

# The NINTH MEETING

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

*Psalm 66:16*

Eunice P. Senior

Ken Coonley

Clifford Goldstein

Rich Carlson

Emil Dean Peeler

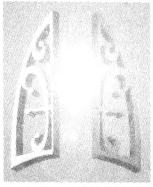
Donn Leiske

Larry R. Evans

Rodney Applegate

Bill Tucker

Blanche Yates



## MASTER, NO OFFERING

*By Eunice P. Senior*

**F**OR MORE than 15 years I, like the widow of Zarephath, have had to tread the winepress alone. With a growing teenage son in church school, it became increasingly difficult to meet the monthly financial obligations of home on my meager salary. There were days when we had no money for groceries.

One Sabbath morning as I sat in church I prepared to return my tithe. I knew that my bank-account balance was insufficient to allow me to give an offering as well, as had been my custom. I wavered for a while but finally decided to step out in faith and write the check for my offering on the premise that the Lord would provide.

After the church service I paid a visit to the home of my former landlady. I hadn't lived at that address for more than a year. To my surprise she handed me a piece of mail that had been delivered there for me that same day.

To my further surprise, enclosed in the envelope was a check in the amount of \$75 sent by a company whose name I did not recognize. The accompanying note said that the check was a refund for an overpayment on a medical bill. I thanked God for His goodness.

Later that same evening while attending a meeting in another city, a friend shook my hand and placed a \$100 bill in it.

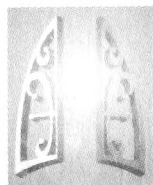
That day I learned firsthand that God is a covenant-keeping God and that He is faithful as He promised. He has been blessing me tremendously ever since, as I have endeavored to serve Him. The more I give, the more He gives to me.

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Matthew 6:33.**

---

*Eunice P. Senior is administrative secretary to the president at the Northeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Jamaica, New York. She is a member of the Linden Seventh-day Adventist Church in Laurelton, New York.*

---



## MY PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

*By Ken Coonley*

**I** WAS in my 20s when I met my wife, Sonja, and became a Christian. I hadn't grown up in a religious home, so I was unaware of many concepts regarding God, including the idea of tithe and offerings. However, Sonja grew up as a Seventh-day Adventist and had returned tithe all her life.

## THE NINTH MEETING

After a few months as a Christian, I began to address the idea of being faithful with returning tithe and offerings to the Lord. How I could do this and survive was a major question to me, especially since I was making only \$50 per week. A faithful church member had hired me to work with him in a new business he was beginning in Lakeland, Florida. He was training me in orthotics and prosthetics, a new profession I was excited to learn.

I prayed earnestly that the Lord would help me understand His leading in this matter of tithe and offerings. He assured me through His Word and Spirit of Prophecy counsel that this was His will and that He would be faithful to me if I was faithful to Him. Sonja and I decided to return a faithful tithe and increase our offerings, trusting Him.

What followed as I committed to tithe was, to me, an amazing revelation of God's providence. My employer offered me a partnership in his business. But how could I buy into the business without any savings?

I had an Adventist neighbor who was a successful printer, a good friend and father figure to me. In talking with him one Sunday morning, I asked if he thought a wealthy lady in the church would lend me the money to buy into the orthotics and prosthetics partnership. To my surprise he said to me, "I am sure she will lend you half of the money you need, and I will lend you the balance." It worked out just as he had said it would. For several years I worked together in partnership with my former employer. I still find it hard to believe that those two church members were willing to lend me a sizable amount of money—with no collateral.

In 1973 I responded to a call to pastoral ministry. I decided to enroll at Southern Missionary College (now Southern Adventist University), so I sold my share of the business back to my partner. The value of my share had increased enough that the sales price paid for my education and the tuition of my two children. Without the return of that investment in the partnership I would not have had the money to attend college, educate my children, and cover our living expenses. That investment directly opened the way to a rewarding future of serving the Lord in ministry.

Years later I understood that I had really invested in a solid partnership with God that has far exceeded any other. I have seen clearly a direct relationship between my decision to be faithful to Him and His abundant provision for me.

**Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9, 10, NIV.**

---

*Ken Coonley is president of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is a member of the Charlotte Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church.*



## $2x + \text{WHATEVER}$

*By Clifford Goldstein*

AFTER FOUR years of marriage I was running out of excuses to my wife as to why we needed to wait another year or two or three before having kids. In reality I felt totally whole and complete without some noisy little appendage that would supposedly help me mature into full personhood. Plus, I couldn't for the life of me think of any logical, practical reason to have a kid. Why? It just didn't make sense. Besides, who could afford them?

