

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

# activated

Vol 17 • Issue 7

## **SURPRISE!**

Life's curveballs

## **From Mundane to Marvelous**

The result that matters

## **Radiant Imprints**

A wonderful future





## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION KNOWING GOD

God has a problem!

Lots of people say they believe in God, but they don't really know who He is.

To many children, God is something of a cross between a superhero and a friendly old wizard with a long white beard. Superman meets Dumbledore.

As we grow up, God seems to "graduate" into a watchful headmaster, keeping an eager watch on things like how late we come home or what books we're reading. Like the headmaster and prefects in Roald Dahl's memoirs, this God is vicious and a bit too fond of caning.

Then we learn more about the world and are confronted with other philosophies and views, and many of us go through stages where we push Him away, feeling as if we can't live up to His rules—or as if we'd rather not.

The truth is, if God is keeping score and tallying up our points good and bad, we're simply not going to come out of it looking very good. Luckily, our God is a loving God, a holy God, a marvelous God who wants to be close to us and show us the way to live eternally with Him: "To all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God."<sup>1</sup>

God doesn't demand perfection. He never thought that we could be perfect—if He did, He wouldn't have come to earth to die for us. But He did, and He wants to have a relationship with each of us: "Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me."<sup>2</sup>

Let's read on and get to know Him better!

Samuel Keating  
Executive Editor

1. John 1:12 NLT  
2. John 15:15 NLT

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# THE HIDING PLACE

BY KOOS STENGER

**WHEN I WAS BORN**, only a few years after WW2, Holland was still getting back on its feet, and the aftermath of the war and occupation was still visible. I grew up hearing many stories about the things people had endured, and it filled me with deep respect for the sacrifices that had been made, including by those who chose to stay true to their convictions, even to their own harm.

One such person was Corrie ten Boom, who ended up losing most of her family and spending years in a concentration camp. It would have been easy to say “no” to the Jewish refugees who knocked on her family’s door with panic-stricken eyes. They could have lowered their eyes and pretended not to see the desperate need in order to save themselves. But to them that choice was not even an option. The ten Booms were deeply committed to Christ and knew that selfishness and self-preservation were never His way.

Love always sees the needs of others and does not regard its own comfort. So Corrie and her family chose to resist. Not physically, but they fought with the weapons of faith and created a physical hiding place for the

persecuted. Her story is recorded in the well-known book, *The Hiding Place*.

I was always curious to see where they hid refugees and finally got to visit the house where it all happened. It’s in Haarlem, not far from Amsterdam, and now a museum open to the public. Being there brings back the reality of suffering and war. The rooms are tiny, the hallways and stairs narrow, and the secret hiding place where six Jews were hidden during the fateful Gestapo raid is only 76 cm (30 in.) deep.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the suffering, the home on Barteljorisstraat has become a monument of faith and victory. Most of the ten Boom family ended up losing their lives during the war, but it is not hard to imagine the joyful welcome Jesus must have given them the day they entered heaven, their final Hiding Place.

We may not be called upon to make such sacrifices, but Christians are called to light up the darkness in their world, and the lives of those who have gone on before us show the importance of strengthening our convictions and relationship with God to be the light of the world for our day. It is worth it all, for in Him we too have a hiding place.

1. Virtual visit of the ten Boom museum available here: <http://tenboom.com/en/>

KOOS STENGER IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN THE NETHERLANDS. ■



BY MARIA FONTAINE, ADAPTED

“HE (JESUS) is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of God’s nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.”<sup>1</sup>

Jesus described Himself as “the light of the world,”<sup>2</sup> but have you ever contemplated what that means? Jesus is the radiant brilliance of the Father that shines into our lives, manifesting the love and nature of God, illuminating our

way to the Father so that we can experience and ultimately come to understand who God is.

