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Questions Youth Are Asking Today

Answered by Mervyn Maxwell

AGE-RELIGION-EDUCATION GAP TOO WIDE?

For two years I've been dating a friend who is a few years older than I am. He never finished high school, but he makes good wages as an employee in a plumbing outfit. He is very good to his own parents and also to mine, but my parents say that unless he finishes high school and college the educational difference between us will be too great. (I have a good job as an R.N.) I love him, but I'll have to confess I'm worried, not so much about his education as the fact that when we first started dating he wanted to take me places I didn't think a Christian ought to go. He doesn't do that anymore, of course; and he gives every appearance of being a sincere Christian.

An education gap is of less importance than an intelligence gap. When discussing mutual concerns, do you respect each other's contributions, or does either of you find yourself shocked by the other's dullness or amazed at the other's brilliance? If so, the friendship won't wear well.

Your boyfriend would do himself a good turn in any case to get a high school diploma, and he could do so rather readily at a night school.

As for his religious life, your friend may have grown a great deal spiritually in the past two years. Think awhile and ask yourself if he

is "being good" now to please you or if over this period of time he has reevaluated his principles and sincerely upgraded them. I think it is wise for Christian young people to find mates who are, if possible, even better Christians than they are themselves.

HOW COME I GET THE "SIGNS"?

"Signs of the Times" comes regularly each month in the mail; yet I did not subscribe to it, and I'm not sure that I'll ever want to pay for it—though I do enjoy some things I read in it and seem to be getting more out of it the more I see it. What's the catch? When do I get the bill?

Signs of the Times is, among other things, a kind of "thank you" magazine. When an acquaintance—a neighbor or a businessman, perhaps—shares a special kindness, Seventh-day Adventists have developed the custom of sending him an annual gift subscription to *Signs* as an expression of their appreciation for his friendship. They hope that its articles will give him a lift, a more joyous faith in God, and thus help him get more out of life.

You will never receive a bill. That would spoil the whole idea!

MURDER BY CRUSH. HELPI HELPI

My question doesn't have anything to do with religion, but then, you didn't say it had to. I have a crush on one of my teachers. Last

year I knew it was love, because I thought about him every minute of the day and walked past his home whenever I had a chance. This year I have him for a teacher again. It's murder; it really is. He's super nice to me. I'm not quite as crazy about him as I was last year. I don't walk by his house, and even in class I try to ignore him; but when I get out of school, wow! I don't want him to find out I love him, and I don't want to transfer out. Please help!

Growing up is fascinating—and confusing. If girls are ever to be happily married to guys, somewhere along the line obviously they've got to develop an ability to feel romantic about them, or rather, to feel exclusively romantic about a certain particular guy. Boys have to do the same, of course, the other way around.

Teen-age boys, however, often lag behind girls in this type of maturation, with the result that a lot of girls in their middle teens don't become as romantically attached to boys their own age as they do to older fellows. Even temporarily to teachers.

Perhaps the best thing for you right now is not to take yourself too seriously. Already your crush is beginning to fade. When you mature a little bit more, and when Tall, Dark, and Handsome in your own grade matures a little bit more, you'll fall in love with him instead.

And then—Wow!

CHEER FOR EPILEPTICS

I'm a handicapped person myself, and I work in a large rehabilitation center. I'd like to say I was happy to see the encouragement you gave the young person with epilepsy. Yes, he may very likely enjoy a career of his own, especially with the aid of new medicines that are helping many others like him.

Thank you for your interest.

Thanks, too, to another person who says she used to pass out every other day from epileptic fits. She wrote to offer the name and address of a physician whose prescription has kept her from having any seizures for eighteen months.

WOULD GOD HEAL ME?

I am not a youth. I'm in my early forties. But older people have questions too. There are a lot of churches that don't believe God heals sicknesses nowadays. They say He worked miracles only when Jesus walked this world. Is this really true? I went to church regularly until I fell sick three or four years ago. My condition has grown so bad so quickly that now I'm almost a shut-in.

God's miracles were certainly not intended to be limited to the period of Christ's life on earth. Jesus promised His followers that through faith in Him they would do even greater miracles than He Himself performed. John 14:12.

The Bible instructs the Christian when seriously ill to "call for the elders; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil." James 5:14. Preparation for such very special prayer includes confession of sin and rededication to obey all of God's revealed will. James 5:16.

God always responds. Sometimes I have seen Him fill a patient with such grace that he actually rejoices in his trials as Paul did. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10. Sometimes I have seen the pain leave, or healing begin at once, or even complete healing take place on the instant.

If you do not know a minister who believes in divine healing, I shall be glad to help you locate one near your home. Under separate

cover I am sending you a helpful booklet, *Prayer for the Sick*.

YOUNG DISCUSSIONS, OR OLD MEN'S SERMONS?

Although I am a Lutheran, I receive "Signs of the Times" and enjoy it very much, especially your question column. I still believe in reading the Bible daily, being properly married, and going to church; but I find I learn more and become more emotionally moved when discussing Christ in a group of kids (like myself) and a minister. I find that when I go to church all dressed up and have to sit on a hard bench listening to a pastor who is fifty years old, I get bored. Does it matter how you accept Christ into your life and how you express your love for Him? Please help me. I am caught up in a battle between old religion and new.

I'm all for kids meeting in small discussion groups, especially if a friendly minister is present to help when they need him.

There is quite a movement going on to have little groups of Christians meet together. This is great—but suppose all Christians should meet in little groups of their own age or occupation or sex and never come to church; what would we have then?

Don't you think such "comfy" little gatherings, if exclusive, could be quite selfish?

The best of these Christian groups in real life are actually the opposite of selfish. They talk and pray not only for themselves but also for non-Christians that they may find Christ. Suppose your group prayed for old people (parents, grandparents, uncles, business people you know, teachers you have in school), wouldn't you soon want to go to church to encourage them to go too?

We all need each other. Young people need older people, and older people need young people. Little kids need teen-agers to set the pattern for them, and so on. Don't stay away from church! Find Jesus in a youthful, radiant way; then take this radiant Christ to church with you, and help others find Him too. In the church I attend, young people have done wonderful things to

increase a joyful spirituality in the congregation over the past few months.

Try it. Your pastor may preach more Christ-centered, relevant sermons as a result of your witness!

COMMENTS FROM READERS:

I NEARLY COMMITTED SUICIDE

I'm nineteen years old. Two months ago I seriously planned to commit suicide by taking an overdose of drugs. My parents are divorced, and my friends have betrayed me many times with their gossip. For more than three years I have been smoking marijuana, and one year ago I started taking pills. A year ago I lost a finger in an accident, and then my spirits really started sinking. Left alone in the house two months ago I did almost everything imaginable to pass the time away. On the fifth night I took some pills and started drinking, and playing sad music on the stereo. I took more pills. I dreaded the moment when the music would stop and leave me alone with myself. I lost track of time, but just as gravity pulls one to the earth, time pulled me towards death. At four in the morning I was sitting on the couch crying. I don't know why, but I picked up the Holy Bible and started reading it. I had never read the Bible before, and I had never been to church in my life. An hour and twenty pages later I got down on my knees and begged the Lord to save me from myself. Now sincerely believing in the existence of God and accepting Jesus as my Saviour, I no longer feel alone. My life is really different now. I hope somebody can benefit from my experience. [California]

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?

Would you like to ask Mervyn Maxwell to help you find an answer? If so, send your question to

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