

# RELIGION

## The Mark Of A Winner

BY MATTIE ANN CALLIER-SPEARS

When my children were young, I introduced them to different activities. One such activity was track & field. Their participation in this sport which kept them tired and breathless, had proven to be a sermon to me as well as an activity to burn up some of their unharnessed energy.

I soon became the "track Mom" to all the other youngsters. A participant's age could range from three to eighteen years old. And later on, I found out that there was an over-the-hill category. That meant--as long as you had the stamina, the wind and the desire to participate, you could enter an event that required you to run, jump or throw.

Every sanctioned meet required a registration fee per event. Before your name was added to the rooster and you were given a lane assignment or a position on the field line-up, you had to have a stamped receipt showing that you had paid for each event.

A contestant entered an event with other contestants of the same age. I can remember when the Nationals was held at Mt. Hood Community

College's track. My son, Ulf, had clearly won his event but the officials felt that he was older than the other contestants, because he was so tall. They held up the awards presentation until they could verify his age. The verification was his mother. Me. Others, who knew Ulf Hansson, were confident and cheering; while, the other parents and their children, who had run against him, were waiting with baited breath for the officials' decision.

As my children trained, during each race I yelled, "Keep your eyes on the finish-line! Run against the clock! Don't look around!"

It is very hard to win a race while you are looking to see where your opponent is located.

"Stay in your lane! Keep your eyes on that tape! Run all the way through! Don't slow down! Even if you are not first, keep running until you cross the finish line." These were a few of the instructions runners received from their coach. The coach would repeat these words over and over again until the runners could do them automatically.

What is your goal?

During training, an athlete had to keep him and herself physically and morally fit. A sound diet that was high in protein, lots of juices and green vegetables came highly recommended before an enduring performance.

I can remember that many of the children on our team were from low income families and they didn't necessarily have all the items that were included on the lists of foods from which they were to choose their winning meal...So--they made-do with what they had.

These kids, the Albina Roadrunners, ran with a purpose and a determination that none of the other kids, with the expensive sweat suits and the expensive track shoes, had.

This legendary coach, Phillip Walden, had planted into their minds, a thought that chanted, "You can do it! You can do it! You can win! No one can beat you!"

No matter how this team may have looked in their over-sized, mismatched, too tight, basketball jerseys, faded, pygmy appearance uniforms--when the gun was raised, they blew

everyone off the track, and--they loved a good celebration.

Do you see where I am going with this story?

God does not care what our clothing looks like or how much they cost or whether or not we have a gold card. All He wants to know is, "Are you available? Will you finish the race or will you quit? Will you go where I send you or will you fuss and kick? Will you waste valuable time complaining or will you be willing to receive instructions?"

In Paul's letter to the church of Philippi [Philippians 3:14], he states, "I do not mean that I am already as God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach it and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that. That is the reason Christ made me His. Brothers, I know that I have not yet reached that goal. But there is one thing I always do: I forget the things that are past (Don't look back). I try hard as I can to reach the goal that is before me. I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the

life above." [TEB-The Everyday Bible translation].

The prize that Christian Believers are striving towards is--just to behold his face. But--the scriptures says that Christ has laid up for us (Christians) treasures in heaven. We have this hope because of this faith and love we received from the Good News and we understood the truth about the grace of God.

Each and every day, we press towards the mark by preaching Christ to everyone. We must let everyone know that God is our only hope for glory. We must leave the comfort of our homes and reach-out and touch others with God's word and God's love and truth. We must let them know that there is hope for them in this world. Today. Right now.

There are a many people, out in the world, talking about Jesus--but--they are not living for Jesus. Their lifestyles are a contradiction to what they are saying. Even the scripture warns us that not everyone who says "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven. These people will be chastised by God Himself for misleading

others. We must preach the truth and nothing but the truth so help us God.

The Bible is very specific about the rules and regulations that we must follow in order for us to be found worthy.

Just as the track coach would challenge and instruct his rag-tag lot... The Holy Spirit is challenging and instructing us, right now.

We are in a real race. A race for life everlasting. This race is not to the swift but to the one who can endure until the end.

This is the most important challenge you will ever have.

And the mark of a winner is that you will find him/her pressing daily. Not just sometimes; but, on a daily basis. Not just when he or she feels like it or when it is convenient. But--pressing towards the ultimate prize. Praise God!

You know how the announcers say, "...and the winner is...?" Well--the announcer will be God and His words will be "My child. Well done! You've been a good and faithful servant. Enter and accept your reward."

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

**Interested In The Adventist Church or Been Away And Want To Come Back?**

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### Virgene Barber

July 10, 1928 to November 4, 1993

Virgene Barber was born in Commerce, Texas to David and Ernestine Roberts. She was the eldest of four children from this union.

She married Billy M. Ladd and to this union two sons were born, Billy and Gary. In 1954, she moved to Portland seeking a better life for her family in the North. She worked at the Bohemian Restaurant for over ten years as a caterer until she retired to start her own domestic business.

In 1957 Vir-gene married Vel-mar Barber and gave birth to their youngest child, Sheila. Virgene was a member of Mt. Sinai Church where she served as treasurer. She used her catering skills to raise funds for the various church activities.

Virgene was a loving and positive person who enjoyed meeting

new people. Cooking, catering, and making people look "beautiful" were just a few of the many talents shared by Virgene. She also enjoyed creating and buying new and old items.



She laughed!! Her warm and genuine presence will surely be missed by the many lives she touched.

She leaves loving memories with three sons, Billy E. Ladd, Sr., Gary A. Ladd, Sr., James L. Barber and one daughter Sheila J. Barber; three sisters; Pearl J. McKenzie,

Delores Franklin and Gladine Reynolds; twelve grandchildren; six great-grand children; and a host of nieces, nephews, family members and friends.

Memorial Services for Virgene Barber was held at Mt. Sinai Church on Tuesday, November 9, 1993. She was interred at Willamette National Cemetery.

## Mallory Avenue Christian Church

"Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."

9:45am Sunday School  
11:00am Morning Worship  
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## St. Mark Baptist Church

103 NE Morris St., Portland, OR 97212

- Sunday School - 9:30 am
- Sunday Morning Worship Service - 11:00 am
- Sunday School Teacher's Meeting Tuesday - 6:30 pm
- Bible Study Wednesday - 6:00 pm
- Prayer Meeting Wednesday - 7:00 pm



Dr. Joe S. Hardie, Pastor

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## St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church

8101 N. Fiske Avenue • Portland Oregon 97203  
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- Sunday Service 10:45
- Sunday School 9:30
- Bible Study 6:00
- Evening Service 7:00pm



Pastor, Re. James C.E. Faulkner

Theme: Whatever your going to do for the Lord, **do it now.**

- I Peter 4:11

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

Are you the African American mother of an African American son or the wife of an African American man? At times, does it seem that you just can't understand where they are coming from or why they sometimes appear to be heading in an opposite direction? You can receive answers to such questions and more at a workshop entitled, "The Gathering - an in-house workshop for African American women regarding African American males."

The workshop will take place November 13, 1993 at Mallory Avenue Christian Church at 8:30am until 1pm. Space is limited so hurry by pre-registering. Cost of workshop is \$20. The workshop will be conducted by Griot Nyewusi Askari and will include a mix of Drumming, Blues and Storytelling, as well as total audience participation. So bring your spirit and your questions and be inspired.

For pre-registration and more information, call 288-3370.

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