John 1 says that “In Him [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men.”<sup>3</sup> We couldn’t live without physical light that nourishes our bodies and the physical world around us. Likewise, without the spiritual light of God who is the source of all life, we would be spiritually lost and in “the shadow of death.” The Bible says concerning Jesus, “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”<sup>4</sup>

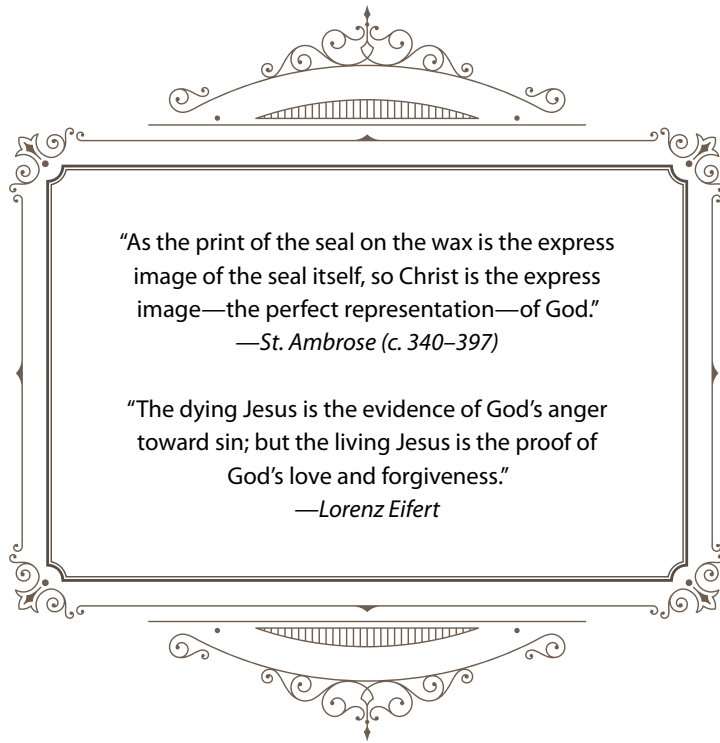
When Jesus came to earth, He brought us the spiritual life of God that frees those who receive it, delivering them from death.<sup>5</sup> That’s the essence of what salvation is: God sent His light to us, which is the source of eternal life, and when we take Jesus into our lives, we start to be filled with the brightness and life of God.

And Jesus is more than just the light, as incomprehensibly amazing as *that* is. He is also the imprint of God’s nature.

An imprint is a mark that identifies the maker, and God’s imprint in Jesus is the nature of God Himself. Jesus manifested God the Father’s

1. Hebrews 1:3 ESV
2. John 8:12
3. v.4
4. Matthew 4:16
5. See Ephesians 2:4–5.
6. See Ephesians 3:20.
7. See Hebrews 12:2.
8. See Luke 19:10.
9. See 1 John 3:16.





“As the print of the seal on the wax is the express image of the seal itself, so Christ is the express image—the perfect representation—of God.”

—*St. Ambrose (c. 340–397)*

“The dying Jesus is the evidence of God’s anger toward sin; but the living Jesus is the proof of God’s love and forgiveness.”

—*Lorenz Eifert*

nature through all He said and did. He presented God in a way that we, His human creations, could understand. As we look at Jesus and His life, we see glimpses of the very nature of God, the love of God, the expectations of God for us, and the mercy, forgiveness, and compassion of our God who has given us so much more than we could ask or imagine.<sup>6</sup>

We see a God who will face even the greatest of sacrifices for the results they will bring,<sup>7</sup> who cares enough to seek out the lost and patiently guide them into His arms.<sup>8</sup>

We see God’s nature in every miracle, in every word of forgiveness and hope Jesus spoke, and in His love that sees the good and possibilities, even when we’re at our worst. We see the tender gentleness as well as the fury against evil. Best of all, we see the way that God’s imprint on us

can cause His light to shine out of our lives too and illumine others.<sup>9</sup>

God’s radiance, Jesus, came into this world in such a small form: as a baby in a stable. So few even took notice. Yet He became the greatest thing that ever happened, providing salvation for all who would accept Him. As we grow closer to Jesus, we can increasingly radiate God’s Spirit in this life and ultimately throughout the universe and eternity.

When we look at ourselves, we probably don’t see the brilliance of God’s imprint. But then how many could have imagined what would come from a struggling woman and her poor husband for whom everything seemed to be going so terribly wrong? Having to leave their home behind, not knowing where she would deliver her baby. Having to give birth among the animals,

laying her newborn son in a feed trough. Who would have imagined that such a troubled and seemingly “unblessed” beginning for that tiny new life would usher in the radiant imprint of God’s life and glory and sovereignty for all to see?

