International Women’s Day of Prayer
March 4, 2006

Resource Packet

“What Do They See”

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North American Division

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Department of Women’s Ministries
About the Writer

Born in Kansas, in the United States of America, Dawn Reynolds is a third generation Seventh-day Adventist. She has one adult daughter, Alisa, who was nurtured with music from before birth.

She has earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in music from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Recently she completed the requirements for Lay Ministry of Evangelism offered by the North American Division Evangelism Institute at Andrews University. She has served as the Prayer Coordinator on the Women’s Ministries team for the local conference.

Currently she teaches at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland, conducts classes for parents and toddlers and is a private piano instructor. Other interests include composing, reading, crocheting, knitting, and quilting.
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Suggested Order of Service
Women’s Ministries Day of Prayer
March 4, 2006

Prelude (instrumental music)

Choral Introit/Congregational song as platform participants enter

Congregational Scripture—Psalm Collage

Invocation

Welcome

Hymn of Praise—To God Be the Glory, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #34
Praise to the Lord, Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal #1

Intercessory Prayer

Offertory

Scripture

Praise in Music (Vocal or Instrumental)

Sermon—What Do They See?

Hymn of Commitment—Can the World See Jesus In You?/Make Me A Blessing

Benediction

Postlude (instrumental music)
Praise from Scripture: Psalm Collage

Leader: Lord, through all the generations You have been our home! Before the mountains were created, before you made the earth and the world, You are God, without beginning or end.

Women: I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak His praises. I will boast only in the Lord; let all who are discouraged take heart. Come let us tell of the Lord’s greatness; let us exalt His name together.

ALL: Let the godly sing with joy to the Lord, for it is fitting to praise Him.

Women: Praise the Lord, I tell myself; with my whole heart, I will praise His holy name. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.

Men: I took my troubles to the Lord; I cried out to him and He answered my prayer. My help comes from the Lord, who made heavens and the earth.

Youth: I was glad when they said to me; Let us go to the house of the Lord. How happy are those who fear the Lord—all who follow His ways!

Solo: I will sing of the tender mercies of the Lord forever! Young and old will hear of Your faithfulness. Your unfailing love will last forever. Your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens.

Leader: When I pray, You answer me; You encourage me by giving me the strength I need.

Men: If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there Your hand will guide me, and Your strength will support me.

Solo: Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise Him, all you people of the earth.

Women: I will praise you, my God and King, and bless Your name forever and ever.

I will bless you every day, and I will praise you forever.

ALL: Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise!

NOTE:
The verses for this Psalm collage are taken from the following chapters: 33, 34, 117, 120, 121, 128, 138, 139 New Living Translation (NLT)
Story for Children

Scripture: Matthew 10:37-42
Object: A cup of cold water (where possible)
Time: Approximately 5 minutes

Girls and Boys,

In my hand I have a cup of cold water. If I offered you a drink of water, you would probably take it if you were thirsty. If I offered you some juice, or some lemonade or __________ (substitute a popular drink) you might take it even if you weren’t especially thirsty.

Did you know that you can’t live very long without liquid of some kind—your body really needs water every day? In parts of the world where there are deserts, water is especially important for humans and for animals. In other places in the world water is so important that people have fought wars over water. If you lived in a place where there was a stream going through your property you were very blessed.

In the land where Jesus lived when He was on earth, sometimes it was hot and dry. One of the nicest things you could do for people was to give them a cup of cold water. Jesus said that it was so nice that whenever you gave someone else a cup of cold water in His name it was just as though you were really giving it to Jesus.

Whenever we do something nice for someone—whether it is a special friend or a teacher, or brother or sister, or whoever it might be, we are doing it for Jesus. What a wonderful thought. Jesus loves us so much and He wants us to do something kind for somebody to show His love today.

Can you think of something you can do? (Elicit responses from children.)

Today’s sermon is about finding ways to do something nice for somebody. Be sure to listen carefully and get some ideas for helping people.
Sermon for the Day
What Do We See? The Call to Reflect His Love

Greetings to Congregation (Acknowledge and thank those people present – it may be your home church or you may be the guest speaker in another church. Allow approximately 1-2 minutes.)

