

# The TENTH MEETING

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

*Psalm 66:16*

Ronald G. Schmidt

Joyce W. Hairston

Samuel L. Green

Merlin and Juanita Kretschmar

Tom Sanford

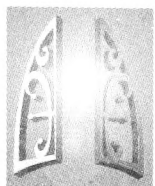
Paul E. Moore

Laura Krum

George W. Reid

Kenneth Wiebe

Doug Batchelor



## COMPLETELY FILLED WITH JOY

*By Ronald G. Schmidt*

**A**FTER surrendering to God's call to full-time ministry, I moved my family from New York to Maryland so I could attend Columbia Union College.

We knew that finances would be very tight, but if my wife, Marlene, and I both worked, we thought we could squeak by. Soon, however, we received the good news that Marlene was expecting our second daughter. A routine examination by the gynecologist detected some complications. The doctor ordered complete bed rest, making it impossible for Marlene to work.

This development greatly affected our anticipated household income and caused a reevaluation of our finances. It was costing us approximately \$200 a week to live, and our weekly earnings were \$50. And six years earlier we had decided not to have any more children, so we had disposed of everything except for a few baby gowns and diaper pins.

The outlook was dismal. I considered several options. Perhaps I could delay my pastoral education and reenter the job market. Or maybe I could use tithe and offerings in this emergency. Until then Marlene and I had been strongly convicted about faithful stewardship, including returning a faithful tithe and other offerings. Before her pregnancy we had pledged \$500 to Adventist World Radio. At that moment it appeared to me that \$500 would go a long way in solving our immediate crisis. And ministers, after all, are paid from tithe funds. Why not pay myself with my own tithe?

My inner debate churned on for several weeks. After much prayer and study, and seeking counsel from those I trusted, I finally shared with Marlene the conviction I had reached. We must be faithful in our relationship with God as we originally had defined it and cast ourselves into His care.

One day soon after, I delivered our \$500 pledge to the General Conference building in Takoma Park. I left the building with a receipt for \$500, and a joy I had rarely known.

A few months later the Silver Spring church gave Marlene a surprise baby shower. We received most of the essentials and soon had every item we needed except for clothing. One Sabbath afternoon, on returning to our apartment after church, we found two large boxes filled with the prettiest baby clothes we had ever seen, and most of them were brand-new. These random acts of kindness were repeated several times anonymously. To this day we do not know the source of the clothes. Our little Jenny was, in our way of thinking, the best-dressed baby in town.

We had so many clothes for Jenny that Marlene passed some along to other mothers in need. And through it all we were happy each Sabbath to return our tithe and offerings.

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Surely we know we cannot outgive God. He had fulfilled His promise to open for us the windows of heaven.

**But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6, NKJV.**

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*Ronald G. Schmidt is executive secretary of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is a member of the Matthews, North Carolina, Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

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### MY BIGGEST RAISE

*By Joyce W. Hairston*

**I**T WASN'T an unreasonable plan, this call to fund a new educational building so our children could be taught of the Lord. Our children did deserve the best. The pastor had caught the vision too. And so the plan was announced that every member should sacrifice a certain amount each month. In less than two years we'd have a new school building.

*But I'm giving enough already,* I thought. *Surely that plan is not for me. I return a faithful tithe and a faithful offering.* More than 25 years ago I had caught the vision of the brethren and adopted what they called the "10+" plan. A few years ago I even got the vision that God should be given a raise in offering whenever I received a raise at work.

Of course I believed in Christian education. My husband and I had faithfully followed the command of God, and all six of our children attended Christian schools.

But wasn't my 10 + 13 enough? That question troubled me when this plan was brought before the church to fund the new school building. I tried to convince myself that my giving was enough. After all, the church wasn't my only responsibility.

But the more I tried to rationalize why I shouldn't give to the plan, the more troubled I became. After three days of battling, I finally gave up and said, "Lord, I'm willing to give my part toward the building project."