So if you feel like things have gone wrong in your life and are looking pretty bleak right now, you can still rejoice. If you have Jesus in your life, even the smallest space holds the potential for glorious things.

That’s cause to face your day with a smile, because through the radiance of God’s nature made flesh for you, your future couldn’t be more wonderful.

MARIA FONTAINE AND HER HUSBAND, PETER AMSTERDAM, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■

# MEANINGS AND PURPOSES

BY JESSIE RICHARDS



FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, I've felt strongly that I needed a purpose, a "mission," a life plan. It's both part of my natural personality type and how I was brought up to understand that God worked—that He had a calling, a "special place in His kingdom" for each of us. I still believe that ... but differently.


Several years back, it became clear to me that what I had assumed was my calling, my "special place," was not in fact. Or rather, it was no longer. Naturally, I became obsessed with finding a new purpose. I deeply searched my soul. I meditated. I prayed. I had some counseling and coaching. I couldn't figure out "the right plan," but I went ahead and moved and started a new job. My hope was that by taking action, by doing *something*, even if it wasn't *the* thing, I would come closer to finding my new purpose.

Fast forward a couple of years, and I was no closer to knowing my "new purpose." I was frustrated. Worse, I felt guilty. I felt that there was something I was "supposed" to be doing and I was missing it.

When you meet someone new, one of the questions that's bound to come up within a few minutes is, "What do you do?" I find that a difficult question to answer. I have a job, which is *something* I do—every day, in fact. But does my role at a nonprofit, which I enjoy and feel good about, truly sum up "what I do" in the sense of what my life is about? Does it define who I am? It really doesn't.

It's important for me to have meaningful work that I feel good about doing and enjoy, and I think my career always will be a big part of me and also play a part in how I live out my purpose in life. But I believe the meaning of a person's life, like life itself, isn't etched in stone, never to be revised. And it most likely isn't one thing, or even just one thing at a time.

As for me, my purposes for the time being include doing what I can to make the lives of those around me a little better. I've also been finding a lot of meaning by learning to love and care for myself. I spent many years focusing so much on getting things done—for the sake of others, I told myself—that I all but forgot that I matter



“Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.”  
—Howard Thurman (1899–1981)

too, that God wants *me* to be happy and fulfilled too. I’ve found a joyful sense of meaning through learning new things, traveling to new places, having a variety of new experiences, as well as taking in more literature, art, and music—enjoying the experience of being alive and connected to other beautiful people in this amazing world.

I’ve also gotten over the mental block that in order to find meaning in life, I have to have some grand and glorious and consuming passion—that I have to be some kind of “savior.” I’ve stopped stressing myself out and beating myself up over a perceived sense of failure of not doing something that I felt was big enough or good enough. It’s liberating.

Every now and then, I still have a tinge of guilt around the edges of my consciousness. I get the nagging sense that the new me isn’t ambitious enough, that my life isn’t as purpose-driven as it could be. But then, who gets to say that one life’s meaning is more valuable than another? Don’t we all play our own part in making up this tapestry that is humankind?

I’ll close with something I received from Jesus in prayer during one of my moments of struggle a few years back. I’ve come back to this many times, and always find it reassuring:

Your “purpose in life” isn’t something that is always clear, obvious, and completely understood at the time. Sometimes it doesn’t seem like you have much of a special purpose at all. It just seems like you’re going from day to day, working, living, going on. It doesn’t feel “special” or filled with purpose. But it is! Every day of your life is significant. Every day is an opportunity, an open door. Every day can have its own special meaning. It all matters to Me. It all counts to Me. It’s all precious to Me.