Sure enough, our little son came home, and as I bonded with him I suddenly realized why people have kids. They're great! But that still didn't solve the slight problem of financing this project while making it possible for my wife to stay home with our son. Family life in the metropolitan D.C. area on one church salary is a stretch. I told my wife she'd have to work part-time (she was in mortgage banking), and we'd farm Zachary out, at least on occasion.

My wife was determined that she wasn't going to farm Zachary out to anyone, ever, no matter how dismal the economics. So we sat down one day at the dinner table and looked at a budget. We finally figured out that *if* nothing ever broke, *if* we never had an extra expense, *if* the cars would run forever, and *if* we never ate at a restaurant or took a vacation, we could get by—*if* I kept on getting up at 4:00 a.m. to write articles and books that would supplement our income (so buy my books unless you want to see my kids go hungry!). We figured we'd need  $x$  number of extra dollars each month to get by.

Well, we were wrong. We needed  $2x + \text{whatever}$  to get by. And yet, amazingly enough, as each month progressed, the  $2x + \text{whatever}$  always came in. Month after month, year after year, we've gotten by, even with another little appendage (Hannah) to join in the fun. Sure, we drive old cars, and we don't take all those vacations to Europe, as we used to. But we look back and see how we stepped out in faith, on a principle, determined to do the right thing for us, no matter what the self-sacrifice involved. And all we can say is that the Lord has blessed.

We've learned a good lesson, not just in stewardship, but in the Christian life in general: We need to do what we believe is right, no matter what possible inconveniences might occur. It's a lesson we don't want to forget.

**Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will be established. Proverbs 16:3, NASB.**

---

*Clifford Goldstein is editor of Liberty magazine for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is a member of New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church in Laurel, Maryland.*



## SUPPORT FROM THE HOME FRONT

*By Rich Carlson*

WHEN college began to loom large in my future, my parents and my home church rallied to provide the support and encouragement I needed for such a venture.

My blue-collar, hardworking father and mother made many financial sacrifices so their children could attend an Adventist college. The local church pastor played baseball with me when Sabbath conflicts prevented me from playing on my public high school sports teams. The pastor's wife took time to drive me and my best friend to Union College to see the school I planned to attend after high school graduation. Those commitments of my parents and my pastor kept me focused on Seventh-day Adventist higher education.

The greatest miracle of affirmation, however, came after my sophomore year in college. I decided I wanted to be a student missionary, but the college provided no funding for expenses and my family could not afford to pay the \$535 for airfare to Peru. This was in the days before fund-raising through letter writing, so I was perplexed to know what to do. I had no rich relatives and no assets I could turn into cash. The picture for fulfilling my dream of being a student missionary looked bleak indeed.

But somehow the elder of my home church found out about my need. To this day I still don't know how he knew. This elder invested countless hours helping us in Pathfinders, chauffeuring us around town for Ingathering, driving us to summer camp, and finding a myriad of other ways to help us know that we were a valuable part of that church. And somehow he found out that I had the opportunity to go to Peru—if I could raise \$535.

One Sabbath while I was on home leave I listened as he stood at the pulpit and told my church family that one of "our students" could be a student missionary if all of them would help. He asked for offering plates to be passed specifically for the purpose of sending me to the mission field. When the deacons counted the money, it totaled \$535.

They called me to the front of the church and had prayer for me. I knew then how special I was to them—and to God. There was no question about my calling to serve God for the rest of my life. The combination of dedicated parents, a committed church family, and the direct leading of God in that offering left me not the slightest doubt that I was valued.

Today, as a college chaplain, I continue to commit my life to helping God's young people find a closer relationship with Him. I remember my home and

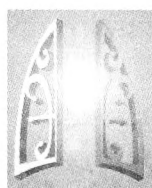
my home church, and I offer myself as a tool to be that “home church” for someone else.

**Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9, NKJV.**

---

*Rich Carlson is chaplain at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. He is a member of the College View Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln. This story originally appeared in More College Faith (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Worthy Books, 1997).*

---



## UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS

*By Emil Dean Peeler*

I WAS asked to officiate at the funeral of a man named Charles Dillard. I didn't know why his family wanted to have the services at our church or why they wanted me to deliver the eulogy. However, I felt that this was another opportunity for the church to share Christ through service. I asked God to give me the time, energy, and patience to work in His behalf that His name would be glorified.

I arranged to meet with the family to speak words of comfort and to assist them in preparing for the service. While doing this, I learned something about the kind of person Charles was. I discovered that he truly loved God and tried to be an encouragement to others even while suffering with his own illness. I was heartened to learn that though he wasn't a member of any particular church, he had lived his life trying to be a blessing to others.

