

RIDING HIGH

*Stories About Experiencing the
Blessings of the Sabbath*

Compiled by

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RIDING HIGH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

RIDING HIGH.....	6
OVER THE SUNSET MOUNTAINS	11
GREEN GIANT AND THE SABBATH	14
BEYOND OUR THOUGHTS.....	16
REJOICING IN THE SABBATH.....	23
NEVER ON SABBATH, BETTER ON SUNDAY	25
THE SHOEMAKER'S STORY	27
A TEST OF FAITH	31
PROFESSOR X AND THE LIBRARY BOOK DROP	35
A ROOF AND A PRAYER.....	38
A BUILDER KEEPS THE SABBATH AND A BANKER BREAKS THE RULES	41
THE HAMMER THAT WOULD NOT WORK ON SABBATH	44
CAST YOUR NETS.....	46
THE SABBATH IS FOR FELLOWSHIP.....	48
THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD.....	53
WHEN GRANDPA ARGUED WITH AN ANGEL	55
THREE TIMES FIRED	59
"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING ... ?"	61
ABANDONING MYSELF TO GOD	64
JACKHAMMER FAITH.....	66
JUST SAY "NO.....	69
AN ACCOUNTANT'S ACCOUNTABILITY	72

RIDING HIGH

OPENING DAY	74
THE SABBATH AND SECURITY	76
GOD IS NOT MY CO-PILOT.....	78
WONDERFUL WINDOWS	81
A TEST OF TIME	83
THEY PRAYED FOR RAIN.....	85
THE CHURCH WITH NO NAME.....	88
GRADUATION AT COQUILLE HIGH.....	91
THE CASE OF THE PIANO SHORTAGE.....	94
TRIAL BY FIRING SQUAD.....	97
THE BULL THAT PREACHED.....	107
A JEEPLOAD OF MECHANICS.....	112
GOD WORKED THINGS OUT.....	115
TIAGO AND THE SIX-FOOT FISH.....	121
POLITICS AND THE SABBATH	129
MISTY'S CHOICE.....	131
THE EMPTY WATER JAR.....	134
KEEPING THE FAITH.....	136
THE MYSTERIOUS TEST	142
HOPE	146
PRIVATE FORD'S SABBATH PASS	150
SCHOOL FEES FOR JEAN AND GILLIAN.....	152
SABBATH COURAGE AT GUNPOINT	155
PHONING FOR THE TRUTH	157
COURAGE AFTER FIVE YEARS.....	162

THE BROKEN RADIO	165
THE MYSTERIOUS PORTER.....	167
SABBATH IN JAIL.....	171
BEFORE THE RAIN CAME	174
FREEDOM LETTER.....	177
CONTENDING WITH HORSES	181

Preface

RIDING HIGH

If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day...; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 58:13, 14, RSV.

The blessings reaped from properly observing the Sabbath of the Lord are many. Attendant to the Sabbath are the blessings of rest, refreshment, fellowship, enjoyment, redemption, healing, anticipation, celebration, exhilaration, peace, worship, reflection, awe, inspiration, creativity, intimacy, natural wonder, discovery, sanctity, fulfillment, hope, joy from serving others, affection, knowledge, wisdom, exploration, divine providence, and a plethora of other delights that God offers to us for the purpose of contributing to our happiness and spiritual contentment on this earth and beyond.

Tragically, the world around us, even the Christian world, views Sabbath observance as legalistic service, restrictive drudgery, and pharisaical dogmatism. And there are reasons for this. This is exactly how many “keep” it or “represent” it.

Preface

But legalistic observance is definitely not the ultimate purpose of the Sabbath. Though indeed the issues of loyalty and obedience to God are rightly found in the Sabbath commandment, the authentic purpose of the Sabbath and even its restrictions are to preserve and set apart a sanctuary of life, experience, and time, in our walk through this earth. Instead this weekly vacation or retreat is a unique re-creative privilege and delight for the people of God. When its purpose is fully realized in the Christian's life it is productive of the greatest of blessings, drawing man to God, and to each other. It becomes an active, repeating, memorial of creation and redemption.

Those who choose to dishonor this beautiful institution are actually the ones who omit from their hectic and desperate lives an incredible and enormous benefit. They are the clear losers in this contest of faith. The Enemy of Souls exults when a negative attitude exists toward the Sabbath, for he desires that labor, busyness, unrest, and suffering be encouraged and maintained, rather than ministered unto or alleviated. His *modus operandi* is to slander and sully the Sabbath, for he disdains God, and he makes determined efforts to keep people away from the creative and re-creative blessings God wishes to shower upon humanity.

God promises to bless those who honor the Sabbath, particularly the seventh-day Sabbath which is clearly promoted in Exodus 20:8-11, Isaiah 58:13,14, and several other places. He recommends that man turn his foot away from the Sabbath and remember it instead. In eastern cultures to trample something underfoot is to repudiate it and to curse it. God asks that this not be done to His Sabbath. The reason given in Isaiah 58:13,14 is so that he can particularly BLESS man!

The promise is offered in such terms that if a person so honors the day, observing it in such a way that God is included as the source of the DELIGHT, that God will bless and honor the observer. There are at least three guaranteed results.

RIDING HIGH

The first is *delight*. The word is employed in the Bible as of a *bride*. God's purpose in the Sabbath is to bring such joy and fulfillment. When properly cherished it will be fun and rewarding. Not in a cheap, entertaining type of way, but in a much deeper and more satisfying way. Parts of the day may not always be stimulating, exciting, or full of occupation, but it can always be fulfilling, and right. Thus it becomes a delight. Those who have properly learned the habit of Sabbath observance know from experience exactly what this means. They have tasted of the good portion, and nothing can take it away from them.

The second part of the blessing promised is *rest and refreshment*. God says he will cause such "to ride upon the high places of the earth." For many years this expression made little sense to this author. Not until he traced the words back to its original source did he begin to appreciate the grandeur of this statement.

This passage is actually quoting Deuteronomy 32, labeled the *Song of the Rock*. There, God recounts to Israel (through Moses) how he brought them out of the bondage of Egypt on eagle's wings (vs. 9ff.). The picture offered there, when given thorough investigation, is particularly precious.

Eagles are known for a particular practice that is still observed by naturalists to this day. In order to teach young eaglets to fly the parent eagles mount the baby eagles on their backs. After climbing to considerable altitude the young eagles are dumped off their backs. The eaglets struggle to fly, flapping their wings, yet there, at a safe distance from the ground they learn to soar and to fly. However, their young wings have not attained sufficient strength to fly very long, so soon the parent eagle must swoop under them and catch them. There the young eagles rest for some time, RIDING over the high places of the earth, until they are carried up *higher* and the process is repeated. The same circumstance is referred to in Isaiah 40:31 where those who wait upon the Lord are said to "mount up on wings, like eagles." "They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Preface

How powerful is this Sabbath promise! Like the eaglets we on earth furiously flap our fledgling “wings” for six tiresome days. We become weary and exhausted, physically and spiritually. It is our privilege when the Sabbath comes, to *ride on God’s back*, soaring above the problems of life, over the heights of the earth. There we can “fly,” a desire found among the greatest of human wishes, and rest, until we go back to the daily labor and toil under the sun. The benefit gained by riding for a while is crucial to our survival, lest we crash fatally to the earth in our weakness and exhaustion.

A third blessing promised in this passage is *nourishment*. God promises to “feed” us “with the heritage of Jacob,” our father. What this means is that God promises to provide food, physical and spiritual, to us, when we rest in Him. This means that God promises to provide for our daily needs at those times when we are not laboring (on the Sabbath) to provide food and shelter to our families.

The heritage of Jacob in Deuteronomy 32 is really talking about the promised land of Canaan for the ancient nation of Israel. It literally means the “inheritance of Jacob.” God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob’s offspring as the place where they would “REST” from their sojourn and bondage. God even prophesied to them that they would eat from stores, which they did not fill, and from vineyards that they did not plant. Thus it is when one “inherits” something. He receives, as a gift, something of value for which he did not labor.

Heaven is our ultimate inheritance. But while we are wandering in this current wilderness, God will give us extra manna for the Sabbath. Through his providence and prior blessing, he will “FEED” us on the Sabbath day. This is an astounding promise that has been fulfilled millions of times already.

In the following pages are stories of how God has blessed many Sabbath keepers in their earthly pilgrimage. They are only a few of the stories this author has read or collected over many years. There are many more stories

RIDING HIGH

to be told. These have been published together to conveniently give those who have not tested the Sabbath command some examples of how God blesses and provides. It is also given to regular Sabbath keepers as cause to remember and celebrate how God has blessed them over the years of their experience with the Lord.

These stories are mostly re-printed exactly in the way they have appeared in books and church periodicals, with the author's name attached. Many are from the Junior GUIDE, a youth magazine known to many of us. They are presented sometimes in a juvenile way, but the junior stories have been preferred this way by many over the years anyway, even by adult readers. Several more are from the OVER AND OVER AGAIN series published by Ronald Knott. There are 49 (The Sabbath Jubilee number) stories in the main section, but three are added in the appendix so that there is one for each Sabbath of a given year. These vignettes could make very appropriate Friday, or Sabbath evening worship materials. The author invites others to share their stories for the second volume in formation, "Soaring High."

The purpose of this book is not to teach that God always blesses those who keep the seventh-day Sabbath in exactly the same way as is represented in these narratives. In fact, every story is different, and God blesses how he chooses to bless each group or individual. But they are re-published to give glory to God for his gracious works, and to inspire all readers to be faithful to God in honoring the day that he has blessed and hallowed from the very first week of creation. May His Sabbath blessing rest on every reader. May they learn to entertain in their own lives the blessed presence of God himself, as he comes to be with them on the Sabbath, and on every day of their lives, both now and through eternity.

---Steven E. Behrmann

OVER THE SUNSET MOUNTAINS

By Steven E. Behrmann

In the early years of my ministry I was single. On rare occasions, in amongst our busy schedules, I enjoyed fellowship with my brother, a minister also, who lived, along with his family in a neighboring state.

It was actually very relaxing for me to drive away from the demanding and never-ending business of pastoral life---on a Sabbath afternoon, after services. On one particular Sabbath my plan was to drive through the beautiful mountains of Idaho and Montana to the town of Salmon, Idaho. However, this required a journey of at least 10 hours, much of it through largely unpopulated mountains and forest. On this occasion I underestimated the distance as well as the potential of the gas in my Honda gas tank.

Although I have had to buy gasoline at times on Sabbath in order to return from long-distant speaking engagements, I have always avoided if possible carrying on any unnecessary business exchange on the Sabbath. Going through the city of Lewiston, Idaho, on the way I thought about filling the tank with gas. But after some moments of meditation I considered that I would have to fill the tank later anyway in my journey to reach my destination, so why not wait until after a relatively early sundown and enjoy the outstanding scenery, taped music, and fellowship with my Creator for the present. And that is exactly what I experienced. The rivers, mountains, and trees were beautiful and I was thoroughly enjoying the drive. Humming as I went, I felt content. I was *literally* “riding upon the high places of the earth.”

However, I later became worried in consequence to what I had done. I found myself trying to scale an almost

RIDING HIGH

endless summit, which was reached by a road that twisted for miles and miles through almost complete wilderness. Previously escaping my notice had been signs that indicated that there were no services for the next 100 miles or so. I realized as darkness was coming on, even on the west side of the summit, that I was in trouble, for no service stations appeared anywhere. Naturally, I prayed asking God to stretch my range of travel even though the tank had registered totally empty for some time---even before I had reached the final summit and was descending the eastern slopes.

Far down the other side, the sun had set behind me, and darkness had set in. I passed a set of buildings that did not show promise of help; in fact to my glance it appeared to be another of the rare private buildings or residences on the pass. But at that moment my car sputtered, then coughed, the engine died, and I came to a halt on the shoulder.

Immediately the suggestion came into my mind to go back to that place and inquire for help. Miraculously the car started again and I was able to turn around and drive maybe a quarter of a mile back to that very place. I crossed the oncoming lane, and just barely edged over the slanted embankment before the engine quit for the final time and I coasted down to within about ten feet to what appeared in the darkness to be gas pumps!

Soon a young man appeared, and though he said his establishment had been permanently closed for business for some time, he would be happy to sell me some gas. He then pumped some gasoline for me and I was on my way. I thanked the Lord for his providence even the more as I traveled on for another 20 miles or so before reaching any other available services. I soon realized I had found what appeared to me to be the only gasoline remotely available in that whole region.

Some may question the validity of my story, or the way I handled the Sabbath promise, or most understandably my native wisdom. But I still believe that the angels nurtured by little car along for *at least* 40 mountain miles with essentially no fuel and then led me to the only place I could refuel. In addition, I was able to honor the sunset hour, by trusting in the One who not only painted that mountain sunset, but who also created the

Over the Sunset Mountains

Sabbath, and everything good we see.¹

¹ At this writing, the author is a pastor in the Oregon Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He had this experience in 1986.

GREEN GIANT AND THE SABBATH

By Don F. Gilbert

For several years my wife and I had earned our college tuition by renting a farm and growing cash crops. One of our crops was sweet corn for the Green Giant Canning Company. The company provided the seed and set the date for planting. After harvesting the corn for freezing or canning, Green Giant sent us a check for payment.

One year, as usual, we made arrangements with Green Giant and planted the corn. It came up in lovely green rows nearly half a mile long. We cultivated it and provided tender care. With plenty of rain from the Lord that summer, we expected a good harvest. We often walked through the field as the corn grew, just to enjoy the tall, lush green stalks and to think about harvest time.

Our contract with Green Giant included our stipulation that the company would never send harvesters to the field on a Sabbath to pick the ripened corn. That year the pickers came on a Friday. We explained to the field superintendent that they must quit picking by 6:30 p.m. regardless of whether they had finished. He brought in extra equipment and said he would do his best.

Sweet corn to be used for canning must be picked during a very narrow window of time. When the moisture content of the kernels reaches precisely the right level it must be picked. A difference of even two days can determine whether the crop is usable or lost.

By our 6:30 evening deadline only about half our crop had been picked. We would lose the rest because the harvesters wouldn't be back in our area for a while. I watched at the gate as the trucks and the last large tractor-mounted picker left our farm. The picker driver throttled down his engine as he left and said, "Gilbert, you're crazy. We have working lights and can work all night to be finished by morning." I said, "No, thank you."

Green Giant and the Sabbath

My wife and I experienced that feeling of inner peace and confidence we have when we do what is right, no matter how difficult. That Sabbath was special.

Two weeks later the field man from Green Giant called and said he was in the area of our farm. He saw our remaining corn, and it still looked so green that he again had checked the moisture content. It hadn't changed from the picking date two weeks earlier. Would I agree to his bringing in the equipment and finishing the field? He said that never before had he seen anything like this happen, and he could not understand how the corn had maintained its exact moisture content for such a long time. I quickly thanked him and gave the go-ahead to finish the harvest.

We knew the reason the corn had maintained its perfect harvesting condition. God had answered our prayer. He had rewarded our faithfulness to keep the Sabbath. And He had used that faithfulness as a witness to the Green Giant Canning Company of His power and His grace.

Irene and I went back to college with our tuition money in hand and joy in our hearts. God is very good.²

² Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 1. North American Division. 1998, p. 189.

BEYOND OUR THOUGHTS

By Coralie Liske

“I called you in, Harold, because I have a very pressing matter that I need to discuss with you.” Harold Seidl settled his husky six-foot frame into the nearest chair and looked up expectantly as the pastor continued. “One of the girls who expressed her desire to follow the Lord during the evangelistic campaign has run into a big problem.”

Harold mentally reviewed the previous two months. He remembered when Henry Feyerabend had first come to Fortaleza, Brazil, to hold evangelistic meetings. In his mind’s eye he could see the handbill announcing the series to be held in July and August. It had been unusually successful. The summer of 1970 had been filled with blessings. Many people had given their hearts to God and had accepted the Advent message. But now what was the problem?

The pastor was explaining: “Maria de Jesus came to me yesterday and told me that she was in dire need of help. She wants to keep the Sabbath because she is convinced of its validity but she’s having a hard time doing so. Her employer refuses to let her have Sabbaths off. She wants to be baptized, and I certainly want to baptize her. But you understand the problem, I’m sure. If she quits this job it will be almost impossible for her to find another one, and she does need the work. Harold, my friend, before we urge her to leave her job, I thought it would be wise for one of us at least to talk to the manager of the shirt factory where she works. I would appreciate it very much if you as the public relations man of our conference would go to see him.”

Harold’s mind was made up in an instant. Of course he would go. His serious blue eyes met the pastor’s questioning ones as he made his decision. Yes, he would visit the manager that very week. The pastor grasped Harold’s hand and shook it vigorously.

Beyond Our Thoughts

“Thank you very much, Harold! I knew that I could count on you.” The pastor’s face was beaming. “We’ll be praying for you, and I’ll be waiting to hear what happens.”

Harold hummed a tune as he rubbed the polishing cloth over his already shining shoes. “Honey, where is my best shirt?”

“Right here, dear. I’ve just finished ironing it.”

Harold slipped into his shirt with utmost care, then put on his tie.

“You look real handsome, dear.”

“I have to.” Harold reached for a comb. “That man won’t find any reason to look down his nose at me if I can help it!”

Harold finished combing his glistening blond hair and straightened his tie. “God, it’s Your name and church I want to represent today.”

On his way out the door Harold took one last glance in the mirror. Satisfied he picked up the latest issue of *These Times* that he had purposely left near the door and kissed his wife. He strode out, his head lifted high. “Pray for me, hon.”

He was glad he had taken time to wash his car. In fact, he was thankful he even had a car. Who would have thought he would someday be so fortunate! Not just anyone in Brazil owns a car, and a new one at that. It would lend prestige, and that was important to his project.

He parked directly in front of the building and picked up the copy of *These Times*. Adjusting his tie, he went in.

The secretary smiled. “Good morning, sir. May I help you?”

“Yes, thank you. I have come to talk to the manager about one of his workers.”

“Do you have an appointment?”

No, I don’t.” Harold looked steadily at the secretary, who got up and walked over to the door with the

RIDING HIGH

manager's name in big letters printed on it.

Harold had purposely come unannounced. No telling how many days he would have had to wait if he had tried to make an appointment. The manager might even have refused to see him.

An Interview Granted

“The manager will see you now.” The brisk voice of the secretary broke into his thoughts.

“Thank You, God. I knew You would do it.” He entered the office, confidence making his handclasp brisk and firm.

“Good morning, Mr. Carlos, I am Harold Seidl, the public relations director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” Harold handed the manager *These Times*. “Compliments of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.”

“Have a seat, Mr. Seidl. And what is it you would like to talk to me about?”

Leaning slightly forward in his chair, Harold began, “I understand that one of your workers, Maria de Jesus, has decided to keep the Saturday Sabbath and has asked for that day free.”

“Yes, that's right,” the manager interrupted, “but impossible for me to grant it. She has missed two Saturdays already, and if she stays away from work again, I'm afraid I will have to dismiss her.”

Harold continued pleasantly. “Maria, as you may already know, has a little boy to support. If she loses this job it is very unlikely she will find another. She has decided to keep the Biblical Sabbath, and to force her to go against her decision would make her violate her conscience.”

“I am very sorry, but I cannot change my policy.” The manager's voice was decisive. “Maybe I can explain the situation to you, and you will see what I mean. You know that this shirt factory is one of the largest in Brazil. We have some thousand workers. Maria works in a strategic part of the assembly line—one of our best workers, I might add. Now, if she gets sick for a day or two, we can manage to substitute for her. But we can't possible replace her every week. Besides, if we allow her to have Saturdays off we will have the rest of the workers demanding the same privilege. No, I cannot change my mind. This is big business. Production is the key word. We simply cannot afford to lose money.”

Beyond Our Thoughts

Harold scratched his head. “Yes, I can see your problem, but have you thought of letting her work Sundays instead of Saturdays? You could put her at the end of the line packaging the shirts. That way there would be no gap in the line on Saturdays.

“No, Sunday work wouldn’t do, either. We would have to have someone come in to turn the lights and machines on. It would cost us money to hire a person to do this. Besides, there would be the cost of extra electricity. We couldn’t really leave her alone, either.” The manager glanced at his watch. “Look, what difference does it make which day you worship? Sunday is just as good as Saturday!” His words came fast now, and his voice was rising.

Harold wondered whether he had gone too far. No, he had to finish what he had started. He wasn’t used to doing a job halfway. “I’m not here to discuss religion. But if you would like to discuss the Sabbath some other time, I would be happy to. Right now I am concerned with Maria.”

A Bold Proposal

Suddenly an idea burst into Harold’s mind. He knew the superstitious background of this man’s culture and decided to capitalize on it. “If you don’t let her have Sabbaths off, if you force her to go against what she believes, you will be responsible for her soul!”

“No, no! I am a good man. It will be her own fault! I’m not responsible for her soul!” His hands clutched the arms of his chair.

“Look, why don’t you close your factory on Saturdays?”

The manager stared at his audacious visitor. “Are you crazy?”

Harold had the advantage for the moment. He hurried on. “How many shirts do you produce in one day?”

“About twenty-two-hundred.”

RIDING HIGH

“I promise you your production will double, maybe even triple, if you close your factory on Saturdays. There is a promise in the Bible that says if you obey the Lord, He will bless you much more than you even think. I can guarantee that it will happen!”

“You are crazy!” The manager looked stunned. He arose from his chair. “It is time for lunch, and I must leave. I have no more time to discuss the matter.” He took his coat from the rack and slipped it on.

But Harold had found his strength and he drove his argument home. “I’d just like to remind you again that you are responsible for her soul.”

“There is the door.” The manager extended his hand, and they walked out together. The secretary watched them leave, her eyes a question mark.

I’m afraid I lost that case, Harold thought as he drove away. “Lord, it’s Your cause that’s at stake. I’ve done my part, and now it’s in Your hands. Do whatever You see best.”

Elder Seidl, it’s good to see you back from vacation.” His secretary arranged the papers on her desk and took the cover off her typewriter.

“Yes, it’s good to be back in my own office again after four weeks.”

“Elder Seidl, I have some extra good news to tell you.”

“Good! What is it?” Harold waited expectantly.

“The shirt factory has closed down on Sabbaths!”

“Praise God! Tell me all about it. I’ve got to know the whole story!”

“I’ll let Maria do that. I’m sure she can hardly wait to see you. You’ll meet her in church tomorrow.”

Harold didn’t have to look for Maria in church on Sabbath. She saw him first and hurried to him, eager to tell her story. She found him equally eager to listen.

“The starting bell hadn’t rung when I got to work the Monday morning after you saw the boss,” Maria began. “My friends gathered around me and wanted to know whether I had heard anything since the big man from my church had come to see the boss. I told them I didn’t know what was happening, and that for all I knew I would

Beyond Our Thoughts

be fired that day. Oh, Pastor, as I worked that morning I was so worried. Should I give up the Sabbath? Was it really worth it? I could just hear the boss bidding me farewell, to put it mildly. But then thoughts of the Sabbath I had just spent lifted my spirits. I didn't regret my decision to follow Jesus all the way. I remembered the blessings He had already given me in the short while since I had become a Christian. I felt reassured that He had me in His hands.

"Time really flew by fast for a Monday morning. I remember looking at the clock for the first time that morning. I was rather surprised to see that it was only few minutes before break time. Just then the intercom went on."

"Pastor, I'll never forget the announcement made that morning. We were told that there were two alternate plans that we were to vote on. You can imagine my curiosity when I heard that, but I still wasn't prepared for what came next. The first plan was that we would continue to work as usual, six days a week, eight hours a day, Monday through Friday and five hours on Saturday. The second plan was almost unbelievable. We would be working five days a week, nine hours a day. This would mean that the factory would be closed both Saturday and Sunday.

"I wish you would have been there to hear the cheering that followed. I was standing there with tears in my eyes. I just couldn't believe it! Pretty soon I had a crowd of workers around me all eager to see my reaction. Most of the workers knew about the whole situation—your coming to see the boss, my missing work on Saturday, and the rest. You know how word gets around, especially among friends. Of course the vote still had to be taken, though we were almost certain what the outcome would be. Who wouldn't want to have their weekends free?"

"I said that the time went pretty fast for a Monday morning. That was only before break time. After that, minutes seemed like hours. It seemed as if they were deliberately taking the longest possible time to count the ballots. Finally the intercom went on again. Except for the hum of the machines, you could have heard a pin drop. It had been voted that we work and extra hour every day and be free both Saturday and Sunday. I found myself clapping along with the other workers. I thanked the Lord right then and there, and when I had time after work I went straight to the boss and thanked him. And do you know what he said? 'Go thank you pastor.'"

RIDING HIGH

“And the production, Maria, what about the factory production? I assured the manager that his production would increase twice over, if not more!” Harold’s voice betrayed his excitement.

Maria’s eyes glowed. “One week after the first Sabbath, production had increased from twenty-two hundred shirts per day to three thousand. Now, just four weeks from that time, the factory is producing four thousand five hundred shirts—more than twice the original production!”

Harold’s face reflected Maria’s glow. God’s name had been wonderfully glorified in Fortaleza.³

³ *The Review and Herald*, June 21, 1973, p. 11. At the time Coralie Liske was a student at Andrews University.

REJOICING IN THE SABBATH

By Denise Dick Herr

Most of my life I've lived in Adventist communities where Sabbathkeeping was a given. When I went to college at Andrews University, my friends and I attended church, took naps, and then went for a walk. I kept Sabbaths but didn't truly enjoy them.

Several years later I joined an archaeological excavation in Israel as the pottery manager—the person who organized the washing, analyzing, marking, and storing of the millions of shards that are all-important on a dig. When one of the directors, an American Jewish rabbi, asked me to be the pottery manager, I said to him, “You know I don't work on Sabbath.”

“That's OK,” was his reply. “Many of the students are Jewish. We finish work on Friday morning and don't return to the site until Sunday noon.” He hesitated. “Of course there is the last weekend, when we write reports.” He quickly added when he saw the look of determination in my eyes, “But you won't have to work then.”

The long, hectic weekdays of the dig rolled by. I got up early and went to bed late. I worked hard. Sabbaths, on the other hand, were bliss: I had time to sit and talk to friends, time to walk without boxes of pottery in my arms, time to read and think. But I didn't realize how wonderful Sabbaths were until the final weekend of the excavation.

The last Friday of the dig was the day we began the serious business of writing reports and closing down camp. My Jewish and Christian friends tried to synthesize their summer findings. Coffee mugs in hand, they labored over stacks of notes and drawings.

RIDING HIGH

I worked hard all day too, but when the sun went down, I breathed a sigh of relief. It was Sabbath. I was free from work for 24 hours. Sabbath wasn't a chore—something I had to do; it was a gift of time.

That evening a special meal was served in the dining room at our tables rather than through a cafeteria line. The report writers, Christian and Jewish alike, ate quickly and rushed to return to their work.

Free, because I observed the Sabbath, I chatted with the other Adventist archaeologists as we ate cookies and watermelon and watched Israeli folk dances.

Sabbath morning I awoke later than usual and observed the bloodshot eyes and haggard faces of the writers. They had been up late and early. Several were dependent on the summer's work to get into graduate school. Others needed the data for dissertations. The pressure was evident.

I felt like an island of peace in the midst of frantic activity.

I ate breakfast with one of the dig directors, and Israeli woman—a Jew, but not religious.

“You're not working today, are you, Denise?” she asked.

“No, I keep Sabbath—Shabbat.”

“You know,” she said, looking exhausted before the day had even begun, “I think keeping Shabbat is a wonderful idea. I'll have to try it someday.”⁴

The Sabbath was made for humankind. Mark 2:27, NRSV.