That night when I arrived at work, I was told by my supervisor that it was time for my yearly evaluation. I left the meeting in a state of shock because I had received my biggest raise ever.

My calculator quickly explained the ramifications. Beyond the regular tithes and offerings, God would receive His "raise," the building project would get my full share of "the plan," and there'd still be something extra for me.

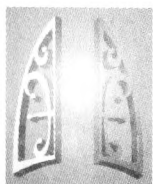
Once again I had been shown that I can't beat God's giving.

**For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Luke 12:34.**

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*Joyce W. Hairston is a licensed practical nurse at North Carolina Baptist Hospital. She is a member of the Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.*

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## LESSON IN A TV DINNER

*By Samuel L. Green*

**W**HEN I was a student at Southwestern Adventist University, my needs were always greater than the money available. I saved money by living in a small off-campus house, and I worked my class schedule around two jobs.

One day, after attending classes and working my first job, I went home to eat before going to my second job. This meal was going to be especially meaningful because it was my last TV dinner and the only food that I had left in the house. I had no money to buy any more food. It would be my only meal of the day, and I was preparing for a “forced fast.”

The hunger had been gnawing all day, so I relished the blissful anticipation of eating this frozen Mexican dinner. While heating it in the oven, I absent-mindedly scanned the ingredients on the packaging. To my dismay I read that the dinner contained lard.

After some mental wrestling I decided to be faithful to my convictions and biblical teachings. I threw the dinner into the trash and reminded the Lord of His promise that my bread and water would be sure. I drank a large glass of water, put ChapStick on my lips to cover their ashen pallor from my hunger, and headed off to work.

When I returned home later that night, I found, to my great joy, a sack containing two large homemade pizzas. The next day, while mentally preparing my angel-of-deliverance testimony, I met the brother of Ben Davis, one of my classmates. He asked if I had found the pizzas on my doorstep. He told me that Ben’s wife, Elsie, had made too much pizza dough, so she made extra pizzas. Unaware of my predicament, they had decided to give me the two extras.

From this experience I learned a valuable lesson about being faithful to the Lord’s commands at all times, even when it is difficult to obey and when those commands can seemingly be disobeyed in secret.

I learned also how mysteriously the Lord works. Elsie probably never figured out, or even wondered, why she made too much pizza dough. But a faithful Father knew. He had a promise to keep to a faithful child.

**O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Psalm 31:23.**



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*Samuel L. Green is executive secretary of the Southwestern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Burleson, Texas. He is a member of the Dallas Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dallas, Texas. This story originally appeared in College Faith: 150 Adventist Leaders Share Faith Stories From Their College Days (Pacific Press, 1995).*

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## NO MATTER HOW OLD!

*By Merlin and Juanita Kretschmar*

**J**UANITA and I were facing a tough time.

In our retirement we had planned to start a not-for-profit tourist attraction as an outreach ministry in Key West, Florida, called A Key Encounter (AKE). It would include a small theater, museum, and gallery with Creator-uplifting programs and exhibits designed to attract some of the millions of tourists who flock to this island paradise each year.

After much prayer we put our personal signatures on an expensive lease for 3,000 square feet of space in a tiny mall. We had adequate funds in hand or pledged to cover the cost of the renovations (according to a written bid) and the first year's lease. Based on conservative attendance estimates, assuming adequate advertising, we planned that the small admission charge and donations from friends would cover the lease thereafter. We moved forward confidently.

However, only after that expensive lease was signed did we learn that the construction work alone would cost four times the amount bid and budgeted. It consumed all our resources, including money we needed to pay the lease the first year and the advertising.

Again after much prayer we decided to commit all we had to the project, if need be. But we weren't really worried. Adequate funds had always come in every emergency during our mission experiences in Brazil and New York. Surely the same would happen here. One generous donor, when told of the increased costs, agreed to send some additional help. We promised never to ask her for any further help.