The funeral went smoothly, and the family seemed very pleased. Clearly, the Lord had blessed every aspect of the service. I thanked God once again for His faithfulness. As I was preparing to leave for home a well-meaning church member asked me why I would take the time to provide a service for people who weren't “in the church” and whom I really didn't know.

“Well,” I said, “I think that's why the church exists: to share the love of Christ without any conditions or expectations.” I left with a feeling of satisfaction that the Lord had enabled me to manage one small part of His vineyard just as He would wish it.

Three weeks went by, and the funeral became a distant memory, mostly buried by a myriad of pastoral functions and responsibilities. I began opening mail that had been piling up on my desk for several days. I found a beautiful card from a couple whose names I did not recognize. Written inside was a brief note. It explained how Charles, whom they had just recently met in the hospital, had been

## THE NINTH MEETING

such an encouragement to them when the wife was adjusting to receiving dialysis treatment on a regular basis. Despite the brevity of time that Charles had entered her life, his infectious optimism had enriched her faith and outlook.

Learning of Charles's death, this couple felt directed to attend the funeral. Upon leaving the service, both were moved by the power of God and by the dignified way the service was conducted. They were impressed to thank me tangibly for being kind to people that I did not know. Though they had never met me personally, they were inspired to be a blessing to me.

Inside the envelope I found a check for \$1,000, with a note attached that said: "To be used only for your family." What an unexpected blessing!

To me it seems clear that God was making a very direct connection between my unencumbered willingness to be a blessing to someone else and the return blessing He arranged in that surprising gift to me.

What a mighty God we serve!

**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.**

---

*Emil Dean Peeler is senior pastor of the 16th Street Seventh-day Adventist Church in San Bernardino, California.*

---



### NEVER ON SABBATH, BETTER ON SUNDAY

*By Donn Leiske*

THE COMPANY my wife, Kathie, and I founded, SHOPWARE, Inc., produced training software for vocational education. Fortunately, almost all trade shows had little or no Sabbath scheduling conflicts. The main exception was the largest international show in our industry. Not only did this two-and-half-day show include Saturday, but Saturday was opening day.

We decided to participate and sent in the application with a short note stating that we would not exhibit on Saturday. Soon we received word that policy required all exhibitors to have their booths staffed at all times, and this rule had never been broken. In all the years of administering the show the officials had never had a request of this kind, even though, we learned, a Jewish company from Israel was represented, as well as many Christian businesses who might have been expected to want Sunday off.

After some discussion the show administration agreed to allow us not to staff

our booth on Saturday. In exchange we had to give up our prime booth location and accept a less visible place, with low traffic flow.

We agreed to all this, even though it appeared we would be losing in the process. We set up the booth on Friday and placed two signs in front for Saturday visitors. One read: "Free demonstrations tomorrow." The other read: "'The Lord . . . rested the seventh day' (see Exodus 20:8-11), . . . and we've done the same."

That Sabbath we enjoyed a peaceful day with the local Adventist congregation. Of course we were eager to see what would be the result of our not attending the big show on opening day.

That Sunday morning I will never forget. Many show participants came by our booth and said, "We missed you on Saturday and made sure to come back to see you today." This was remarkable, since this show was so large that many people never even got to see all of the exhibits! One of the exhibitors, who was also one of our dealers, came by our booth to tell us how impressed he was that we were willing to go to such expense to stand up for our beliefs and what a good influence our commitment had on the people. He said that the general Saturday traffic was very low and that we didn't miss anything!

It was exciting to see God work! Our ability to witness at that show resulted in other dealers being influenced. One dealer became a vegetarian, and his wife read numerous Adventist books with great interest. God made sure at those shows that we succeeded in business equal to, or better than, a booth opened on Sabbath. But more important, we have seen that the best rewards are not measured with a calculator. They are measured in the joy we have in our hearts for living as God would want us to.

**The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psalm 84:11.**

---

*Donn Leiske is a business and internet consultant in Aberdeen, Washington. He is a member of the Grays Harbor Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hoquiam, Washington.*

---



## THE DAY I WENT FOR BROKE

*By Larry R. Evans*

I HAD no desire to end up broke again. But painful experience had taught me that my earnest simple faith appeared, once more, to be on a collision course with the stark realities of life.

I recalled the disastrous summer a year before. With high hopes I had set out to become a student literature evangelist. My strong but simple faith assured me

## THE NINTH MEETING

that I would win my part of the world for Christ. I lasted three weeks.

The first two weeks my partner and I were stopped twice by the police and asked what we were selling. The incidents were unnerving. The third week we were escorted to the police station and interrogated by the police chief. We caved. Reasoning that we had planned to sell only for the first half of the summer anyway, we opted for the easy way out and took an early "retirement."