JESSIE RICHARDS HAD A ROLE IN THE PRODUCTION OF *ACTIVATED* FROM 2001 TO 2012, AND HAS WRITTEN A NUMBER OF ARTICLES AS AN *ACTIVATED* STAFF WRITER. SHE HAS ALSO WRITTEN AND EDITED MATERIAL FOR OTHER CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES. ■

# Surprise

BY MARA HODLER

HOW ABOUT THOSE MOMENTS WHEN LIFE IS MOVING ALONG SMOOTHLY, it looks like you have a good view of where things are headed, you're making progress ... and then all of a sudden, surprise! A total about-face happens. Something that forces you to change and pushes you in a different direction. A complete game changer.

I find those "surprise" moments kind of scary. Having no control over a situation feels like a free fall. Not my thing! It's at those times when my best-laid plans are strewn around me like worthless debris that I hear in my head the words, "Man proposes, but God disposes."

I have the choice to just "go with it" or try to force and steer things back to my cherished plans. Really, it's not so much of a choice as it is a mental attitude. Half the time, the outcome is obvious, and holding on to my plans is clearly only going to prolong the inevitable. Still, it's hard to let go.

It's like a good salsa dance. When two people have danced together for

a long time, they learn to "read" each other and can ad-lib a dance perfectly and in perfect synchronization. In traditional salsa, the man is the leader, and the woman is attuned to his slightest pulls and guides, moving her body to follow his lead. When the couple is in sync, their movements become an extension of each other, and it's amazing! A couple that is out of sync is pretty sad to watch. They step on each other's toes, sometimes even fall, and at best, lack the gracefulness that the dance is supposed to convey.

I sometimes picture my life as a dance. When those "surprises" come into play, I can almost hear Jesus saying, *Come on. We've been dancing together for so long, you know how*

*to follow. Just let Me lead and I will make this dance spectacular.*

I know in my heart that if I let Him take control, I won't trip and fall. But it can be hard to surrender to His lead. Usually the reason is that I feel I've worked hard on practicing the previous routine and learning every step, and I don't want to change. Sometimes I try to lead. And the results are, well ... pathetic.

Surrender is not a common first reaction. It's human nature to become attached to a certain outcome. We like to think we have control. We put a lot of energy into planning, and it's hard to think that it can all be wasted by one event that nullifies our plans.

Here's the funny thing, though:





when it comes to dancing, all the routines, all the carefully choreographed dances rehearsed over and over are what allow a couple to abandon the *planned* dance and spontaneously create a whole new dance. In life, all the planning, the training, and following what you believe God wants you to do is what makes you ready to just flow with the surprise, whatever it may be.

Now a little note on these “surprises.” Many of the ones I’ve experienced seemed like “bad news” at first. I’ve experienced being denied a visa to a country where I had my dream job secured; having key coworkers move on just when I thought our projects were taking off; facing illness, accidents, work

falling through; losing clients; and having bad weather botch the most perfectly laid plans. These things have abruptly taken my life in unexpected directions. Yet none of them ruined my life. In some cases, the path they set my life on turned out to be so much better than what I had planned or foreseen.

Some of the most amazing people I know recognize these troublous interjections as an invitation to a special dance. They trust so well that they are able to skip the struggle and sway in time. It’s very impressive to me, and I look at them with the same kind of marvel that I feel when I watch the synchronized dancing couple. I’m amazed at how the quick turns, dips, and bends of the dance of



their life seem to happen gracefully and without struggle. The beauty of their peace definitely confirms that their approach to a “surprise” works better than mine.

The good news is that I can be sure there will be more surprises, and I have the opportunity to practice getting better at flowing instead of struggling. As I write this, I know that there are going to be unexpected happenings and events ahead that I could not have predicted. My prayer is that I will flow with the dance, and that I will not resist or struggle—at least not so much that I ruin the dance.

Jesus wants to make your life extraordinary, and He’ll use every little twirl, dip, bend, and lift to create the most beautiful dance, if you’ll just flow with it.

MARA HODLER IS A FORMER MISSIONARY TO THE FAR EAST AND EAST AFRICA. SHE CURRENTLY LIVES IN TEXAS WITH HER HUSBAND AND CHILDREN AND RUNS A SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS. ■



BY ELSA SICHROVSKY

# FROM MUNDANE TO MARVELOUS

**ONE OF MY FAVORITE NOVELS** is C. S. Lewis's *The Horse and His Boy*, one of the seven books in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. The heroine, Aravis, is a princess trying to escape an arranged marriage to a high-ranking, but loathsome, fellow. Escaping with her are some newfound friends who, despite being unrelated, cross paths with her and decide to travel together for safety. Their destination is the mystical land of Narnia.