I would like for you today to turn to someone next to you and share with them some blessing that God has given you since last Sabbath. Then listen as that person shares with you a blessing he or she has recently received. (Allow approximately 3 - 4 minutes for this activity.)

As you have just been sharing your stories of God’s most recent blessings with each other it is impossible not to be reminded of His love to all of us. If we review each day at its end, regardless of how difficult the day may have been, there is always some clear evidence of how much God loves and cares for us. Never a day goes by that we cannot see some way that he shows His concern and compassion for each one of us.

Jesus came to demonstrate the incredible love that God the Father has for us by—among many things—showing us how to live and to minister to each other. And then He gave us the greatest example of God’s love by giving the greatest gift—His life.

Let’s pray.

In the sermon title, “What Do We See—A Call to Reflect His Love,” the word see makes us think of many things: the need to observe closely or to have whatever we’re looking at appear clearly. When we want to see something as best as we can, sometimes we put on glasses that help us. Sometimes we turn on a light—perhaps a light with a lot of power. In this way we are confident about what is there. Perhaps it is a picture, or maybe some words we need to understand. If we see clearly our understanding becomes better.

Today we want to shine a bright light on God’s Word as we focus on a few specific passages in the Old and New Testaments. Our Scripture reading in II Corinthians 1:3-4 speaks to our being able to bring comfort to others just as God has comforted us.

Wherever we live in the world today, we can look around and see so many people who are troubled by tragedy and who need to find help and hope. The continuous blessings we receive from God are not given just so that we can enjoy them, but they are given to us so that we can give to others in need.

The comfort that we give brings support, strength and hope to others. The comfort we give should come from a heart that has a desire to make things better for the life of another human being. The comfort that we give brings encouragement to the one receiving it. Someone has said that encouragement is like oxygen to the soul. That sounds like something really necessary and that is within our power to do.
When we shine a light on Jesus and His disciples in New Testament Scriptures, we see examples of His caring about people and His concern for their lives. We see Him healing the woman who in faith touched the hem of His garment. We get a glimpse of Him showing kindness and compassion to mothers who brought their little ones to receive a blessing from Jesus. We see Him working a miracle and feeding those who were hungry. He cared about their needs. We see the faces of Jesus’ hearers as they listen to His story of the Good Samaritan who shows compassion and provides care and hope for a stranger—a stranger who was attacked and injured and left to die.

And this record of Jesus’ life is just a small sample of events in His ministry. We just have a tiny picture of what He did. As John wrote in chapter 21 and verse 25, “And I suppose that if all the other events in Jesus’ life were written, the whole world could hardly contain the books!”

These experiences that Jesus demonstrated for His followers was a way of providing an example of the lives they should live after He left them and went back to heaven.

But Jesus’ examples and teaching was not a strange thing for the Jewish people to see and hear. They had knowledge of their history and many of them had to have read or heard about the caring and compassion God wanted his people to show to others. The Old Testament tells of many experiences with this Divine mercy and kindness. It was this same mercy, love and kindness that the children of Israel were in turn to reflect to others.

As we look carefully at what was going on in Elijah’s day we see a widow who was facing extreme difficulty just to survive with her young son in a time of famine. When we find her in I Kings 17:8 she is gathering sticks to build a fire to prepare her last meal after which she and her son will lay down and die.

Today women find themselves in a variety of unfortunate circumstances. It is predicted that, in this year—2006, close to ½ the households in the entire world will be headed by women. They are widows; they are the divorced; they are heads of homes where the husband has disappeared, or are incarcerated; they are women who are single heads of households; they are women who are caring for family members—many of whom are children, orphaned by AIDS. They struggle to earn a living, to provide food and shelter and some of life’s simple needs.

And so we can look at this widow who is preparing what she believes to be her last meal on this earth. In the middle of her preparations comes Elijah—a man who has been getting his meals from birds. He comes with a request for her to make him a meal.