Now, a year later, the same fervent conviction to answer the call to sell religious books had come over me again for the summer ahead. Fresh in my memory, however, was the image of the big, burly police chief who had so thoroughly intimidated me the summer before. Weighing more on my father, however, was the hard fact that the sales I had completed during those doleful three weeks hadn't even covered the expense for gas.

Despite these unfavorable indications, I enrolled in the training class. What a new perspective! The training was different and much more thorough than the year before. Things were looking up.

The day before I was to start my second attempt as a student literature evangelist, Dad decided to tell me that doing the same thing again was foolish. So he informed me that he was putting his foot down, and I would not be leaving. I had to find a job that made some money.

I was crushed. I had had such sincere motives. So many doors had seemingly opened. That evening my prayer was one of confusion and resignation. I thought I had done my best. I had believed I was responding to the Lord's invitation. I had been exercising the kind of faith I thought He wanted from me, even in the face of a hard experience from the summer before. Now the door was closed. The next day I'd start looking for another job.

As I was dressing early the next morning I heard the doorbell. I heard voices and was surprised at the early visit. Soon I heard Dad call me. To my great surprise, I saw the publishing director. He had come to see if he could do anything so I would be able to canvass that summer. I was flabbergasted at what Dad told me.

"Mr. Hansen," he said, "has given me his word to guarantee a base income for you out of his own pocket. You may go on one condition. You must put in your hours every week," he said sternly.

Someone believed in me. In a very real sense I had to go for broke. No matter what happened, I had to answer this opportunity honestly. My faith took on a new focus—a focus that included not only the high-minded and appropriate desire to witness but a firm commitment to do what was necessary to actually *sell books*.

My father's wise insistence for me to be financially accountable, linked with Mr. Hansen's belief in me, made all the difference that summer. Remarkable, providential, faith-building events occurred during those weeks. And Mr. Hansen didn't have to pay anything out of his pocket.

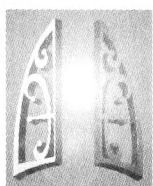
That summer I learned that stewardship is more than money. It is a lifestyle that includes both faith and accountability.

**Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life. James 1:12, NIV.**

---

*Larry R. Evans is president of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Calhoun, Georgia. He is a member of the Georgia-Cumberland Academy Seventh-day Adventist Church in Calhoun.*

---



## EVERYTHING EVERY MORNING

*By Rodney Applegate*

**I**T SOUNDED too good to be true, like one of those 800 numbers promising a product to put my life on easy street. Usually a flimsy, questionable sort of dust collector arrives to be mustered out at the garage-sale table alongside all the other quick-fix wares.

But when God promises a solution, He doesn't exaggerate.

I found it in one of those early-morning encounters with the Lord when I had been running on empty for quite a while. Nothing was going right. Every department head who sat across from my desk presented another insurmountable problem. "The buck stops here" was taking on new significance.

My doctor had frowned as he put down the stethoscope, unwrapped the blood-pressure cuff, and pronounced "stress," as if by his declaring the symptom, I could regulate the causes.

I knew better. But I thrived on challenges. So I'd roll up my sleeves, lengthen my days, and we'd solve the problems. Trouble was, staff was already working beyond capacity. I plunged ahead, accelerating my pace, the level of pressure rising steadily.

And that's when I staggered into my study to meet the Lord early one morning. I had spent myself on every avenue of problem solving and had come to the end of my human resources. Sinking to my knees, I finally admitted to Him how unmanageable my life and work had become, and the water was still rising.

God came to my rescue that morning. Out of a little book, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, page 101, came the challenge. Plain and simple: You give Me your life, here's what I'll do . . .

"If you will seek the Lord and be converted every day; if you will of your own spiritual choice be free and joyous in God; if with gladsome consent of heart to His gracious call you come wearing the yoke of Christ—the yoke of obedience and service—all your murmurings will be stilled, all your

## THE NINTH MEETING

difficulties will be removed, all the perplexing problems that now confront you will be solved.”

Humbled and awed by the immensity of the offer, I whispered, “I accept the deal, Lord. I’m Yours, along with my work and its problems. I’ll quit complaining. You take control.”

That’s the only way to serenity. Let God have your time, your talents, and your treasure, and He hands you back a life full of satisfaction, peace of mind, and well-being. I had tried to conquer and achieve by myself, but there weren’t enough hours in the day. Now I give Him everything every morning.

And the problems? They still stack up like boxcars on a railroad siding. But the divine 800 number lives up to its promise, one day at a time.