⁴ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 1. North American Division. 1998, p. 178.

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.

RIDING HIGH

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.⁵

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

⁵ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 1. North American Division. 1998, p. 131.

THE SHOEMAKER'S STORY

By Margaret Wright

Koos was an orphan. His mother had died when he was a baby, and when his father passed away too, Koos was sent to an orphanage. He was treated kindly in the orphanage, but there were no luxuries in life. Because all the boys had to work, he was taught the shoemaker's trade at an early age. He learned how to work with leather and to repair shoes. Although Koos received no wages, he was given his food and a place to sleep. He was provided clothing also—two khaki suits that were to be worn during the week and one other suit that was to be worn on Sundays.

When Koos reached the age of 19, he felt that he knew enough about his trade to set up business on his own. With the grand sum of 16 rand (US \$13.) in his pocket he set out to face the world.

In the course of events, Koos made the acquaintance of a Mr. Beck and asked him whether he would lend him 20 rand (US \$16.26) to buy leather to start a small business. Because Mr. Beck respected Koos, he gladly offered to lend the money.

Koos worked hard, going from door to door asking whether there were shoes that needed repairing. Little by little his funds grew. Finally he had enough money to buy a bicycle, which would save him a considerable amount of time. When in due course the 20-rand debt was repaid, Koos found that there was no more need for him to go from door to door asking for work. His reputation was well established and customers had begun coming to him. Indeed, he had so much work on his hands that every day he rose at 5:00 a.m. and often worked until 11:00 p.m.

On his way to and from work Koos had to pass a store that was owned by a Mr. Langley. As time passed, a warm friendship developed between the young man and the trader.

RIDING HIGH

“Why don’t you buy some machinery, Koos?” the store owner said to him one day. “Sewing leather is hard work. Just look at your hands! You are a good, hard working lad, and I’ll help you as much as I can.”

Before long, with aid from his friend, Koos was able to install some machinery. What formerly took two hours to accomplish now was completed in ten minutes. His business thrived. Mr. Langley remained his best friend, and Koos never failed to visit him.

One evening, when Koos called to see his friend, he found that he was not at home. They were so close that it seemed strange that Mr. Langley had not mentioned to him that he would be away. “I’ll call on him tomorrow morning,” Koos decided as he went on his way. The following morning he was amazed to find his friend’s house full of people and he soon learned that Mr. Langley had passed away suddenly. Stunned, he was filled with remorse that he had not been more determined to contact his old friend the previous day. He felt Mr. Langley’s loss keenly.

Koos was an atheist. He did not yet know the One who “healeth the broken heart.” Depressed and unhappy in the following months, he found himself rebelling against religion. But one day something wonderful happened. Koos began to have strange dreams—dreams in which the various truths in the bible were brought before him. These dreams brought him comfort and hope. When he awoke in the morning he felt happy and at peace. Because it was such a new experience for him, Koos mentioned his strange dreams to his friends.

A hand wrote on the wall

The dreams continued for some months. At times it seemed to Koos that he was sitting on a school bench in a school where Jesus was the teacher. Bible truths were written on a blackboard and explained to him. One night a hand appeared and wrote on the wall. The writing not only foretold the end of the world, but the hand also wrote some figures on the wall. Koos tried to see the date inscribed on the wall, but an unseen hand smudged the figures so that it was impossible to read them. As Koos repeated to his friends what he had been taught in his

The Shoemaker's Story

dreams, someone finally remarked, "If you believe all you have told us, you will have to be a Seventh-day Adventist." Koos had never heard of Adventists.

His last dream occurred in August, 1935. In that dream the Lord showed him that he should keep the Sabbath. Despite the fact that Koos did not know anyone who kept the seventh-day Sabbath, he Promised the Lord that he would do so, trusting that the Lord would look after his business. After he had made the decision, a stranger knocked on his door. In the course of the conversation, Koos told him about his strange dreams and of his intention of keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day. To his astonishment, the stranger, a Mr. Shone, told him that he too kept the Seventh-day Sabbath. He was able to show Koos the same scriptures and truths that had been revealed to him in his dreams. Realizing that the Lord had directed this stranger to his home, Koos praised God for doing so.

But the Lord tested Koos. Late the following Friday afternoon an important businessman came to him with a number of pairs of shoes that required repairing. "Certainly I'll do the work for you," Koos said. "but I don't work on Saturday. It is my Sabbath day. Can you call for the shoes on Monday?"

"Give me my shoes back again," the man answered. "You must be Adventist. I do not wish you to repair them."

Koos was sorry to lose the work, but he replied, "Well, I'm glad that you are taking these shoes away from me on account of my religion and not because of my work!" He told the man how the Lord had led him and how he trusted in God to help him with his business. Not long afterward the man returned with shoes to be repaired and remained a good customer for many years.

In this manner Koos accepted the Adventist message. He became a faithful and true witness for the Lord, his business prospered, and he became a well-known figure in the community. In his shop Koos kept a rack filled with literature proclaiming the beautiful truth that God had revealed to him in such a wonderful way. Many a passing stranger smiled as he read the words painted on the shop window;

"We doctor shoes, heel them, and save their soles."

RIDING HIGH

Thus, in Koos life the words of the psalmist were fulfilled: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. . . . But his delight is in the law of the Lord. . . .Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” (Ps. 1:1-3)⁶

⁶ *The Adventist Review*, July 2, 1981, p. 9. Margaret Wright was living in Cape Province, South Africa when this story was written.

A TEST OF FAITH

By H.B. Lundquist

According to Holy Writ, “God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Whether it is strengthened and developed depends on the individual. The Advent pilgrims, as described by the messenger of the Lord in one of her early visions, developed their measure of faith until a single tiny thread became a tough rope capable of bearing the weight of a man or a woman and, moreover, of providing the means of reaching heaven from the rocky, dangerous pathway of this life.

When I was a young man striving to support myself, my widowed mother, and two younger brothers, I had not yet learned what that kind of faith is. Of one thing, however, I was convinced: I must please God, who had given me such a beautiful hope for the future. This conviction quickly became an unbreakable determination through my mother’s influence. I had secured the Sabbath free from work through her appeal to my employer, but at a greatly reduced salary. However, my work kept me at the job until six o’clock in the afternoon the year round. Yet in the wintertime the Sabbath began shortly after four.

It seems only yesterday that the short episode occurred that turned an idealistic boy into a determined man. Mother had agreed to bear the consequences if my employer would not grant me the extra one or two hours on Friday in the wintertime. She had told me in her sweet, trustful way, “God will provide.”

It was a Thursday afternoon when I mentioned the matter to my employer. He was plainly upset by the request, and so as not to appear too hasty, excused himself for a few minutes. When he returned, in a short, curt tones he said, “Harry, you are now asking for two extra hours on Friday afternoon. Soon you will be asking for more time off on Thursday afternoon, then on Wednesday, and perhaps on other days. There is a limit to the concessions a business can make. If you can come to work when you are needed, you can continue to work here.

RIDING HIGH

If not, then we shall have to seek someone else for your position.” He reinforced these words with vigorous language. I told him that I could not continue to violate my conscience, and that if I could not have the privilege of beginning the observance of the Sabbath at the proper time, then he should feel free to secure someone else. That seemed to anger him still more.

One Monday morning when I came to work he had already secured a young woman to take over my tasks. In order to make the lesson more impressive, he told me that I could consider myself free after that day. He then hunted up an old, discarded pad of discharge slips that without a doubt had been employed in times past to lay off day laborers. He made out one for me and asked me to go to the cashier, who would give me the wages that were due. I was paid off through that evening without one extra cent.

When I reached home with my severance pay of a little over nine dollars, my courage gave way. I was discouraged and wept openly. My mother came over to me, and placing her hand on my head, said, “Harry, don’t despair. God is still alive, and He will take care of us.”

Some way my mother’s confidence and courage seemed to be just the tonic I needed. The next morning I began my search for a job that would give me the entire Sabbath free. My first stop was at a former employer’s. He said, “Harry, you don’t need to show me your recommendation (which the general manager, my employer’s superior, had given me). I gave you a better one than that two years ago. But I am sorry that at the present time I have no employment to offer you.” From there I went past a loan office where I observed that a stenographer was wanted. Upon entering I learned that the president of the firm was not to be in until that afternoon late, and I was invited to return then.

The interview that afternoon with Mr. J. E. Johnson, of the Realty Title and Trust Company, opened a new chapter in my life’s history. He was an old type gentleman. I told him that I was a stenographer and would like to see whether I could qualify for the position he had open. He then asked me whether I knew how to make contracts and mortgages. I told him that I did not, but that I could learn how to do so. Then, in a burst of boyish confidence, I confided to him that he might not want me after all, for I had just been discharged from another

A Test of Faith

firm. He asked me why, and I told him that I was a Seventh-day Adventist, and because I could not work after sundown on Friday I had been released.

He called in his office manager and told him the story, I shall never forget the kindly look the manager gave me as he inquired, “Would you be able to work on Sunday?” I assured him that I would be glad to work Saturday night and Sunday or any other evening to make up the lost time. He said, “Well, if that is the case, it makes no difference to me.” It seemed as if an angel had spoken. I seemed to be in a dream. He told me to report for work the next morning, and he would give me a trial. This I did, and although the work was quite different from the routine tasks I had been performing, I soon learned how to do it.

On the first Friday afternoon I experienced a special test. That morning the lawyer of the firm had dictated a mortgage and contract to me, and told me that he needed them both right away. Being young and inexperienced, I was ashamed to confess my ignorance, and so when the clock began to tick off the afternoon minutes and hours, the mortgage was still incomplete, and the contract not even begun! Four o’clock arrived, and then four-ten. I closed down the top of my typewriter desk, put on my cap, and, as I remember through the mist of the intervening years, with the peak pulled down a trifle over my eyes, cycled rapidly to my home, confident that another discharge awaited me.

Imagine my surprise on coming into the office on Sunday morning to find the mortgage gone from the typewriter. Upon inquiry I found that another stenographer had finished it. And now the contract! The friendly manager and another employee helped me with this complicated legal document, and soon it was on the top of the lawyer’s desk. It seemed to be all right, for it was not returned for correction!

Another surprise awaited me. Although Mr. Johnson knew that my wage had been thirty-five dollars a month, I found fifty in my first monthly pay envelope, which soon, without any request on my part, was raised to sixty, and later to seventy-five dollars.

RIDING HIGH

God has His eye on the sparrow. But He also is watching lovingly over every son and daughter who by faith serves Him.⁷

⁷ *The Youth's Instructor*, January 8, 1952, p.8.

PROFESSOR X AND THE LIBRARY BOOK DROP

By Lucille C. Lacy

When I was a teenager, a high school teacher told me that I would never be a success in my life and that I'd be a detriment to society. It was the first time anyone had made such a sweeping negative evaluation of my potential, and I was devastated.

After completing a master's degree in music education from George Peabody College for Teachers, I taught college for several years. Then I prayed, "Lord, if it is Your will for me to pursue a doctoral degree, prepare the way." Unexpectedly I was awarded a United Negro College Fund Teaching Grant for \$10,000, renewable annually. To me this seemed a notable honor for one who had been told by a professional educator that she had no future.

I wanted to get my doctoral degree from Ohio State University. From a pool of 400 applicants, I was one of the 10 accepted into the program. Soon I met Professor X, who told me that as a Seventh-day Adventist I had no chance of succeeding as a doctoral student at OSU. The graduate music program was impossible to complete while missing Friday night and Saturday sessions. He said I should either attend the classes as required or

RIDING HIGH

withdraw from the program. I left his office determined to complete the program *and* keep the Sabbath.

One Friday afternoon at the end of one semester, Professor X gave the class an almost impossible "take home" final examination. It was due the following Monday and would require exhaustive research in the library all weekend.

Two hours before sunset on Friday I closed up all my studies and prepared for the Sabbath. Saturday evening some of my classmates called to wish me success. They had spent all Friday evening and all day Saturday in the library and were far from finished.

By Sunday evening, after 10 hours of research, I had answered three of the exam's ten questions. I stopped and communed with God for one hour. Then, one hour before the library closed, I was impressed to walk down the stacks. Praying silently and with tears running down my cheeks, I felt nothing but despair, when suddenly in front of me, a book dropped from the shelf and fell open to a page of information I needed. I quickly picked up the book and continued to walk down the aisle when another book fell from the shelf. Books began falling from high and low, faster and faster. Each book was opened to an exact answer.

I grabbed a cart and moved quickly down the aisle picking up the books. The library assistants heard the sounds of the books falling from the shelves and asked if I knew who was throwing the books. I just smiled through my tears, rejoiced in the Lord, and kept on picking up those books.

I was the only student in the class who completed the entire exam. Professor X was shocked.

I have found that people cannot set limits for us when we pray and completely depend on a loving God who honors those who trust in Him.⁸

⁸ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 1. North American Division. 1998.

Professor X and the Library Book Drop

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A ROOF AND A PRAYER

By Timothy Atolagbe

I grew up in a home where the family gathered for prayer every morning and evening. My siblings and I didn't appreciate the blessing of this family routine for many years until one day just before the beginning of the rainy season. The roof on our house needed to be replaced.

My father had made arrangements with a carpenter friend to bring his work crew in the beginning of the week. The carpenters didn't come until Friday morning. They knew that our family were Adventists, and my father made it clear that should they choose to start working on the roof on Friday, it had to be completed before the beginning of the Sabbath at sunset.

My country at that time had no broadcast weather forecasts, so leaving a roof unfinished was not an option. The job would have to be completed in one day. The men started working just before noon, but in keeping with their Islamic practice, they took a break to go to the mosque for prayers. By the time they returned, they had only a few hours left before Sabbath. At sunset my father expressed his dissatisfaction to the work-crew leader and requested that the work on the roof be stopped until Sunday morning. No one thought that it would rain, because the sky was clear and the rainy season had not really started. However, the possibility that it could rain still existed, so the carpenters asked to be allowed to work a little longer or to return the next morning on the Sabbath to

A Roof and a Prayer

complete the job while our family was at church. My father told the carpenters of his trust that the same God who commanded that His Sabbath be kept holy is able to protect our house in any weather. The men laughed as they left.

That evening our family gathered for worship and prayed that the Lord would hold off any rain until after Sunday when the carpenters would return to complete their job. In the middle of the night I was awakened by loud thunder and the sense that someone was standing in the corner of my room whispering. I soon realized that my father was praying with an open Bible in his hand. He told us later that he had gone around to every corner of our house praying. As the thunderstorm continued, I could hear some of our next-door neighbors knocking at our door, asking if they could do anything to help. My parents thanked them and said we'd be fine. As the thunderstorm continued, we children slept while our parents stayed up praying.

The next morning my father got up a little earlier than usual before family prayer time to inspect our house for damage. We rejoiced and thanked the Lord that there was no damage to our home.

We didn't realize the full extent of God's blessing that stormy night until later in the day when we returned from church. Some men from the neighborhood came to ask my father if he would sell them the "formula" for blowing away the rain. While it had rained hard everywhere else in the neighborhood, it had not rained around our house that night.⁹

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. Psalm 46:1-3, NN.

⁹ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 21.

RIDING HIGH

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A BUILDER KEEPS THE SABBATH AND A BANKER BREAKS THE RULES

By John J. Jones

I was a traveling salesman for several years after finishing college. However, after marrying a beautiful young lady, I became tired of traveling and wanted to be home every night with my lovely wife.

There were not many higher-income jobs in my hometown, so I decided to be a home builder. Many people told me that I was crazy. Leaving a well-paying job and beginning another occupation that I knew nothing about didn't seem smart. But Jesus had richly blessed me as a salesman, and I was sure He would bless me in building houses. So I stepped out in faith. Sure enough, I was blessed abundantly.

Within a few years I became one of the top builders in my town and in the entire county. The local office of a large savings and loan association arranged a special financing program with a lower interest rate for people who bought my houses. Meanwhile, regular interest rates began to go higher and higher. Finally the president of the bank called me into his office and told me they would give me and my customers one more year of this special financing program, and then it would be over.

I accepted his offer graciously, bought many lots, and began building several houses at a time. My operating capital was spread thinly. To keep ahead, I had to close on a house every month to survive.

RIDING HIGH

As we approached winter, the weather became severe, with rain, sleet, and snow. This greatly slowed down the outside finishing work on the houses.

The bank had given us a deadline of February 8 for the end of the low-rate financing. We still had three more houses under contract to finish and close. The bank wouldn't give a loan on a house that wasn't finished. The buyers of these houses wouldn't be able to qualify for a loan at the regular interest rate. So I had to finish those houses before the deadline, or I would be stuck with three unsold houses, perhaps for a long time. Regular interest rates were so high by now that people had stopped buying.

I never allowed subcontractors or my own workers to work on the houses on Sabbath. However, many times, when necessary, the workers had volunteered to work on Sunday. Three weeks before the deadline several of the workers approached me and said, "John, your ox is in the ditch, and we've got to get it out. We can work Saturday and Sunday to help you out of this jam. You've got to finish these houses and close on them, or you will lose everything. We don't want to see you go broke." I thanked the workers for their concern and their offer to work on their days off. However, I explained to them that this was not a life-or-death situation. There was no proverbial ox that had fallen in the ditch and was suffering. They were unconvinced. My wife and I prayed every day for Jesus to resolve our dilemma. We worked steadily and finished one of the houses and closed it on February 7. After the settlement meeting at the bank, the president told me he would be closing the other two houses tomorrow, February 8. I was shocked. I told him the houses weren't finished.

"I know that," he said, "but we are closing anyway." He was going directly against bank policy. To help justify what he was doing, he said he would hold back a sizeable portion of the money due me until I had actually finished the houses. I was thrilled. Those houses would be sold. I had a reprieve that allowed me to finish the houses after that terrible deadline.

I wondered how he could do this, for he might get in trouble with the home office in Atlanta. He recognized my concern and told me not to worry-everything would work out fine.

We went to closing on the two houses the next day, and to my astonishment the bank didn't even hold back any money from the sale. Apparently the president just trusted us to finish the houses. Jesus had answered our prayers

A Builder Keeps the Sabbath and a Banker Breaks the Rules

and saved us from financial hardship.

We finished the houses three weeks later, and the buyers were well pleased with them. No one else could explain why the banker was willing to break strict company rules. But we knew that Jesus had intervened.¹⁰

John J. Jones is a general contractor and land developer in Sylacauga, Alabama. He is a member of the Sylacauga Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹⁰ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 28.

THE HAMMER THAT WOULD NOT WORK ON SABBATH

by Lawrence Maxwell

There was a shoemaker who lived in Spain. Let's call him Senor Menon, for I do not know his real name, though the story certainly happened. Senor Menon was a poor shoemaker, so poor that he owned only one hammer. He also had a radio that kept him company while he worked.

One day over this radio came the sound of a quartet singing "Lift up the trumpet and loud let it ring." Then a man talked about the love of God and some of the other important doctrines of the Bible.

"Good sermon; good singing," Senor Menon muttered to himself. "I must tune in again next week." He listened to the program many more times. And the more he heard, the more he liked it.

Then one morning a man selling books entered his shop. "How interesting!" Senor Menon exclaimed as he examined the salesman's books. "These books say the same things I hear on the radio every week."

"You mean on the Voice of Prophecy program?" the book salesman asked.

"The very one," the shoemaker replied. "I know just about everything the Adventists teach by now."

"I'd be glad to come around and answer any questions you may have," the book salesman said. And so every evening for a week or two the colporteur visited the shoemaker and studied the Bible with him.

Senor Menon accepted everything except just one point. "The seventh-day Sabbath," he said, shaking his head.

The Hammer that Would Not Work on Sabbath

"There is no use telling me God wants us not to work on Saturday."

"But, Senor Menon," the colporteur said, "it says right here in your own Bible: 'The seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work' (Exodus 20:10). Isn't that clear?"

"No, no." Senor Menon shook his head again. "You read the words clearly enough, but they do not mean what you say they mean."

"Senor Menon," the colporteur said, "if God were to send you a sign telling you He wants you to keep Saturday holy, would you keep it then?"

"Oh, yes, yes," Senor Menon said, "of course. I want to obey God."

The very next Sabbath Senor Menon went to work as usual. But he couldn't find his hammer. Search high and low, in the cupboards and under the workbench, there was no hammer. And since that was the only hammer he had, he couldn't work that day.

He went back Sunday morning-and there was the hammer as large as life!

"A strange thing," he whispered. "Is this the Lord's sign? But no, it couldn't be. What's so important about losing a hammer for a day?"

So he went to work the next Sabbath too. He had no trouble finding the hammer this time. He carefully adjusted a shoe, slipped a nail from between his teeth, and put it exactly where he wanted it in the shoe. Then he struck the nail with the hammer. But as the hammer came down, its iron head broke into two pieces.

"It is the sign of the Lord!" the shoemaker cried. "My hammer wouldn't work last Sabbath, and it won't work today. And if it won't work on Sabbath, I won't either. From now on I shall keep the Sabbath." As soon as possible after that he was baptized. When the ceremony was over, the pastor handed him a gift.

"Here is a new hammer for you," the minister said. "I am sure it will never work on God's Sabbath." "It won't," Senor Menon promised. And it never has.¹¹

¹¹ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 30.

CAST YOUR NETS

By Rudolph Carlson

It was an important event when my father, a commercial fisherman, first trusted me with my own fishing crew during the annual spring smelt run on the north shore of Lake Superior.

After working hard most of one Friday night with little to show for it, I surprised myself that I was still willing to drag myself out of bed to go to church. I was just getting acquainted with Seventh-day Adventists, and my curiosity about what they believed wouldn't let me sleep on Saturday morning. Anyway, I could always take a nap later that afternoon.

For some reason on that Sabbath the idea stuck in my head that God challenges us to a partnership with Him in financial affairs. While somebody prayed over the offering, I made a deal with God. I said, "God, let's be partners on tonight's catch. I will give You not only ten percent of what I make; I'll make You a true partner and split it down the middle, 50/50."

My crew started setting up for fishing a half hour after sunset, as required by law, just as we had for several previous nights of unsuccessful fishing. We anchored our rectangular fifteen-by-ten-foot fish corral in the river with its three-foot opening facing the river mouth. The corral was made of a metal mesh welded to an iron frame with two ten-foot mess gates extending out diagonally from the opening on each side. The fish swim in, and they don't swim out. The fishermen use a dip net to scoop out the fish and then put them in boxes that are stacked seven high on a semi-trailer.

After everything was ready, one of us stayed by the water, monitoring the fish corral, while the rest of us

Cast Your Nets

climbed into the cab of the truck to keep warm and try to sleep. At about midnight my turn came to watch for fish. So far we hadn't seen a thing.

I hadn't been watching more than five minutes when all of a sudden the corral started to move upstream! I looked inside, and in it were several large game fish that I had to scoop out and return to the river as the law mandated. The more I worked, the more I kept asking myself: Why are all of these large fish coming in? So I turned and looked out into the lake in search of a clue.

There, barely in sight, was what appeared to be a single wave heading for the river's mouth. I pulled up my hip waders and ran out into the lake to take a better look. The wave was about eighteen inches high, and to my amazement was made of fish swimming on one another's backs. I stood there gazing in amazement until the wave hit me and almost knocked me down. Now I knew where all of those game fish came from. They were being herded up the river by the advancing horde of smelt. I ran back to the truck and woke the other crew members. We fished as hard as possible. The smelt came in so fast that we had the first truck loaded in no time. As it pulled away to make room for the second truck, its axle broke from all the weight it was carrying.

That was the most fish I had ever seen before or since. The next Sabbath the Lord and I split \$1,400, and He's been my partner ever since.¹²

He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. John 21:5, 6, NIV.

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¹² Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 34.

THE SABBATH IS FOR FELLOWSHIP

By Gottfried Oosterwal

My mother was an Adventist and my father often went along, but I hated to go to church as a boy, for a number of reasons. In the first place I couldn't play soccer, and all Dutch boys grow up playing soccer. I never could join the junior league and of course all my friends said, "Hey, Bobby (that was my name when I was young) when are you going to join the rest of us playing soccer?" The second reason was that we didn't have a church. We had no building, no tower, no organ, no choir, no minister with a beautiful robe. The little handful of church members in Rotterdam were meeting in the greasy basement of a bicycle repair shop. There was never a moment of quiet, all the time you heard the metal hitting metal. I hated to go there. On top of that, the building we used was located in the most run down part of that large port city. You can't imagine how that section of the city looked and smelled. And coming from a better part of town, I hated it.

At times I attended the Dutch Reformed churches of my friends. They were huge-with towers and organs, choirs, and reverent ministers with long robes. I sat in them with awe. And my friends would say, "Hey, Bobby, where do you go to church?"

I replied, "Don't worry, don't worry." I was so ashamed; I was angry.

One Saturday as we set off for church I spied some of my friends waiting for me behind the corner. School was closed that particular day and they wanted to follow me and see my church. Noticing them and guessing what they intended, I excused myself, "Momma, I better run on ahead." I started running as fast as I could. I could run very fast in those days, so I lost my friends across the railroad tracks. Every Sabbath after that I would watch to make sure my friends weren't watching. If they were, I'd say, "Bye bye, Momma," and I'd run to church.

The Sabbath is for Fellowship

One Sabbath I overheard my mother say to a church sister, "Our Bobby loves to go to church. He can't wait for us, he's always running!"

But all that changed. The church became the center of my life. I found here and the deepest fellowship that ever can be experienced by a human being. I know the day and I know the hour. The date was May 10, 1940, a Friday, when troops from Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands. The Germans had used their crack paratroopers for the first time in the war, landing them in the southern part of Rotterdam where I lived, while the Dutch Marines were defending the bridges in the northern part of the city.

The battle raged from house to house---shooting, bombing. The next day was the Sabbath and as our family huddled in our basement, afraid of the bombs, mother began dressing my brother and my sister.

"What are you doing?" father asked.

"I'm dressing the children."

"I see that, but what for?"

Answered mother, "We are going to church."

My startled father stated, "Today? There's a war going on!" The paratroopers were firing a machine gun right in front of our house. Father sought to reason with her, "Not even a dog is outside. How can we go on the streets?"

My mother simply responded, "Today is the day of fellowship."

When she said "day of fellowship," something hit me right there and then as a young teenager. You see the Sabbath is not only a great memorial to God's creative activity as in Exodus 20, but Deuteronomy 5 indicates that the Sabbath was given as a memorial of redemption, a memorial to the time when one nation was molded together. Once we were slaves, with divisions among us as human beings, divisions between slaves and masters, between tribes, *between* people of different races and ethnic groups. But the Lord has given us the Sabbath, so that we can celebrate the fellowship of the believers.

As we entered the street, a soldier, with hand grenades in his belt and a machine gun under his arm, confronted us.

"Halt, where are you going?"

RIDING HIGH

"We're going to church"

He said, "Go back, go back, there's a war going on, there is shooting all the time." My mother said, "No, we want to go to church"

Then he suddenly thought of something and said, "No, no, no, not today, tomorrow. Everybody is confused in the war."

"No, no," my mother said opening her Bible to Exodus 20. At that point he called in his sergeant. The sergeant said, "You better go home."

"Oh, no, we go to church today."

And he thought for a moment and said, "Jewish people."

"No, no," my mother said, knowing the love the Nazis had for the Jewish people, "we are Seventh-day Adventists. Look the Bible says. . . ." But that was too powerful for the sergeant, and so he called the lieutenant.

The lieutenant listened for awhile and, realizing what was in the minds of my parents, said, "Go and may God be with you."