When Elijah appeared, it was on the very day when the widow feared that she and her son were going to die. This tested her faith in the power of the living God to provide for her. But even in these horrible circumstances she showed her faith by sharing this meal with the stranger who was asking for some of the last little bit of food.
Ellen White writes in Prophets and Kings in Chapter 10 and page 129 that the remarkable thing was that this woman was not an Israelite. She had never had the privileges and blessings that the chosen people of God had enjoyed; but she was a sincere believer in the true God and had walked in all the light that was shining on her pathway. And now, when there was no safety for Elijah in the land of Israel, God sent him to this woman to find a refuge in her home. God chose her to show kindness and compassion to Elijah. God chose her to provide a refuge for His prophet.

And so she did. She took the last of what she had and shared it with God’s prophet. She must have wondered why she was risking her life and that of her son by doing this but her faith and trust in Israel’s God enabled her to make this decision.

But what do we see in verses 15 and 16? Not only did the widow have food for that day but her barrel of flour and the container of oil never ran out during the famine! Her kindness and hospitality, extended in faith to Elijah, brought blessings back into her own life and also to that of her son.

What an amazing example this poor widow shows. She is also setting an example for her son to follow as he grows up.

(If there are children in your audience;)
I would ask you boys and girls this morning to remember this story and the important lessons for you here.

I would like to remind you to:
- Treat people with kindness and generosity.
- Help those who are in need.
- Be sensitive to people's feelings.
- Never be mean or hurtful.
- Think about how your actions will affect others.
- Remember that you will grow into caring people by doing caring things.

Work with your family, your church, your Sabbath School class, your Pathfinder or Adventurer Clubs. Here you will find ways to share God’s love by bringing caring and compassion to a needy world.

As we continue to keep that bright light on Scripture we can see Jesus’ examples of caring and compassion during the short time He spent here on earth. This was His way of shaping the disciples to continue to carry on His ministry. He had only three years to show them an example of what was needed to reflect His love and do God’s work in the world. But what a powerful three years they were.

As the disciples talked and walked and watched, their understanding grew. Slowly at first but gradually the lessons Jesus was trying to teach began to be part of their minds and hearts.
Their test would come after Jesus went back to heaven. Would they remember what He had taught them? Would they know what it meant to live as Jesus had lived? Had they learned lessons of compassion and kindness? Did they realize that He came to bring hope to the hopeless? Had all they had seen given them an understanding of what it meant to care for others? Could they show sympathy to those in need?

Well, the book of Acts paints a picture of how the love of God, sent through His Son Jesus, was reflected in the early church.

Led by the apostles and others who had been with Jesus they formed a community where the love and caring for each other stands out as a model for churches today. We see here that a powerful prayer life combined with a loving community resulted in amazing church growth. Acts 2:47 says that daily members were added to the church.

I would ask some questions for you to think about today (pause after each question): What does your church look like? When others look at your church, what do they see? When you look at your church what do you see? Is your church reflecting the caring and compassionate Jesus?

The New Testament further testifies to the value of compassion and the help to the community that a single woman brought. She is called Tabitha but many know her as Dorcas. In fact, many groups are called by her name—Dorcas Societies—and these groups follow her example in caring and compassion for others. She worked in the community of Joppa and when she died suddenly there was sadness all over the city. People gathered and showed the clothing Dorcas had made to take care of those in need.

When the apostle Peter was summoned to this little town and the power of the Holy Spirit worked through him to bring Dorcas back to life, can you imagine the excitement this must have created? Excitement for those who had been mourning her death and excitement for Dorcas herself who, I would imagine, was happy that she was alive and could continue her unselfish work for those in her community.

The Scriptures tell us that the news raced through the town and that many came to know and follow Jesus because of this.

God calls us to live in such a way that those who know you but don't know God will come to know God because they know you. We must continually be aware that all of us are God’s love letters to a world in need.

As the world—near and far—watches, what do they see in you? As that spotlight shines on you, what is revealed? Do you live so close to the Lord each day, passing to and fro on life’s busy way, that the world can see Jesus in you? Perhaps you feel that the tasks are so great and you can’t make that much of a difference. Be assured that the task ahead of you is not as great as the Power behind and within you. The instruction in Scripture is backed by Holy Spirit power that will guide and direct you as you step out in faith to make a difference in God’s world.
Maybe you are thinking that this is just good advice—not really meant for you. Then perhaps you need to shine the spotlight on I Peter 4:10. “God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God’s many kinds of blessings.” This is a message about what we must do.

