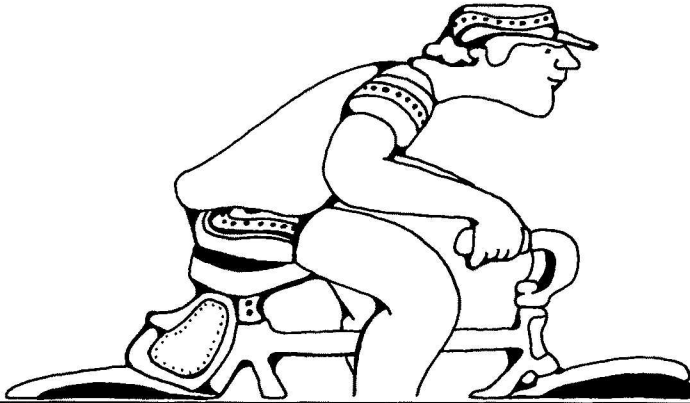


**C.** S. LEWIS had the habit of deflating the ego of his readers. On one occasion he wrote: "If anyone will take the trouble to think back upon the thoughts he or she has thought in the previous ten minutes, and to analyze them, it will be surprising how much garbage will be found" [paraphrase]. I thought on that the other day when I was



of different types of solutions, none of which is a favorite of the enemy. With malice I pictured the fright, and then retreat, of this four-legged monster as he got his deserts.

At that point my malevolent thoughts were interrupted by a cherubic face appearing at the window of the house which the threatening animal was "protecting." There was a bright-faced, smiling lad of probably no more than eight summers, and he called out to me through the window—in the brightest and most cheery of tones—"Good morning." Immediately, I felt ashamed. Here I was contemplating the most dire threats of antagonism towards the pet of this innocent child, and he was wishing me a happy good morning!

Somewhat subdued, I continued on my way, thinking upon the topic of human depravity.

Only two corners further on, I came



## REFLECTIONS of a CYCLIST

by Desmond Ford

cycling to the office. The trip is about eight miles, and usually involves encounters with a number of dogs.

### Reflections on Threatening Dogs and Cherubic Children

I was coming up a hill when I heard the warning bark of one regular nuisance on the left side of the road. I thought with wry humor of John Newton's hymn "Through many dangers, toils and snares, etc." Of course, the contrast is abysmal. Newton nearly lost his life on a variety of occasions. He suffered naval floggings, repeated exposure to inclement weather while chained to a ship's deck, and knew the horrors of being treated as a slave in darkest Africa. To date, on this particular route, I had been bitten twice, had one pair of trousers rather marred by canine jaws, and occasionally had to swerve perilously close to traffic in an endeavor to avoid attackers.

Anyway, on this particular morning, as I heard the threatening roar, I reflected it would serve the dog right if I had been carrying a plastic container of antidog solution. You know the stuff, or stuffs. There are a number

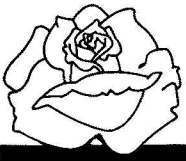
upon another canine protector of the way, who showed great interest in me, and expressed it vociferously. This one, too, I had met many times before. He really only had three effective legs, possibly having been run over or hit by a passing motorist long before. I realized that this was really a gallant little animal, who, despite his handicap, was still determined to protect the household which fed him regularly and gave him other marks of affection. Yet here I was cherishing thoughts of unkindness towards the whole canine creation that ventured forth on the county roads. Once more I felt ashamed.

Second thoughts are usually best. The trouble is they are often not permanent. Tomorrow when I once more cycle through the gauntlet, my repentance will doubtless flee away to be replaced by thoughts of havoc and mayhem. What a creature is man!

To add to this revelation of depravity, I want you to know that the particular day in question was a beautiful one. All things stood out bright and clear in the early morning sunshine,

*Continued on page 10*

*"...I was preoccupied with dogs in a world that had the sun, the moon, stars, rippling streams, green fields, flowers, fruits, and a million other wonders."*



***Surrounded  
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and forget  
the rest!***

*Continued from page 7*

and the air was crisp and fragrant. I should have been thinking, not of Newton's hymn, but Browning's, when he declared that "God's in his heaven, and all's right with the world." Of course, Browning was overoptimistic when he said that all things were right with the world, but I guess he meant the providence of God overshadowed all. The main point is I was preoccupied with dogs in a world that had the sun, the moon, stars, rippling streams, green fields, flowers, fruits, and a million other wonders.

Is that not too often the case with us all? Surrounded on all sides by evidence of the love of God, we concentrate on the slightest threatening shadow—and forget the rest! Would not life be different if we formed the habit of thinking upon the good, and only giving the evil our close attention when some decision was required regarding it.