**In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. Isaiah 30:15.**

---

*Rodney Applegate is president of Walla Walla General Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington. He is a member of the Walla Walla College Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

---



### A ROW OF CORN AND THE HAND OF THE LORD

*By Bill Tucker*

**W**HEN I was a teenager, I lived in the Philippines, where my father was the ministerial director for the North Philippine Union. Once in the early 1960s, I went with my parents to the beautiful campus of Mountain View College in the South Philippines. My father was the speaker for the school’s Week of Prayer.

While we were there, campus officials gave us a tour of the college’s extensive farm. We saw many fields of corn, soybeans, sugarcane, and pineapples. At this same time we witnessed the evidence of God’s protection and of His kept promises.

School officials showed us where a terrible plague of locusts had just raged through the surrounding region a few days before and had destroyed all crops in one swift moment of time. According to our hosts, the locusts headed straight toward the fields of full-ripened corn at Mountain View College.

Students and faculty prayed earnestly that God would rebuke the devourer, as He had promised. After all, this was His college, these were His fields, this was His corn, and they were His people who had been faithful in returning to Him tithes and offerings, according to Malachi 3:10, 11.

The locusts completely destroyed the crops of a farm immediately adjacent to

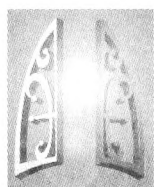
the college and ravaged the first row of ripened corn on the college property. And then, suddenly, incredibly, they died, right there at that first row of college corn. They stacked themselves up nearly two feet deep along that first row of the corn and expired.

I stood with others of the college, gazing with awe at the heaps of millions of dead locusts still stacked up where they had died, as it were, “in their tracks.” Miraculously and dramatically God had destroyed the locusts. I saw the dead locusts, and I saw the living corn. God had turned impending disaster into a marvelous time of rejoicing and thanksgiving for His deliverance.

It isn’t hard to guess the impact that experience and the evidence I saw with my own eyes have had on my personal covenant relationship with God in tithes and offerings.

**“I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty. Malachi 3:11, NIV.**

*Bill Tucker is president/speaker of The Quiet Hour radiobroadcast in Redlands, California. He is a member of the Redlands Seventh-day Adventist Church.*



## THIS IS SACRIFICE?

*By Blanche Yates*

**M**Y HUSBAND, Lee, and I were silent—each deep in our own thoughts. We’d been discussing the Week of Sacrifice Offering. We really wanted to give sacrificially. We’d been thinking and praying about it for several weeks. Lee made \$800 per week. We had four children in church school and academy. We had to pinch pennies to make ends meet. I had tried selling encyclopedias that year, but I disliked door-to-door sales, and I had finally stopped trying.

I felt strongly impressed that we should give a full week’s salary. But I hesitated to suggest it.

Lee broke the silence, “I think we should give one week’s salary!” We both felt that this was God’s leading.

When we turned in the money the following Sabbath, we experienced a mixture of apprehension and excitement. This was the first time we’d ever stepped this far out in faith.

On Sunday morning we attended a county auction with my parents. As we settled onto the hard wooden benches and looked around, we wondered what we’d gotten into. The building looked like it was constructed from scrap wood. The auctioneer was disheveled, and cigarette smoke filled the air. But we soon forgot the discomfort and crude surroundings. The auctioneer

## THE NINTH MEETING

kept the people laughing, and excitement rose as he urged the crowd to bid higher prices.

Suddenly Lee poked me in the ribs and said, "Look! That's exactly what we've been needing." They were just bringing in a new 80-gallon hot-water tank. Before long we bought the water heater at a much reduced price. Soon we made other purchases, and by the time we left, we had to make arrangements for someone to deliver our things. As we added up what we'd gotten we knew that we had saved more than \$500.

The next night I received a phone call, asking me if I sold encyclopedias. I set up an appointment, and the following evening took a large order that qualified me to receive a free set of encyclopedias and dictionaries for our family and a self-teaching learning center for our children. After I returned home, Lee and I talked about how God had provided much more than the \$800 that we'd given three days before—not in money, but in goods.

A few weeks later Lee called and asked me to meet him at a restaurant after work. When I arrived, he smilingly handed me three envelopes. His company at times gave employees special awards for specific work well done. The first envelope contained an award check for \$100. The second had a check for more than \$300. My hands trembled as I opened the third envelope. Out fell a check for \$800. Lee's manager had commented that he'd never heard of anyone receiving three employee awards in one day. But we knew why it had happened.

**Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. Proverbs 3:9, 10.**

---

*Blanche Yates is an administrative assistant at Eden Valley Institute in Loveland, Colorado. She is a member of the Eden Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Loveland.*

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