



The following fantastic and true story was told to the Ontario Seventh-day Adventist Church by Miss Charleen Nelson on March 10, 1973.

You know, I can't tell you how doubly grateful I am to be here, because this is the third time that I have told this story; and each time that I attempt to tell the story, I am as convinced as I am that I am standing before you today that Satan attempts his very best to keep me from it. The week-end that I was at San Pasqual Academy, and Elder Richer was there, I had to drive down on Friday evening; and I encountered three near misses of fatal accidents that night, and it wasn't just happenstance. This week, as I prepared to come here to Ontario, I have had things happen to me all week long that has convinced me anew of a reality of Satan and the forces of evil.

The story I have to tell to you today is one that I heard when I was a freshman at La Sierra Academy. It was told at the Loma Linda University Church on a Friday evening, and I wish that I could have the man that told that story here before you this morning. But since I don't, the best I can do is to relate the story to you as best as I remember it, as I heard it that Friday evening.

The story was told about Elder Leo B. Halliwell. Now, for some of you old-timers here today, I know you know who Elder Halliwell is. Some of you younger people may not know him or remember him. He was the individual responsible for starting the mission launches in the Amazon in South America. He did a tremendous ministry during his life, and I am not too certain, but I believe stories have been written about his work there as well as books. The impact Elder Halliwell left on my life that night is one that I hope, somehow, God could help you to have today.

Elder Halliwell told his story shortly after returning from the Amazon. His return to the United States was necessitated by the illness of his wife. She

contracted cancer while in South America. It was several years before they realized her illness was serious. They came back to the States to provide medical care and treatment for her at Loma Linda. Shortly after they came back here, Elder Halliwell was advised by the General Conference that they had a young doctor and his family to replace him in the Amazon, because it was his request to the General Conference that he not return for a prolonged stay to the Amazon; he chose rather to be up here in the States with his wife for her remaining, time.

The young doctor that was sent down to the Amazon was joined later by Elder Halliwell to begin to train him and to introduce him to the various tribes, various leaders, and various workers in the Amazon that he would be rubbing elbows with from day to day. His name I would prefer to withhold, as did Elder Halliwell that night, for obvious reasons. Elder Halliwell spent approximately four months with this young doctor and his family in training, and they became very close during those four months as mission workers often do. For those of you who have been missionaries, I know you know. And then Elder Halliwell returned to the States to be with his wife, and they kept a regular flow of correspondence between the two families.

Not quite a year later, Elder Halliwell began to notice that the young doctor's wife was beginning to have a tinge of something in her letters that spelled, perhaps uncertainty, maybe doubt, certainly a sense of confusion and a lack of surety. He couldn't really put his finger on it, but he sensed something dramatic was happening. And then later a letter came from her and all her letter said, in essence, was "Pray for my husband".

At this point in the story I will go to the wife's words as she remembers the encounter. She said they had gone down to the Amazon, and after Elder Halliwell had left they felt a challenge and a burning desire to do what used to be done down there. They were young and on fire for Christ. They knew that they were where God wanted them to be. The doctor was a medical doctor, and they opened up a clinic and began to treat the people, to operate the mission launches, and really throw themselves into the work and become totally involved with Christ, and to living His message to those people medically and spiritually.

Then about six months after they had been there, their two little girls, young, small, contracted a very rare disease; and in 24 hours those two little girls died. The impact of the death of those daughters on that young doctor can't be relayed in words.

He was emotionally destroyed. He was a medical doctor. He supposedly, at that time, without the aid of experience but with the aid of knowledge that he had acquired over a period of years, should have been able to do something to cure disease and illness, sickness, pain, and suffering. And yet, in 24 hours he lost his own two little girls and radically he couldn't have done a thing. That was hard for him to accept.