Halfway through their journey, Aravis bumps into one of her rich girlfriends. Mistakes made by both girls lead to Aravis being separated from her traveling buddies, but after many obstacles and delays, they make it to a hidden gate behind the king's deserted old palace. Just when things are looking up, however, Aravis' father, the king, and his aides suddenly show up in the deserted palace. The pair duck into a nearby room and fling themselves behind a couch. To their horror, only moments later, Aravis's betrothed husband and the king enter the room for a top-secret council, forcing the girls to stay put until the council is dismissed.

Yet it is there, trembling behind the couch and only inches away from the man she is fleeing from, that Aravis

hears the most important secret she will ever hear: the crown prince is planning a surprise invasion of Narnia and the neighboring kingdom of Archenland within the next few hours.

After the council's dismissal, Aravis's friend helps her to flee the city and rejoin her traveling buddies. Aravis shares what she has heard, and they are able to warn Archenland's king in the nick of time. As a result, Archenland's army defeats the prince, saving Archenland and Narnia. Both kingdoms may have been lost if it had not been for the mistakes made by Aravis and her friend. Had all gone according to plan, Aravis would have escaped before the king entered the palace for his clandestine meeting. But what would have become of Narnia and Archenland, where Aravis and her friends settle after the war?

Although Aravis's original purpose—escaping a detestable marriage—was worthy enough, it was rather mundane compared with the noble mission of saving not only two great kingdoms but also the futures of her friends; but this marvelous turn of events was only brought about through her and her friend's mistakes and





“My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,’ says the Lord. ‘And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.’”

—Isaiah 55:8–9 NLT

circumstances beyond her control.

In Aravis’s adventures, I find many parallels to my own experiences. Her flight from her home reminds me of how often I have tried to “escape” from a situation or circumstance to some better place I envisioned—a better job, an ideal relationship, etc. Like Aravis, I have my goal clearly defined in my mind, and I am determined to reach it regardless of what stands in my way. And so I pray, “Please help everything to go smoothly and splendidly. Please clear away potential obstacles and problems—all the kind of stuff that is so inconvenient and bothersome.” God probably looks at my plans and chuckles, *That’s OK, but it’s rather mundane. I’ve got something truly marvelous in mind!* On hearing my prayer, He probably smiles and says, *Problems may not seem beneficial, but they are My favorite tools for accomplishing My purposes.*

More often than not, I make mistakes in the course of my journey and unforeseen problems arise, nearly ruining my chances for “escape.” Deals fall through. Plans crumble. Personalities clash. Communications become strained. Circumstances take the situation out of my control. I sigh with frustration and struggle desperately

to regain control and bring my plans back on track. But instead of getting better, the situation often dissolves into seeming catastrophe and failure.

“Things couldn’t get worse!” I mutter. But eventually, the pieces fall into place—differently, yet more beautifully than I could hope for, and I see that God used all those annoying obstacles and errors to steer me toward worthwhile opportunities and fruitful and lasting outcomes. He even uses my mistakes to redirect my steps away from *my* plans and closer to *His* plans. Experiencing the breakdown of my plans and seeing the beauty of God’s design has transferred my confidence from my “nice, neat plans” to God’s “complete, comprehensive insight.”

When I recognize His hand, I sigh—this time, in contentment—as I marvel at the beautiful place that God has brought me to. With gratitude, I realize that I would never have arrived where I am today if God had not overturned my original plans so that He could transform them from mundane to marvelous.

ELSA SICHROVSKY IS A FREELANCE WRITER. SHE LIVES WITH HER FAMILY IN SOUTHERN TAIWAN. ■



# What God Does For Me

BY INGIBJÖRG TORFADÓTTIR

**WHEN I CAME IN FOR MY NURSING SHIFT** in the department for Alzheimer’s sufferers, one patient was very agitated and wouldn’t sit still. I could have given her some medication to calm her, but as she wasn’t aggressive or in pain, I instead walked around with her for a while. It was an aimless stroll; I would stop at times to look at paintings, show her a teddy bear, look out the window, etc., but mostly we just walked.