I'll not give here the details of how we crossed the front line between the Dutch Marines and the German Paratroopers. Some of us in the family are still bearing the scars. When we got to the greasy basement of the bicycle repair shop, without an organ, without a tower, the whole congregation was there. The bombs were falling and the grenades exploding, but the church was there. It was there because the very hallmark of the church is not the building, not the tower, but the fellowship of the believers. There was hugging and kissing. They did what the Bible says to do when you get together. Greet each other warmly. Hug, give each other a kiss, a kiss of love, or a holy kiss. I still see before me the hugging and the kissing and suddenly I felt so proud to be a Seventh-day Adventist.

We didn't have an organ or a tower, or a big building, only a greasy basement in a bicycle repair shop, but we were celebrating the very essence of what it means to be the church, we were a fellowship of believers. It was that fellowship that saw us through those five terrible years of the war when there was hunger and when people were

The Sabbath is for Fellowship

taken captive and put into concentration camps. Some children lost their fathers but they had many other fathers because of the church. Some people lost mothers, but we had many mothers as long as we had sisters in the church. That's the core of being the church. As long as one member had some soap (and my mother had hoarded a lot of soap), then the whole church had soap. And as long as some people had bread or flour or sugar or salt, the whole church had bread and flour and sugar and salt. That is what saw us through.

Some who were teenagers then owe their lives to the fellowship of believers. When all the food was rationed to one-quarter loaf of bread per family, some older Adventists came to our home and gave us their bread. Before the war was over these very people had collapsed in the street. Some of us can tell the story because we are alive and well because of their sacrifice.

The next week, so proud was I of this people that I made my stand to be joined to this people of God. But all the churches were closed because the Germans forbade any meeting of more than two people. However, the following week, May 25, the churches were open again. We met, even though our city had been bombed to pieces, the second city in the Second World War after Warsaw. Many of us had lost everything we had. Some had lost their lives. And here the church was together again in sadness, thanking God for our lives but being so sad about the lives of the brothers and sisters, for when one is hurting the whole church is hurting.

We had barely sat down and our organ, the little harmonium, had begun to play when suddenly we heard a sound in the stairway to the basement of the repair shop. It was the sound of boots. The door opened and there stood a German soldier. A hush fell over us all. Forgive us, but when you lose everything through bombing, when everything is being taken away, when your country's being occupied by an enemy, you hate that enemy and we did, we did. There was hatred in our hearts and in our minds.

The first deacon went up to him and said, "Get out, leave us alone! Isn't it enough that you bomb our city and destroy our lives? Isn't it enough that you rob us of everything? This is a little church! Get away, get out, leave us alone!"

The German soldier just stood there and said, "But, I've come here to worship. I'm a brother."

I saw the first deacon swallow very hard. Just a few days before, his home and everything he owned had been

RIDING HIGH

destroyed. From a wealthy businessman he had been turned into a pauper because of the bombings by the Nazis. Then, suddenly, he throws his arm around the young soldier and says to him, "If you have come here to worship God, you are my brother." And he took him to the front seat of the church and held his hand through the whole service.

Fellowship isn't just for people like ourselves, fellowship extends to¹³ . . . (everyone). . . .

¹³ Quoted in Families Reaching Families, Mission of Fellowship, pp. 24-26. Original source unknown.

THE BATTLE BELONGS TO THE LORD

By Dianna Brantley

The choice was clear: Either I would work on the Sabbath, or I would lose my job.

As a civil deputy sheriff in a county police department, I had never had a Sabbath conflict before. Now I was being told that I would have to work the evening shift, which included Friday nights.

I met with my immediate supervisor and informed her that I couldn't work on Sabbath because of my religious beliefs. Though sympathetic, she explained that the decision was out of her hands. I would have to talk with the commander.

I prayed, asking Jesus for strength and endurance. I also shared my decision with my husband, knowing that he would support my convictions. Together we sketched the plan: I must talk to my commander and explain the situation, then leave it in God's hands. My husband also reminded me that even though I had been with the police department for almost 20 years, God had supplied me that job. If necessary, He could get me another one.

Filled with these thoughts, I summoned my courage, put on my breastplate, and walked into the commander's office, ready to do battle.

After nearly two hours of discussion, the commander underlined his authority. He was the commander, and I had to follow his orders or lose my job. With a smile, I reminded him that Jesus was also his commander and that he couldn't operate without Jesus' permission.

RIDING HIGH

The next Monday morning my supervisor approached me excitedly, smiling from ear to ear. Out tumbled the news: The commander had contacted her over the weekend and asked her to inform me that he had changed his mind. I would now be able to work anytime and anywhere I chose.

Strange and abnormal things had happened in his household over the weekend, he told my supervisor, and the only thing he could attribute them to was our conversation, which had weighed heavily on his mind. My supervisor was delighted at the turn of events. She too was a Christian and glad for the chance to be a bearer of good news.

Jesus saw to it that the commander and I later became very good friends and I no longer had to worry about keeping the Sabbath.¹⁴

The battle is not yours, but God's. 2 Chronicles 20:15.

Dianna Brantley is a civil deputy sheriff for the Miami Dade Police Department in Florida. She is a member of the Miami Bethany Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹⁴ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 36.

WHEN GRANDPA ARGUED WITH AN ANGEL

by Ben-Ira

The man who argued with an angel was Mr. G. T. van Druten. His granddaughter Mary Anna Lees told me all about it. Here is her story.

Mr. van Druten, my grandpa, was farming at the time in South Africa. His family had come from Holland, and he was a very devout Christian, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church.

When his son William was about 20 months old, the little boy suddenly became seriously ill with what seemed to be an asthma attack. Grandma became alarmed. "We have to get him to a doctor as soon as possible, or we might lose him," she said.

Grandpa agreed. He asked the hired men to prepare the spring wagon at once with a team of eight mules. They would have to take food and bedding, and servants to care for the mules; so it was quite an expedition.

Grandpa wasn't sure where to take his little boy. It was about 125 miles to Kimberley and a little more than 125 miles to Bloemfontein. There were no closer towns. Kimberley was a mining camp at the time, and Bloemfontein was a more settled community. The baby was so ill that it might be too late whichever way they went.

The first part of the journey did not call for any decision, but soon they were approaching the fork in the road where one turn led to Bloemfontein and the other to Kimberley. Grandpa prayed that God would give him a sign

RIDING HIGH

so that he would make no mistake in his choice.

Soon after he had prayed, he saw a horseman on the road that led to Bloemfontein. The road passed through open fields, where Grandpa could see miles in every direction. He knew that that horseman had not been on the road before he had prayed, and he also knew he had not gotten onto the road by riding across the fields. Grandpa was convinced that this was God's answer to his prayer. He decided to follow the horseman and turned the team toward Bloemfontein.

They had not gone far when the horseman disappeared. Grandpa called to the servant who was driving and asked him if he had seen the horseman. He said he had. But now neither of them could see him, and there was no shelter where he might be hidden. With gratitude to God and renewed hope that Heaven's blessings would protect the little one till they reached help, they continued the journey.

This happened on a Saturday evening. As midnight drew near, Grandpa stopped the wagon and started to make camp.

Grandma protested strongly. "What are you stopping for? The baby is so sick, any breath might be his last. Even if we went on at once, it might be too late."

"We can't go on," Grandpa said. "It is now the Sabbath. I have never desecrated the day before and will not do so now." (Grandpa believed that Sunday was the Sabbath and that he should keep it holy from midnight until midnight.)

Grandpa was soon asleep. As he slept, he had a dream. He saw the horseman who had guided him at the fork of the road ride into camp and ask him why he had stopped and camped.

"I am camping here to keep the Sabbath," Grandpa told him.

"Which day is the Sabbath?" the horseman asked. Grandpa replied, "Sunday, the seventh day, of course."

"You are mistaken," said the horseman. "Yesterday was the seventh day and the Sabbath. If you have a calendar, I will show you."

So, in his dream, Grandpa went to the wagon where Grandma had a box with a calendar in it, and he got it out. It was just as the horseman said, but Grandpa was not convinced. "This must be a bad calendar," he said. "I will

When Grandpa Argued with an Angel

get a good one, and then you will see I am right."

The horseman disappeared, and Grandpa awoke. But he had a very troubled mind. He awakened Grandma and asked her if she had a good calendar.

"The one you have is a good one," she said.

"No, it isn't, for it shows Saturday as the seventh day of the week."

Grandpa got out his Bible to see if that would help him, but it just made matters worse. By daybreak Grandpa felt lost and uncertain about everything. "Let's keep going," he said. So they continued their journey to Bloemfontein.

Grandpa took Grandma and baby William to the doctor and left them there. Then he went at once to see the Dutch Reformed minister. The minister told him that the original Sabbath was Saturday, but it had been changed to Sunday, though he did not know who had changed it or when.

On his way back to the doctor's office, Grandpa met a Jewish Rabbi. He asked him about the Sabbath, and was told that the Christian church was responsible for the change. So Grandpa went back to the minister. They studied all day and came to the conclusion that Saturday was the Bible Sabbath. Grandpa kept the next Sabbath, and continued to keep it ever afterward.

Grandpa had a little cottage in Kimberley, where the family sometimes went for vacations. Soon after William got better they went there for a few days. On Sabbath they walked to the diggings-large diamond mines at Kimberley-and sat on a big rock to watch all that was going on.

They noticed a tent, and sitting in the door of the tent was a man dressed in a clean white suit reading his Bible. It was so different from the activities in the diggings that Grandpa and Grandma were fascinated by it. Finally they went over to find out who the man was. It was in this way that they met William Hunt.

William Hunt was a miner. While prospecting in the United States, he had found the Sabbath truth. Now he was a faithful keeper of the Sabbath. Later he gave Grandpa the address of the headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and so opened the way for the first Seventh-day Adventist foreign missionaries to come to South Africa.

RIDING HIGH

Grandpa was baptized by our pioneer missionary, Elder Charles Boyd, and was one of the first members of the Beaconsfield Church of Seventh-day Adventists. He was a faithful member until the day he died.¹⁵

¹⁵ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 22.

THREE TIMES FIRED

By Dennis T. Ranalla

When I was 30 years old, I again gave my heart to Jesus and was rebaptized into the church. I truly wanted to be a partner with God, so careful stewardship of all of God's blessings became very important to me.

About this time God opened up a job for me at a large hospital. When I accepted the job, I made it very clear to my employers that I did not do scheduled cases on Sabbath. They said that was fine. After I had worked for about a month, my supervisor asked me to do some scheduled cases on Sabbath. I said I couldn't do that and reminded him of the agreement.

He asked me to come to his office. We sat down, and he told me a story about a rabbi who disappeared every Sabbath day. No one knew where he went. This happened Sabbath after Sabbath, so one day someone decided to follow him. The rabbi went into the woods where an old woman lived by herself. The rabbi changed into work clothes and cut and stacked wood all day long. At the end of the day he changed his clothes and went his way.

My supervisor asked me what I thought about the rabbi's doing good on the Sabbath day. I told him that was between him and God. He said I would be doing good by working on the Sabbath. I said I felt uncomfortable with that.

"Okay," he said. "You're fired."

The next morning I was called at 6:30 and asked to come to work. At 2:30 in the afternoon I was told, "You're still fired, but come to work tomorrow." I worked that day, and at the end of the day I was told not to come anymore. The next morning I was called at 7:00 and asked to come to work, so I worked that day, and at the end of the day I was told, "You're really fired." The following morning at 6:30 I was again called and asked to come to

RIDING HIGH

work.

That afternoon I was invited to be a guest in my supervisor's office. This time he told me he had worked out the schedule so that I wouldn't have to do scheduled cases on Sabbath. I would just have to take call and do emergencies. And I was no longer fired.

I worked at that hospital eight years, and did only emergencies on Sabbath. Our heavenly Father gives and takes positions. That was 22 years ago, and He is still faithful in providing me with work.¹⁶

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

Dennis T. Ranalla is an anesthetist in Dallas, Oregon. He is a member of the Inchelium, Washington, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹⁶ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 46.

"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING ... ?"

By Victor Chant

In 1975 the Zambian government announced that a period of military training would be required of all high school graduates at the close of that school year. As we approached the time, students sought out several of us faculty members, asking how they should practice their faith in a military camp. The Seventh-day Adventist Church had already appealed to the government for consideration on two issues—the Sabbath and bearing of arms. The answer that came back was unequivocal: church leaders ought to mind their own business and not interfere, or churches would be closed throughout the country.

Teachers and administrators were in a quandary about how to advise the students. We searched the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy with much prayer, looking for answers to this crisis. When pressed, I began advising students that they would probably have to break the Sabbath and just do what they were forced to do during the months of training. It was the coward's way, but first and foremost I wanted to help save the church in Zambia and keep the young people from hardship.

While we were prayerfully considering all of this, a visitor from the General Conference arrived on campus. A special meeting was called for the staff to meet the visitor. As I sat there in the back corner of the staff room, listening to the presentation, a clear, distinct voice spoke to me: "What do you think you are doing, telling

RIDING HIGH

the students to break the Sabbath?"

My cowardly position passed before me, and I saw what I was doing. How could I represent Jesus if I wasn't willing to suffer for Him? I walked out of the staff room that day ready to face prison, deportation, or whatever came my way. I knew that I would speak boldly and encourage the students to keep the Sabbath, no matter what might happen.

I had walked only a few yards when a couple of students approached me to talk about their military training and what they should do about the Sabbath and their belief in God. I shared the message I had heard and encouraged them to stand for truth and to be willing to suffer whatever might happen to them.

As time passed and our students were taken to military camps, nothing happened to me, even though my name was sent to the government as a security risk because of my witness to the students. I never was deported, nor did I face any hardship. The miracles and triumphs experienced by the students in the camps they were sent to over the ensuing years bear testimony to the power of God to deliver and triumph with His truth. Only eternity will reveal the victories of those students and others who saw God at work in their lives.¹⁷

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:12-14, NRSV.

¹⁷ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 62.

What Do You Think You are Doing?

Victor Chant is a teacher and counselor at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy in Aldergrove, British Columbia. He is a member of the Abbotsford, British Columbia, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

ABANDONING MYSELF TO GOD

By Blanche Yates

"I'm sorry, but we can't use you," the store manager said as he shook his head. "Everyone here works every other weekend-no exceptions."

Putting on my bravest smile, I thanked him and headed for the exit. I'd been beating the pavement looking for a job for several weeks. It seemed that I'd tried every business within a 50-mile radius of home. Either they didn't need help or they worked on Sabbath. The constant rejection was hard for a nineteen-year-old to take.

As I got into the car, I looked at my watch and realized that it was close enough to Sabbath that I'd better head for home. I had no more money for gas. The only money in my wallet was the \$30 I'd set aside for tithe and offering. I pondered as I drove home if it wouldn't be wiser to use some of that for gas. Perhaps I could use the offering and not the tithe.

I'd been praying for work, and I'd been persistently looking. But without gas money I couldn't even continue to job-hunt. I felt burdened and unsettled. All of my life I'd returned tithe and offering. It was a "given." But now, for the first time, I faced a strong temptation to borrow some of it.

The struggle continued. But as I arrived at church on Sabbath morning, I made up my mind. I quickly filled out a tithe envelope and sealed it. A special peace settled over me as I dropped it into the offering plate in church. The burden was lifted. For the first time I felt the sweet joy of abandoning myself to God. I sang as I drove home from church.

About an hour after Sabbath lunch the phone rang. I recognized the voice of the last store manager I'd talked to on Friday. He talked excitedly. "I just realized that you said you'd be willing to work every Sunday if you could have Friday nights and Saturdays off. Is that true?"

Abandoning Myself to God

"Yes, that's true."

"Could you start tomorrow morning at nine?"

*I had to choke back tears. "I'll be there."*¹⁸

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now. . . , if I will not open you the windows of heaven. Malachi 3:10.

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

¹⁸ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 63.

JACKHAMMER FAITH

By Douglas L. English

The summer before I began graduate studies at the University of Arkansas, money was tight. By the time I finished a teaching contract on June 15, no summer jobs were available and my graduate-fellowship money would not become available until classes began in late August. Our meager savings were eaten up by moving costs. Susan my wife could not find a job, and the only work I could find was at a temporary employment agency. Every morning I would call at six o'clock, and if they had work for me that day, they called back. I was fortunate when I got two or three days of work a week.

One evening Susan showed me that our checkbook balance came to \$12 and some cents. We had little food in the apartment, rent was due the following week, and after that would come the utility bills. It was clear that something had to happen now, or we would not last until school started.

That night when I said my prayers, I kept them shorter than usual. "Father, I'm in this place because I heard You call me to graduate school. We have no more money. I have been faithful with my tithe, and You promised You would take care of me. It's time for You to keep Your Word."

The next morning I didn't call the agency. They called me, at 5:55 a.m. "Doug, we have a job for you. It's twelve hours a day, seven days a week, which means plenty of time-and-a-half pay. It lasts all the way until school starts for you in the fall, and you start as soon as you can get here and pick up your time card. Do you want it?"

It was Tuesday, and I figured I could get in four solid twelve-hour days before they fired me for not working on Sabbath. "You bet!" I fairly shouted, racing out to my VW Bug almost before I hung up the phone.

The work was miserable. I broke up concrete all day with a jackhammer. The only respite from that bone-

Jackhammer Faith

jarring work came when I had to push a wheelbarrow full of rubble onto a truck. At the end of the first day they fired one of the temporary workers for not hustling on the job, perhaps to make a statement to the rest of us. So I really put my back into it, hoping to last even to Sabbath.

Friday, after I clocked out, I went to the foreman. "Sir," I began with what I hoped was a tone of conviction, "I am a Seventh-day Adventist, and tomorrow is the Sabbath. I won't be here to work, but I need this job. Will I still have it on Sunday?"

He cocked his head to one side and said, "The job's for seven days a week." When he said nothing more, I pressed the issue. "Can I come back Sunday?" He shook his head and said, "I don't know."

With no more assurance than that, I kept the Sabbath. When I clocked in Sunday morning, the foreman said nothing. After another painful week with the jackhammer, I approached him again on Friday.

"I am keeping the Sabbath again tomorrow. Will my job still be here for me Sunday?"

He gave me the same quizzical look he had the week before and then said, "If this is going to be the way it is every week, I'm not sure we can use you."

With nothing to lose, I again asked, "Will you take me on Sunday?" Again, his noncommittal "I don't know" ended our discussion.

Every Friday I told the foreman I would not be in on the Sabbath, asking to be back Sunday. He never gave me any more assurance of work than a simple "I don't know," but he never fired me when I returned on Sunday morning.

As it turned out, my arthritic knee couldn't keep up the pace all the way until school started, and I had to quit. But by the time it gave out, Susan was working, and my overtime pay was enough to carry us to the start of graduate studies.

Knowing such a God who answers so suddenly in time of need and sustains so faithfully when we have no other assurance, how could we deny His claims on our time or finances?

I know the blessing of tithing, and I know the blessing of the Sabbath. I commend them to anyone willing to receive

RIDING HIGH

them.¹⁹

Them that honour me I will honour. 1 Samuel 2:30.

Douglas L. English is pastor of the Muskegon, Michigan, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

¹⁹ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 64.

JUST SAY “NO”

By A. Monise Hamilton

In retrospect, I guess it did seem like a ridiculous idea. How could I, a nonworking, full-time student and single mother, even wish to attend the track-and-field event at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia? But then, in retrospect, it wasn't the first time I had believed in something that was deemed ridiculous. After all, I had recently moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan, to enter the seminary at Andrews University, only eight months after being baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist.

My dream-come-true, all-expense-paid trip began on Friday, July 26. That night, standing on a street corner in Atlanta, surrounded by thousands of equally excited people from all over the world, I recounted to myself the miracle that had occurred.

When the Olympic Games had begun a few days earlier, I still had no idea how-or if-God would answer my prayer. On Tuesday my sister had called to say that she was going to Atlanta with her employer for a business venture in connection with the Olympics.

"Do you think your sister would like to go with us?" he had asked her out of the blue. By Friday I was on my way.

My uncontrollable excitement made it difficult to choose from the dizzying array of exciting things to do that first night. My niece and her friend, who had arrived a week earlier, suggested we go to Centennial Park. Packed with a great variety of entertainment attractions, Centennial Park was the "hot spot" of Olympic tourism. "There'll

RIDING HIGH

be a lot to do there on a Friday night," she said. "Wanna go?"

Friday night? Did she just say Friday night!" In all of my excitement I had forgotten it was the Sabbath.

And that's when the battle began. I could still go, I reasoned. I'd be only walking around. How is that not keeping the Sabbath holy? Plus, I may never have this opportunity again! God couldn't possibly expect me to miss out on all the fun, when I'll be here for only four days. As the lone Sabbathkeeper in my group, what **am** I supposed to do while they're out having fun? Certainly God will understand. After all, He's the one who blessed me with this trip.

My mind was made up. Standing just two blocks from the park, I could hear the concert music and could see the lights from a laser-light show. I couldn't resist any longer. I was going to Centennial Park.

"So, do you wanna go?" my niece asked again.

"No," I answered.

"No?"

Did I just hear "no" come out of my own mouth? Shocked by my answer, I realized that in my weakness God had "set a guard over my mouth" and had spoken for me. I didn't understand His interference. But I told my niece and her friend that Centennial Park would have to wait until Saturday night. They decided to visit an attraction on the outskirts of Atlanta. Disappointed and irritated, but now convicted to do what I knew was right, I walked back to the hotel and spent the evening alone.

A little more than four hours after my sudden change of plans, a bomb went off in Centennial Park, killing a woman who was attending a concert and injuring dozens of others. The force of the explosion was so strong that I felt and heard it three blocks away in my hotel room.

In the aftermath of the panicked chaos and terror of being evacuated from downtown Atlanta, I understood God's interference.²⁰

²⁰ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 68.

Just Say “No”

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known. Deuteronomy 11:26-28, NIV.

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AN ACCOUNTANT'S ACCOUNTABILITY

By Wayne R. Vail

When my wife and I returned from mission service in Africa in 1966, circumstances made it advisable for me to leave denominational work. I decided to take advantage of the break in service and advance myself professionally. I looked for work that would qualify me as a certified public accountant. Since my parents were working in San Francisco for the General Conference, we went there.

Because tax preparation is a significant part of most accounting practices, the months prior to April 15 were hectic. Many practitioners worked seven days a week, and the workdays were well in excess of twelve hours each. Because I wouldn't work on Sabbaths, the placement agencies wouldn't recommend me to any of the accounting firms. As they saw it, it wasn't reasonable to ask for Sabbath privileges. I followed up every advertisement I found for openings with certified public accounting firms, but without success.

The local office of the California CPA Association had a little card file where firms sometimes announced openings. The clerk at the association office pulled out an announcement for a firm down in the financial district of San Francisco and gave it to me.

"Here, this may be just the firm for you," she said. "I know the people there. It's a small firm, but it's congenial to work with."

This firm accepted me, and I began working almost immediately.

An Accountant's Accountability

I had worked for the firm about two months when the clocks were changed back from daylight-saving time to standard time. Having grown up and served in southern Africa, where there was no daylight-saving time and no significant fluctuation in sunset times, I was shocked to realize the Sabbath would begin before normal office closing time on Fridays. I asked the senior partner for the privilege of leaving the office one hour before sunset.

"Wayne," he said, "my grandmother was a Seventh-day Adventist. She was the most wonderful person I ever knew. You will never have a problem in this office regarding Sabbath observance. Arrange with my partner how you will make the time up."

During my two-year internship I never had any conflict over Sabbath observance. In fact, my Sabbath observance was never challenged in any office I worked in from then on.²¹

Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight. Psalm 119:77.

Wayne R. Vail is retired from church treasury work. He lives in Vancouver, Washington and is a member of the Vancouver Seventh-day Adventist Church.

²¹ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 92.

OPENING DAY

By Olga Speer

When my late husband and I got acquainted, he operated a seasonal business, which was open seven days a week during the summer and closed during the winter months.

During the winter that Ralph and I got acquainted, he started to keep the Sabbath and to return tithes. When summer came, he decided to keep the business closed on Sabbath. His father said, "There is more business on Saturday than on any other day of the week. If you close on Saturday, you will starve."

Ralph kept his business closed on the Sabbath that normally would have been the opening day of the season. He held his opening day the next day-on Sunday. He had more business on that one day than in any entire *week* before, when the business was open seven days a week.

Ralph and I were married a short time after this. We always found that God blesses those who love Him and keep His commandments.²²

Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. Psalm 25:12, 13, NASB.

²² Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 100.

Opening Day

Olga Speer is a retired Bible instructor in Ardmore, Oklahoma. She is a member of the Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church in Harrah, Oklahoma.

THE SABBATH AND SECURITY

By Ofelia A. Pangan

When my husband resigned from teaching in a small church school in 1984, we decided to go back to Toronto, where we hoped he could find another job. Though he was drawing a small unemployment benefit, just enough to help us survive, our biggest concern was how we could support our three children in college—one at Canadian Union College and two at Pacific Union College.

I had a part-time job at a nursing home, working in the kitchen for an hourly wage. Initially, my fellow workers gladly exchanged hours on Friday nights or Saturdays whenever I was assigned to work those shifts. But when they discovered I was exchanging my shifts because of religion, nobody would accommodate my request. Suddenly they wouldn't tolerate my not working on Saturdays.

As a last recourse, I approached my supervisor and appealed to her to let me keep my Sabbath. I told her I was willing to work the whole Sunday or put in more hours, but my plea fell on deaf ears. She thought I was very foolish: Not only were jobs scarce, but I had just gotten a raise, which she knew I needed to keep three children in college. The only thing I could do was to resign from my job.

Our family doctor learned of our plight and offered me three to four hours each day at her office as a receptionist. Though I wasn't trained as a secretary, in a few days God helped me learn how to use the multifunction telephone, how to bill the patients, how to make patient appointments with specialists, and many other things. I did my best, and the doctor was pleased with my progress in helping at her office.

One day I saw an ad in the newspaper, seeking a teacher of English as a second language in a factory where courses were offered before the night shift and after the day shift. I had trained to teach English as a second

The Sabbath and Security

language, and I began to pray earnestly about the job. Though the position offered only twelve hours of work each week from Monday to Thursday, I was convinced that God was leading me to do that kind of work.

I applied for the teaching job, convinced more than ever that God wanted me to use my expertise in teaching to help us financially and to reach out to others. The Lord helped me get that job, and it paid almost four times as much as the receptionist job and three times the pay of the nursing home. Within a few months, I transferred to a school setting, which helped secure our financial position until my husband found employment again.²³

If you turn back your foot from the sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day...; then you shall take delight in the Lord, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 58:13, 14, RSV.

Ofelia A. Pangan is a retired teacher in Clovis, California. She is a member of the Central Valley Fil-Am Seventh-day Adventist Church in Fresno, California.

²³ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 122.

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,

God is not My Co-Pilot

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?²⁴

²⁴ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 137.

RIDING HIGH

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.

WONDERFUL WINDOWS

By Jill McCann

When we purchased our home, we knew that the windows were in poor shape. Winter arrived, and we realized that replacing them would have to be sooner rather than later. We started calling for estimates. All the contractors said it would take two days to do the job. We selected a contractor and waited to hear when the installation would be scheduled.

My husband, Mark, called me at work one day to let me know the dates selected. When I checked the calendar, I nearly choked. The dates were a Friday and Sabbath.

"Mark, can we switch the dates?"

"Jill, if we don't do it then, we'll have to wait several more weeks; it also fits with when I can be home to supervise their work."

"Can't they start Friday, with your supervising? Then I'll get off work on Monday, and they can complete it then."

Mark wasn't so sure about that solution. After all, what did I know about window installation? Mark also knew that my Sabbath was important to me, but being of another faith, he did not share the same conviction.