Give of yourself. You can always give something, even if it is only kindness. No one has ever become poor from giving. Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.

The power to accomplish the task is not all that God has promised. He has also promised benefits and blessings for those who bring comfort and compassion to those in need. The widow in Elijah’s day certainly gave testimony to that.

But findings from a scientific study done approximately 3 years ago show some interesting results.

This study was conducted by Dr. David McClelland at Harvard University in the United States. Participants in the study were asked to watch a documentary on the life of Mother Teresa or a few minutes of a video showing other individuals who helped or acted in a kind way to someone else.

The results of the study revealed two very important findings. Number one, because they were so motivated by what they saw, the participants expressed a very strong desire to get involved in doing something positive. Number two, an antibody found in the saliva of those in the study rose significantly. This antibody is the first line of defense against germs that enter through the nose and mouth and is an important part of the body’s defense against disease that puts the body in danger.

I don’t know if the primary researcher knew about the benefits the Bible promises but the current study results certainly add support to what Scripture says. It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man, woman or child can sincerely try to help another without helping himself or herself.

As the world’s needs grow every day we must ask ourselves if we are truly responding to Jesus’ command when he said, ‘I have given you an example to follow; do as I have done to you.” (John 13:15)

The United Nations reports that fully one fifth of humanity lives in countries where many people think nothing of spending $2 a day (U.S. dollars) on a fancy cup of coffee. Another fifth of humanity survives on less than $1 a day and lives in countries where children die for want of a simple anti-mosquito bed net.

The Desire of Ages, page 637 says that “When the nations are gathered before Him, there will be but two classes, and their eternal destiny will be determined by what they have done or have neglected to do for Him in the person of the poor and suffering.”
Today I would encourage each of you to ask God each day for the privilege of sharing His love with someone. Ask him to send someone – place in your pathway a person you can encourage, and comfort in His name.

He comforts and blesses you daily so that you can in turn pass that blessing on to others.

Fervently seek God in prayer to send the Holy Spirit to give you extraordinary power and direct you each day. Ask him to show you opportunities where you can bring comfort and compassion to others.

May we reflect more and more of God’s image by the power of the Spirit working on our hearts. May our example be a means to lead others to Him is my prayer today.

APPEAL: (Give an opportunity for those who have not accepted Christ as their personal Savior to do so today. The appeal does not have to be a lengthy one, but no service should close without giving those present a chance to make a commitment to Christ.)
Take Time to Pray

I got up early one morning
And rushed right into the day.
I had so much to accomplish
That I didn’t have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me,
And heavier came each task.
Why doesn’t God help me, I wondered;
He answered, “You didn’t ask.”

I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on, gray and bleak.
I wondered why God didn’t show me.
He said, “You didn’t seek.”

I tried to come into God’s presence,
I tried every key in the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided;
“My child, you didn’t knock.”

I woke early this morning,
And paused before starting the day.
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray.

Author Unknown
Make Me A Blessing

Out on the highways and byways of life,
   Many are weary and sad;
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife,
   Making the sorrowing glad.

CHORUS
Make me a blessing, make me a blessing;
    Out of my life may Jesus shine.
Make me a blessing, O Saviour I pray,
    Make me a blessing to someone today.

Verse 2
Tell the sweet story of Christ and His love,
    Tell of His pow'r to forgive;
Others will trust Him if only you prove
    True every moment you live.

CHORUS

Verse 3
Give as 'twas given to you in your need,
    Love as the Master loved you;
Be to the helpless a helper indeed,
    Unto your mission be true.

CHORUS

http://my.homewithgod.com/heavenlymidis2/blessing.html
Can The World See Jesus In You?

Do we live so close to the Lord today,
Passing to and fro on life's busy way,
That the world in us can a likeness see
   To the Man of Calvary?

REFRAIN
Can the world see Jesus in me?
Can the world see Jesus in you?
Does your love to Him ring true,
   And your life and service, too?
Can the world see Jesus in you?