This aimless walking went on for over an hour, but each time I tried to direct her back to the common area, she kept pulling me off in another direction. Then a thought struck me: *This is how I am with God!* How often I drag Him around into

every corner of each room of my life, regardless of what He may be trying to show me or do with me. Even so, He is always there, moving stuff out of my way to make sure I don’t stumble. He is there all the time, and His love is so endless.

At one point, this patient was nearly dragging me around by my sweater. She kept turning into a dead-end fire escape, and although we had already been down that corridor several times, she kept insisting, so I let her lead me. It struck me that God must look at me sometimes and think to Himself, *Oh well, she will soon have to turn around anyway. If she’s not listening, I will just let her have her way. She’ll learn, she’ll come around.*

God seemed to be showing me how He watches over and takes care

of me. How He is never impatient. I had just been thinking, *I’ve done this for long enough. Time to ask a nurse assistant to take over ...* but I didn’t feel that would be right. I was left wondering, *How can I leave her in her time of need after all God does for me? Is my life and time more important than being there for someone?*

Even when I am doing good, I often end up getting bored and stop—or fall into thinking how great I am and feeling quite pleased with myself. But in reality, helping and serving others is just my “reasonable service”<sup>1</sup> and what God does for me every day.

INGIBJÖRG TORFADÓTTIR IS  
A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY  
INTERNATIONAL IN ICELAND. ■

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1. See Romans 12:1.





# PEACE

BY RAVI SINGH

**MANY PEOPLE DO NOT EVEN HOPE TO FIND LOVE AND JOY,** for both seem impossible to them; however, they would give everything in exchange for peace. Some people think money can help them find peace and solve their problems. But even if all the weapons were removed from the face of the earth and all the nations developed a friendly relationship, we would still not achieve the peace we so desperately need. The peace I'm talking about is not just a lack of conflict and a sensation of well-being, but perfect inner tranquility.

Jesus said, "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."<sup>1</sup>

I found peace. I can pinpoint the day when I sensed the power of peace, when God broke through the

hardness of my heart. I didn't think my heart was hard until the hardness was gone. Then peace fully existed without depending on circumstances, material possessions, or the acceptance of others. It was there because of the presence of God alone. That was my day of freedom. My personal Independence Day.

But I lost my way. I've done many things I'm not proud of and am now in prison. When I was caught, God was giving me another chance. He was telling me, *I have given My Spirit to live in you, if you will travel through life with Me. I will teach you what to do and help you when you are about to get off the path. I will even set you in the right direction when you take a wrong turn.*

God wants us to be free from the burdens of the past so we can move on. This is His gift of peace.

RAVI SINGH IS AN *ACTIVATED* READER SERVING A PRISON SENTENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA. ■

"If God be our God, He will give us peace in trouble. When there is a storm without, He will make peace within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble."

—Thomas Watson (c. 1620–1686)



"Peace comes when there is no cloud between us and God. Peace is the consequence of forgiveness, God's removal of that which obscures His face and so breaks union with Him."

