—with no sight of the top.

We faithfully resolved to continue our practice of returning tithe and offerings, to manage everything that was left as carefully as we could, and to keep our school account current.

Things went well through the elementary and academy years. Then came the last hurdle—college. During the ten years our children were in college (six of those years we had two attending at the same time), the whole family worked very hard. The boys worked each summer and during the school year.

Could we manage without educational loans? During that ten-year period we received many loan offers. However, we had decided to continue on a pay-as-you-go basis. So we lived in a rental home, drove older-model cars, and watched every dollar carefully.

Three college degrees and \$100,000 later all three children had received the benefit of an Adventist education from elementary school through college.

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However, the most amazing part of the story is that during the college years, due to God's blessing, our family's net worth increased in direct proportion to the amount spent on education.

We have been immeasurably blessed to see how God honors faithfulness in worthwhile, though difficult, endeavors.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. . . . Commit thy way to the Lord; trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:3-5.

Stephen L. McPherson is president of the Idaho Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Boise, Idaho. He is a member of the Nampa, Idaho, Seventh-day Adventist Church.



A FULL TRUNK AND A FULL HEART

By Lorna Baker

FOR SEVERAL months after my marriage failed, my five children and I lived on a small disability pension. The monthly routine when the pension check arrived was always the same: return the tithe, pay the rent, go to the food bank.

Waiting in the bank that Friday afternoon to deposit my check, I began to think about how good it would feel not have to rely on the food bank that month. I longed to be able to visit the grocery store and make purchases, as other families did. As I approached the window, the struggle felt like all-out war. I was bombarded by so many feelings that I had to force myself to put the right amount of money into a tithe envelope I always carried with me.

By the time I reached the food bank, it was closed, and again the struggle began. "Use the money," a voice inside whispered. "God won't punish you this one time." Needless to say, by this time I was crying, feeling very sorry for myself and my children. Not paying attention to where I was going, I made an illegal left turn right in front of a police car. Real, genuine tears flowed down my cheeks at my double predicament, but the officer was unmoved by my story. He wrote the ticket for \$48 and then wished me a good day.

As I drove slowly away, the voice kept saying, "Use the tithe money. It won't hurt."

At sundown worship that night my heart was heavy. At bedtime the thought returned: "Use the money. No one will know." On Sabbath morning the struggle continued. I prayed, and God helped me honor my vow to Him.

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During the worship service one of my sisters in Christ mysteriously asked for the key to my car. When the service ended, she returned the key but told me not to open the trunk until we got home. Curiosity, however, got the better of us. As soon as we left church, we opened the trunk, expecting to find lunch. What we found instead was more food than the tithe would have purchased plus \$100.

I don't have to tell you how happy I was that the Lord helped me honor my vow. He knew that my faith needed support, and He made sure I got it.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. Psalm 37:25, 26.

Lorna Baker is a registered nurse at a community health center in Toronto, Ontario. She is a member of the Willowdale, Ontario, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

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