It has only been weeks since the PTL debacle and the Gary Hart political upheaval. Many of us asked whether "The good man is perished out of the earth" (Mic 7:2). But again, it is a matter of where we look. In the last two and a half months I have met hundreds of people, some of them Americans, some Australians, some Filipinos, some Japanese. Everywhere I have gone, I have encountered kindness and generosity.

#### **Reflections on Tokyo**

There was that evening at Tokyo's main train station. I was very weary after a long flight from the Philippines. Before that, a wearying truck ride under armed guard to Manila Airport. I had been through the maze of getting from Tokyo airport to the train station, which to a newcomer can be a challenging and somewhat trying experience. Signs in English were few. Most travelers about me knew only their own language. I wanted to find out how to reach Nagoya.

Everyone was rushing hither and thither. (The Japanese are very energetic people and always seem engrossed with business. In contrast, Filipinos are more relaxed and love to sit in the sun and laugh, tell stories, or sing.) The night was late, and I didn't wish to wander in my ignorance forever. So I stopped a man

walking briskly towards me, and said to him sharply and inquiringly, "Nagoya?" Immediately, he took one of my bags and began to lead the way to an office about 200 yards away. Only when I had received the necessary information from an English-speaking official, and was in good hands and no longer lost, did my Japanese "Good Samaritan" bow with great courtesy and leave.

During my three days in Japan, finding my way around Hiroshima and other places, I must have asked fifty people for directions, and was always met with uniform courtesy. I am no stranger to being lost. I confess that due to a very poor geographical sense I am capable of being lost even in a telephone booth. Therefore, it is with continual gratitude that I meet the wonder of kind and helpful strangers.

#### **Reflections on the Philippines**

In the Philippines I was assigned an escort, "lest I be kidnapped." I didn't know how seriously to take such words, though it was a fact that some Australians, Americans, and Swiss had been kidnapped in recent weeks. The young man assigned to me kept closer than any brother. He steered me through the complexities of Philippine cities, and did what he could to prevent my being cut down by the traffic as we made perilous forays in search of a passing jeepney.

In one home where we both slept in the same room because of a multiplicity of guests, I remember the hostess—a lady of infinite charm and apparent happiness. To my sorrow I learned she had lost her husband by a sudden stroke just a few weeks before. In the early morning I arose to walk before what would necessarily be a sedentary day of meetings. I found her busy in the kitchen. She was crying. She said, "Since my husband's death I find it hard to sleep." Here was a woman suffering terribly from bereavement, yet she had greeted her guests with a smiling face and all the genuine signs of hospitality.

#### **Reflections on the USA**

Recently in Grand Junction, Colorado, I left my motel just after 6:00 in the morning to walk to the airport about a mile away. Kind friends had been eager to pick me up and take



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me, but I saw no reason to disturb their early Sunday morning rest. I like to walk and my bag was not heavy. I had gone only half a mile when a car stopped, and a lady's smiling face appeared, inquiring, "Are you trying to make a flight?" I thanked her for her kindness and assured her that I had plenty of time. But I went my way marveling.

#### Reflections on Choosing Good or Bad

Yes, the world, your little world and mine, has its threatening dogs. But it also has shining-faced children, glorious days, and a multitude of people who reflect the goodness of God in their own unpaid-for acts of kindness and charity. The three women

doctors I met in Mindanao represent a vast, unheralded host. Sisters from one family, the three doctors regularly harness the talents of many Christian young people for regular visits into the country—even Communist insurgency country—in order to heal the sick and educate the poor in matters of hygiene.

It is up to us whether we will concentrate upon the darkness of threatening dogs, the clouds on the horizon, the ordinary and unending complexities and perplexities of life; or whether we will marvel and adore at the abundant evidences of the goodness and grace of God, still reflected in both his animate and inanimate creation. □



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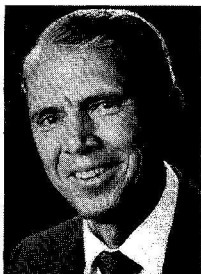
#### THE 1987 GOSPEL CONGRESSES

Good News Unlimited's 1987 Summer Congresses will be held at El Rancho Tropicana, 2200 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95407, July 17-19, 1987; and at the Southern Inn, 1400 N Mack Smith Rd., (East Ridge, Exit I-75), Chattanooga, TN 37412, July 31-August 2, 1987.

Please make all reservations and payments directly to El Rancho Tropicana and the Southern Inn. Good News Unlimited is not responsible for reservations, etc. this year. Sufficient rooms have been block-booked at both hotels. Rooms are available at special discounted rates, as follows:

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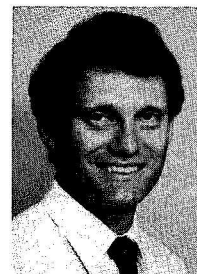
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