By the first of April, A Key Encounter finally opened to the public. But the tourist season was just ending. Our advertising budget had been spent just paying for the construction and the lease. So of course attendance—and the admission fees that we needed to help cover the ongoing cost of the lease—were not what we had hoped. Still, tourists and locals who did find us were blessed and sometimes deeply moved by the Scripture-based wildlife film, by the "Seven Days" photographic exhibit, water-color paintings, and shells. We just wondered how long we could last.

This wasn't the retirement we had hoped for after more than 41 years in church employment. Did we really want to live month after month the rest of our lives

with a nagging fear that the lease could not be met? Did we want constant worry that we would have to close and God's name in this party town suffer defeat?

Friends sent what help they could, but it was not enough. Prayer became wrenching in its urgency now. One day in September we were together, praying each hour, asking God to do something in behalf of this ministry and for us if He saw fit. I told Juanita we would not be trading our car in for another, even though it was in bad shape. Then I started looking through some papers I had requested from the bank.

Minutes later the phone rang. The lady who had originally helped so generously and with whom we had not spoken for some time was on the line from the opposite side of the United States. She asked Juanita, "How are things going with AKE?"

"You're getting our newsletters, aren't you?" Juanita replied. "From what people are telling us and writing in our visitors' register, His Spirit really seems to be blessing. We're thankful to God that AKE is making such an impact."

"Yes, yes. I read the newsletters," the lady responded. "But that's not what I mean. How are the finances going by now?"

"Are you sure you really want to know?"

"That's why I'm calling."

Juanita took a deep breath and answered, "Well, I've used up every penny from my life savings (IRAs) keeping up with the lease. Merlin has used some of his. I just asked him when he's going to trade in our car, since it won't shift out of second gear most of the time. He said he didn't have the money. I told him he did—in his IRAs—and he said he couldn't use them for the car, since he will probably need that money to pay the lease at AKE in the months ahead.

"Also, what funds do come in are being eaten up with credit card interest. We had to use the cards to purchase the projection equipment. At the moment, he is going over some papers from the bank to see about disposing of our home so we'll have enough money to retire the credit card debt. So that's where we are. Now aren't you sorry you asked?"

Our friend paused and then asked how much we owed on the credit cards. Then she said she was going to be in touch with us a bit later. Juanita and the lady prayed together on the phone, and her call ended.

Two hours passed. A fax arrived. The lady wrote that she was sending \$20,000, the amount needed to cover the credit card debt. She added that she had an "old car" she wasn't using and wanted to give us. It was a 1981 model and had more than 100,000 miles on it. She thought maybe we could get some good use out of it. It turned out to be a Mercedes Benz turbo diesel in excellent condition. They have been known to go 400,000 miles.

We fell on our knees again in thanks to God. This is called swallowing your pride and just being grateful. We had given God the burden about the car; we'd

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given Him the house. He had given us back the house and put us in a luxury auto perfectly suited to the Keys. And He had done it just in time.

A Key Encounter continues to stay open, by faith. Thousands of people have visited AKE, some even taking Bible-study enrollment cards and other spiritual material before they depart.

The generous lady said she still doesn't know what made her happen to pick up the phone and call us that day.

And we still don't know why God let us sign that expensive lease when He knew the construction cost was going to be four times the bid and that AKE would absorb all our human security/future. But we have learned that no matter how old we are, there is an additional step or two to take in faith and surrender, and another assignment that will bear fruit for Him.

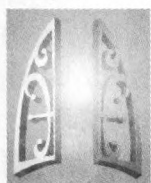
So we continue to claim the promise that we felt He gave us when we first retired:

**They shall still bring forth fruit in old age. Psalm 92:14.**

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*Merlin and Juanita Kretschmar, in retirement, are founders and producers of A Key Encounter, a Creation-based tourist attraction in Key West, Florida. They are members of the Marathon, Florida, Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

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### A VERY RICH WOULD-BE RUNAWAY

*By Tom Sanford*

I COULDN'T shake the feeling. All week long I simply had wanted to run away. But I wasn't 15—I was 51. To make matters worse, I was the director of a facility that, among other things, provides for the care of teen runaways.