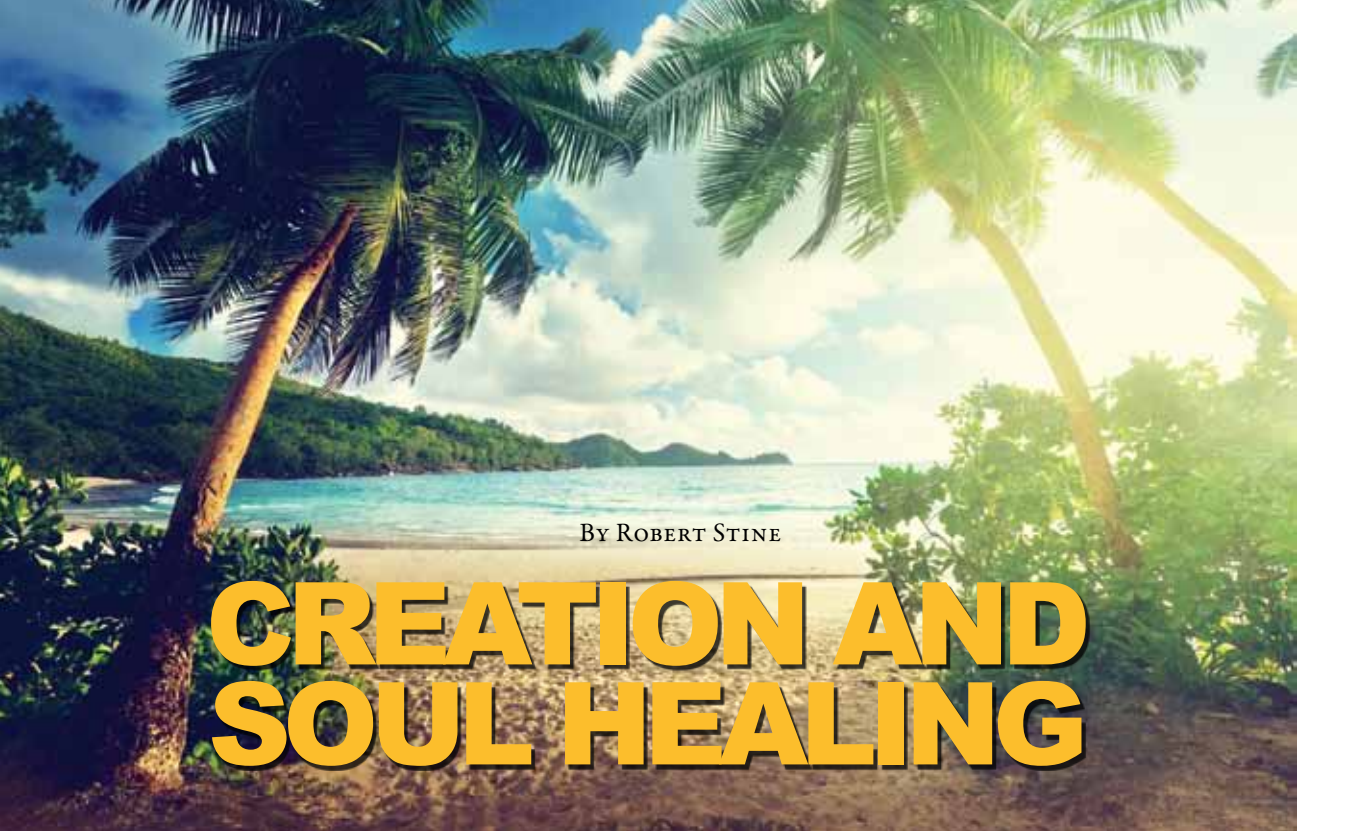
—Charles H. Brent (1862–1929)



"Real contentment must come from within. You and I cannot change or control the world around us, but we can change and control the world within us."

—Warren Wiersbe (b. 1929)

1. John 14:27 NLT



BY ROBERT STINE

# CREATION AND SOUL HEALING

**LIVING IN A BIG CITY CAN TAKE ITS TOLL ON OUR SPIRITS**, minds, and bodies. The crowded conditions, the selfishness, the barrage of media, the stress of normal life, relationships, health, finances, family, friends, coworkers ... it can all get to us if we do not take time daily to refresh our spirit with a good reading of God's Word and prayer.

We do not always recognize that we are getting weak, worn, or stressed until we get away from our environment in a fresh place, where we can stand back and see clearly.

After 15 years of living in Tokyo as a missionary and teacher, I didn't realize how affected I was by the physical circumstances around me until I began to get upset with people pushing me on trains, by getting bumped and pushed aside by people

who were just in a hurry or in their own world.

Fifteen years of riding the trains daily in Tokyo is a nerve-wracking experience, as they are crowded and people push and cram into the carriages, where you are squashed between bodies on all sides.

Despite reading God's Word and having prayer every morning without fail, still I was being affected, and didn't even realize it until I had a change of jobs and scenery.

I moved to a small tropical island in Okinawa Prefecture, 2,000 kilometers from Tokyo. As soon as I landed, I felt the power of nature, of creation, of the sea, the mountains, the climate, and the sweet people that live here.