"I'm sorry, Honey. This is what works best."

Not to be deterred, I told him that I was going to pray for rain, so the crew couldn't work on that Saturday.

I started checking the weather reports on Monday. There were no predictions of rain. Nothing changed throughout the week. On Friday morning I offered up one last prayer before I left the house.

RIDING HIGH

"Lord, you know I don't want the new windows installed on Sabbath. You also know that I've been praying for rain, so that the workers won't be able to finish tomorrow. I've seen no forecast showing rain is on the way. This problem is bigger than me. I need for You to work it out. Thank You. Amen."

About 2:30 that afternoon Mark called. "Honey, I've got some good news and some bad news."

"Okay. Give me the bad news first."

"Well," he said, "the bad news is that they won't be able to work on the windows tomorrow."

I could barely contain my "yippee."

"The good news is that they'll have the windows finished today."

By then I shouted, "Hallelujah!" Of course, I asked how this could be.

"I don't understand it either," Mark answered. "But when the project manager arrived this morning, he said, 'I don't know why they told you it would take two days to do this. Would it be okay if we did it all today?' So I said, 'Yes. You'll make my wife's day.'"

Sabbath arrived, and I basked in the light of those new windows, and in the light of a God Who beamed through them the evidence of His care. "Thanks for answering, and without the rain."²⁵

Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5.

²⁵ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 150.

A TEST OF TIME

By Suzanne Waters Street

My stomach turned as I considered my dilemma. I had to work, and I had a major exam to take in the middle of my workday. Was I prepared for the exam? No!

I could quickly recount the many hours I had spent in church and in church work. In fact, I had attended a weekend meeting, prepared an extensive financial report, attended a prayer meeting, and finally, had attended a special board meeting. As a result, the evening before my exam I had fallen asleep with my textbook and notes in my hands.

"To keep the Sabbath holy is one thing, but all of this other stuff I'm doing is just too much," I fumed. I was so angry that I couldn't even ask for my Father's help. I felt strongly that in spending so much time on church activities, I had not used my time wisely. It was an easy matter, after the fact, to see how I could have maneuvered work, school, church responsibilities, and home so that I could have been prepared for that exam.

Overwhelmed with fear, self-pity, and anger, I decided I was fed up with being pulled in so many different directions all of the time. I had always worn many hats, but I had begun to feel that I was just one step ahead of self-destruction.

When I had started college in 1997, I was convicted that I must continue to serve God in my small home church. I had already promised to tithe my time in support of God's work, no matter what my life circumstances

RIDING HIGH

were. But many times I found myself tormented and struggling to keep that promise.

Now, through the burning tears of anger and pain, I opened my prayer journal to record my plea. I simply wrote, "Dear Father, I am tired physically and mentally, and I am grossly unprepared for my exam. Would you bring what I have read and written back to my mind so that I can do well? Please guide my hand."

I left the office that day and rushed over to my class. I sat down and whispered yet another prayer as my anger melted into helplessness. I was fearful of just flat-out bombing on the test.

After a little delay the professor stepped into the room and stood before the class. In a state of unbelief I listened as he apologized for somehow losing the exam while attempting to print it from his computer just before class. Needless to say, the dreaded exam that had shaken my soul was canceled until the next class meeting.

At that moment I was forced to see that God had never forsaken me but had continuously rewarded me for giving my time to His work. I saw a God of love, who is concerned with all that concerns us and who constantly works to cause all things to work together for the good of those who faithfully give of their time.²⁶

We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28, NJKV.

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²⁶ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 2. North American Division. 2000, p. 185.

THEY PRAYED FOR RAIN

by Bonnie Moyers

For nearly a year Mother and her two boys, Leroy and Clinton, had been Seventh-day Adventists. Their home was much happier since Christ had come to live there. But one thing was lacking: Father was not a church member.

He often attended church with the rest of the family, and he agreed that Seventh-day Adventists were teaching the truth. "But," he insisted, "it would be impossible for me to keep the Sabbath. If I don't operate my sawmill on Saturdays, I'll lose many of my best customers. And what about this summer?"

Mother and the boys understood what he was talking about. Father's tractor, thresher, and other farm machines were in great demand during the summer. And the money he earned using the machines to help his neighbors was very important in paying the family's bills.

"I have to provide for you," Father said. "How can I do that if I turn down all Saturday work? Besides, doesn't it say somewhere in the Bible that a man should provide for his family's needs?"

So life went on without much change. If there was no work to do, Father would go to church with his family. But if someone asked Father to work on the Sabbath, he worked.

His family didn't give up easily, however. They kept right on praying that Father would change his mind. "Something is sure to happen soon," Mother said to the boys.

And it did. Mr. Jones, their next-door neighbor, came over one Friday afternoon. "Mr. Hevener," he said to Father, "I wonder if you could come over tomorrow and spread lime on my east acreage. Weather permitting, that is. The forecast calls for clear skies tomorrow."

RIDING HIGH

"Certainly," Father promised. "I'll be over bright and early."

Mother overheard the entire conversation. After Mr. Jones left, she said to Father, "Did you promise Mr. Jones that you would spread lime for him tomorrow? We were so hoping you would go to church with us."

"Well, I'll go with you if it rains," was Father's answer, to which Mother replied, "Then I'm going to pray that it will rain!"

Father smiled and went on about his work.

Mother was not discouraged. When Leroy and Clinton came home from school that afternoon, she told them what had happened.

"We'll pray for rain," they decided. Three figures knelt and three heads bowed reverently as first Mother, then 12-year-old Leroy, and finally 9-year old Clinton asked God for rain.

God heard and answered! Not immediately, but in plenty of time. The family was Awakened early Sabbath morning by a steady *pitter-patter* on the roof.

Father cocked an eye open and yawned. "What's that? Rain? I won't be able to lime any fields today!"

So that Sabbath the whole family went to church together. And Mother and the boys prayed again-a prayer of thanksgiving!

All went well for about two months. Then Mr. Barrett, whose farm was five miles away, came to see Father. "Mr. Hevener," he asked Father, "could you bring your threshing machine and harvest my wheat for me tomorrow? I'll pay you well."

"Of course," Father assured him. "I'll be glad to."

"By the way," Mr. Barrett added as an afterthought, "you won't need to come if it rains. If the weather doesn't hold, I'll have to postpone threshing for a while."

If it doesn't rain. The words pricked Father like a thorn. He refused to believe that God had sent rain to keep him from liming Mr. Jones's field on the Sabbath, but the words did give him a strange feeling. When Mother learned what Mr. Barrett wanted, her face broke into a wry little smile and she said, "Guess we'll have to pray for rain again."

They Prayed For Rain

Once more Mother, Leroy, and Clinton fell to their knees. "Lord," they pleaded, "please do it again. Send a good rain to let Father know that he shouldn't work on Your holy day-and help him to accept You as his Savior."

Again God listened, and this time His answer was even more prompt than before. Before the family went to bed, thick dark clouds gathered, blotting out the moon. Lightning flashed and thunder pealed. Rain fell from the sky in torrents.

"Who would have thought that it would rain tonight!" exclaimed Father in astonishment. "If this gully-washer keeps on, there'll be no threshing tomorrow, that's for sure!"

The rain kept on through most of the night. Father wasn't sure whether he should be glad or sorry. But the sound of the rain was music to Mother's ears, and to Leroy's and Clinton's too. "Now you can go to church with us," they said happily.

"You didn't pray for this shower, did you?" Father asked, giving the three of them a strange look.

"We sure did, Leroy" said.

"Then it must be God's doing," Father said. "I must not fight Him."

So that Sabbath the family went to church together. And from that day on, Father never missed church another Sabbath. Several months later Father was baptized.

Did Father lose anything by keeping the Sabbath? Far from it! His lumber business was very successful and more than provided for his family. He also gained the respect of his neighbors and fellow business associates. "A fine man, that Mr. Hevener," they say. "He's a good Christian who practices what he preaches."

So Father is living proof that when a man decides to do what God asks of him, God never lets him down.²⁷

The father in this story is the grandfather of the author. Leroy is her father.

²⁷ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 74.

THE CHURCH WITH NO NAME

by Dorothy Aitken

The little meetinghouse had stood there for many years. The paint was peeling. Weeds were growing in the yard. A couple of windows had been patched with cardboard. And the sign with the name of the church on it had long since disappeared. Only a few people attended services each Sabbath, and hardly anyone in town remembered that it used to be a beehive of activity, a center of religious worship for people who kept the seventh day.

On the other side of the little town lived Benedicto Bayuma. He loved to go to church. He felt clean and good and satisfied when he knelt before the high altar in the big cathedral, where the choir sang every Sunday morning and burning incense made the air smell sweet. But as he grew older he became dissatisfied. Something was lacking; what it was, he had no idea, but merely kneeling before the altar and muttering a few prayers did not satisfy him anymore.

One day Benedicto said to himself, "There are other churches in this town. Maybe I am going to the wrong one. I shall visit them all."

So Benedicto began attending all the churches in the city. Sunday after Sunday he roamed from church to church. But nothing was able to satisfy him.

"I guess there is no church that really has the answers," he decided. Feeling that God had let him down, he went back to his old life.

One night he was awakened by a strange dream. Before his eyes appeared a little old weather-beaten church. Inside he saw a man preaching. A voice said, "Here is truth."

The Church with No Name

Benedicto was so surprised that he jumped out of bed. Then he sat down on the edge of the bed and thought for a long time. Where was that church? He hadn't seen any like it anywhere in town, and he thought for sure he had visited them all by now.

One day he told a friend about his restlessness. His friend gave him a Bible. "If you love God and yet are not satisfied with the teachings of the church, maybe you should read the Bible and find out about God for yourself."

So Benedicto began to study the Bible. Soon he discovered the true Sabbath. He had no idea that anyone else in the world had ever discovered that the seventh day was the Sabbath. Surely none of the churches he had visited believed that way. So Benedicto decided that he would keep the Sabbath all by himself even if he was the only Sabbathkeeper in the whole world!

When he told his employer that he could no longer work on Saturday, Benedicto lost his job. Everywhere he applied it was the same story: Saturday was the busiest day of the week; everyone had to work on Saturday.

One day as Benedicto was waiting for a bus he met an old friend. They started talking, and Benedicto told the friend that he was out of work and could not find another job. However, he didn't tell the friend why no one would hire him.

"Look, I'm badly in need of a man to work for me," said the friend. "Why don't you come and help me out for a while? If you like it, you can stay on permanently."

Benedicto knew that he should explain about not being able to work on the Sabbath, but because he was desperate he decided not to say anything. He went home with the man and worked all week. At last it was Friday, and Benedicto was nervous. He would have to tell his kind friend that he would not be at work the next day. But how could he? He kept putting it off all day.

Finally it was closing time. Benedicto gathered up his tools and put them away. His throat was dry. He felt miserable. Then the boss came in. "Benedicto," he said, "you won't have to come to work tomorrow."

Benedicto swallowed hard. He could not believe his ears.

"You see, Benedicto," the man went on, "the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, and on that day we do not do any work. If you like, you can come again on Sunday. But if not, I'll see you on Monday."

RIDING HIGH

The boss was almost gone before Benedicto could find his voice. "Senor, you keep the seventh-day Sabbath too?" Benedicto was almost hysterical with joy. "I thought I was the only one in the whole world who even knew about it."

The next day when Benedicto went to church with his employer he discovered the little weather-beaten church that had no name on the door. It was the very same church he had seen in his dream! And the preacher-he had seen him in the dream, too! Benedicto knew he had found his church at last.

When the church members heard his story they hurried to correct their mistake. The church now has a fresh coat of paint, new windows, and a name!²⁸

²⁸ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 79.

GRADUATION AT COQUILLE HIGH

by Maxine Miller

Only three weeks remained before graduation. The order blank for our announcements was to be filled out and mailed at the end of the class period. Mrs. Watson, our class advisor, stood at the front of the classroom.

"All right, class, put your books away. Bob, will you and Ray please hand out these slips of paper for me?"

The two boys went up to Mrs. Watson's desk to get the slips of paper. After each student had a slip, the teacher explained what to do.

"Now, class, write your name on the slip of paper just the way you want it printed on your name cards. Oh, and by the way, commencement exercises will be on Friday night, May 26, at 8:00."

A cold feeling went all over me as I realized what Mrs. Watson's words meant.

I had been attending Coquille High for the past four years. During those years I had been unable to attend many of the school functions, for they just about always came on Friday night or Sabbath. I wished I could go to a Seventh-day Adventist academy but the nearest one was 200 miles away and my mother couldn't *afford* to send me to the boarding school. I was the oldest of five children, and my stepfather wasn't interested in Christian education.

After class was over and the students had all left the room, I walked up to Mrs. Watson's desk.

"Yes, Maxine, what is it?"

"Mrs. Watson, did I hear you correctly that commencement exercises are to be on the 26th of May?"

"Yes, I just received the letter this morning from our speaker, Dr. Johnson. He has many appointments, and we are happy he has an opening that evening."

RIDING HIGH

"I thought that was what you said, but I wanted to be sure." I just remained standing by her desk.

"What's wrong, Maxine?"

"Well . . ." I hesitated. "I won't be able to go to the graduation exercises. You see, I'm a Seventh-day Adventist, and we keep the Sabbath from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown. Do you think there's a chance of changing the date?"

"No, I'm very sorry, Maxine. That's the only date the speaker can come."

I was a sad girl as I boarded the school bus that afternoon. I tried to console myself with the thought that some Adventist friends of mine had had the same thing happen to them the year before and they had missed out on graduating with their class. I shook my head and decided to be brave about the whole thing. But Mother noticed that something was wrong as soon as I entered the house. "What's wrong, dear?"

"Oh, Mom, Mrs. Watson just told us today that graduation will be on Friday night, May 26."

"Did you ask Mrs. Watson if it could be changed?"

"Yes, Mom, but there isn't a thing she can do about it." Just as I said that, an idea popped into my mind. "Mrs. Watson can't do anything about it, but God can."

So right there in the kitchen my mother knelt by the table with me, and we talked with God about my problem.

"Dear Father in heaven," my mother prayed, "You know how important graduation is to each student. Somehow make it possible that the date will be changed so Maxine may attend the exercises. In Jesus' name we ask. Your will be done. Amen."

I prayed, "Dear God, please change the date. I know You can if it is Your will. Thank You. Amen." It was a short prayer, but I felt that God could do anything.

Mom said, "I'm going to telephone Aunt Viva and write Aunt Bessie and have them pray too. I know God will make it possible for you to attend the exercises if He wants you to." The days went by, busy busy days, as all seniors know. Our class picnic was to held on Monday, the twenty-second of May, and there was a lot of planning and preparation. But every day, no matter how busy I was, I found time to pray my special prayer.

The commencement announcements and name cards arrived on Thursday, the eighteenth. As we were

Graduation at Coquille High

admiring them, Mrs. Watson spoke. "May I have your attention, class?"

We all looked at our adviser.

"Dr. Johnson, the speaker for our commencement exercises, just phoned a few minutes ago. It seems that there was a mistake in his appointment schedule. He already has another appointment for the night of the twenty-sixth, but he said he has an evening open, Thursday night, the twenty-fifth. You'll have to change the date on your . . ."

I didn't hear the rest of her announcement. I just bowed my head and prayed a prayer of thankfulness. "Thank You so much, dear God, for answering our prayers."

God is a loving God, I told myself, and all things are possible when you have Him on your side. Even a graduation exercise is important in His sight when you pray, believing He will answer.

"Oh;" I whispered out loud, "wait until Mom hears about this."²⁹

²⁹ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 83.

THE CASE OF THE PIANO SHORTAGE

by Eunice Soper

Janet's fingers swooped up the piano keys and skittered down a long run to a crashing conclusion. Her curls bobbed as she turned her smiling face toward her teacher. "Didn't think I could ever learn that page, but I did."

"Splendid!" Mrs. Tayney applauded. "You'll have it all memorized in time for the recital."

Janet gathered up her books thoughtfully. Her teacher's recitals were really something in musical circles, and it was an honor to take part. "What day will the recital be on?" Janet remembered that in the past they generally had been on Friday night, when she couldn't attend. "You know I can't take part if it's on a Friday night or Saturday."

"Oh, yes," Mrs. Tayney brushed aside the idea with a gesture. "That's your ... uh, `Sabbath' you call it? Well, this will be the largest recital of the year, so I'm sure it will be all right for you to come."

Janet's head shook decidedly. "I'm afraid not, Mrs. Tayney. Not if it's on the Sabbath."

The teacher stared at her stubborn pupil for a moment before saying with a half smile, "Well, we don't have to make the decision now, do we? But you must play, for you are my most advanced pupil."

Janet couldn't help dreaming about the recital. It would be held in a big hall. Up on the platform would be 10 pianos. There would be solos, duets, and trios. But most thrilling of all would be the piano ensemble—all 10 pianos playing at once. There would be at least one big, shiny, black grand piano. And she, Janet, in her new lavender formal, would sit at it while she flawlessly played the leading part.

The Case of the Piano Shortage

Down in the audience her father and mother would sit with all the other fathers and mothers. And by their shining eyes everyone would know that it was their daughter whose fingers were gliding so smoothly over the keys of the grand.

Janet would bring herself sharply from her reverie. After all, she would tell herself, the recital would probably be on the Sabbath, and she couldn't be there. Resolutely she put the dream out of her mind, but still faithfully practiced and polished her selection.

"It will be absolutely perfect by the time of the recital," Mrs. Tayney exulted one lesson period.

Janet took her courage firmly in her hands. "Mrs. Tayney, exactly when is the recital going to be held?"

Mrs. Tayney shot a quick glance at the tense face before her. "Why, the evening of May 5."

Janet's eyes darted to the calendar, and her heart sank. She had told herself that she was not planning on playing for the recital, but she could not help the sick feeling in her stomach. "I can't be there, Mrs. Tayney," she said steadily, while inside she felt like crying. "That's Friday night, part of my Sabbath. Remember, I told you about it?"

"Oh, my dear!" Mr. Tayney's face was shocked. "You simply must play! You are our leading pianist! We have to have you! Can't you ask your mother to please let you come to the recital?"

Tears filled Janet's eyes, and her voice trembled a bit. "Even if Mother said I could play for the recital and I know she wouldn't do that-I couldn't. The Sabbath is God's holy day, and this is a matter between Him and me. I just couldn't attend a recital on the Sabbath."

"Well, we simply can't have it at another time," Mrs. Tayney spoke a bit sharply. "I don't believe the hall will be available any other time. And that is the only time we will be able to get that many pianos at one time."

"I don't expect you to change the date for me," said Janet, "but I can't be there on the Sabbath."

Janet left the studio with a feeling of deep discouragement. She had worked so hard on her piece. And she did want to have a part in the big recital. Subsequent lessons did not help much either, for each week Mrs. Tayney tried to coax her into playing, and each week Janet had to explain again that she could not play on the Sabbath.

Weeks went by. Janet practiced faithfully until she could play her piece faultlessly. Finally it was time for the

RIDING HIGH

last lesson before the great recital day.

Mrs. Tayney met her stubborn pupil at the door. "Janet, you win!" she exclaimed happily. "We're going to have the recital on Thursday night instead of Friday night."

The startled girl's eyes widened unbelievably. "What-what do you mean?"

"Simply that there is not a piano available in all Kansas City for use on Friday night. Not *a single one!* But I can have all I want on Thursday night. I just don't understand it. I've never had so much trouble renting pianos!" She sounded bewildered and just a little annoyed. "And the hall is available on Thursday night, too."

Relief, wonder, joy, and gratitude sped over Janet's countenance, wiping away all the uncertainty of the past weeks. "Oh, I'm so glad I know my piece" was all she said aloud. But her heart said, "Thank You, thank You, thank You, Lord!"³⁰

³⁰ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 87.

TRIAL BY FIRING SQUAD

as told to Marvin Moore

I stood in the gravel pit by the pump house, shovel in hand and the words of refusal still on my lips. The sergeant's voice shook with anger.

"Either you shovel that pile of gravel, or my firing squad shoots!" He clenched his fist in my face. "We teach soldiers to obey orders seven days a week in this Army!"

The knots in my stomach tightened. The sergeant whirled and marched straight to his rifle squad. My frantic mind clawed for some clue that this was not the end, that he was only bluffing. The crescents his heels chopped in the hot summer dirt didn't give me any encouragement. He barked an order, then whirled again. His arm flew up, and a pudgy finger pointed straight at my face.

My fingers tightened around the shovel. I waited, eyes clamped shut, ears tensed for him to bark the last words I ever expected to hear. Then heavy footsteps pounded back toward me. I dared my eyes open and wished I hadn't.

Shoot! Shoot! my mind screamed.

He moved in, eyeball-to-eyeball. Beads of sweat on his forehead dripped onto mine. I felt his heart pound. His tobacco-stained breath blasted the order. "Soldier! Move that shovel!" Then he backed off and glared.

My brain whirled. Confusion fogged me in. "God," I breathed. And then I knew what I had to do. I held the shovel out to him. "Shoot me if you wish," I said, "but I cannot do what you ask."

His jaw dropped. Disbelief broke through the rage on his face. Fire seemed to shoot out of his eyes as they met mine for a brief second. He turned to his men and sent them on their way with a crisp "Dismissed!" Then he bellowed, "Soldier, the CO wants to see you at 16:00 at headquarters. Now get to your barracks!"

RIDING HIGH

After what seemed an endless walk past taunts and jeers of "holy-day boy" and "Advent Sabbathkeeper," I finally reached the barracks. I sank down on my bunk, relieved to be alone in the empty room. "God," I cried, "where are You? You worked everything out so perfectly last week. How did all this happen?"

To the Adventist evangelist who baptized me on a Sabbath morning late in 1916, the World War was mainly a sign of the end. Few Americans felt personally involved. Hadn't our president promised to keep us out of war? Then suddenly we were very much involved. I obeyed my summons to serve, wondering just how my new faith would fit in with Uncle Sam's Army.

But God was on my side. Without speaking to a single officer about my Sabbath, I had simply prayed and hoped. And God had honored my trust. Early that first Sabbath morning an officer had called us all out to the parade grounds for a surprise inspection. One bold exception stood out among the wrinkled batch of GIs that straggled out and lined up: me!

"One thing you men had better learn in this Army and fast!" the officer scolded. "You are *always* ready for inspection. Out of this whole company only one man is ready. Congratulations, Cleveland. Y-u may take the day off. Pick up a pass at headquarters. The rest of you report for work at 9:00!"

The poor officer was quite unaware that I had prepared for church, not for his inspection. What a God! With Him on my side, Army life would be a snap!

But now this. I sat on my cot and tried to think through the events of this second Sabbath morning. I searched for an answer, but like a whirlpool my dazed brain sucked every snatch of hope out of reach.

I turned to lie down, and my face brushed against something. As I pushed it aside, I realized that it was my Bible. I sat up and turned to the story of Daniel in the lions' den. Then with new courage I leafed back to the Psalms. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:15). I sank to my knees to claim God's promise.

A moment later I heard loud, explosive talk coming my way. I tensed and jumped to my feet when a voice spoke up. "That'll teach him to spruce up for his Sabbath and put us to work all day while he goes out and has a

Trial By Firing Squad

lark. By the time we get through giving him a sand bath he won't be sitting, standing, or lying for a week!"

With the Bible open on the cot in front of me, I stayed on my knees, my head bowed, my eyes closed. Feet hit the front steps and the door flew open. In stomped a half dozen soldiers. I knew they could hardly wait to get their hands on me.

The room became deathly silent. For a moment, not a man moved. I heard whispers. Then they left the barracks on tiptoe.

Now I knew how Mary Magdalene must have felt when her accusers walked away. I realized that God was still on my side. I had been spared a rubdown with sand by men so angry they would have left my body one solid abrasion. After a prayer of thanksgiving I sat down again and searched for Bible texts to memorize in preparation for my interview with the commanding officer.

I stepped into the headquarters building a few hours later, Bible in hand. A private pecked at a typewriter on a desk in the middle of the room. He stopped long enough to hear my name and motion me to a chair. I sat down beside what I concluded must be the door to the commander's office.

Across the room hung a framed picture of President Woodrow Wilson. Under the windows along the back wall stood two wooden tables and an antique filing cabinet. A clock between the windows announced the time: 3:45. I had purposely arrived a few minutes early.

I settled back to wait. A strange new peace settled over me. Gone was the fog, the confusion of the morning. I sat there for several minutes, eyes shut, praying. Then the commanding officer's door flew open and out burst two distraught junior officers. I jerked my feet in as they rushed past. The commander, Major Stanfield, strode out the door after them.

"Where's Cleveland!" he demanded. Anger edged his voice. "Isn't it enough he disobeyed orders this morning without being late to see me? Get him here!" he ordered.

Glancing up, the private nodded in my direction. "He's right over there, sir."

Major Stanfield turned and glared at me. "Soldier," he barked, "don't you know that 16:00 means 4:00? Look at that clock, and next time be here three minutes early!"

RIDING HIGH

I looked. The clock said 3:57. "Yes, sir," I mumbled, and stepped into his office.

The commander followed me in, stepped behind his large mahogany desk, and sat down. On the wall above him hung a picture of the president, flanked by two flags.

He motioned to a chair in front of the desk. "Sit there."

I sat down. After a long period of silence, he shifted in his chair. "Cleveland," he growled, "they tell me you disobeyed orders this morning and talked back to a noncommissioned officer. What do you have to say for yourself?" He leaned his large swivel chair back, eying me through a haze of cigar smoke.

"The sergeant told me to shovel gravel on my Sabbath, sir." I wondered whether my waning courage or my jitters showed through more. "But I was not aware of talking back. I'm sorry if I did."

Major Stanfield leaned forward again. His eyes glared into mine. "In this Army, Cleveland, any time you refuse to obey an order you're talking back. And as for Sabbath-keeping, this is the Army, not church. We don't know what that Sabbath of yours is all about, and what's more, we aren't interested in finding out."

He paused, reached for a pen and paper, and began to write. After a line or two he looked up. "No, young man," he continued, his voice slightly softer, "I'm not going to do anything about this morning's incident. But next Saturday morning you'd better do what you're told or you'll be in for real trouble. Is that clear?"

"God, what do I say now?" I breathed. The story of the three Hebrews before the enraged Nebuchadnezzar flashed across my mind. I looked up. "Sir, I understand what you said and why you said it. But I cannot work on God's Sabbath. It begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. I'll be glad to do double duty any other time. But it will be impossible for me to work on the Sabbath."

Eyes glaring through slits, the commander half rose from his chair. His face reddened. Jaw set, he leaned toward me. His tight fist slammed the table.

"Soldier," he growled, "what kind of Army do you think this would be if every man here told us what he was and wasn't going to do, and when he planned to do it? Next Friday night, or Saturday morning, or whenever it is, you'll do what you're told!"

He shook his head violently. "Sir, it's not that I won't. I can't. My Bible teaches me that God's law is above

Trial By Firing Squad

every human law, and the Sabbath is one of His laws. I must obey God."

Major Stanfield settled back into his chair. "Private Cleveland," he said tersely, "you're under company arrest. Report to this office for court martial in three days, at this same time. Till then, stay in your barracks. That is all." He rose, motioning toward the door.

I stood to leave.

He stepped to the door and reached for the handle, then turned and faced me again. "Your meals will be brought to you," he said. "And bring along that book with your laws in it when you come back."

Three days later I sat in the commander's waiting room once again. Pictures of the past two weeks drifted through my mind. I thought of God's answer to prayer that first Sabbath morning in the Army that gave me the day off without me even having to ask for it. I thought of the sergeant's terrifying bluff before a "firing squad" the past Sabbath and of the deliverance God gave me from a torturous sand bath a few minutes later. I thought of the tense interview with Commander Andrew Stanfield and the past three days of Bible study and prayer, preparing for this afternoon's court-martial.