Verse 2
Do we love, with love to His own akin,
All His creatures lost in the mire of sin?
Will we reach a hand, whatso'er it cost,
   To reclaim a sinner lost?

REFRAIN

Verse 3
As an open book they our lives will read,
To our words and acts giving daily heed;
Will they be attracted, or turn away
   From the Man of Calvary?

REFRAIN

http://www.avoiceinthewilderness.org/extol/hymn148.html
Optional Activity

Prayerwalking

What is it and how do I get started?

Prayerwalking has been defined as praying on-site with insight. It is intercession on location with information in cooperation with the Almighty God.

In hundreds of cities across the globe, ordinary believers are prayerwalking through the streets of their communities. They pray while walking, with eyes open for the spiritual awakening God is bringing.

For prayerwalking there is no set pattern or proven formula. Prayerwalkers have set out with every imaginable style. There’s nothing magic at all in the footsteps. God’s Spirit is simply helping us to pray with persistent spontaneity in the midst of the very settings in which we expect Him to answer our prayers. We instinctively draw near to those for whom we pray.

Getting close to the community focuses our prayer. We sharpen our prayers by concentrating on specific homes and families. But we enlarge our praying as well, crying out for entire communities to know God’s healing presence. When praying for unreached people groups or cities, it is especially helpful to pray on-site. Not only are we changed, but we bring the light of Christ into the area and impact the spiritual darkness just by our presence as the children of light.

Prayerwalks give us a simple way to continually fill the streets with prayer. Many are praying city-size prayers while ranging throughout their towns with disciplined regularity in small bands of two or three. In limited access countries, thousands of "tourists" walk the streets interceding for the lost in their own communities. Thus prayerwalkers keep near the lost in order to touch them with the gospel and transforming service. Quiet triumphs often follow as God changes the city day by day and house by house.

Prayerwalking on a "prayer journey" in another country should be preceded by consistent prayerwalking in your own community. You can engage in prayerwalking with believers all over your city as you seek to have a God-sized vision for the place you live. This will be a good training ground before you travel halfway across the world to engage in hours of prayer.

How to Get Started Prayerwalking

Join with other believers. Join your faith with others to help prayer flow in an engaging conversational style. Large groups sometimes fail to give everyone a chance to participate. Pairs and triplets work best. (For example, a group of eight could naturally divide into pairs as they walk, but be in sight of each other or meet back together at a certain location.)
Set aside time. Allowing one or two full hours gives prayerwalkers a good chance to manage preliminaries and follow-up discussions, although much can be done in less time.

Choose an area. Ask God to guide you. It is best by far to learn the joys of prayerwalking in unfamiliar neighborhoods. You’ll return quickly to your own neighborhood with fresh vision. Centers of commerce and religion are fascinating, but there’s nothing like touching families, schools, and churches in residential areas. Use elevated points to pray over a large area. Linger at specific sites which seem to be key. When deciding where to go overseas, you may choose to link up with a missionary working in that area so your prayers can be strategic to ministry plans that are being implemented.

Pray with insight. Pray for the people you see. As you do, you might find the Spirit of God changing your heart. Above all, pray Scripture. If you have no clear place to begin praying, select a biblical prayer, and you will find that they almost pray themselves.

Focus on God. Make God’s promises the highlight of your prayer.

Regather and report. Share what your experiences and prayer requests. Expressing your insights and faith will encourage others – as well as yourself. Set plans for further prayerwalking.

Coordinate efforts. Enlist other praying people to join with friends to cover special areas. Keep records of which areas have been covered. Pool your insights to ascertain whether God is prompting a repeated focus on particular areas. Eventually aim to cover your entire town or city, unless God guides otherwise.

Themes for Prayerwalking

Attempt to keep every prayer pertinent to the specific community you pass through. As you do, you will find prayers naturally progress to the nation and to the world.

Use a theme passage of Scripture. Unless God guides you to use another, try 1 Timothy 2:1-10. Many have found it to be a useful launching point for prayerwalking. Verse 8 speaks of the important territorial dimension to prayer connected with God’s desire that all people be saved. “I want the men in every place to pray.”