Unlike the usual excuses these kids make up for running away, mine seemed to be legitimate. The more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea. These kids were God's kids (so I reasoned), and if they were God's kids, certainly He could provide for their care.

But this week, and for several weeks in fact, it seemed to me that He wasn't listening to our needs or that He didn't even care. And if He didn't care, neither did I.

Financial disaster loomed like thick storm clouds. I sat in my office on a sofa savoring my escape plan rather than praying.

At that moment I was jolted back to reality by a 17-year-old who barged through my open door with all the grace and finesse of a bull in a china closet.

She plopped down in a chair opposite me and stared at my melancholy face.

"May I sit beside you?" The words tumbled out as though they all wanted to be first.

"Sure," I mumbled, resenting the intrusion. She flopped over beside me on the couch much like an ungainly bag of potatoes.

"Are you rich?"

Just moments before, I was complaining to God about not providing even for the bare essentials. And now this! Why did she come anyway? Trying to be polite, yet wanting to emphasize the point, I said, "Of course not. What makes you ask?"

"Because" she started, "the kids here say you built this place for kids like me, and nobody but nobody would do that unless he was so rich he didn't know what else to do with his money."

"It wasn't me," I responded, now feeling a bit awed at her inquisition. "It was thousands of people donating money and hundreds of others donating their time to build this place."

"But aren't you rich anyway?" she asked as she stared into my eyes. I turned away, not wanting her gaze to penetrate my anxious soul. But at that moment I realized that God had sent this young woman to remind me of who He is and that the value of a soul is far more important than money.

I turned back. Her eyes were set, waiting for the answer.

"Yes," I smiled. "I am very, very rich because you're here and alive."

With that she bolted to her feet and blurted out, "Yeah, I don't do drugs anymore, I don't sell my body or want to die anymore."

As she disappeared out the door, tears streaked my cheeks in wonder and adoration for God's gentleness in reminding me who really is in charge.

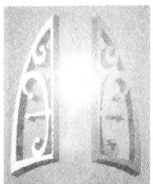
"You are so right, Stacy," I whispered. "And I don't want to run away anymore."

**O Lord, I know you listen to the poor in heart. You are always ready to set your people's spirit free. Psalm 69:33, Clear Word.**

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*Tom Sanford is the executive director of Project PATCH (Planned Assistance for Troubled Children) in Clackamas, Oregon, and Garden Valley, Idaho. He is a member of the Gladstone Park Seventh-day Adventist Church in Gladstone, Oregon.*

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## TO RISK EVERYTHING FOR GOD?

*By Paul E. Moore*

**P**AUL, are you willing to risk everything for God?"

In all my life I had never had anyone ask me a question like that before.



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Elder Bob Mix was asking me now. The sincerity of his voice, his penetrating gaze, stopped me. All I could say was, "Bob, I want to be that kind of a person."

Bob's next question was easier to answer, because it was fanciful. "Would you be willing to step out of the pastoral ministry to see the ideas we've been studying become a reality?"

I laughed, "Bob, I don't think the Lord is asking me to do that!"

My second oldest son, Paul, and his family came to visit us one week-end. "Daddy," Paul asked, "do you really believe in the ideas you've been talking about?"

"Yes."

"Whom are you going to get to do the job?"

"I don't know, but I'm sure that the Lord knows."

"I think your vision for this is a call, Daddy."

Different ones repeatedly urged me to step out in faith, to lead out in building a network of Adventist radio stations across America. But how do you do something like that?

I considered my strong points: no experience in radio, no financial backing, and none of the special gifts needed to achieve such goals. All these argued that I ignore encouragement to move forward.

I had told Bob I wanted to be the kind of person who would be willing to follow the Lord wherever He would lead, even out of the pastoral ministry. But the Lord would need to make it abundantly clear that it was His purpose, not mine.