It began to dawn on my mind that perhaps the Lord was answering my prayer for freedom to keep His Sabbath holy, but in a different way. After all, I was still very much alive. I hadn't been sent to the guardhouse. They had trusted me to stay in my own quarters and to appear on time for the court-martial without sending a military policeman to escort me.

"Lord, I don't know what they'll do to me in there," I prayed, "but I trust you to give me the right words to say. Help me-"

Heavy footsteps interrupted my prayer. I heard joking and laughing. Seconds later the front door opened, and several officers and a sergeant, severe looks now on their faces, stepped to the private's desk.

The private and I jumped to attention and saluted.

"We are here to see Major Stanfield for a court martial," a heavysset captain announced.

"Major Stanfield said he would see you as soon as you arrive, sir." The private stepped to the door and knocked. After a pause he entered. Seconds later he emerged and addressed the captain. "The commander says

RIDING HIGH

he'll be with you in just a minute, sir."

"I hope he won't be too long," the lieutenant snapped. "I haven't got all day for this affair."

"You may be seated if you wish, sir," the private said. "He's just signing a few documents."

The lieutenant took the chair next to mine, then edged away from me. I felt like poison. The others stood, blowing cigarette smoke around the room.

The front door burst open again, and another lieutenant hurried in. He puffed and wiped his face. "What's this hearing all about, anyway?" he shot at the captain. "They called me at the last minute, and I'm stacked to the gills with reports to get to Washington by Monday. I suppose this'll make me one more." He shot an icy glance my way.

"Sir, some recruit thinks he's going to baptize the U.S. Army into his church," spat out an all-too familiar voice.

Jarred out of what little composure I had left, I recognized the bullying sergeant I'd met at the gravel pile three days before. He flipped a cigarette into an ashtray.

Just then Major Stanfield stepped out of his office. The lieutenant next to me snapped to his feet. The others and I joined him in a smart salute. The commander touched his fingers to his forehead and motioned toward the door.

"We'll call for you when we're ready, Cleveland," Major Stanfield said. He turned and closed the door behind him.

I waited for what seemed an eternity. When the door opened again, I heard the sergeant's order. "Private Cleveland, Major Stanfield wants to see you in here!"

I picked up my Bible, stepped past the sergeant into the room, and saluted. Behind the desk sat the five men who were to hear my case.

"Be seated, Private Cleveland." Major Stanfield waved toward the chair I had occupied three days earlier. I felt like the proverbial sheep among wolves as I sat down facing the men.

The major cleared his throat. "Private Cleveland, this is Captain Smith and Lieutenant Carter on my left, and

Trial By Firing Squad

Lieutenant Hurst and Sergeant Spears on my right."

I exchanged glances with the officers.

"We understand," Stanfield continued, "that at 0900 hours last Saturday morning, you refused to obey Sergeant Spears' order to work at the gravel pile by the pump house. Give an account of yourself."

"I'm happy to obey any order I'm given by a--"

"By a supervisor you feel like obeying!" interrupted the sergeant.

"Cleveland!" Captain Smith burst out. "Either you get that crazy religion out of your head--or you'll be serving this Army a whole lot longer than you imagined."

"Sir," I replied, "my religion teaches me to obey my government's superiors. And that includes officials in the Army. However, my religion also teaches me to--"

"Listen, soldier," cut in Lieutenant Hurst, "we haven't got all day to listen to you preach about your church. You're making me have to fill out one more report to send to Washington, as if that's all I had to do. Will you do what you are told, when you are told? That's all Washington wants to know, and that's all I care to waste the ink to tell them!"

"Cleveland, you may finish what you have to say," broke in Major Stanfield. "We will listen." He leaned back in his chair and puffed on his cigar.

"Thank you, sir," I replied. "As I said, I do not wish to disobey my superiors. But as a Christian, I believe I must obey God rather than human authority any time the two conflict. The Bible teaches that Saturday is the Sabbath and forbids work on that day. That is why I could not do what Sergeant Spears ordered me to do last Saturday morning."

"Soldier," the captain harangued, "what outfit taught you this nonsense, anyway? Were your parents foolish enough to raise you this way?"

"No, sir," I replied. "I have believed this for less than a year. I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I--"

"A seven-day how many?" Lieutenant Carter queried.

"Seventh-day Adventist," Major Stanfield volunteered. He picked up a card and leaned toward Lieutenant

RIDING HIGH

Carter. "It's right here on his record. Go ahead, Cleveland." He handed the card to the other officer.

"I joined this church of my own free will after hearing a series of Bible lectures in my hometown. I realize the problem I'm causing, and I wish it didn't have to be this way. But I believe with all my heart that Saturday is the Sabbath, and I'm prepared to take the consequences, even if it means death."

"That's the ridiculous truth!" muttered the sergeant, half under his breath. His eyes met mine--the same flashing eyes I'd seen the previous Sabbath morning at the gravel pit.

"I really don't care where you got this notion or who put it into your head," Captain Smith spat out, "but I know who's going to get it out!"

"I wouldn't be too sure of that, sir," Spears growled. "You should have seen the idiot make a fool of himself last Saturday morning--excuse me, Private, Sabbath morning," he added in mock respect.

There was a pause. Tension filled the room. My stomach convulsed. I held my breath and tightened my muscles.

"Your church teaches you to rebel against the government?" exploded Lieutenant Carter. "Rebellion! That's all it is. Rebellion, pure and simple!" He half stood and pointed his finger at me. "Maybe you will die before this is settled! Die over some foolish notion!"

I looked at my feet. Silently I asked God for help. I decided there wasn't anything I could do by myself. So I sat there with my head bowed.

Major Stanfield broke the silence. "Gentlemen," he said, rising to his feet, "I think Private Cleveland's position is quite clear to all of us. That is what I wanted you to hear. I will have to think this case through some more before I decide what to do. I know you are all busy with other responsibilities. You may be excused." .

The four rose to leave. The commander moved around his desk and stepped to open the door. "Lieutenant Carter," he said, "I'll make out the report on this incident myself."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir," replied the lieutenant. The three officers and the sergeant saluted smartly and left the room. I leaned forward to stand, but Major Stanfield stopped me with a wave of his hand.

The door closed again; Major Stanfield returned to his chair behind the desk. I felt his searching look fixed on

Trial By Firing Squad

me. I glanced at him out of the corner of my eye and wondered what he was thinking. His face looked serious, but he didn't seem angry. He sat for several minutes, scarcely moving. He thoughtfully rubbed his chin with his fingers.

Presently he got up. Taking Sergeant Spears' chair, he brought it around the desk and set it down close to mine.

"Cleveland," he said, "the Army isn't opposed to men going to church on Sunday from time to time. You want it on Saturday. I think that could be arranged. But you're different. You insist that it's got to be every Saturday. And not just for services in the morning, but for the whole day, starting on Friday night! I told you to bring that book with you when you came to see me this afternoon. Now I want you to show me from the Bible where it says that."

With a prayer that the Lord would guide me, I began with the story of Creation. Moving through to the experience of the children of Israel, I explained the fourth commandment and the sacredness of the day. I pointed out God's intention of blessing a specific day, as seen in His own miracle of the manna for 40 years. In the New Testament I pointed out the example of Christ and the apostles. The commander's interest seemed genuine. I concluded with the prophecy about Sabbath-keeping in the new earth in the last chapters of Isaiah.

"Young man, I can see you know what you believe. I'd like to know what you people have to say about war."

With another prayer for help, I did the best I could to explain. When we finished with war, he wanted to know about the second coming of Christ. Then about death, the resurrection, the judgment, the millennium, and hell. The kind of questions he asked gave me the distinct impression that he knew more about Seventh-day Adventists than he cared to reveal, and that he was testing me to see what I knew. We sat for an hour, covering nearly every phase of the church's beliefs. With each passing moment his attitude became more favorable.

Finally, when Major Stanfield stood to his feet, I did too. He put out his hand. "Cleveland, I congratulate you on knowing so well what you believe. For one so recently baptized into your faith, I am amazed at your knowledge. I know all about Seventh-day Adventists. They're good people. My family hires a Seventh-day Adventist maid, and she gives us honest, faithful service. Don't worry about that report to Washington. It will be favorable. And don't worry about your Sabbath, either. As long as you are under my command, the time is yours

RIDING HIGH

from sundown Friday till sundown Saturday."

Relief flooded over me. I felt weak, but I mustered the courage to salute and say, "Yes, sir; thank you, sir!"

The officer walked with me to the door and held it open. "Oh, one other thing." He touched my arm to stop me. There was a twinkle in his eye. "Mind you, don't go teaching that religion of yours around here too much, or we won't have any Army left!"

He gave me a gentle push out the door.³¹

³¹ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 91.

THE BULL THAT PREACHED

By Rachel Whitaker

Pastor Timothy, I need your advice." Nathaniel's furrowed brow revealed his concern. "The nurses from the Seventh-day Adventist hospital in Atoifi are holding a clinic here in Kwaibaita. You've often warned us about Adventists' misguided doctrines. Is it safe to go to their clinic?"

Pastor Timothy thought carefully before replying. As a pastor and the paramount chief of the entire Kwaibaita district, he was well respected by the people of his community in the Solomon Islands.

"We do need medical care here in the village," he admitted. "You can accept the Adventists' medications, but don't listen to their teachings.

If they tell you anything about the Bible or the church, just ignore it."

After Nathaniel left, Pastor Timothy felt a pang of guilt. *In 20 years as a pastor, I've found some texts in the Bible that make me wonder if the Adventists are right about some things. Take the fourth commandment, for example ...*

He quickly shoved that thought out of his head. What would his church members think if he suddenly changed his mind about Adventists and their teachings?

"We have a lot of work to do in the garden this morning," Pastor Timothy said to his wife and their 10-year-old son, Bofanta, one September day in 1990. It was a Sabbath morning, but that did not bother Pastor Timothy, since he did not believe that Saturday was the Sabbath. "The taro plot will be full of weeds after all the rain we've

RIDING HIGH

had."

The three of them walked down the path away from the village. Pastor Timothy paused to open the gate of the cow pasture they had to cross to reach their garden.

As they neared the other side of the enclosure, his wife spoke up. "Look at how all the cows have lined up facing us. It's almost as if they're trying to block our way."

"They look like soldiers on parade," said Pastor Timothy with a laugh. "I suppose they'll move when we get closer."

But the cows didn't move. *Odd*, he thought. *I guess we'll have to go around them.*

At the end of the line stood a large, muscular bull that seemed to be staring straight at them. As the family approached, the bull suddenly spoke in the Kwaibaita language. "Why are you going to the garden now? Don't you know that today is the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord God?" Pastor Timothy's jaw dropped. "Did you hear that?" he croaked to his wife. "I-I think the bull just talked!" she whispered hoarsely.

Pastor Timothy looked around, certain that he must have been mistaken. No one else was in sight. Then he heard the voice again. "Timothy!" His head swiveled toward the bull. "Timothy, I'm speaking to you!"

Yes, the sound was coming from the animal. Its mouth was even moving as it talked.

"Th-there must be a devil in you to make you talk like that," Pastor Timothy said, his voice trembling.

"I am not the devil," the bull replied. "I am the voice of Jesus talking to you."

Pastor Timothy really paid attention then! The bull went on: "Today is the Sabbath of God. Don't you know that God gave you six days to work, and the seventh day is the Sabbath? You have been a pastor, and yet you don't know these things? How blind can you be?"

He's right, Pastor Timothy thought. I've been refusing to believe the truth all this time.

But the bull was not finished. "You must not work in your garden today. Go home and read Jeremiah 1:5. Share it with your people. Then look for the Seventh-day Adventist pastor, Pastor Bata. He will further explain these things to you."

Pastor Timothy waited, but the bull said nothing more. The pastor dropped to his knees in the field and began

The Bull That Preached

to cry. "I'm supposed to be a spiritual leader," he moaned, "but instead I've been teaching my church members the wrong things! I'm sorry, Lord. "The pastor and his family immediately headed back to their house, taro plants and weeds forgotten.

"I must look up the text the bull mentioned," Pastor Timothy said when they reached home. He found the passage in his Bible and read it aloud: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

"What does that have to do with the Sabbath?" asked Bofanta.

"I think God is saying that I need to share this message with others," his father replied.

Pastor Timothy called the entire village together and told them what had happened. "It was the voice of Jesus that spoke to me through the bull," he said. "We must not do any work today. We must begin resting on the Sabbath."

The people stared at him in amazement. But they respected their pastor and chief, so everyone in the village kept that Sabbath.

Early the next morning Pastor Timothy set off through the bush toward Atoifi Adventist Hospital. Questions rushed through his mind as he walked along the steep rocky mountain trail. There were so many things he needed to ask the Adventist pastor!

After a four-hour hike through the lush tropical forest, he reached the hospital and approached the first employee he saw.

"My name is Timothy, and I'm the chief of Kwaibaita," he said. "I am looking for Pastor Bata."

"Who told you about Pastor Bata?" the puzzled employee asked.

Pastor Timothy didn't answer the question directly. "I have a story to tell Pastor Bata," he said. Someone took him to the village where Pastor Bata was working. "I've already kept the Sabbath," Pastor Timothy told him. "I need to know more."

The two pastors studied the Bible together for three months. "I want to be baptized," Pastor Timothy decided.

RIDING HIGH

“And I want to do it in my village so that all my people can see the choice I'm making.”

Pastor Timothy's baptism was a big event in Kwaibaita.

Most of his church members showed up to see the man who had warned them against Adventism become an Adventist himself.

"For many years I taught you things that I knew were not according to the Bible," Pastor Timothy confessed. "I ask your forgiveness for leading you astray."

He looked out over the crowd, full of people he cared about. "I've shared with you many of the things I've learned from the Adventist pastor. I believe them to be the truth. Will you join me in following God's Word? If you will join me, come stand over here to my right. If you want to stay with your cur-rent beliefs, stand on my left."

For a moment no one moved. Then several people jumped up and strode purposefully toward Pastor Timothy's right. A few, with looks of horror on their faces, headed in the opposite direction.

As more and more people in the crowd chose one side or the other, Pastor Timothy's face broke into a broad smile. The majority of the villagers were taking their stand with him to follow God's truth!

Soon a new church was built in Kwaibaita where Pastor Timothy and his people could worship God every Sabbath.

And the talking bull? He hasn't said a-word since. He doesn't need to. He lets Pastor Timothy do all the preaching about the Sabbath.³²

Thanks to David Tasker, Jim Manele, and Tadashi Ino for providing the information for this story.

³² ---*Guide*, December 6, 2003, Volume 51, number 49. p.8.

The Bull That Preached

A JEEPCLOAD OF MECHANICS

by Mabel Hillock

Chug. Chug. Chug. Jerk. Stop.

The missionary looked glumly at the dials on the dashboard. Yes, there was gas. He tried the starter. No, the engine would not start. The car just wasn't planning to budge an inch.

"Not again," he groaned.

The old car had a habit of acting like this. It had supposedly been fixed several times, but now it had stopped once again.

Wearily the missionary stepped out into the hot Indian sunshine and lifted the hood of the car. He was a school principal and had never been much of a mechanic "back home," but here in the mission field he was learning fast!

Taking out the tools he had placed under the front seat for emergencies, he began to tinker with the stubborn engine. Spark plugs wrong? No, they seemed to be all right. The carburetor? It looked OK. What else could it be?

The missionary worked on, his once-white shirt getting greasier and his hands getting grimmer by the minute. Soon the others who had been in the car crowded around, trying to help. But although they did everything they could to put a spark of life into the defunct motor, it looked as though the vehicle had given up for good this time.

The missionary sighed and climbed back into the car to get away from the blistering sun. He wished he had brought some water to drink, but he hadn't planned to be gone so long.

A Jeeload of Mechanics

It had all started several months before when the missionary had returned home from a committee meeting. "They agreed to let us build a new duplex for our Indian teachers," he had told his wife.

And so after many long sessions with paper, pencil, and contractors, the work had finally begun. Men had to dig out the foundations for the walls. And while they were doing that, stones were hauled to the site on bullock carts. Sand had to be dug from the riverbed behind the boys' dormitory and sifted. And permits had to be secured for everything--permits for stones, permits for sand, and permits for cement.

The missionary made seemingly endless trips for this, that, and the other. Now it was bricks that were needed, but there were no bricks to be found near the school. It was Divali season (comparable to Christmas and New Year in other countries), and no one would be making bricks until after Divali--which lasted nearly a month.

Finally someone told the missionary of a brickyard several miles away where he could buy the bricks he so badly needed. So on a hot Friday afternoon the missionary, along with the school treasurer, the contractor, and one or two of their friends, had piled into the car and started out to see what bricks could be bought.

But now they were having car trouble! They hadn't even reached the brickyard yet, and the precious Friday afternoon hours were slipping away. Soon it would be Sabbath, and the men should be back at the school.

The missionary closed his eyes and silently prayed. "Dear Lord, please help us. You know I want to be home before sundown and I can't get this car to go. There isn't much traffic on this lonely road and no one I can turn to for help except You. Please make this car run."

He tried the starter again. Buzz.

Silence.

He tried again.

Another buzz.

More silence.

The missionary leaned against the door and tried to figure out what he should do. He could walk several miles to find a mechanic, or perhaps one of the few passing trucks would tow---

Suddenly there was the roar of a motor, then the screeching of brakes as a jeep pulled up beside them. The

RIDING HIGH

missionary looked up to see men jumping out of the vehicle and walking toward him. How so many men could come out of one jeep amazed him.

"Are you having difficulty with your car?" one of them asked. "May we help you? We are all mechanics on our way to a convention."

With a whole jeepload of mechanics, it didn't take long to find and fix the problem. Soon both car and jeep were on their way again.

"The Lord does hear and answer our prayers," the missionary concluded when he told the story at vespers that night. "Sometimes in very unexpected ways!"³³

³³ Helen Lee, *Guide's Greatest Prayer Stories*, Review and Herald, p. 56-59.

GOD WORKED THINGS OUT

by Bonnie Moyers

Dietrich Mueller was a German boy with loving parents, a good home, and kind neighbors. One of the neighbors, Mrs. Schmidt, lived across the street. Nine-year-old Dietrich noticed that she left her house every Saturday wearing her best clothes. One day Dietrich asked Mrs. Schmidt, "Where do you go every Saturday morning when you leave the house all dressed up?"

Mrs. Schmidt smiled at Dietrich. "If you really want to know, I'll tell you. Every Saturday morning I go to church."

"Church?" Dietrich couldn't believe his ears. All his friends went to church on Sunday like he did. "You go to church on Saturday? What kind of church has meetings on Saturday?"

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church. Every Saturday morning our church has Sabbath school at 9:30 and church service at 11:00. We have special programs for people of all ages. You would enjoy the things the children do in the primary division."

"What sort of things do they do?" Dietrich wanted to know.

"Fun things," Mrs. Schmidt explained. "In Sabbath school you would hear interesting stories. And I'm sure you would enjoy the songs they sing. They also play Bible games and have quizzes."

"That does sound like fun," Dietrich agreed. "Could I go with you when you go to church this week?"

"If your parents say it's all right for you to go," Mrs. Schmidt promised, "I'll gladly take you with me."

When Sabbath came, Dietrich was dressed in his best suit and his face was so clean that it shone. He and Mrs. Schmidt slipped into her little Volkswagen and away they went to the Adventist church.

RIDING HIGH

Dietrich decided right away that he liked the looks of the neat brick church building with the evergreen shrubbery nestled around it and the well-kept lawn. And the people were friendly. A boy about his age moved over on the bench so Dietrich had a place to sit. Dietrich enjoyed everything. Sabbath school really was fun!

During the church service the pastor told the children a story about the trouble a little boy got into when he didn't obey his parents. Then he told them

that they could listen in on the grown people's sermon if they wished. Dietrich decided that he would listen in, and he was pleased that he could make sense of almost everything the pastor said.

On the way home he told Mrs. Schmidt, "I really enjoyed going to your church today. Could I come back with you again sometime?"

"Of course you may."

"Did you enjoy your visit to the Adventist church?" Dietrich's mother asked when he stepped inside the door.

"Yes, I did-very much."

"What did you learn today?" his father asked.

"One thing I learned was that boys and girls should pay attention to what their parents say-that parents usually know what's best for them."

"That was a worthwhile thing to learn, son," Father agreed. "I'm glad you went to church. It's better than some other places you could go."

So it was that the very next week when Dietrich asked permission to go to Sabbath school, the answer was, "Yes, you may go."

The weeks lengthened into months and years, and Dietrich attended Sabbath school and church every week. He was now 14 years old. He knew he loved Jesus with all his heart. One Sabbath when Pastor Heinrich asked those who wanted to give their hearts to God, be baptized, and join the

Seventh-day Adventist Church to stand and come to the front of the church, Dietrich was on his feet at once. The baptism would take place in two weeks.

But when Dietrich told his parents that he had decided to be baptized into the Adventist Church, his father

God Worked Things Out

shouted, "You've got to be crazy!"

"Why do you say that?" Dietrich was puzzled at his father's reaction, because he had not seemed to mind his attending the Adventist Church all these years.

"I say that because if you become an Adventist and keep Saturday when the rest of the world keeps Sunday, you will have all kinds of trouble getting work or setting yourself up in business. You will be so different from everybody else. It's not worth your while."

"I'm not worried about whether or not I can get work," Dietrich tried to explain. "What's more important than what kind of job I get is that I must do what I feel is right. I love God with all my heart and believe that the best way I can serve Him is by joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

Mother looked sad. "But couldn't you serve God just as well in our church?" she wanted to know.

Before Dietrich could answer her question, his father pulled a stack of bank notes from his pocket. Holding them out toward Dietrich, he said, "Son, let's be reasonable about this. See all this money? I'm a wealthy man. I'll give you all this money and more if you'll forget about joining the Adventist Church.

With this money, you could be almost anything you want to be in life. I could help you get set up in the business of your choice. Here-the money is yours."

But Dietrich answered, "I'm sorry, but I can't take it."

His father's face turned an angry red. "Don't bother to come home after your baptism. Pack your clothes and take them with you the day you are baptized. For after that day, this will no longer be your home. And I will no longer think of you as my son!"

Dietrich's mother sat silently. Tears filled her eyes and spilled onto her cheeks. She didn't want Dietrich to leave home, but what could she do or say? She was afraid to go against what her husband had said.

"I'm sorry things have to be like this," Dietrich replied. "But if I must choose between serving God and having a future in big business, then I choose God."

In the two weeks that followed, nothing changed. Dietrich's father still said he must leave home if he went through with being baptized. Sadly, Dietrich packed his clothing and prepared to leave. Sabbath morning dawned

RIDING HIGH

bright and clear. And although Dietrich knew he couldn't come back home after the baptismal service, he still had peace in his heart. He felt sure that he was doing the right thing. As he was getting ready for the baptism, he talked with Pastor Heinrich.

"Yes, you really do have a problem," the pastor agreed. "If you were full grown and trained to do some special kind of work, you could find a job and your troubles would be pretty well over. But you're only 14. However, you can stay at our house until we work something out for you."

After much thought, prayer, and earnest talk, it was decided that Dietrich should attend the Seventh-day Adventist academy in Cologne. There he could work his way through school by working around the campus and in the classrooms.

Dietrich went to the academy, and he loved the school with its Christian teachers. But although his Sabbathkeeping problems were over, his money problems had just begun. He was penniless when he left home, and the wages he earned by doing janitorial and maintenance work and grading papers for teachers were not very high. Dietrich realized that in order to pay his bills so he could remain in school, he could eat only one meal a day and none on Sabbath.

Poor Dietrich! He would skip breakfast and lunch and eat supper, so he wouldn't have to go to bed feeling hungry. It was hard, studying and working all day on an empty stomach. Many times Dietrich felt so weak and tired that he had to force his weary arms and legs to keep going until all his work was done.

Sabbaths were worst of all. Dietrich's stomach growled all through Sabbath school and church. It pained him all through special Sabbath afternoon activities and vespers. Hardest of all was trying to go to sleep on Saturday nights. Those gnawing hunger pangs were almost more than Dietrich could stand.

Dietrich could have told his roommate or some of his teachers about his plight. But he didn't. His roommate had all he could do to earn his own way through school. And he felt that his teachers were already doing all they could to help him.

One Sabbath morning Dietrich woke up hungry as usual. As he counted the money he had set aside for tithe, a thought came to him. "You've got so much money there. Why don't you borrow some of it and buy yourself a

God Worked Things Out

good breakfast for a change? It would be all right if you paid it back later on."

Throwing himself on the bed, Dietrich cried in his despair, "Oh, Jesus, You know how hungry I am. You were hungry Yourself when the devil tempted You in the wilderness. But You didn't give in. Please help me not to. I'm so hungry I feel like I'm going to faint. Thank You, Jesus. Amen."

Dietrich wiped his eyes and dressed for church. He had no way of knowing it then, but not only had God heard his heartfelt prayer but help was already on its way. He went to Sabbath school and church as usual and turned his tithe in. Shortly after the offering plate was passed, a deacon tapped Dietrich on, the shoulder and whispered, "Someone wants to see you in the hall."

Dietrich stepped out into the hall. There stood a messenger with a special delivery letter. "A letter for you-special delivery. Please sign that you received it."

Dietrich signed for the letter, and the messenger left. The handwriting was familiar. The letter was from his mother. He hadn't heard from his mother or father since the day he had left home several months before. Was it bad news inside the letter? He opened it with trembling hands. As he did so, a check for \$1,500 fell out. "Dear Son," the letter read, "Regardless of what your father said, I still love you and care about what happens to you. To me you are still my son. I know it costs a lot of money to attend boarding school, and I hope this check will help defray your expenses. Lovingly, Mother."

Fifteen hundred dollars! That was more, much more money than he had ever dared hope for. Now he had enough money to take him the rest of the way through academy. He could buy clothing. And he could get enough to eat-three square meals a day. A very happy Dietrich thanked God for answering his prayer so promptly as he sat down with his friends in the cafeteria to enjoy the first good Sabbath dinner he had been able to have since he had first arrived at the school.

Dietrich went on to college and is now serving God as a minister. He will never forget how God answered his

RIDING HIGH

prayer when he needed an answer so desperately.³⁴

³⁴ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 107.

TIAGO AND THE SIX-FOOT FISH

by Marvin Moore

Tiago's hand clutched the front of the rowboat on both sides. The salt air blew his long, black hair into his face. He brushed the strands aside.

Pushing the toes of his right foot into the bottom of the boat, Tiago leaned over the edge and peered into the clear water below. Behind him his father leaned hard on a long pole that was stuck in the sandy ocean floor, keeping the boat just far enough away from a net on the left to give the boy a good view of any fish that might be caught in its webbing.

Tiago turned and looked at his father. The muscles in the boy's arms tightened, and he clenched his fists. "We have to keep going!" he exclaimed.

Man and boy looked at each other for a brief moment. Then the man turned and studied the sun that dipped toward the village behind him. Looking back at the boy, he hesitated a second. "OK, for just a bit longer," he said.

Tiago whirled, bent over the edge again, and gazed into the water. His back glistened in the sun. The ocean waves slapped the side of the boat and splattered a crazy pattern of splotches across his cutoff khakis. An inch of water sloshed across the floor as the boat bobbed up and down. A rope lay coiled in the bottom, its frayed end tied to a long spear that rolled with the movement of the boat. A hunting knife lay beside it.