It was at this time, or shortly after, that his wife began to write letters informing Elder Halliwell of the death of their children, and then following with the request, "Please pray for my husband." He lost interest in everything -- in his work, in his wife, in Christ; in the people he was working with day to day. Nothing interested him, nothing could arouse his desire to keep on living and working and doing and performing and accomplishing. And then one day he came to his wife and he said, "Honey, I've got to get hold of myself. I knew that something inside of me has crumbled, and I've got to find it again, and the only way I know how is to throw myself back, into working for God. I know that He, and time, and work--the combination of the three together--will be the aid I need in building back the pieces that have fallen apart." And so, with heavy steps he walked down to the mission dispensary, and he opened up the door, as it had been closed for so long; and it wasn't long before the word spread around the various villages that said that the doctor was back in again, and they began to come with their sick and their ill to be cured, to be treated. A few days went by and he was beginning to lose himself in his work, and it was beginning to be good for him. He felt the healing that needed to happen inside.

And then one day a very distinguished-looking man came into the clinic for treatment. And when he was brought in to the doctor, the doctor noticed something unusual about this man. He wasn't like the usual villagers around the area; he had an air of sophistication: an air of accomplishment about him, which was rare to that vicinity. In the course of treating his minor ills, the doctor began to converse with him, to find out who this man was, where he was from, to develop an interest, to open a door. The man talked very intelligently, enticingly so. Pretty soon the man was saying to the doctor,

"We're going to be having some meetings shortly in a nearby village, and we want to invite you to come to them." And further, "I understand that you, as a missionary here, are going to be holding an evangelistic series here soon--is that correct?"

The doctor nodded and said, "Yes."

He said, "I'll go to one of yours and see if we both can't learn something."

The doctor became interested. In the course of conversation with this man he learned that the meetings that this man was talking about was spiritualism; and he had the reaction that I suppose I would have and you would have. He kind of mentally drew back a bit and he said

"Hey, help," you know. Wait a minute, what is this? And he said,

"Well, I really don't think I would be interested, thank you very much anyway. I do appreciate your invitation and your concern, but I really think I'm going to be too busy. I won't be able to." The man looked at him, and he said

"Why?" The doctor said,

"Well, I really don't believe in spiritualism. It is something that I know about, and I don't want to become involved with spiritualism." The man began to talk to that doctor and he said,

"Have you ever gone to a spiritualist meeting?"

"No."

"Then how do you know that you don't want to become involved with spiritualism?"

The doctor said, "I know through my religion and the teachings of my church. I know what spiritualism is and I don't want any part of it."

The man began to work intellectually on this doctor, and it wasn't long until the doctor felt, "I know about it, I realize what it is--if I have a forewarning of what it is all about then I don't have to become involved with it, and maybe if I agree, as he says, to go to one of his meetings and don't become involved, then he, in turn, will come to one of our evangelistic meetings; and there is that slight chance that this one man might become converted. Maybe this is what God wants me to do." At that point, that doctor began to compromise. He agreed. He didn't mention anything to his wife about it because he felt that it probably would upset her, and rightly so.

A week later the young doctor went to his first meeting, with a little bit of, I would imagine, chagrin, a little bit of uneasiness. But I am sure that he wouldn't have gone unless he had a feeling of assurance that God's on my

side, I know what this is all about--it's not going to get me sort of an attitude. He opened up the door of that meeting place and his two little girls came running across the room to him.

"Daddy, daddy, daddy!"

From that point on that man had no more of a chance. He began to attend the meetings regularly in order to see his little daughters. His wife immediately began to notice the difference in his attitude. She had had so much hope that at last he was going to be able to start finding himself again and throw himself back in his work by becoming involved again. They had begun to break open a new relationship when all of a sudden something strange was happening, and she didn't know what it was, but she felt that it was something more than she could cope with!

And so the letters began again to Elder Halliwell, "Please pray for my husband."