While my wife was away for a visit with our children in Texas I caught the flu. Friday morning I awakened after a miserable night of chills and fever. I looked to heaven, and prayed, "Lord, if this idea of an Adventist satellite radio network is really Yours, some way, somehow, I must know—beyond any doubt. Otherwise, Lord, I want out."

Suddenly I sensed God's touch. My sinuses drained, my temperature became normal.

What a Father! What a God! I arose from my sickbed. I was well. I was assured that He indeed was calling an unqualified person to do something big. I accepted His call to start Life Talk Radio Foundation.

The story of how God put this dedicated team together is still being told. The team members depend on Him for their very livelihood, enabling them to serve Him in a unique way.

We have found a special blessing in having to depend entirely on the Lord, day after day, for financial sustenance. We find joy in His work and treasure His promises. Those are the rewards of stewardship.

**Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will**

strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10.

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*Paul E. Moore is president of Life Talk Radio Foundation in Yakima, Washington. He is a member of the Fairview Seventh-day Adventist Church in Yakima.*

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## A STEWARD'S SCHEDULE

*By Laura Krum*

I SIGHED heavily as I climbed the stairs to my college dorm room. This was only the beginning of the year, and already I was overwhelmed with my study load.

Lying on my bed in my room, I wondered if I could do anything to reduce the stress. Lately, with all the pressure, my morning worship routine had collapsed, and I realized that I had been a poor steward of my time.

In my mind I prayed for a way of managing my time better while putting God first. Immediately I was impressed that there is more to putting God first than reading the Bible and praying in the mornings. Though it certainly wasn't a new idea, it occurred to me that putting Him first also meant being a good steward of the health God had given me. This would require an exercise program; eating regular, well-balanced meals; and getting enough sleep at night.

In the long run, it really wouldn't matter what grade I got for a research and statistics test, but it would make a difference what condition my body—the Lord's temple—was in when I left college.

In my dorm room that day I began formulating a plan of action. It would be an experiment, really, and I was both nervous and excited about its potential results.

Besides resuming worship first thing in the day, I would take time for balanced meals and make sure I got some form of exercise, outside if possible, before studying faithfully in the evening. Bedtime would come firmly at 9:30 p.m.

Over the next few weeks I was pleasantly surprised by the results of my experimental schedule. I felt better, slept better, worried less, and my grades improved.

Of course I was always greatly tempted to cheat a little on my schedule. On cold days it took a lot of willpower for me to push myself outside to exercise. And many nights as 9:30 approached I was strongly tempted to stay up later to finish a paper or cram for an early-morning test.

But I would go to my window, look out at the night sky, and renew my decision to put God and His principles first. I reminded myself that He loved me and didn't want me to do poorly in school any more than I did. Then I'd crawl into bed and sleep soundly.

And I was never disappointed. In many cases a test would be postponed or changed to “open-book.” A teacher might be gone, and the canceled class would give me a free period to complete a paper. Or assignments would simply take much less time and effort than I first expected.

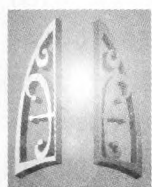
The results of my college experiment made a deep impression on me. I felt very special that God would do so much for me. I still do my best to follow the same principles today in managing my time and health. And I haven’t been disappointed yet.

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

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*Laura Krum is a homemaker and member of the Northside Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.*

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## HIS PROMISE IN HAND

*By George W. Reid*

**I**T WAS September. I was 18, leaving my home in the Southwest for the first time, and heading for Lincoln, Nebraska. All my belongings, packed into an already-weary suitcase and a cardboard box, were stashed in the cargo hold of a Trailways bus. I climbed aboard for the 12-hour journey to Union College.