The boy kept his eyes fixed on the net in the water below. The man turned now and again to look at the sun. "We have to stop," he said at last, half rising to his feet. The boy shook his head and leaned farther over the edge.

"Tiago!" the man ordered. He stood and moved toward the boy.

RIDING HIGH

Tiago bolted to his feet, violently rocking the boat. "A fish!" he yelled. The man caught his balance and moved swiftly to his son's side. Together they leaned over the edge. In the clear water they saw a fish about six feet long caught by the gills in the web of the net.

Tiago seized the spear. "You keep it from getting away," he said, and handed the coil of rope to his father. Then he leaned over the side again, grasped the spear high over his head, and hurled it at the fish.

When the fish rested quietly, Tiago dived into the sea, untangled it from the net, and helped his father load it into the boat.

Ten minutes later a half dozen fishermen crowded around as Tiago and his father landed their boat and lifted their catch onto the sand.

"A good omen! A good omen!" exclaimed an old man, slightly stooped, but a strong fisherman still. He moved a bushy eyebrow up and down as he spoke. Diaglo was the village sage, prophet, and priest. "Soon we will all catch fish!" he said.

"Nacimento, you are a lucky man!" one of them said, slapping Tiago's father hard across the back. "And you still have three hours left before dark to catch more. Soon you will be the richest of us all!"

Tiago's father glanced at the sun, then turned to his friend and smiled. "No, Amorim," he said, removing his hat and brushing his thinning hair with his hand. "I must take this one home now and prepare for the Sabbath. God gave me this fish, and I must not dishonor Him by working on His Sabbath."

Amorim's jaw dropped. He stared a moment, then turned to leave. "Stupid!" he muttered to himself as he walked away.

A murmur ran through the group of fishermen still gathered around the big fish. One by one they returned to their own nets.

Tiago watched them leave. His jaws tightened, and he glared at his father. He drew a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Let's go," he said quietly. And he dropped to his knees and picked the fish up by the head.

Alexandre Nascimento and his wife, Nazare, had joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church about a year before. Two of their children had been baptized too, but even before his baptism, Tiago, the oldest son, had chafed under

Tiago and the Six-foot Fish

what he called "those dumb rules."

A severe economic depression had struck their small fishing village on the northeastern coast of Brazil shortly after the Nascimento family became Adventists. For several months now nobody had caught more than enough small fish to survive. The large fish that brought high profits seemed to be a thing of the past-until today.

The houses in the village flanked either side of a narrow, winding street about a quarter of a mile up from the seashore. Tiago and his father carried their fish up the beach to the family's thatch-roofed house. The younger children danced about when the two fishermen entered their home with the day's catch.

Alexandre urged everyone to prepare for the Sabbath, while his wife and their oldest daughter cleaned the fish in the small lean-to kitchen behind the house.

Toward evening, Alexandre stepped outside and checked the western sky. "Mother! Tiago! Children!" he called. "The Sabbath is coming. It's time for sundown worship."

Nazare came into the front room from the kitchen and sat beside her husband in a double wicker chair. On a low table in front of them were a large family Bible, a small tin can with a wick that poked up from a hole in the top, and a box of matches. The younger children came-some from the family bedroom, some from their play outside-and sat in smaller chairs or on the floor around the table.

Alexandre picked up the Bible. He turned the pages to find a text, then glanced about the room. He frowned. "Tiago!" he called.

Tiago shuffled into the room and sat on the floor, cross-legged, his chin in his hands. He kept his eyes fixed on a red ant that crawled up and down a leg of the table. "Dumb!" he kept muttering softly to himself.

Just as his father was about to read from the Bible, Tiago heard footsteps running up to their house. A second later he heard a loud knock at the door. "Nascimento! Nascimento!" a voice called. Tiago recognized the voice. It was Amorim, the fisherman who had disgustedly walked away on the beach several hours before.

Tiago leaped to his feet, threw the door open, and Amorim stepped inside. Amorim looked at Alexandre, who still sat in the wicker chair, Bible in hand. "There's another huge fish in your net!" Amorim exclaimed. "If you hurry, you can still get it before dark. I can take you right to it and help you bring it in."

RIDING HIGH

Alexandre Nascimento rose slowly from his chair and walked over to his friend. He placed a hand on Amorim's shoulder and looked into his eyes before he spoke. "Thank you for telling me," he said with a smile. "But it is already the Lord's Sabbath, and I cannot go out."

"But it may get away! Somebody may steal it!" Amorim retorted. "Besides, Diaglo said it would be an ill omen for all of us if it escapes."

"God can take care of it," Alexandre said. "If He wants me to have it, it will still be there tomorrow night."

"But..."

Tiago saw the fire in Amorim's eyes. He watched the crimson around his shirt collar as it rose and covered his face. He heard the words as they burst from Amorim's lips. "Stupid!" he hissed in front of the whole family before turning and stalking through the door.

Alexandre closed the door, sighed, and returned to his seat beside his wife. Tiago saw her squeeze his hand in hers as he sat down. His father turned and smiled at her, then opened the Bible and began to read.

Tiago scarcely heard a word. God, money, the Sabbath, work. The thoughts raced about and crossed one another in his mind.

"Father, it doesn't make sense!" he blurted. His father laid the Bible in his lap and looked at Tiago.

"What doesn't make sense?" he asked.

"That we're all about to starve, but we can't work because of some rule that says not to. If that fish weren't there, it would be different, but it is there!" He turned toward the window and motioned with his hand toward the darkening sky outside.

Tiago watched as his father reached over to the table and took a match from the box. Striking it against the leather sole of his shoe, he held it to the wick in the can until the primitive lamp cast a bright light about the room.

"Son," he said, "I'm glad to see that you're a hard worker. You will be successful in life, I know."

Tiago felt a touch of pride and sat a bit straighter.

"God has commanded us to work," his father continued. "But He has given us some guidelines to follow. Six days are ours; the seventh belongs to Him. If we really want to succeed, we must do our work His way, not ours."

Tiago and the Six-foot Fish

He made us, you know." The man turned his face up, and their eyes met.

Tiago looked away and shifted on the floor. A moment later he stood to his feet. "I don't know. I just don't know!" he said, and he turned and stumbled back into his bedroom.

Unfolding his hammock, Tiago stretched it between two hooks in the ceiling and curled up in it. From the living room he heard low voices. Twice he thought he heard his name. He knew when the family knelt to pray. His father always spoke in a lower, more distinct voice when he prayed. Again he heard his name.

Tiago was only vaguely aware of the other family members when they entered the bedroom a half hour later and stretched out in their own hammocks. He slept fitfully all night. Once, when he opened his eyes, he saw the eerie shadows of the moon through a tall banana tree outside the window. Toward morning he fell into a deeper sleep and dreamed of piles and piles of huge fish in the sand on the beach.

After breakfast and a short worship the next morning, the entire family set out for church. The younger children skipped and ran ahead. Tiago hung back.

Services were held in the small front room of the deacon's home. Tiago waited outside for the singing to end before going in. Each Sabbath morning the deacon hung a sign on the gray mud wall beside his front door announcing the services in bold, crudely shaped letters. But few people attended, other than the handful of regular members. "Church in that little rat hole?" Tiago had heard his friends chuckle.

As three of the members were shaking Tiago's hand at the door, Amorim and Diaglo trudged down the street toward the beach, dragging a newly repaired length of fishnet between them. Tiago caught a brief glance from Diaglo as they passed by. Diaglo muttered something, and both men shook their heads. "Tiago! Tiago!"

Tiago whirled. Two boys and a girl were racing down the street toward him.

"Tiago!" panted the taller boy as he slowed to a trot, then stopped. "My father said you caught two fish in your trap yesterday!"

"Yes." Tiago stared at the dust on the ground and kicked a pebble with his toe.

"How much do they weigh?"

"I don't know," Tiago replied. "We brought only one of them in, and we didn't weigh it because it was too

RIDING HIGH

late."

"Too late?"

"Yes, too near the Sabbath. My father won't let us do any work on the Sabbath."

"But what about the other fish?"

"We didn't find out about it till it was too late,"

Tiago replied. "We haven't gone after it yet." "You what?"

Tiago glanced at his friend out of the corner of his eye and nodded, then kicked the pebble again.

"I'm sure glad my father doesn't make us go to this dumb old church," the girl snickered.

The trio stood around awkwardly for a few seconds. "Well, have a nice Sabbath, Tiago," one of the boys sneered, and they raced on down the street toward the beach.

Tiago slipped into a chair near the back just as the deacon was offering the opening prayer. "And help us to find the money to build a new church in this village so that we can better honor Your name. Amen." was all Tiago heard.

"Dumb!" he muttered under his breath. "If people would use their heads, they'd soon have the money for a church."

Tiago sat through most of the service with his elbows on his knees, his chin in his hands, his eyes fixed on the floor. He hurried home at noon, hoping none of his friends would see him. All afternoon he stayed in the house.

"And if You have kept the fish for us over the Sabbath," his father prayed as they knelt at the close of sundown worship, "help us to find it before it gets too dark. Thank You for answering our prayer. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Tiago drew a deep breath as they rose from their knees.

"Change your clothes quickly," his father said. "I believe God will answer our prayer."

Down at the beach 15 minutes later, Tiago and father dragged their boat to the water. Several curious villagers watched from a distance.

Tiago and the Six-foot Fish

Amorim sauntered up. "Well," he said. A note of ridicule tinged the skepticism in his voice. "Do you really think it will be there?"

"If God wants it to be."

"Humph!" Amorim grunted. "Well, it was about halfway to the end of your net." He motioned toward a float that bobbed at the end of Alexandre's net, some distance out from the shore.

Tiago leaped into the boat after his father.

"Watch that knife, son," Alexandre said as Tiago crossed to the front of the boat. "You almost stepped on it with your bare feet."

Tiago glanced at the knife that lay beside the spear and the coiled rope in the bottom of the boat, then took his place at the front, peering only casually over the edge into the clear water below. His father strained at the pole to move the boat as rapidly as possible. Tiago glanced into the water again.

Suddenly he sprang upright.

"A fish!" he yelled. "Another *huge* one!" He jerked his head around and stared at his father. "I thought Amorim said it was halfway to the end of the net!"

"Never mind what Amorim said," his father replied. "Let's get this one now."

He handed the spear to his son. Five minutes later the fish lay in the bottom of the boat. Tiago and his father pushed on toward the end of their net.

"Another one!" Tiago yelled. This time a broad smile lit up his face as he looked back at his father. Alexandre stepped to the front of the boat and squinted into the water, darker now in the dimming light of the day. Several seconds later he pointed a little ahead of the fish Tiago had spotted.

"Two!" he cried out. "Look!"

Tiago looked. "And in front of them is another one!" he exclaimed.

"Son," said Alexandre joyfully, "we're going to have to do some night fishing." He picked up the short knife and handed it to Tiago. "Dive down and get it. We'll bring them in one at a time."

An hour later Tiago and Alexandre landed their boat with 10 huge fish-six-footers, all of them-and 15 smaller

RIDING HIGH

ones!

Amorim stood speechless as they unloaded the fish onto the shore and pushed their boat back out into the water.

"Everyone to their nets!" Tiago heard Amorim yell as he and his father shoved into the water again. Tiago turned and looked. In the dim light of the last bit of dusk, he saw Amorim dash toward his boat about 100 feet down the beach.

All night Tiago and his father felt their way along their net, bringing in the fish. It was nearly noon the next day before their task was done. Amorim and Diaglo walked up as father and son unloaded the last fish from their boat.

"Well, how did your fishing go?" Alexandre asked, a warm smile on his face. Amorim glanced at Diaglo out of the corner of his eye, then stared down at the sand. He shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing," he said quietly, and he and Diaglo walked away.

Tiago's mouth dropped open. He looked at his father. "And we caught 122 big ones!" he exclaimed. "And many, many smaller ones!"

Then a smile broke across his face. He motioned toward the mountain of fish on the sand. "It looks as though there will be enough to make a sizable gift to the Lord for building our new church, doesn't it?" Tiago said to his father.

Alexandre laid an arm across Tiago's shoulder. Father and son stood a moment looking at their tremendous catch. "I'd say that you're just about right," Alexandre replied.³⁵

³⁵ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 115.

POLITICS AND THE SABBATH

By Chuck Randall

I've long felt that it is very important for Adventist Christians to be actively involved in their communities. In keeping with that conviction, I have been privileged to serve my community as a trustee on the local hospital board. For more than 15 years I have been the board chair. This responsibility naturally has involved me in the Michigan and American hospital associations.

Several years ago officers of the Michigan Hospital Association asked me if they could nominate me to run for a seat on one of the American Hospital Association councils. This would mark the first time a trustee had ever attempted this. Positions on these AHA councils have always been held only by hospital executives, not trustees.

When the balloting process concluded, my supporters were pleased when I was elected. I, of course, felt honored.

I was interested to note that the first meeting of the council after my election would feature First Lady Hillary Clinton as a keynote speaker. But I was dismayed to learn that the event and future such meetings would be held on the Sabbath.

After praying about my problem, I made my decision.

With some considerable guilt feelings about disappointing friends, I called the woman then in charge of this council at the American Hospital Association. I apologized for all the inconvenience I had caused and explained why I would not be able to serve on this council. I told her that because of my understanding of God's direction in the Bible, I had reserved the Saturdays in my life for religious celebration.

RIDING HIGH

Having made my little speech, I was sure that this was the end of an embarrassing situation, and all I needed to do was to get off the phone as quickly as possible. However, the gracious voice on the telephone apologized to me and said, “Mr. Randall, I’m sorry that you’ll miss your first meeting. But if you will agree to serve on this council, I promise you that during the rest of your term I will not schedule another meeting on Saturday.”

“This organization needs people with character and principles,” she continued. “I am looking forward to meeting you!”

She was true to her word. And since that time the council position has brought me in touch with senators, representatives, other government officials, and hospital leaders all across the country.

I’ve been convinced again of the value of community involvement by Adventist Christians and have renewed my confidence in a special promise recorded in the Bible.³⁶

Them that honor me I will honor. 1 Samuel 2:30.

³⁶ Ronald Alan Knott, editor. *Over & Over Again!* Volume 1. North American Division. 1998, p. 47.

MISTY'S CHOICE

by *Denise Jones*

Misty pushed open the locker room door and stormed inside to change from her gym clothes into jeans and a sweater before the rest of the team could follow. Their triumphant cheering rang in her ears as the coach continued to explain the announcement that had sent Misty rushing from the gym.

He and the fifth-grade basketball coach at Stanfield had had a rivalry between them for months. Finally the Stanfield coach had agreed on a match. The game would be played the following Saturday.

Two bright splotches of color burned red across Misty's cheeks as she finished dressing and hurried from the auditorium to her next class. Only Amanda, her best friend and fellow teammate, noticed her hasty departure, and she hurried from the locker room to catch up.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked Misty. "Aren't you happy about the Saturday match?"

Misty felt her whole body sag. "Oh, Amanda," she said, "I can't play this Saturday. It's my Sabbath."

Amanda stopped short. "But you've got to play," she said, her voice rising. "You're our best player. That's not a good enough reason to not play."

"To me it is," Misty said firmly. But her heart was in her throat.

As history class progressed, she noticed all the smiling faces eager for Saturday, and she began to ask herself if "the Sabbath" was a good reason. She wanted to play very badly. This game was as important to her as it was to the rest of the team, and Amanda was right—they were depending on her.

Surely God doesn't intend *for me* to give up something I love so much, she thought. Surely He wouldn't mind just this *once*.

That night after dinner she told her mother about the game, and with a defiant shrug of her shoulders she said,

RIDING HIGH

"So I won't be going to church with you and Dad this Sabbath. I've asked Amanda to ask her parents if they can pick me up, so you won't have to wait on me."

"I see," her mother said quietly. She paused. "Before you commit yourself, will you do something for me?"

"What?" Misty asked, a bit suspicious.

"Will you pray very hard about it?"

"OK," Misty answered. But at bedtime she found it hard to pray. She didn't really want to ask God's help. Deep down in her heart she knew what His answer would be. Instead she crawled under the covers without having prayed at all. I'll *pray about it* in the morning *before I leave for school*, she told herself.

Morning came, and because it was storming and she had to rush to find her raincoat and umbrella, Misty didn't have time to pray. As she hurried through the cold rain to the waiting bus, she told herself it really didn't matter. But she felt a little guilty as she remembered that this Sabbath was her turn to help Mrs. Robinson with the cradle roll class at church.

A frown of aggravation settled on her face as she turned toward the window. Outside, the rain made a soft gray background for the changing autumn colors. Watching the rain through the window reminded her of how badly their little farming community needed rain. Somehow she was reluctantly thankful for the gifts God gives His children.

When Misty opened her lunch box that afternoon in the cafeteria, a little white slip of paper fell on the table. Picking it up, she read in her mother's handwriting, "'If you love me, you will obey what I command'" (John 14:15).

Excusing herself from the table, Misty fled to the empty fifth-grade classroom where nobody could see her tears. She felt miserable. Before now, Sabbaths had always been a blessing. They made her feel happy and close to God. Today she was very unhappy with Sabbaths and herself.

Finally, Misty folded her hands and poured out her heart to God. When at last she said Amen, she felt a lot better and decided to find Mr. Cook, the coach, and tell him she couldn't play in the Saturday morning game.

"Hi, Mr. Cook," she said as she entered his office.

Misty's Choice

"Misty, I'm glad you're here," he remarked. "The game has been postponed until Sunday afternoon. It seems the coach over there will be out of town Saturday. Will you help me tell the rest of the team?"

During family worship that evening, Misty told her family about the lesson she'd teamed that week. "If we ask God, He will help us to do what is right."

As her family bowed their heads, she thanked God for His guiding Spirit. And once again the Sabbath became a blessing for Misty.³⁷

³⁷ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 128.

THE EMPTY WATER JAR

by Soledad Caberte as told to Ella Ruth Elkins

When evangelistic meetings were held in the Philippines, Eutiquis and Tessie Gripo, a young farm couple, attended the meetings night after night. Their hearts were touched by what they were hearing, and before long they were baptized and joined the local Adventist church.

One of the many new things Eutiquis and Tessie learned was to reverence the Sabbath. It was very important to them to have their cows, carabao, goats, chickens, and even their harvested corn taken care of before the Sabbath hours.

One Friday afternoon as Tessie was hurrying about, she glanced at their large empty water jar with a tired look. *I don't have time to fill the jar with water now, she thought, or I might not be able to finish all my work before sundown.*

So Tessie and Eutiquis hurried doubly fast to put their animals away and to gather in their harvested corn. They were so tired and thirsty. How they wished their water jar at home had been full so that they could have taken some water with them to the fields.

At last all the corn was gathered in. The sun was still shining above the treetops as Tessie and Eutiquis hurried to the house to get ready for the Sabbath. Tessie grabbed a smaller water jug and hurried outdoors to get fresh water to fill the big jar that still stood empty.

As the water began to run into the smaller jar, it got heavier and heavier. When it was half full, it felt so heavy that Tessie was afraid she'd never make it back to the house without dropping it. So she decided not to fill it any

The Empty Water Jar

more. Oh, how heavy that water seemed to be!

When she finally got home, she started pouring the water from the smaller water jug into the big jar, wondering how many more trips she'd have to make with a heavy load like that before the big jar was filled. Four trips might do it. She groaned inside.

The water from the small jar just kept coming and coming! Tessie's eyes grew wide with astonishment! The big 38-liter jar was now full from the half-filled smaller jug she had just poured in! There was plenty of water for the Sabbath, and she would not have to go back for more!

"Eutiquis!" she called excitedly. "Come look at this water jar! It's full! Did you pour water in there when I wasn't looking?"

"No, I didn't," answered her husband. "But maybe God did when He saw how hard you were working to get everything done before sundown."

And so that is what Tessie believed. Her neighbors frowned when she told them what had happened, but Tessie knew what she had seen. She was greatly encouraged as she thought about her caring and loving God.³⁸

³⁸ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 132.

KEEPING THE FAITH

by Gladys Delong with Glen Robinson

It was a rainy day in 1917, and my brother, Jim, was bored and looking for something to do.

"Why don't you read a book from the bookcase?" Mom suggested from the other room.

"Mom, I've read every book we own more than once," Jim said, sighing. "I can't bear to read any of them again!" He looked out in frustration at the pouring rain.

"How about this one?" 9-year-old Ivan, our little brother, asked, holding up a book. "I found it behind the bookshelf."

Jim took it and looked at the cover. "*Bible Footlights*. Sounds like a religious book for old folks. Well, at least I haven't read it before."

Jim and Ivan went back to the bedroom they shared. Ivan lay on the floor with paper and pencil, and Jim threw himself across his bed and flipped through the pages of the book.

"That must be some book you found there," his dad said when Jim brought the book to the dinner table with him.

"Yes," Jim responded, his eyes still focused on the page he was reading.

"Well, interesting or not, you need to put it away until after dinner," Dad said. Jim nodded and closed the book, putting it on the floor beside his chair. Jim, Ivan, and the rest of the family bowed their heads, and Dad asked God's blessing on the food.

"So what does the book say that's so interesting?" Mom asked Jim as she passed him some green beans.

"Lots of things," he responded. "And all the claims it makes are based on the Bible."

"Oh, really," Dad responded quietly.

Keeping the Faith

"Yes, it includes Bible verses that prove what it says." Jim chewed on a mouthful of food before continuing. "But there was one chapter that really surprised me. It says that the Sabbath is really Saturday and not Sunday. God made Sabbath on the seventh day of the week-that's Saturday-and people tried to change it to the first day of the week, Sunday."

Jim's words met with stony silence. Everyone in the family continued to eat, but no one dared speak, waiting for Dad to respond. Finally Jim couldn't stand the silence anymore.

"Dad, did you and Mom know that? I mean, why do we and all the other families go to church on Sunday if Saturday is the true Sabbath?"

Mom looked over at Dad in silence. He wiped his mouth before he responded.

"Jim, there are a lot of reasons we go to church on Sunday. Your mother and I have always gone to church on Sunday, and everyone we know goes to church on Sunday. It wouldn't be right for us to change just because of what a book says."

Jim looked at his father in surprise. "But Dad, if God made Saturday as the Sabbath, then it would be wrong to continue to worship on the wrong day, wouldn't it?" -

"Wrong or not, Sunday is our Sabbath," Dad responded. "That's the way I was raised, and that's the way we've raised you. We're not going to change that just because of what someone wrote in a book!"

Jim shook his head as he and Ivan headed for their room after dinner. "The book uses so many Bible verses to prove that the seventh day is the Sabbath," he said. "It can't be wrong, and yet Mom and Dad don't see the mistake they're making."

Ivan shrugged. "Maybe you misunderstood. Maybe you need to go back and read it some more."

Jim thought about it and nodded. "Maybe you're right. I'll go back and read it again, and maybe I'll understand it better."

Jim continued to study the book and compare it to his Bible. For several days he also thought and thought about what he had read.

"Do you have it figured out?" Ivan asked him one day.

RIDING HIGH

"I've studied and studied, and decided that the book is right. Saturday, not Sunday, is the Sabbath. And if Sunday is not the Sabbath, I don't want to worship on that day anymore!"

"But what about Dad?" Ivan asked. "Won't he be angry?"

"He'll be mad, all right," Jim said. "As for what to do, I don't know yet."

The whole issue of Saturday or Sunday weighed heavily on Jim's mind. He loved his father and didn't want to disobey him, but his parents had also taught him to do what was right, regardless of the consequences.

That night Jim knelt by his bed and prayed. "Dear God, I'm confused about what to do. Please show me in a dream tonight if Saturday is the true Sabbath. If it is, dear God, I promise You I will keep it holy for the rest of my life!" Feeling better about the situation, Jim climbed into bed and went to sleep.

The next thing Jim knew, he felt a hand on his shoulder shaking him awake. He looked up into the face of what he realized was an angel! The heavenly messenger smiled, but Jim realized that the angel had an important reason for his visit.

"Get up, Jim, and go to the window," the angel said. "Look out at the sky. If the sky is a bright glowing red, you will know that Saturday is the true Sabbath."

Jim got out of bed and went to the window. He raised the shade and looked out. Everywhere he looked, the sky glowed bright red. He knew that his prayer had been answered.

"Dear God," he prayed, "thank You for answering my prayer. I promise You that from now on for the rest of my life I will keep the seventh-day Sabbath holy." He did not know that this decision would make his life very difficult in the weeks to come.

On Saturday morning Dad was ready to go to work. He called the boys together to assign their chores for the day.

"Jim, today I want you to go to the cornfield and hoe the corn. Make sure you get all the weeds out," he said to my older brother.

"But, Dad," Jim said, "today is the Sabbath. I can't work today."

Dad laughed. "You must have your days mixed up, Jim. Today is Saturday, not Sunday. *Tomorrow* is the

Keeping the Faith

Sabbath."

"No, Dad," Jim replied. "*Today* is God's Sabbath, and I can't work on the day He's made holy."

Dad's usually kind and loving expression turned hard and serious. "Now, you listen to me," Dad said to Jim in a tone that scared him. "Enough of this nonsense about Saturday being the Sabbath. You just want to have two days to rest. I promise you this, if that cornfield isn't hoed and weeded when I get home tonight, I'll give you a whipping you won't forget." With that, Dad left for his job on the railroad.

"Do you think he meant it, Jim?" Ivan asked as the boys headed back toward the house. "Will Dad really give you a whipping if you don't work today?"

"You know Dad as well as I do," Jim responded. "He always means what he says."

"Then what are you going to do?" Ivan asked, struggling to keep up with him.

Jim didn't respond. Instead he walked into the kitchen where Mom was wiping off the kitchen table.

"Mom, will you fix me a lunch?" Jim asked. "I'm going into the woods today. I'm going to keep the Sabbath holy."

Mom sighed. "All right, Jim. I'll fix you a lunch."

A few minutes later Jim headed off to the woods to keep his Sabbath appointment with God. Crossing the pasture, he suddenly heard a noise behind him. He turned and saw Ivan struggling to catch up with him.

"Ivan, what are you doing here?" he asked in surprise.

"I'm going to the woods to keep the Sabbath holy," Ivan said. "Just like you."

"But you know that Dad will whip you too," Jim pointed out.

"I know," he said, shrugging his skinny shoulders. "But I'm still going into the woods with you to keep the Sabbath holy."

Jim let Ivan follow him into the woods, where they stayed all day. They read the Bible and the new book that Jim had discovered, and they prayed together. Finally the sun began to set, and the boys walked home slowly, knowing what was waiting for them there.

Dad stood in the front yard with a big switch in his hand. First, he whipped Jim hard. Then he whipped Ivan as

RIDING HIGH

well.

"Next Saturday," he told the boys as they wiped the tears from their eyes, "maybe you'll do as you are told."

Saturday came around again, and Dad again gathered the boys to assign their chores. Once again Jim told his dad, "This is the Sabbath. I can't work today."

Dad's face grew red with anger. "If the work I gave you today isn't done when I get home tonight," he said, "I'll beat you worse than I beat you last Saturday night."

Dad left for work. Once again Jim asked Mom for a lunch so he could go to the woods and keep the Sabbath holy. And once again Ivan followed him into the woods to keep the Sabbath with him.

That evening Dad was in the yard again, waiting for the boys to come home. The longer he waited, the angrier he became. Just before dark the boys walked into the yard. Dad grabbed Jim and started beating him with a switch. He whipped him and whipped him until Mom ran out of the house and pleaded, "Stop! You've whipped him enough!"

All during the week Jim prayed, "Dear God, I can't stand another beating like Dad gave me last Saturday night. Please, dear God, when Dad gives me work to do next Sabbath, please let something happen so I can't do it. Let it not be my fault so Dad can't whip me again."