The man went to the doctor for some time--I don't know exactly how long--but one night he was sitting in the back of one of those spiritualistic meetings after having a few moments of enjoyable time with his daughters--I don't know exactly how it could have been--and all of a sudden it was like something physical just shook him and mentally he came to and realized who he was and where he was and what was happening. It was like he was sleepwalking and he just went sick inside with what he had allowed to happen.

After that meeting was over that particular night, he went to the front and he said, "Look, I went to talk to the head guy, you know, the number one man."

"O.K." They took him back into a room with a table and two chairs and a lamp. The doctor sat down to wait; pretty soon the door opened and in walked an individual he had seen many times but never really talked to before. The man said, "Yes." "You know all about me, don't you?"

"Yes."

The doctor looked at him and he said, "All right, I want to know something. Because of who I am and once was, because of the training I had, there probably isn't any chance for me, at this point, to ever disentangle myself from spiritualism. But because of my background and the church that I was raised in, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I want to ask you one question." The man said, "All right." The doctor said, "I want to know what it is that

spiritualists are going to use in the last days to draw God's people, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, away from their God and their Bible." He said, "I know because of the writings of Ellen G. White, I know because of the training and the instruction we've been given that spiritualism is going to use. Do you know?"

The man was quiet for a long time and pretty soon he said,

"Yes, doctor, I know."

The doctor said, "Would you tell me?"

The man said, "Yes, I'll tell you, but if you ever repeat what I tell you here tonight, you will die in three days."

And then he told him.

The doctor went home that night--his wife said she didn't know what time it was but it was in the wee hours. He went into their bedroom, and he sat down on their bed, turned on the light.

She said, "Elder Halliwell, what I saw in the face of my husband that night I can't even describe. He was like a ghost--he was white." She said, "I knew something had happened, something extraordinary. I didn't know what was happening to him, but I knew something drastic had happened to him that night." She said, "I asked him." And he broke down and began to tell her what he had become involved in--what he had seen.

He said, "Honey, I know you are going to judge me harshly, but if it had been you, if you had walked through those doors and seen our little girls--Honey, they were ours: I talked to them, I felt them, I heard them laugh--those were our girls."

With tears running down his cheeks as he told her he said, "I couldn't stay away, and by God's grace and love, I suppose, unbeknown to me, I didn't come home and tell you and involve you too but I couldn't stay away." He said "Tonight, when I went, something happened to me."

And he told her what had happened, the physical feeling that he had felt, how he had asked to go back in the back room and talk to this man. And then he told her what the man had said and she just begged him, and she said, "Honey, I don't want to know--don't tell me--my God, we've gone through

enough, you've endured, you've become involved in it, now let's pray. Let's get out of this, let's just leave it alone, and just drop it."

After a minute he said, "I can't drop it." He said, "After what I know tonight, I can't drop it. I'm going to tell you what he told me, and so whatever the consequences may be, I have to leave my life and my feelings as I feel them now up to the judgment of God." He told his wife that night, friends, what that man told him would be used in the last days to draw God's people away from their church and away from their God. It would be television.

And three days later that doctor died.

Now, I don't know what kind of an impact this may have on you. You may say, Now, isn't that a phenomenal story; I wonder if it's true?!! Or you may say, "That's interesting, but is it really relative to what we know today?" Where are we today? What's happening? I don't know how involved you are who are here today; I don't know how involved you are with television in your home. But I know the Adventist families I know of--the one I struggled through myself--and I can't think of more than three that don't have television in their homes. I can't think of any element that has come into the family unit and society that has done more known damage with wider acceptance than that "Boob Tube."

It was very interesting to me. I am working and going to school too, so I don't have too much time, and I don't know what the current television shows are that well, so I went to some young friends of mine--some young teenagers and younger--and I said, "Hey, kids, will you help me with something? I have a project." I said, "Would you write down as many television shows as you can think of right now, just off the tops of your heads, that have supernatural tendencies in them--you know, like ghosts -- and I explained a little about it to them.