From the viewpoint of a systematic planner, the whole venture was foolish. So many basic questions stood unanswered. Did it make sense to travel hundreds of miles away when good college education was at hand in my own hometown, available at a fraction of the cost? My father, while a good and caring man, was not convinced my choices were the best, and he made it clear that I should not look to him for financial support. True, others in the family were a little more supportive—a dear aunt provided the entrance deposit for the first semester. But the real weight of paying the bills rested on me. So here began the test of faith that would demonstrate whether the Lord is serious when He promises His watchcare.

That test was real. The college was overflowing with arriving students. I wound up tucked away into an attic room with four other freshmen at the top of the administration building. The environment of five active young men in one room lacks something toward promoting the academic life, but there was one blessing in it: For any room where more than three were living, each student qualified for a 10 percent discount in room rent. Although eventually I moved to a more sparsely inhabited room, for four years that same attic was my home.

My first priority, of course, was to find a job, but the College View community was awash with students hunting part-time employment. Before long the search led

to what was once a wooden home typical of the style of the Nebraska plains. A vigorous sign above the door now boldly proclaimed "CAPITAL CITY BOOKBINDERY." Inside that door I met a quick-witted, energetic but diminutive gentleman named Mr. Mayer, the manager, who just happened to be looking for some strapping young man able to move stacks of heavy coverboard used in the re-binding process. Although Lincoln was home to one of the world's most successful manufacturers of forklifts, Capital City Bookbindery didn't have one. The Lord had done it again: provided a stable job. The pay was nothing special, but it was enough.

I treasured that job as a gift from God, to be attended with gratitude and given the best service possible. One by one the pieces of God's providence fell into place. Two only modestly successful summers selling Christian books helped me maintain the financial pace. My jobs had come from the hand of a benevolent heavenly Father who always looked beyond my range of vision to anticipate needs He knew would surely come.

At graduations the custom was that those with outstanding accounts to be settled marched across the platform to receive empty folders, to be filled with diplomas only when the bills were paid. Today I have no idea of what the commencement speaker had to say or even who it was, but one truth remains permanently embedded in my memory. When I opened my black folder, there it was: by God's providential grace, the crisp white diploma looked back at me as if to say, "Here you are, child blessed of God." In my hand lay the evidence that He watches over His own.

His promise in hand and in our hearts is as solid as the deed itself. With the same trust I look to the coming of Jesus and His kingdom.

**Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32, RSV.**

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*George W. Reid is director of the Biblical Research Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland. He is a member of the Spencerville, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

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## THE POWER OF A STORY SHARED

*By Kenneth Wiebe*

**A**S MY roommate burst through the door I wondered what his excitement could be all about. "We really don't believe God!" he announced; "we really don't."

"Really," I retorted. "You better explain this one."

"Here in Malachi, God challenges us to put Him to the test, to see if He is



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as good as His word. I don't think we really believe God. If we did, we'd seize this opportunity."

Testing God seemed like a novel idea, and the challenge intrigued me. As a Christian, returning tithes and offerings was a way of life, but it never occurred to me that this could be used as a test of God's faithfulness. What would happen if I did?

I was a grade-12 student working hard to pay tuition and meet other financial demands associated with life at a boarding academy. I had my tithe automatically deducted at payroll, attended church faithfully, and regularly put a little money into the collection plate; little because I had little. Never had it occurred to me to give all, to give sacrificially.

I covenanted to give God everything I had—a whole \$5! It had been earmarked for some desperately needed personal items, but I was interested in knowing how God would respond, if at all. So the next Sabbath, ceremoniously between God and me alone, I yielded the entire amount.

Mission accomplished, I waited for that feeling of peace I was sure would follow. There was none. Instead a nagging conscience censured me for my foolishness. I felt empty-handed, frustrated, and even angry.

Sunday and Monday passed expectantly. By Tuesday the importance of the test diminished. Routinely I went about my duties until I pulled a curious-looking envelope from my mailbox. The words "just thinking of you today and thought you could use this" were neatly written on a card that contained a \$5 bill. The postmark was dated the Friday before I had put God to the test.