When Saturday came, Dad said, "Jim, I have a job for you. Yesterday I bought some chickens from a man who is moving away. I want you to take this buggy and go get those chickens. If those chickens aren't in the chicken coop when I get home tonight, I'll beat you worse than ever!"

Jim was worried. Would it be breaking the Sabbath to go get the chickens? "Lord," he prayed, "please do something to keep me from going. And make it not my fault so Dad won't whip me tonight."

This time Jim wouldn't let Ivan follow him, especially since Dad had not given Ivan permission. Jim called Old Ned, the horse, from the pasture and hitched him to the buggy. When he had attached the thick leather harness, Jim drove Old Ned out of the yard and down the steep hill from their house.

Suddenly he heard a loud pop, and the horse stopped.

That sounded like a gunshot! Jim thought, but he saw that Old Ned was not hurt. Jim got out of the buggy and

Keeping the Faith

went to see what the problem was. When he saw it, he knew that God had answered his prayer.

Jim unhitched Old Ned and put him back in the pasture. Then he called Mom out to the barn to show her what had happened. He told her what he had prayed, and she said, "God has answered your prayer, son. Go in the house, and I'll fix you a lunch so you can go to the woods and keep your Sabbath holy."

That night Dad came home from work and immediately saw that the new chickens were not in the chicken coop. He stormed into the kitchen, where Mom was preparing supper.

"Where is that boy?" he shouted. "I'll beat him within an inch of his life!"

"Before you do anything," Mom said to Dad, "take a look at the horse's harness." Then she told him about Jim's prayer and what had happened on his way to pick up the chickens.

Dad went out to the barn and checked the harness. He discovered that the front strap of the harness, made of leather so thick that no human being could pull it apart, had been torn in half! Jim couldn't fetch the chickens, because the horse could no longer pull the buggy.

Dad returned to the house, his face as white as a sheet. "That boy didn't cut that strap," he said to Mom. "No human hand could have torn that strap in two! When Jim gets home, I'll tell him that from now on he can keep his Sabbath holy."

And that's how Jim, my older brother, through his faithfulness, lived to see his nine brothers and sisters, his mother and father, many family members, and many of his friends become Sabbathkeeping Christians. Today, many years later, people are still learning of the Sabbath because of what a 14-year old boy did so long ago.³⁹

³⁹ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 135.

THE MYSTERIOUS TEST

by Anees A. Haddad

"Sir, I'm sorry, but I cannot come to school tomorrow. It is God's Sabbath day, and the only school I attend on Saturdays is Sabbath school. There we study the Bible and-."

"Change that crazy idea of yours, Nour!" snapped the principal. "Every day belongs to God. What would we do if Ahmed quit school on Friday and you didn't come on Saturday and John refused to show up on Sunday? If we allowed such things to happen, this school would have to take a permanent vacation!"

"But, sir, the Sabbath is different, because-"

With an angry look the principal interrupted him. "Goodbye, Nour. We'll see you tomorrow."

Nour left the principal's office determined to obey God. He knew it might result in his dismissal from the government school. And in that whole country of more than 20 million people, his church did not have a single school. If I am dismissed, he thought, where will I go? When he arrived at home he entered his room and asked God to help him stand firm to the principles he knew were right. As he got up from his knees his heart was light and there was a peaceful smile on his face. *I will be as brave as Daniel and as true as Joseph!* he thought.

The days passed and became weeks, and weeks became months. Nour was never seen in the government school on Saturdays. His friends ridiculed him, and his teachers made fun of him. But for some reason he was not dismissed from school.

Then one day two professors were talking to each other. "What a bright student Nour is!" one said.

"Yes, if only he did not keep Sabbath on Saturday!" sighed the other. "I'm afraid he's going to find it tough at the end of the year!"

The Mysterious Test

"You mean the exams?"

"Yes, exactly! What will he do if one of the exams falls on Saturday?"

"Oh, I think he'll take it. He won't lose a whole school year just to keep his Sabbath!"

At home Nour's family noticed that he was praying much more frequently than usual. More than once he was seen on his knees during the night pleading for strength to be "as brave as Daniel and as true as Joseph."

It was not long before the students were reviewing for the first examination. Nour was intelligent, and all the other students knew it. "Nour, will you help me with this algebra problem?" they begged. "Let's review physics together, Nour; I need your help!" Nour was always glad to help, even those who laughed at his "funny ideas"!

Monday was a big day! Groups gathered here and there to cram last-minute facts for the examination. The bell rang. Hearts beat faster. The representative from the Ministry of Education stepped out of his car and was taken into the principal's office. A whisper passed among the students, "He will sign our certificates if we pass. He has to see the test papers, too!"

It was an eventful day. Nour knew that he had done very well, and he offered a prayer of thanksgiving. The next few days were not much different from Monday. Excitement, exams, smiles, and tears!

But all through the week a notice on the bulletin board reminded Nour of an exam scheduled for Sabbath morning. He swallowed hard. *I'll be in Sabbath school*, he thought, *but God will help me out*.

That Friday night Nour spent much time with God. It was late when he went to bed, and it seemed like he had been sleeping for just a few minutes when the morning sun brightened his bedroom. Nour had been praying that something would happen to stop the examination from being held on Sabbath, and now with peace in his heart, off to Sabbath school he went.

It wasn't a regular meeting place, for the church was not allowed to hold services in that country. The members grouped off in private homes and held their meetings secretly. They wanted to sing, but they dared not lift their voices lest they were heard by the police. Imprisonment would surely follow.

In the home where Nour went to worship, those present prayed especially for him in his trial. No sooner had they said Amen than a knock came on the door. With fear and trembling the hostess peeped through the upper

RIDING HIGH

window, and all eyes questioned, "Is it a police officer?"

"It's a boy," said the hostess as she started downstairs. Then she shouted from below, "Nour, come down! He wants you."

"Now what?" said Nour as he descended the steps. "Oh, good morning, Ali. Come in!"

"No-no-I-I-can't- Come quickly! Come to school!" Ali panted.

"What's the matter?" Nour asked.

"You see---you---your name was read just---just before the examination. When the inspector did not hear you say 'Present,' he asked about you. The principal exchanged winks with the other teachers in the hall and called me. 'Go quickly and tell him to come right now,' he said. So, I ran to your house, but did not find you. Your neighbor told me you were here. I came running all the way. Hurry, Nour, don't be foolish! You will lose your whole school year." Running up the street, he called over his shoulder, "You still have enough time to complete the test." His voice died in the distance.

Turning around, Nour started to climb the stairs back to Sabbath school. He told the other members, and they prayed together, asking God to intervene so that Nour would not have to repeat his school year just because of the one examination that occurred on the Sabbath day.

On Monday morning Nour went to school much earlier than usual. What were the results of the previous week, especially the Sabbath incident? Furthermore, what were the results of the countless prayers that had been offered in his behalf?

The principal called Nour to his office and told him to be ready for an appointment at 9:00. It was to be in the main hall. Very few students were on the campus, but Nour noticed that all the teachers were there. Were they going to dismiss him? Maybe their presence had nothing to do with him!

A little before 9:00 Nour went to the main hall. Upon entering the big room he was shocked to see the representative of the Ministry of Education. What was he doing there? Next to him was the principal, and all around were the teachers! The place looked like a judgment hall. Nour was frightened. He was the only student present.

The Mysterious Test

"Sit at that desk, will you?" the principal said. A dozen eyes rested upon him. Some faces were frowning; others were smiling! With trembling legs the boy sank into the seat at the appointed desk. In front of him was a folder.

"Open the folder and proceed," the principal announced.

Slowly and cautiously Nour opened the folder. Inside he saw examination questions! Unbelievable! His heart skipped a beat! Blood rushed to his face! He bowed his head and closed his eyes.

"He's praying," whispered a teacher. "He's certainly a courageous boy-a faithful fellow!"

Time fairly flew as he wrote the answers easily. Then he handed in his papers. "Thank you, professors. You are all very kind," he said courteously.

Nour's grades revealed that he was the top student in his class. He was honest, he was faithful, and he was brave-as brave as Daniel and as true as Joseph.

Until this day his unique examination is a mystery. Was a special examination ever given in that country so a boy could keep the Sabbath? Has one been given since? Most unlikely. But prayer changes things. And faith can move mountains-move tests, professors, principals, and government officials!

Today Nour is a professor in an Adventist college in the Middle East helping to train young people "to stand for the right though the heavens fall."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 9.

HOPE

By J.J. Aitken

Scrofane was lonely. Somehow, though he was billeted with many of his comrades on the dusty plain surrounding the ancient city of Pisa, Italy, with its famous leaning tower, and though all were laughing and joking, he felt lonely. He could not seem to enter into the spirit of their merriment. To tell the truth, he was dissatisfied. The clergyman with whom he had talked that morning seemed to listen to his troubles only halfheartedly, and once he had stifled a yawn. Could this way be the right way? He wondered. Why were the churchmen so indifferent, if it was? Why did they not take a personal interest in one's troubles and try to help their people overcome weaknesses? He had faithfully performed all his religious duties, and he should have felt happy, but he did not.

At last he jumped out of his bunk and went out into the hot, dry afternoon. A haze hung smotheringly over the burned up countryside. Dust lay heavily on every blade of grass, every weed. Army life was not so exciting as he had expected. He was bored with everything—with the boys who were his comrades, with the sultry weather, with the clergyman, and with himself. Surely there was a more interesting way of life.

At last, tired of wandering around the post in the heat, he walked slowly back to the barracks that was his home till he should finish his military service. Throwing himself on his bed, he turned on the radio and aimlessly turned the dial.

“The Voice of Hope,” he heard the announcer say. It sounded interesting, so Scrofane listened. At once, it seemed, he felt satisfied. Here was what he had been longing for. All too soon the program ended, and Scrofane lay thinking about the message he had heard.

“Hope”—it was a beautiful word, Scrofane decided. He would listen again.

Sunday after Sunday he tuned in. And then one day he wrote for the Bible correspondence course. Eagerly he waited for the first lesson. Immediately he discovered that he would need a bible, so on his next trip to town

Hope

he bought one. Then with his Bible and the lessons he spent his free time studying. Impatient for the next lesson to arrive, he began reading the Book at random.

Soon he discovered that Sunday was not the Sabbath, and he decided to rest on the seventh day, as the Bible commands. For a long time he thought it over. For weeks he had not attended his church rituals, and he decided never to go again. He had found what his heart had been yearning for. He was sure this was the right way. He no longer felt miserable, and to him that was proof enough.

Finally one Friday, Scrofane went to his commanding officer with the request that he be given time off from Friday night to Saturday night that he might keep the Sabbath. The captain looked at him in amazement.

“Where did you ever get such an idea? You know favors are not given in the army.

Scrofane explained that the bible Sabbath was not Sunday but Saturday. He started out to prove his statement, but the officer was not interested.

“Where did you ever learn such silly things. What church do you belong to?”

“I don’t belong to any church, sir,” Scrofane answered.

“But who is your priest?”

“I don’t have any priest.”

“Well, then, are you a Protestant?”

“I don’t know,” Scrofane answered. “All I know is that Saturday is the Sabbath and I cannot do regular duty on that day.”

“Yes, sir, but I cannot break my Sabbath.”

Sabbath came, and Scrofane stayed in his barracks all day reading his Bible and studying over a second time the lessons he had received. At last the officers came and questioned him again. He could tell them nothing more.

“I think,” he said, “that I am the only one in the whole world who keeps Saturday as the Sabbath, but I know it is right.”

RIDING HIGH

So he was put into the guardhouse. But his officer did not like to think that he had imprisoned a man for his religious convictions. Again the boy was questioned. In desperation the officer asked, "Where did you learn all this nonsense? Surely someone must have told you about it. You must belong to some church."

"Well," sighed Scrofane, "all I know is the Voice of Hope church. Maybe that is the church I belong to."

Finally it came out. The officer found where he had been sending his lessons and immediately got on the telephone.

Pastor F. Sabatino sat in his office in Florence buried in a pile of correspondence. The telephone rang sharply.

"Is this the church of the Voice of Hope?" the voice on the other end asked.

"Well," said Pastor Sabatino, "we have a Bible correspondence course and a radio program by that name."

"Do you have a boy by the name of Scrofane who is a member of your church?"

The Adventist minister stepped to the files. Soon he found the name.

"Yes, we have a boy at the army camp in Pisa by that name," he answered.

"Then you had better get right down here. We've got him in the guardhouse and don't know what to do with him."

Immediately Pastor Sabatino called Pastor G. Cupertino, the director of our Italian Training school in Florence, and they took the next train for Pisa.

Scrofane was very surprised to learn that there are nearly a million others in the world who keep the Seventh-day Sabbath. He had never heard of Seventh-day Adventists or of Missionary Volunteers.

For a long time our leaders talked with the commanding officer, and found him to be very sympathetic. But he said he could not let the boy out, or the other prisoners would feel they were being treated unjustly.

"He will have to stay three months," the officer decided, "and then we will let him out."

So Scrofane went back to the guardhouse to await his freedom.

The next day everything was in a hub-bub. A new general was coming out to inspect the camp. Everything must be in perfect order.

Hope

The general arrived. He inspected the troops. Before leaving he asked, “Do you have any boys in the guardhouse?”

“Well, yes, a few,” the officer admitted.

“Well,” said the general, wishing to make a good impression, “turn them all loose.”

So the next day Scrofane was given his freedom, and he has been free to practice his religion unmolested ever since. Scrofane does not believe that it was mere chance that prompted the general to let all the prisoners go free. He believes in the providence’s of a loving heavenly Father.⁴¹

⁴¹ *The Youth’s Instructor*, June 5, 1951, p. 5.

PRIVATE FORD'S SABBATH PASS

by Lawrence Maxwell

Bob was in the Army. It was Friday afternoon, and he had not made arrangements to get Sabbath off.

He had been in the Army several weeks already, and had gotten Sabbaths off before. But there had been other Adventists with him then, and it had been easy to go in a group to speak to the officers.

This time Bob was alone. He had been moved from the camp where he had been stationed and brought to a new camp. He was the only Adventist here. He would have to go to the officers by himself.

He knew what he had to do. In one of the buildings was a large room with a counter down the middle. He would have to go into that room, where many soldiers would be milling around. He would stand at the counter, and a loud-voiced corporal, his feet propped on a desk, would shout at him, "What do you want, private?" He would tell him he wanted to see the first sergeant. "What for?" the corporal would demand. And he would have to tell him, shouting just as loudly, so that everyone in the room would be able to hear that he was a Seventh-day Adventist and wanted a Sabbath pass. The men would laugh at him. He knew they would.

Bob didn't like to be ridiculed any more than anyone else does. Was it really necessary to get a pass? No one in the camp knew he was an Adventist. If he didn't keep this Sabbath, no one would know he had been unfaithful. He would be here for only a few days. Before next Sabbath he would be at another camp, where there would be other Adventists to keep the Sabbath with.

But Bob knew this reasoning was wrong. He gathered up his courage and walked to the office. He stepped into the room and walked halfway to the counter-and his courage left him. He couldn't talk to those men. He couldn't face the laughter. He turned and went back to the barracks.

Private Ford's Sabbath Pass

Friday afternoon was running out. He must get the pass. Again he started for the office, but this time got only halfway to the building before turning back.

At the barracks he scolded himself. "This won't do. I shall go and get that pass." And having firmly decided, Bob walked back to the office and up to the counter and told the corporal he wanted to see the first sergeant. It wasn't nearly as hard as he had thought. No one laughed. The corporal told him to step into the sergeant's office.

"Private Robert Ford reporting," he said to the sergeant. "I am a Seventh-day Adventist and would like a pass for Saturday."

He braced himself for the sergeant's icy remarks. To his surprise, the sergeant lifted a paper from the table and said, "I was told an Adventist was coming and have already signed your pass. Here it is."

You could have knocked Bob over with a feather!

Later, when he told the story in Sabbath school, he said, "That experience convinced me that God is ready to give us all the help we need to live right. It's just up to us to make the proper decisions."⁴²

⁴² Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 15.

SCHOOL FEES FOR JEAN AND GILLIAN

by Margaret D. Clarke

The lights were out and the house was dark, but it was not silent. In the main bedroom, Mother and Father were talking in whispers. They were discussing budgets and money matters in a worried sort of way, and they did not want the children to hear.

"But do we really have to take the children out of church school?" Mother asked.

"Well," replied Father, "there's milk and bread and groceries and clothes and bank payments and the dentist's bill and-" Father did some arithmetic. He added up all the bills and subtracted them from the money in his paycheck. There was nothing left over-nothing at all for school fees.

In the other room, Jean and Gillian were also talking in whispers. They guessed about the money troubles, and they realized that the only expense that could be removed was church school tuition.

"If we have to go to public school, I suppose we have to," Jean said. "But I doubt they'll have a teacher as nice as Miss Cuzon."

"And just imagine going to school without Alene," moaned Gillian. Then a few seconds later she added, "I don't believe God wants us to leave. Somehow we'll get the fees."

Silence fell, and sleep crept in. But even in their dreams the girls saw dollars and cents and bills and school

School Fees For Jean and Gillian

fees.

Next day, as Father stood working at his bench, the owner of the furniture-making business where he worked came up to him. "The business is expanding, and I want you to be the foreman of the new section I am adding," the boss said. "You get on well with the men, and I know you're an honest Christian." Then he added the very welcome words, "Of course, you'll receive a raise in pay."

"So you see," Father told the girls when he arrived home, "God has provided the money for church school."

Friday came, and the boss called Father aside. "Look here, I'm terribly sorry about this, but there's a traveling salesman coming tonight with samples. As foreman, you should see them. I know your beliefs about the Sabbath, and I promise it won't happen again, but I made the arrangements with the salesman before you became foreman. It will be only this once. Only once won't hurt, will it?"

Only once. The phrase went through Father's mind. Only once. But it would hurt. He'd be letting down his standards.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said. "I just can't."

The following week, when Harry had the chance, he spoke to his boss. "If my religion is going to hurt your business in any way, I would rather not be foreman. I'll understand if you put someone else in my place."

"Very well," the boss replied. Father couldn't tell what he was thinking.

That night Father said to the girls, "It looks as though you won't be going to church school very much longer."

"God will keep us there somehow," Gillian confided to Jean.

Friday was payday, and Father found more money in his envelope than even foreman's wages. He decided that there must have been a mistake. Then a horrible thought struck him. *What if this is the way the boss is using to lay me off? Maybe this is a bonus to soften the blow.*

Father's shoulders slumped a little as he entered the boss's office. "You've given me too much money, sir."

"Yes, I know."

There was an awkward pause. Then the boss said,

"I no longer require your services as foreman."

RIDING HIGH

This is it, thought Father. *I don't have a job now.*

"No," continued the boss, "what this business needs is a production manager, and you're it."

Production manager! Father was dazed. That meant there would be money for church school fees and some left over. He knew there was a text somewhere in the Bible that said God is able to do more than we ask or think, but at the moment, he couldn't get the words right.

"I knew God would let us stay in church school," announced Gillian triumphantly, as she looked up the text for her father in Ephesians 3:20, 21: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine ... to him be glory."⁴³

⁴³ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 18.

SABBATH COURAGE AT GUNPOINT

by Enid Sparks

It was a quiet Sabbath morning in the late spring of 1957, and Manuel Saigado was walking toward the little church in the village of Yarvicoya, Bolivia. As the rays of the sun came over the low hills, the Lord seemed very near him, and he hummed a tune.

Then he began to recall some of the Bible verses in the Sabbath school lesson. Foremost in his thoughts was Psalm 50:15, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you."

Why should a text like that seem so important on a beautiful morning like this? he wondered. *Is there trouble in store for me today?*

He entered the mud-brick chapel and saw at a glance that every low bench was already full. Many women and children were sitting on the floor.

Suddenly the calm was shattered by the roar of a truck that stopped with screeching brakes right in front of the chapel. The chapel door swung open, and a gruff voice shouted, "Everyone outside."

The worshipers saw rifles slung over the shoulders of the intruders. They obediently filed out.

"Who speaks for this group?" the leader barked.

The people stood trembling, wondering what they should do. Though their eyes were open, they were silently praying for guidance and protection.

"Speak up!" the officer growled.

Manuel stepped forward.

"You are to come with us to Oruro for a political demonstration," the officer said. "We have gained great

RIDING HIGH

victories and today we celebrate. Order your men into this truck at once. Do you hear?"

There was only silence. Manuel looked the officer steadily in the eye and said, "We cannot go! Today is the Sabbath. We are holding a religious service, not a political meeting." No one stirred.

This made the officer doubly angry. He took the rifle from his shoulder, stepped backward one pace, and aimed at Manuel's head. "Change your mind!" he snarled. "Come with us, or die!"

Some of the children wept. Several of the women knelt in the grass to pray. The angry man's finger stroked the trigger nervously.

"Today is the Sabbath of the God of heaven," Manuel answered, and his voice didn't even shake. "If I am to die for keeping God's Sabbath, I am ready.

"You mean you're not afraid? This is your last chance!" the leader declared fiercely.

"No, I am not afraid," Manuel answered. And lifting his eyes toward heaven, he committed himself into God's hands.

Just what happened in the next few minutes no one has ever been able to explain. But several of the men with rifles began climbing quickly into the truck. Soon the roaring vehicle was rumbling down the road, and the brave leader was doing his frantic best to scramble on amid cursing and swearing.

The worshipers filed back into the chapel and held a praise service before returning to their homes. They thanked God that He had answered their call for help.

And Manuel reverently proclaimed, "The saving power of God in the day of trouble cannot be denied."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 27.

PHONING FOR THE TRUTH

by Barbara Westphal

Manuel had hardly entered his teens when he left his home in Central America and began to earn his own living. First he worked as a messenger boy and later as a telegraph operator.

One day he approached his boss and said to him, "I'd like to go to a dance. Will you excuse me from work early so that I can go?"

"I'll give you permission, but on one condition," the boss said.

"And what is that, senor?"

"Promise me not to drink. If you get drunk and miss work one more day, you will be fired." It wasn't the first time Manuel's employer had reproached him for getting drunk and missing work.

Manuel didn't want to lose his job, so he quickly promised, "Oh, thank you. I'll just dance. I won't drink."

But Manuel's promise was forgotten as soon as he was with his friends and glasses were passed around. The next day Manuel didn't go to work, nor the day after that. He was too sick. Besides, he was ashamed to face his boss, and he knew he would be dismissed.

On the afternoon of the second day his employer came looking for him. He said in a mocking tone, "Well, you really had a good time at that party, didn't you? What fun!"

"I didn't mean to take a drink." The boy groaned miserably, not daring to look the man in the eye. "Somehow I couldn't say no. And now you are through with me and I've lost my job."

"No," answered the employer kindly, "I'm not through with you. If I dismissed you now, you wouldn't be able

RIDING HIGH

to get another job. But you've got to stop drinking. You're going to be nothing but a tramp, a hobo, the way you are going now. You'll never amount to anything."

"I'll change!" sobbed the boy. "You've been so kind to me, and I won't disappoint you. With God's help I'll never take another drink in my life."

"You'll need help all right, and you might get help from reading the Bible."

"The Bible? Where could I get one?"

"I have one I can lend you."

"Oh, no, thank you. I couldn't read yours, for it would be a Protestant Bible. I would have to read a Catholic Bible, because I am a Catholic."

So Manuel went to his priest and borrowed a Catholic Bible. He had no idea where to begin or how to find the different Bible books, but day after day he took time to read instead of drinking.

One day he saw a well-dressed gentleman reading a Bible, and he decided to talk to him. "Is that a Bible you are reading?" he asked by way of introduction.

"Yes, it is. Do you like to read the Bible too?"

"Yes, I do. But I read the Catholic Bible. Yours looks different. Is it a Protestant Bible?"

"Yes, it is, but you will discover that they are very much alike. Why don't you come to our church? We study the Bible a great deal, and I'm sure you would enjoy our services."

Manuel thanked the man, who turned out to be a minister, and said he would visit their church. If he liked what they were teaching, he would become a member.

But when he attended the man's church, Manuel was disappointed. He didn't sense God's Spirit there. Besides, as he read his Bible every day, he was learning things that puzzled him. The seventh day was evidently the Sabbath day, and yet this church and all the others he knew of said the first day was the Sabbath. He stopped attending.

When the minister met him on the street one day, he asked Manuel why he had stopped coming to church.

"Oh, I'm studying the Bible at home," Manuel said. "But you said you would become a member of our

Phoning For the Truth

church."

"Yes, but I don't think that your church teaches the truth as the Bible presents it."

"Why, what do you mean, boy?"

"The Bible says that the seventh day is the Sabbath, but you have services on Sunday."

"Oh, you must be one of those sabbatistas!" the minister exclaimed in disgust.

"Sabbatistas! You mean there is a church that keeps the seventh day? Who are they? Where do they have their meetings?"

"I don't know," was all the minister would say.

Manuel began to ask his friends where the sabbatistas held their meetings, but no one seemed to know. They had never even heard of such a church.

Time went on. Then one day when Manuel was working in the telegraph office he had a bright idea. He would look up the list of all the churches in the telephone directory and find the one called "sabatista." But he looked in vain. There was no church called sabbatista, or anything like it. So Manuel decided to phone each church and ask whether they kept the Sabbath day.

Ring-a-ling-ling. "*Hola*. Does your church keep Saturday or Sunday?"

"Sunday, of course, and we'll be glad to---" "Thank you," said Manuel, and politely hung up. Ring-a-ling-ling. "*Hola*. Does your church keep Saturday or Sunday?"

"Sunday, of course, and----"

"Thank you."

So Manuel went down the list. It was discouraging. All the churches answered him as if he were crazy. Of course, they all said, *of course* they had their services on Sunday!

There was one more church to call, and that was listed as the Mission Adventista, whatever that meant.

Ring- a-ling-ling. "Does your church keep Saturday or Sunday?"

"We keep the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week," a pleasant voice answered him.

"Really! When do you have your services?"

RIDING HIGH

"At 9:00 on Saturday morning, and you are welcome to come and attend."

At 9:00 the next Sabbath morning Manuel was looking for the Mission Adventista. There was the big building, with a school beside it, right on Avenida Norte. The minister was friendly, and so were all the young people.

Manuel attended every meeting he could, but his boss was most unwilling to let him off work on Saturdays. The man who had been so patient with Manuel when he was a good-for-nothing drunk had no patience at all with this religion, even though it was making him trustworthy and honest.

"I am going to stop work at the end of the month, senior," Manuel announced one day.

"Boy, you're crazy! I don't want to lose you. What's the matter?"

"I want to attend church on Saturdays, and you are never willing to let me have the day off, so I'd better stop working here."

"Think it over, son. Don't give up a good job. You don't have any relatives you can go to. What will become of you? There are thousands of unemployed people here in San Salvador, and you'll never find another job."

But Manuel was determined.

"I'm glad you've made your decision," the minister said kindly when he heard about what had happened. "And now what are you going to do to earn a living?"

"I don't know. I have no plans at all," Manuel replied. "God will have to help me."

The minister suggested that Manuel could become a literature evangelist. "You could sell books and earn money to go to school. You really should get more education."

With relief in his voice, Manuel thanked him, but told him that it was rather late for him to try to go to school. Here he was a grown young man, and he had been to school only two years. It would be years before he could train for a profession.

But the beginning of the next school year found Manuel attending the little elementary school beside the church, sitting at the desks with boys and girls 10 years younger than he. He passed the eighth grade at the end of the year and took the government examinations.

He is working hard selling books, determined to secure a Christian education and serve God as a minister or a

Phoning For the Truth

teacher.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 33.