In fifteen minutes, friends, this is the list that those kids came up with: "I Dream of Jeannie", "Bewitched", "Dark Shadows", "My Favorite Martian", "My Mother, the Car", "Night Gallery", "The Munsters", "The Adams Family", "The Sixth Sense", "One Step Beyond", "The Ghost and Mrs. Muir", "Seymour", "Chiller", "The Flying Nun", "Alfred Hitchcock", "The Teenage Witch", "Star Trek", "Land of the Giants"; then they went into cartoons: "Superman", "Caspar", "The Teenage Witch", "Milton", "The Monster" .

Also advertisements that I won't go into necessarily, but I'm sure if I could challenge you today, those of you who watch a great deal of television, to go

home and spend the next week with a piece of paper next to the T. V. Guide and write down each time you see something flick on their screen that has a tendency of either ridiculing God (as in Mother Nature), undermining God, or introducing supernatural powers into the minds of those who are watching it--be it through comedy or terror--I think you would be astounded. And for those of you who may think that television doesn't really affect people that much--you know, it entertains, you come home after a hard day at the office and it is a good way to unwind because you don't have to think your own thoughts.

To others it may be a tremendous avenue to baby-sit their young children when they don't have time to spend with them, and they have housework to do, or are visiting on the telephone, or whatever, and they don't want to be interrupted. You may think that television doesn't influence the minds of those who watch it, but it is interesting to me that a survey was done just recently on the effects of television correlating it with the influence of violence in our nation today, and they are making phenomenal discoveries; and all of a sudden something happened and these people who were doing the research turned around completely in their decision and said, "No, it really doesn't affect the minds of those who watch it, as far as violence, crime, callousness to heinous events that may happen in "day-to-day life." I wonder why they reversed their decision, when to begin with the team who was made up of psychologists and psychiatrists who would know the effects of elements on the mind, of how it affects a person's day-to-day life and living--why all of a sudden they would reverse their decision.

And let's take another consideration--even those of you who may decide to slough this whole thing off on the attitude that it doesn't really control your mind because you control it. I say, "Good luck to you", particularly those of you who are parents and have small children. Let's put this element aside. Let's take just the element of time alone. I think you would be astounded if you realized, even if you feel you don't watch much television during the week, if you actually logged the number of hours you spend in front of the television set each week. I think you would be shocked. I asked one family two weeks ago to do it. They are a Seventh-day Adventist family. They have a television set, and they believe in control for the young people in their home. She smiled and said,

"Oh, you had better ask someone else, because we really don't watch that much television.

I said, "That's fine. You are just the ones I want to ask."

Meeting the Devil

They watched, in one week, 32 hours of television, and they didn't watch much television.

I think, too, of how that Boob Tube has intervened and come between family members, as far as just good, healthy, family communication is concerned. How many homes do you know that you could just pop into in the evening and they would have the television set going on a favorite program, and they would be so happy to see you that they would be willing to turn that television set off to visit with you. How many people would you welcome into your home, good friends, good people that you would enjoy seeing that you would want to invite in on your prime time hours of television?

It is strange how we always seem to manage to have time for the things that are really important to us. I think, too, of the type of programs that are watched. I know an organization not far from here--it is a Christian organization--they begin their workday each day with worship. They believe the work they are doing is carrying forward the message of God. They have a burden for where they are and what: they are doing, what they are involved in: they also have a television in their lounge, and every day at noon, without exception, there are 13 people in that Christian Institution who have dedicated their lives to God and his service who can't make it through the day unless they watch a particular soap opera on the television set in the lounge.

Friends, something is happening to us, and we are letting it happen. We have "been given admonition, instruction. We look around us and see what is happening to our society, to our family units, and yet we sit in our Christian pews and say, "It is all right if we control it and it doesn't control us." Where are you ever going to divide that line, or draw that line?

I challenge each one of you today to determine if your television set controls you or you control it!

"CHOOSE YE THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE."

THANX TO