I began spending time at various beaches and parks next to the sea and felt the healing of the colors, the waves, the peace, and the absence

of concrete, cars, people, and noise. It took a few months, but a change came over me. I went slower, paused before answering, became more genuine in my relationships, and was so much happier.

Big, noisy, fast-paced, crowded cities can have an effect on our souls without us realizing how much. God's creation is a powerful healing agent for our souls. It is worth just getting away and enjoying the simplicity of sunsets, trees, flowers, rivers, lakes, the sea, and mountains. Let's breathe the air, relax, go on walks, take in the atmosphere of peace, and allow the voice of God and His angels to whisper clearly to our hearts and heal our spirits.

ROBERT STINE IS A CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR AND MISSIONARY IN JAPAN. ■



# WALKING WITH GOD

BY SALLY GARCÍA

**IN THE VERY FIRST CHAPTERS OF GENESIS**, we read of an enigmatic character, Enoch. Though we know little about him now, it seems that Enoch was well-known in Jesus' time, as the New Testament book of Jude records a prophecy received by him in relation to the Latter Days.<sup>1</sup> This patriarch (born only seven generations after Adam) was also the father of the person who lived the longest in the Bible, Methuselah.<sup>2</sup>

1. See Jude 1:14–15.
2. See Genesis 5:21,27
3. NIV
4. Amos 3:3
5. See Genesis 3:8.
6. Ephesians 5:2
7. 2 Corinthians 5:7
8. See 1 Thessalonians 4:12.
9. See 3 John 1:4.
10. See 1 John 1:7.
11. See Colossians 4:5.
12. See Colossians 2:6.
13. Hebrews 11:5 NLT

The most interesting thing regarding Enoch is found in Genesis 5:24: “Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.”<sup>3</sup>

“Walked with God”—what do you think of when you hear that phrase?

Walking with God depicts harmony. “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”<sup>4</sup> When we are walking with someone, we are usually side by side. We try not to go ahead or lag behind. Learning to walk in step with God is a lifetime adventure.

Walking with God is also symbolic of communing with God. Many of the great thinkers and writers, such as Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Jefferson, and Søren Kierkegaard, habitually went on walks for contemplation. Adam and Eve communed daily with God, walking in the Garden of Eden.<sup>5</sup>

Walking with God is a way of life. The Bible tells us to “walk in

Start your walk with God today by inviting His Son, Jesus, into your life.

*I want to get to know You better, Jesus. Please come into my heart, stay by my side, and accompany me always. Amen*

love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us”<sup>6</sup> and to “walk by faith, not by sight.”<sup>7</sup> It also says to walk honestly,<sup>8</sup> walk in truth,<sup>9</sup> walk in light,<sup>10</sup> and walk in wisdom.<sup>11</sup> All of which is summed up simply by saying to walk in Christ.<sup>12</sup>

Paul wrote of the life of Enoch, saying, “It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—‘he disappeared, because God took him.’ For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God.”<sup>13</sup> Enoch pleased God so much that it seems one day he just walked with God straight into heaven.

A life pleasing to God is a simple life of walking in communion with our Creator until one day we finish our journey in this world and safely arrive at our heavenly home.

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FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

# I AM HERE TO HELP

I know all about you—your gifts, your talents, your strengths. I also know your weaknesses, your idiosyncrasies, and all the funny things about you that make you an individual. I know about the nagging problems that you can't seem to overcome and all the things about yourself that bother you. I know your heart's desires and secret longings. There is nothing hidden from Me.

I care about each of your disappointments and heartbreaks. I care about how you feel. I care about what you think. I care about the difficulties and hardships that you face. I care about your health. I care about your material needs. I care about your spiritual struggles. There is not one detail of your life that does not concern Me.

Every time you look up to Me, I am there. I hear your prayers, and My heart is moved with compassion. I never get tired of listening to you. I am never distant. I am never too tired or too busy for you. I never turn away. I never sleep. I never hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign on My door. Sometimes I don't answer in the way you ask Me to or think I should, and sometimes you don't see the answer immediately, but I always hear and I always answer.