I was elated. God is real! True, I had wished for a little more, but it was sufficient evidence for me. To me, this was not coincidental, since this aunt had never written before and was neither a member of the church nor wealthy. In my opinion God had passed the test.

Seven years later I was conducting home Bible studies in my first pastoral district with Mrs. Dyck, a widow and welfare recipient. During our weekly studies I covered most of the Bible doctrines and was now sharing the importance of faithfully returning tithes and offerings. Midway through, she rose from her place, opened her cupboard doors, and emphatically retorted, "My cupboards are empty, there are still two weeks until my welfare check arrives, and you're suggesting I return tithe and offerings! IMPOSSIBLE!"

Her dilemma was obvious, and I had to agree. Then God's challenge to me seven years earlier flashed into my memory. I relayed my experience, but she remained unconvinced and unmoved. My attempt was unsuccessful.

At seminary one year later, my wife and I received a letter from Mrs. Dyck. "I was in church on Sabbath," she began, "and as the minister called for the offering I felt impressed to put God to the test, as you had done. I had \$1.35 and originally decided I'd give the 35 cents, but instead I put in the \$1. I needed the

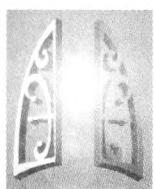
35 cents for bus fare home. You'll never believe what happened! As I stepped off the bus, at my feet lay a \$20 bill. Since no one else was around to whom it might belong, I picked it up and that week bought a much-needed pair of shoes. That week my daughter sent a letter with \$15. Although she doesn't have much money, she said because I am the only mother she has, she wants to share her little bit with me. And then when the lady in the apartment next to me replaced her stereo, she offered me her old one. Now I can even play my Sabbath records. Thank you for helping me to know that God is real."

**Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.**  
Ecclesiastes 11:1, RSV.

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*Kenneth Wiebe is secretary of the British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Abbotsford, British Columbia. He is a member of the Abbotsford Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

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## PROVING GOD

*By Doug Batchelor*

**G**OD'S promise in Malachi 3:10 says that when we are faithful to Him, we won't have room enough to receive His blessings. My own experience, from the very beginning, has taught me that the Lord keeps His word, exactly as He said.

My life wasn't easy when I first accepted Jesus and began to "prove" God on the teaching of tithe and offerings. I was rummaging through grocery dumpsters for my food. Most of my earthly possessions fit in a backpack. It was a struggle at times in those early days of my relationship with Jesus to trust Him, but He always came through, and countless times He filled me to overflowing.

Later, when I was selling firewood for a living and struggling to pay about \$3,000 of mounting bills, I was tempted to postpone my tithing. Surely God would understand. He knew I had a wife and three small children to feed. Back then the price for a cord of wood was about \$65. To take \$10 off the top of that and give it at church for tithe and offerings, with so many pressing needs at home, was a tremendous test of faith.

But I decided to trust God, with no idea how we were going to make it through the next week. On Sabbath I gave my tithe and offerings. Monday, while cutting wood with a friend, I prayed, "Lord, I have done what You said. Please help me get the money I need for my family this week." That very day the mail brought an unexpected check for \$7,000. It was much more than we needed. Absolutely overflowing in fact.

Now after 20 years of testing and trusting God, we have been blessed with

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two garages and many closets bursting with “things.” I feel like a child who must sit on his overflowing toy box in order to close it.

But Jesus also said, “One’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15, NKJV). The greatest spiritual blessing we can ask for is the Holy Spirit. It’s a gift from our heavenly Father, and He says, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Luke 11:13, NKJV).

I believe that receiving the Holy Spirit is the primary overflowing blessing connected with the tithing promise. The Holy Spirit was the blessing that Elisha asked for, and he “ran over” with a double portion. Solomon essentially asked God for the same thing, and his blessings “ran over” to the extent that he became the wisest man who ever lived. And this blessing of Pentecost can be ours when we seek first God’s kingdom by acknowledging His ownership of everything we have.

**“Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” Malachi 3:10, NIV.**

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