Copy this and other passages in a format easy to read aloud several times during your walk. Each of the following prayer points emerges from this passage.

Concerning Christ: Proclaim Him afresh to be the one Mediator and the ransom for all. Name Him Lord of the neighborhood and of the lives you see.

Concerning leaders: Pray for people responsible in any position of authority – for teachers, police, administrators and parents.
Concerning peace: Ask God for the peace that only He can give and pray that we have that peace in our homes, in our churches, in our workplaces, in the community, and in the world.

Concerning truth: Declare openly that there is one God. Celebrate the faithful revelation of His truth to all peoples through ordinary people (1 Timothy 2:8). Pray that people will come to a knowledge of the truth.

Concerning the gospel: Pray for new churches to be established. Praise God for He desires that all people be saved. Pray that God will give us a desire to tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

Concerning the blessing of God: Thanksgivings are to be made on behalf of all people. Give God the explicit thanks He deserves for the goodness He constantly bestows on the homes you pass by. Ask to see the city with His eyes, that you might sense what is good and pleasing in His sight as well as what things grieve Him deeply. Ask God to bring forth an enduring spiritual awakening.

Concerning the church: Ask for healing in relationships, that there be no anger or dissension among God’s people. Ask that God would make His people ???

Adapted from Prayerwalking by Steve Hawthorne and Graham Kendrick (Creation House, 1993).
http://www.peopleteams.org/miao/prayerwa.htm
Prayer Gathering

Introductory Notes

This service can be held on Friday night or on Sabbath afternoon. As this specific activity is initiated you may want to limit the time to one hour. Afterwards your congregation may decide to adopt this as a regular weekly meeting as part of the Women’s Ministries Department responsibilities. Be sure to consult with the pastoral staff for direction and guidance.

The prayer gathering differs from the traditional prayer meeting in that the primary emphasis is on praying and engaging everyone in prayer. The traditional prayer meeting generally involves preaching and some time for prayer. The prayer gathering focuses on individual and small groups praying. This gives several opportunities for people to seek the Lord together.

If this continues on a regular basis, you may want to have a different theme for each week.
Your requests will begin to accumulate and following up with praise reports from those who submit these prayer requests is important as a way of encouraging the group to be faithful in prayer.

Be sure that the members of the group are familiar with the distinction between praise and thanksgiving. Remind them that in praise we give God the glory for who He is. In thanksgiving, we celebrate what He has done for us as His creatures.

Groups who have begun this style of praying together report that the answers they are receiving to prayer are phenomenal. The participation from group members increases as they pray together in small groups. The spiritual growth is inspirational and many individuals tell of the relationship with God growing in remarkable ways.
Prayer Gathering
Suggested Order of Service

Leader’s Welcome – Use a passage of Scripture

Prayer – Pray for a special infusion of the Holy Spirit’s power

Requests – (Before beginning the meeting, ask people for requests they wish to present. There is a form included in the package. Distribute after people have gathered in groups of 2)

Prayer – Groups of 2 pray for requests.

Leader’s Prayer or brief devotional thought – pray for women suffering from effects of war in various parts of the world.

Prayer – Groups of 5-6 pray for this focus

Leader’s Prayer or brief devotional thought – pray for women suffering from effects of crime in various parts of the world.

Prayer – Individuals pray alone

Leader’s Prayer or brief devotional thought – pray for women suffering from effects of natural disasters: hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, etc.

Prayer – Groups of 3-4

Praise – Individuals

Thanksgiving – Individuals
(Before this activity, ask group to give thanksgiving for recent blessings (those received within the past week—10 days).

Song – Entire group

Scriptural Benediction - (Example: Numbers 6:24-25)
Name_________________________________________________ Date ____/____/____

Phone (optional) __________________________________________________________

Prayer Request____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

(You may turn this slip over and write your praise and thanksgiving to God.)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Name_________________________________________________ Date ____/____/____

Phone (optional) __________________________________________________________

Prayer Request____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
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(You may turn this slip over and write your praise and thanksgiving to God.)
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(You may turn this slip over and write your praise and thanksgiving to God.)

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