COURAGE AFTER FIVE YEARS

by Barbara Westphal

George Putten wished he didn't have to work on Saturdays, now that he had learned that the seventh day was the Sabbath. He worked for a large oil company in Aruba, and every time he asked his boss for Sabbaths off, his boss said no.

Five years went by, and Mr. Putten was unhappy every Sabbath because he wanted to be at Sabbath school. But he didn't want to lose his job because he had a wife and children to take care of.

One day he went to the missionary and asked him what he should do. Elder Hamm told him to ask his boss again if he could have his Sabbaths free, and if his request was refused, to stay away from work on Sabbath and go back on Monday.

"Don't quit your job," the missionary told him. "Keep going back. The company can't fire you in less than three weeks." According to the laws of Aruba a man cannot be fired without being given three notices, and the notices must be a week apart.

Mr. Putten did as he had been advised. He asked to have Saturdays off, but the foreman refused, so Mr. Putten stayed away from work that Sabbath. When he went to work Monday morning, his time card was not in the rack with the others. He asked the boss where it was, and the boss said, "You quit the job."

"Oh, no, I haven't. I'm not quitting a good job I've had for 12 years."

"Well, there will be no work for you to do until Wednesday."

That meant that Mr. Putten worked only on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday that week. He got no pay for Monday and Tuesday, the days he didn't work. On Sabbath he was at Sabbath school once again.

Courage After Five Years

On Monday morning when he went back to work, again his time card was missing. This time the foreman said, "There will be no work for you until Thursday." So that week Mr. Putten worked only on Thursday and Friday. That week he attended Sabbath school for the third time.

On Monday he went to the big boss, the manager, and told him about his problem. "I would like to help you," the manager said, "but we don't have a job for a man who cannot work on Saturdays."

Mr. Putten said, "I know one job you have where I could have the Sabbath free." "What's that?"

"The cleaning squad."

"Oh, yes, but you wouldn't want to work sweeping and scrubbing for only nine guilders a day after you have been earning 14 guilders at a good job." (A guilder is a Dutch coin.)

Mr. Putten knew that if he earned only nine guilders a day, there would be barely enough money for food, and nothing for clothes for his children. But he said to the manager, "I would be willing to work for nine guilders if I could keep God's Sabbath."

"Then you must be crazy, and we have no jobs for crazy men! Do you have a family?"

"Oh, yes."

Then the big boss got really angry and told Mr. Putten to leave his office at once. "You are absolutely crazy," he shouted.

But as Mr. Putten was walking sadly down the hall, the manager called him back. "I'm not sorry for your wife, because she must be crazy too or she would not have married you. But I do feel sorry for your little children. You can work on the cleaning squad for nine guilders a day and have your Sabbaths free if you want to."

Can you guess what happened after that? Mr. Putten worked only one day on the cleaning squad. After that the manager told the foreman to let him have his old job back with Sabbaths off. The next day the foreman came around and called Mr. Putten back to work in the shop.

And the manager told Mr. Putten, "I am going to pay you 14 guilders for the day you worked on the cleaning squad, and your full pay, too, for those Mondays and Tuesdays and that Wednesday when we told you there wasn't any work for you to do."

RIDING HIGH

So, you see, when Mr. Putten finally got up enough courage-after five years-to be really firm about keeping the Sabbath, God helped him.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 40.

THE BROKEN RADIO

by *Corrine Kandoll Vanderwerff*

Judy walked out of the cafeteria and hurried across the campus to the dormitory. She had just enough time to get changed before Sabbath school began.

"Hey, sleepyhead," she chided when she found her roommate still in bed. "That's no place to be at this time on a Sabbath morning."

Doris turned her head to look at Judy. "Sleepyhead, nothing," she croaked.

"What happened to you?" Then without waiting for an answer, Judy said, "I'll put your name on the nurse's list on my way to church, OK?"

Doris nodded. "Some bug got me during the night. I sure wish I didn't have to miss Sabbath school and church."

"There's always the radio," Judy said. "That's one nice thing about this place. You can listen to Sabbath services in your room." "What radio?"

"Oh, that's right. Mine quit working last week. I'll run down to Irene's room and see if she's still around. I'm sure she'd let you use hers."

Without waiting for a reply Judy left the room. She knocked on Irene's door, but there was no answer. The door was locked. Evidently Irene was gone. Most of the other girls would be in Sabbath school by now too.

Judy felt sorry for her roommate. She returned to the room, wondering how she could help. "Everyone's gone," she said. "I wish I could help you."

RIDING HIGH

"Let's try your radio," Doris suggested.

"Well, I could get it out. I was going to take it over to the shop yesterday to have it repaired, but never got around to it."

Judy went to the closet, thinking that it was hopeless. But she wanted to cheer Doris, so she decided to try to make it work. She took out the radio and set it on the table. Then she plugged it in and set the dial. There was a crackling, and then organ music filtered out of the speaker.

"It works!" Judy exclaimed. "But it was as dead as anything last Wednesday when I tried to use it." Doris smiled. "I thought it would work."

"Well, I'd better hurry and get to church or I'll never find a place to sit. I won't forget to put your name on sick list. Enjoy the services."

"I'll be here when you get back," Doris assured her.

When church service was over, Judy hurried back to the dormitory. "Well, how'd you enjoy the sermon today from the comfort of your pillow?" she teased as she walked in.

"It was lovely," Doris replied. "Do you know that until today I've never missed a single church service since I was a little girl. I'm so glad your radio worked. Even if I wasn't in church, I at least heard church. When you went to see if Irene was in her room this morning, I said a little prayer that if you couldn't find someone to borrow a radio from, your radio would work just for this morning."

Judy was impressed. "I knew that radio couldn't work by itself."

Later that evening Judy decided to test her radio. She turned it on. There was not a sound. She turned the dial and twisted all the knobs. She thumped the case. She did everything she could think of to make the radio play. Still it would not make a sound. And it never did work again until she took it to the repair shop and got it fixed.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 44.

THE MYSTERIOUS PORTER

by Edna Jewell

"I need 10 porters to carry my loads. Go find them," commanded the chief.

Kapito hastened to do his bidding. Over the hills he walked, informing one man after another that the chief would need him the next day. At last he came to Elia's house. He knew the boy would make a good carrier, for he was strong and honest.

"Be sure to be on hand at dawn," he told Elia.

"But, Kapito," Elia said, "you know that I am a Seventh-day Adventist. I do not like to start a long trip on Friday."

"Yes, I know," Kapito said. "But the chief needs you this time. Besides, you'll probably arrive at your destination before your rest day begins, so why worry?"

Early the next morning the porters lined up in front of the chief's house. Each man was given a pack.

"You must be at Mzimba before sundown today," the chief commanded. "Now go."

The chief was transported without any discomfort to himself. A chair was slung between two poles, and four extra porters carried him.

Elia was happy when he heard that they were to be at the end of their journey before Sabbath. As he walked along with the rest of the men he made his plans. He would receive his pay, buy some food for the Sabbath, perhaps find an Adventist school nearby, and visit with fellow Christians. Then he would return home on Sunday.

But Elia's plans didn't work out the way he expected. Elia did reach Mzimba long before the sun set. But the chief was not traveling with the regular porters, and it was long after dark before he arrived at camp.

RIDING HIGH

After eating the cold potatoes he had brought from home, Elia rolled up in his blanket and lay down under the stars-but not before he had asked his heavenly Father to watch over him during the night.

Long before any of the men thought of stirring, Kapito came to arouse them.

Elia sat up. "But I thought this was the end of our journey. Do we have to go farther? But-but-this is my Sabbath. I cannot carry a load today."

"You will have to tell the chief," answered Kapito. "I'll go with you."

"Wait a minute." Elia stood up and walked behind some bushes. He dropped to his knees. "God, You are my refuge and strength," he prayed. "Please be with me now."

Together the two walked to the chief.

At first the chief tried to bribe Elia, offering him gifts if he would carry his load. But Elia said he had to obey God first. The chief was infuriated and called for his whip. Two men threw Elia to the ground. They pulled off his clothes and left him lying on his face with only a loincloth around his waist.

The hippo-hide whip sang through the air and crashed with a dull thud on the bare back. A second time the whip screamed down on the lad. After the fifth lash, blood began to flow.

"Now are you going to obey me?" shouted the angry chief.

Elia spoke faintly, but there was no wavering. "If you will just give me a chance, I will carry your load after the sun sets. You will have it before you are up tomorrow."

"Very good, we'll see, but you will carry a double load, 88 pounds instead of 44."

The chief ordered the porters to tie two bundles together and leave them with the "seven-days" man, and no one was to give him food. Without a word the porters did as they were ordered, and Elia was left alone.

Elia shivered and slowly bent down to pick up his clothes. His back was still bleeding. He knew that soon the flies would be attracted to the wounds. He carried the heavy load to an umbrella tree not faraway, so that when the sun came up he could rest in its shade.

Then he knelt down and prayed, "Help me today to keep my thoughts on things of heaven so that I will not notice my hunger or my pain." Although he didn't have a Bible with him, he repeated Bible verses he had

The Mysterious Porter

memorized. That Sabbath he felt Jesus very near to him as he sat alone under the tree.

As the setting sun painted magic colors in the sky, Elia knelt once more to ask for protection on his journey. Then he stood up very carefully. Every movement was agony. Scabs had formed on the open welts, and as he stretched, the wounds cracked open. He could feel the slow, warm trickle of blood down his back. How could he possibly walk all those miles with that heavy load?

In the distance he heard the terrifying cry of a hyena. Elia stumbled forward, but gradually his steps slackened as he grew more thirsty. And he was faint from hunger.

He was just going to sit down when he thought he heard the sound of water. Off to the side, through the bushes, yes, there it was. He began to drink deeply.

"Thank You, Jesus. That was wonderful," he whispered as he returned to take up his load.

"Would you like some freshly baked potatoes?"

Elia turned in surprise. There stood a man with a white cloth bundle in his hand. "My Master said I was to bring these to you. Eat them. You will find them very good."

Never had Elia tasted such delicious sweet potatoes.

"That was wonderful," he said as he stood up once more. All the stiffness seemed to have left his back. When he turned to lift his load, he saw that his new friend had placed it on his own head.

Elia was puzzled. Was this man another porter? He had never met him on any of his other journeys. But he set off with him along the path. As they walked and talked, heaven seemed to come down to earth for Elia. On and on they walked.

The first gray streaks of dawn were tinting the sky when the mysterious porter stopped. "I have to be going now. Do you think you can carry the load?"

Elia apologized for having let him carry it so far.

Carefully the stranger placed the bundles in position on Elia's head. The back string, which held them together, slipped a little, and the stranger stepped behind Elia to tie them more securely.

"It is firm once more," he said. "Goodbye and God bless you."

RIDING HIGH

Elia turned to thank him-but he was alone. Though the valley was open for miles around, there was no trace of anyone.

"He was an angel!" Elia exclaimed. "Oh, I am the luckiest man on earth! I have walked with an angel!" With renewed energy, Elia sped over the ground.

Kapito and the porters were still rolled up in their blankets when Elia picked his way around them to the grass shack where the chief slept.

"*Odi, odi,*" he called. "Good morning, Chief."

The chief's mouth dropped open. "You have done the impossible! You should have fallen by the way. I expected to send men back for you, and then I would have been able to punish you again."

Elia answered slowly. "I don't doubt that you thought it was impossible for me to come with my injured back and the double load, but God promised to be my refuge and strength, and He has kept His word."⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 47.

SABBATH IN JAIL

by Elfriede Volk

Frank Schwarz did not think of himself as a criminal, yet here he was, in the courthouse, with a case coming up against him. It seemed so strange, so unreal. But the hard wooden bench he was sitting on was real-as real as the 1921 calendar on the wall and the flag beside the judge's bench-the flag of one of the great nations of Europe.

The bailiff's voice droned through the courtroom as the officer read charges of petty theft against a small, grungy-looking man. The case did not interest Mr. Schwarz, so he looked around at the other offenders. There was a middle-aged man with a ruddy face who was obviously still under the effects of too much alcohol. Beside him sat two teenagers smiling self-consciously. Next to them was a flippant young woman. Beside her was a shifty-eyed little man with baggy pants and an oversize jacket. Mr. Schwarz himself was next. At the very end of the row sat a man in dirty rags.

The gavel rapped, arousing Mr. Schwarz from his reverie. "Next case," called the judge.

The bailiff called forward the man with the dirty rags, and Mr. Schwarz went back to studying the people on the bench beside him. *What are they accused of?* he wondered. *Are they criminals, or just victims of misunderstanding and misfortune?*

The judge's gavel rapped again, and the bailiff called, "Frank Schwarz."

As Mr. Schwarz walked to the front he felt all eyes fixed on him.

"You are charged with an offense under the education act. On four separate occasions you have refused to let your children attend school on Saturday. How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?"

Mr. Schwarz's throat felt very dry. "Guilty," he managed to say.

"You know the penalty for such an offense?" asked the judge.

RIDING HIGH

"Yes, Your Honor."

"Then why did you do it?"

Mr. Schwarz took a deep breath. This was what he had been waiting for, even hoping for-a chance to explain. He knew that attendance at school was compulsory six days a week, yet he could not bring himself to break God's commandments in order to obey the law of the land. He prayed for divine help as he was about to present his case.

"Your Honor," he began, "I am a Seventh-day Adventist, and believe in the seventh-day Sabbath, which God says to keep holy. This Sabbath is Saturday. The commandment also applies for my children-"

"Seventh-day Adventist?" interrupted the judge. "Never heard of them. Anyway, there is nothing in the books about them. But you seem like a reasonable fellow, so if you will forget your notions and let your children attend school on Saturdays, I can dismiss the charge against you."

"Thank you, Your Honor," replied Mr. Schwarz, "but I cannot do that. I believe Saturday is God's Sabbath, and it would be a sin for me to send my children to school on that day."

"Very well then," said the judge, angered by Mr. Schwarz's apparent stubbornness, "you can take the consequences of your refusal. Fifty marks or three days in jail. You can pay the clerk."

All that week Mr. Schwarz debated what to do. Should he pay the fine? That would be much more pleasant than spending time in a musty cell. But could he afford to pay? If he continued to refuse to send the children to school on the Sabbath, he would have to pay 50 marks each month. But when would he find time to spend in jail? He could not afford to take time off work to put in his three days. Three whole days would be 72 hours.

When Friday morning came, he slipped his Bible into his lunch box and packed a set of clean clothes. He felt very strange when he said goodbye to his family that morning and walked out to work with his clean clothes under his arm.

As soon as the closing whistle blew he hurried up the mineshaft and into the shower room. As he was scrubbing off the coal dust he thought of home. His wife would be adding last-minute touches to the Sabbath meal, which she always prepared on Friday afternoon. Their oldest son would be sitting on the front steps, giving an extra shine to the family's shoes. And their daughter would be setting the table in preparation for the evening

Sabbath in Jail

meal. The food was always ready on the table when he came home on Fridays. But today there would be one less place to set, for he was not going home.

Quickly Mr. Schwarz stepped out of the shower and dried himself. Soon he was dressed in his clean suit. Tucking his Bible under his arm, he walked out through the gate and headed directly for the city jail.

"Well, you're a good one!" exclaimed the warden in surprise. "Usually we have to drag people here by force, yet here you walk in of your own free will." Still shaking his head, he led Mr. Schwarz to a cell.

That Sabbath was the first of many Mr. Schwarz spent reading his Bible in the city jail. He remained true to his convictions, so once a month, as soon as work was over on Friday, he walked directly to the city jail. The warden came to expect him, and never bothered to lock him in. On Monday morning his wife brought him his lunch so that he could go directly to work again. He had not yet spent the full 72 hours in jail, so every six or seven weeks he spent an extra Sabbath in the cell.

Eventually the law was changed so that the children of Jews and Seventh-day Adventists were exempt from attending school on Saturdays. But before that time came, Mr. Schwarz spent many Sabbaths in jail.

I wonder: If we had a law forcing us to attend school on the Sabbath, what would we do? Would we stand true to principle during difficult times? Then why not now?⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 53.

BEFORE THE RAIN CAME

by Myrle Tabler

As Terry ran downstairs with his books under his arm, he heard voices in the kitchen. One was loud and argumentative, the other quiet.

"The boys will have to cut and shock the corn this weekend. A rain will ruin it." That was Grandpa Mynter, and he sounded determined.

Cut corn on Sabbath? thought Terry. He could not hear his mother's reply.

Just then Arden, halfway out the front door, called back, "Hurry, Terry, we'll miss the bus!"

Terry dashed after his brother. The school bus, full of laughing, chattering boys and girls drew up to the curb, and the boys jumped on. Arden joined in the fun, but Terry was quiet, wondering what to do.

"Look after things while I'm gone," his father had told him, and Terry had felt proud and grown-up. He liked to please his dad.

Terry was 14, and Arden was 12. Their father worked in the nearby city during the week and drove home Saturday afternoons. The boys took care of the family cow and did chores before and after school. But to cut and shock a small field of corn for winter feed for the cow would take almost two full days. Should he obey Grandpa, who owned the land, or should he obey God who had commanded that the Sabbath day be kept holy? Whatever he did, Arden would probably follow his example.

Mother was a Seventh-day Adventist, but Father was not. To him his wife's religion was "foolishness." Terry

Before the Rain Came

felt sure that his dad would agree with Grandpa Mynter.

There was no Seventh-day Adventist church nearby for Mother and the boys to attend, so they conducted their own weekly Sabbath school at home. Some of their friends liked to drop in on Sabbath mornings to hear Bible stories and sing hymns. They knew they were always welcome. But what would they think if they found the boys working in the field on Sabbath?

During recess Terry joined in the ball game, but his heart was not in it. After making several fumbling plays, he abandoned the game and sat down on the grass to watch. In a few minutes Arden joined him.

"What's the matter, Terry? Don't you feel good?" Terry explained.

"Well, today is only Tuesday. Maybe something will happen before Sabbath." Arden tried to sound cheerful.

Terry sat up straight. "I just thought of something I saw on the bulletin board. There's a teachers' meeting next week, so we'll have two days of vacation. We can do the corn then."

Arden was not so sure. "Do you think Grandpa and Dad will let it wait till then?"

The boys did not have long to wonder. Grandpa Mynter was waiting for them when they arrived home after school.

"Now remember, you boys are to shock corn Saturday."

Arden explained that they could do it the following week because of a teachers' meeting.

"That corn won't wait another week! The kernels are beginning to shell out. It's time you got over this 'Sabbath fanaticism!'" He turned angrily away, pausing for a parting threat. "I'll talk to your father about this!"

"Whew!" said Arden. "He'll make trouble for us when Dad gets home. It'll be hard on Mother too. What'll we do?"

Terry had no answer.

Mother and the boys prayed about the problem that evening at worship. Mother reminded them,

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

RIDING HIGH

But Terry was not sure. He lay awake long after his brother was asleep. Finally he got up and knelt by his bed. "Dear Jesus," he prayed, "help me to do what is right no matter what happens-even if the corn spoils and Dad and Grandpa punish us."

He could sleep now, for he had made up his mind.

"You don't seem worried today," Arden said as they dressed for school.

"No, I feel as if everything will be all right."

But sure as he was, even Terry was not prepared for the principal's announcement in assembly that Wednesday morning. He could hardly believe what he heard.

"Something unexpected has come up," the principal announced. 'Our chief speaker will not be able to come next week, but he can come this week, so we have moved teachers' meeting to this Thursday and Friday. There will be no school on these days."

The boys' father drove home Saturday afternoon just as the rain was beginning to fall. As he passed the corn patch, he looked out the window and saw shocks standing tall and safe in the cut-over field.

Thanks to the mysterious change in the teachers' meeting, Terry and Arden had been able to obey their father and keep the Sabbath too.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 58.

FREEDOM LETTER

by Siegfried Greutz

Trying to hide her troubled face, 13-year-old Emma hurried about the crowded immigrant barracks helping Mother care for the other children. She pulled her younger brother Eddy into a chair and started to comb his unruly black hair.

"If you don't sit still, you won't have any hair left," she said, bringing the comb down on his head with a snap.

What is wrong with me today? she wondered. *Why am I so angry? I was never this way when we were at home.*

Her family would never have left their lovely Romanian home if it had not been for the German leader Adolf Hitler. Hitler was determined to bring the "super race" back home and lead them on to conquer the rest of the world. He had Germans from all points of the compass returning back to the fatherland.

Emma's family, who had been traveling with four other Seventh-day Adventist farming families, were under quarantine for six weeks in this reentry camp. Camp rules dictated that everyone help with the work.

On the first Saturday they refused to work because it was their Sabbath. The camp leader screamed at them, "A repeat performance of this violation will not be tolerated!"

The next Sabbath found the Adventists studying their Bibles, singing hymns, and thanking God for His care and protection. The camp leader was about to discipline the families when he received a notice that a Nazi officer would inspect the camp the following Sabbath. A cruel smile passed over the camp director's face. Yes, the visiting inspector would most certainly deal with the problem.

The sudden rattle of a rusty door lock brought Emma back to camp life with a start. Father appeared in the

RIDING HIGH

doorway. "Hurry the children, Mother!" he called as he finished buttoning the freshly washed shirt he wore on Sabbaths. "The entire camp must be at the main hall in five minutes!" Trouble hung over his face like a tattered veil.

Deathly silence pervaded the gray limestone building where the sudden metallic heel clicks of two guards announced the arrival of the Nazi officer. In the vast crowd the group of Adventists waited near one end of a well-washed table. They stood as still as statues while the Nazi officer came to a halt in the middle of the freshly waxed floor.

"Well," he snapped, "the Third Reich doesn't have all day. What's the problem here?"

A heavyset man shuffled from the crowd and identified himself as the camp leader. "You see, sir," he said, pointing a finger at the Adventists, "these Jews don't want to work on their holy day."

The mention of Jews and their refusal to work made the officer's face take on the hard coldness of a windswept iceberg. His eyes scanned the accused group.

The spokesperson for the Adventist families replied, "Sir, our religious convictions do not allow us to work on Saturday, which is our Sabbath. Also, we are not Jews but German-"

"Do you think the Fuhrer [Hitler's title] has time to sit around and worry about your God's Sabbath?" the Nazi snapped back.

"*Nein, nein, Herr Offizier*, but we would be glad to work on Sunday"

"I've heard enough," the officer barked, bringing his fist down on the table in a resounding crash. With the force of an erupting volcano the Nazi hurled threats at his victims. He continually punctuated each sentence with a crashing fist, which caused the neatly stacked plates on the far end to tremble. In conclusion he stated, "I will give you people exactly five minutes to decide whether or not you will work on Saturday." Within five seconds came their determined but respectful reply. "We cannot and will not work on the Sabbath, though the heavens fall!"

"What?" screamed the astonished Nazi, almost dropping his pince-nez eyeglasses. "Well, then," he stammered, "I hope your God can hear through the walls of a concentration camp!" And with that he spun on his heel and stalked out of the building. Camp inmates were released to resume their day's work.

Freedom Letter

But the talk of the camp was centered on the Adventists. What was going to happen to them? Would they really be sent to a concentration camp? Would God honor their faith and sincerity?

Within a week the camp leader, who had been the first official to threaten the Adventist families, was discovered to have been stealing food from the kitchen. He was dismissed.

As he was leaving, Emma's father helped him load his luggage onto the train. "Listen to me," the man said to Emma's father. "Forget this religious business. These Nazis aren't kidding. They will kill all of you." With that he boarded the train.

A new camp director moved into the office. He was troubled about one thing: What should he do about the Adventists? He called the Adventist immigrants before him and spoke to them. "I can sympathize with you, because I am also a Christian. But I am still an army officer. I must obey orders. But there is one thing I can do to help you. I will send a letter of appeal to the only man under Hitler who can save you from the concentration camp. That man is Heinrich Himmler, head of the German Secret Police."

About three weeks later the screech of the brakes on the mail truck caused the head of the napping secretary to pop up from behind his typewriter. The mail carrier released the burden of letters that cascaded over his desk. Rummaging toward the bottom of the heap, the secretary came upon a letter that caught his well-trained eye. The return address was Fuhrer's office in Berlin. This was no ordinary letter!

Suddenly the secretary realized that this letter would either bring freedom or chains to the Adventists. Quickly he open the envelope, only to find the message written in code. He reached for a pad of paper and silently translated it. Yes! It was about the Adventists in the camp!

Rocketing across the camp courtyard, he burst into the room where the Adventists were quartered-and just as suddenly he excused himself. They were praying.

They finished their prayer and looked up.

"Be glad! Be glad, Adventists! Your worries are over! Herr Himmler has sent a message saying you don't have to work on your Sabbath!" A wave of joy swept over the group. What an answer to prayer! God had not forgotten them.

RIDING HIGH

"But please," the secretary pleaded, "don't let the camp director know I've told you!" Soon the Adventists heard that the camp director wanted to see them immediately about something important. Emma's family and friends once again stood before the camp director. He read the letter to them. "The people in your charge are not to be molested for their religious beliefs which have brought them to their home country."

The camp director then said, "That was authorized by Herr Himmler, head of the Secret Police. I am glad for you. May God be praised!"

From then on the Adventists could not have had better working conditions. They had no more problems with their religion, and the camp director always referred to them as "my Adventists."

The Adventists learned that the camp director loved music. In trying to find some way to express their gratitude for the freedom of worship he had helped them obtain, the Adventists, under the direction of their tenor-voiced choir director spokesperson, organized a small singing group. That is how Emma was able to sing for the camp leader on his birthday, as well as on other special occasions.

I know this story is true, because Emma, that frightened girl back in that camp, was my mother!⁵¹

⁵¹ Helen Lee Robinson, editor, *Guide's Greatest Sabbath Stories*, Review and Herald, 2004, p. 62.

CONTENDING WITH HORSES

Sabbath Loyalty Convictions
By R. F. Williams

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how will thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” (Jer. 12:5).

“Many lessons suggest themselves in this ancient text. I see in the “footmen” the varied and complex problems that the Christian faces as he goes through life, the temptations that the world offers, and the many decisions that he must make to avoid the pitfalls along the way. I like to phrase the questions thus: If you have not had enough faith to decide that under no circumstances would you work on the Lord’s Sabbath; if the personality clashes that sometimes develop among church members have discouraged you; if you have not yet won the victory over tobacco, or strong drink, or other intemperate habits; if pride and love of self still fill the heart; if you have not gained the victory over criticism and evil speaking; if your tastes in dress, music, reading, and television are questionable; then, “how canst thou contend with horses”-----the greater problems and trials through which God’s people will pass?

The loyalty and steadfastness of some of our young Adventist boys in army service is truly inspiring. Let me share with you one of the stories from a land where freedom is little known. The young man of this story contended well with the horses.

RIDING HIGH

A Seventh-day Adventist lad of 17 was told by the commanding army officer that he would have to perform his regular army duties on Sabbath. He explained courteously that his religious beliefs did not permit him to work on the seventh day of the week.

“If you do not do as we say, we will shoot you and bury you, and besides you will dig your own grave beforehand. So think it over and give us your answer tomorrow,” was the ultimatum presented by the commanding officer.

Early the next morning the Adventist boy was discovered digging a trench about six feet deep. When called in before the commanding officer, he was asked why he was digging a hole.

“Well, sir,” He said, “you told me that if I did not work on Sabbath you would shoot me, and I would dig my own grave. So I am digging my grave because I have no intentions of working on Sabbath.”

The commanding officer decided that such faithfulness to religious principles should be honored. He gave the boy an honorable discharge from the army and sent him home. . . .”⁵²

⁵² *Review and Herald*, June 28, 1973, p. 5

