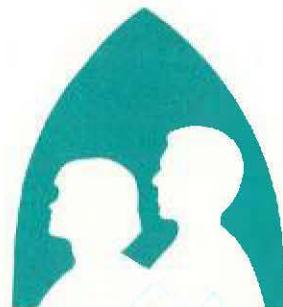


Shepherdess

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Dear pastoral wives, collaborators in ministry:

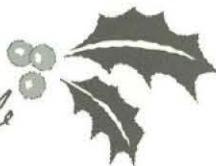
The month of December arrives. We can feel Christmas perfume in the air. The hustle and preparation for this special celebration begins. Messages by fax, phone, or card go to those we love. The whole Christian world, independent of country, culture, age, sex, or happiness, is made manifest. Even people at war rest to celebrate this event. Yet for us as pastoral wives, what does Christmas really mean? Ellen White answers the question:

As the twenty-fifth of December is observed to commemorate the birth of Christ, as the children have been instructed by precept and example that this was indeed a day of gladness and rejoicing, you will find it a difficult matter to pass over this period without giving it some attention. It can be made to serve a very good purpose. The youth should be treated very carefully. They should not be left on Christmas to find their own amusement in vanity and pleasure seeking, in amusements which will be detrimental to their spirituality. Parents can control this matter by turning the minds and the offerings of their children to God and His cause and the salvation of souls.—Adventist Home, p. 478

On exchanging gifts, as a demonstration of affection, she comments,

The holiday season is fast approaching with its interchange of gifts, and old and young are intently studying what they can bestow upon their friends as a token of affectionate remembrance. It is pleasant to receive a gift, however small, from those we love. It is an assurance that we are not forgotten, and seems to bind us to them a little closer . . . It is right to bestow upon one another tokens of love and remembrance if we do not in this forget God, our best friend. —Ibid.

This Christmas of 1994, when the sunset of one more year is almost finished, let each one of us, as pastoral wives, praise Jesus for the wonderful things He has done for us, our families, and our churches. May each ministerial family have a blessed Christmas, divine peace, and a happy New Year full of victories for the glory of God and His church. And may the ministry of every pastoral wife, for the King of the Universe, be especially valued.

Natividade 

Natividade Quintino
Shepherdess Coordinator
Portuguese Union

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Between the Covers

I used to be compulsive about having everything "ready" for a "perfect" Christmas. Anticipation of this holiday sometimes clouded out wonderful moments that were mine for the taking. Circumstances the last few years have challenged my thinking.

We can learn from the simple, and I have learned a valuable lesson from my little Yorkshire Terrier, Dexter. He never waits until Christmas day to enjoy his "treats." We always wrap up a box of goodies for him, but he somehow manages to sniff them out and instantly tears the package open. He enjoys the blessing immediately probably because, in his doggie brain, he can't comprehend waiting around anxiously when there is something so good right in front of him. He is on target in his own canine way. Don't miss the "now" blessing because you are waiting for something "big" in the future.

Throughout this issue of the *Journal*, we have sprinkled some holiday flavor. What these pastoral wives are sharing can bring blessings to you—look for them. Look to Jesus whose birth into this dark world meant the best blessing—a way out! And look forward to the fact that we are a year closer to His return.

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Room at the Inn



Vacancy

Sharon Cress

*Reach out and grasp
the blessing missed by
an innkeeper long ago.*

The steady rhythm of the windshield wipers was suddenly interrupted as I broke the silence. "Let's stop by that Christmas tree lot on Hillsboro Avenue and pick out our tree on the way home."

"Great idea," Jim chimed. "We'll need to get some new twinkle lights this year, too, so maybe we have time to do both tonight."

The drizzle and gray sky loomed ahead of us as we headed on home from a visit with my grandmother. Plans for the holidays were buzzing, and we were reminiscing about the fact that Christmas in Florida somehow never seemed like Christmas without snow and frost on the windows. The conversation drifted to the events of the next week. "What are you thinking about serving at the church Christmas party?" Jim asked.

"Oh, I guess we will talk about that at the meeting tonight. I have some ideas about a buffet ..."

As we approached the entrance ramp to Interstate 75, we both spotted them at the same time. He, with his unkempt curly blond hair and grizzly beard. She with her petite but bulging figure, and thick black curls.

He stuck out his thumb. Jim and I looked at each other. It was like we could read each other's thoughts without speaking a word.

The little car was crowded, and after all, you never can tell about hitchhikers. That could be a pillow stuffed under her dress, and they could be out to murder us or something. Besides, if we wasted time, we wouldn't be able to stop and pick up a tree.

As we got closer, we observed the expressions on their faces and their eyes met ours. In an understood silence, Jim pulled the car over. I opened the door, climbed out, exchanged greetings about the wet weather, and watched them stuff a smelly wet brown duffle bag and themselves into the back seat.

"I'm Jeff, and this is my wife, Sue," he started in as we pulled on to the freeway. "We've come all the way from Detroit. Sure is cold up there this time of year. I've been working in the plant this fall, but things are bad, and I got laid off. I've got a cousin in Fort Myers who thinks he can line me up picking fruit, and with the baby and all, this sure has been a long trip. Sue and I surely appreciate you picking us up."

As I turned sideways in my

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—Via Shepherdess International

seat to get a better look, I studied her. The large deep brown eyes, suddenly turned downward. Her boxy, wet, wrinkled dress made me uncomfortable in my warm, nice clothing.

"When is your baby due?" I asked.

"I'm really not sure," she almost whispered, "but I think in a couple of weeks."

"Is that what your doctor said?" I pressed.

"Haven't been to a doctor," Jeff offered. "We haven't had the money, but I figure everything is okay."

"Are you all hungry?" I quickly changed the subject.

"Sure are. We had some bologna sandwiches with a trucker who picked us up yesterday, just south of Cincinnati, but that seems like last week."

"Look," I said, "We're having a meeting at our church tonight. Jim here is the pastor, and we have plenty of food in the kitchen there. That's where we're heading right now. Why don't you let us take you there and we'll have some supper."

"Sounds great," Jeff hardly let me get the words out of my mouth.

As we pulled into the church parking lot and entered the church, I sensed the stares on the faces of the entertainment committee. Sue hadn't said much the whole trip, but I suppose hunger made wading this sea of judgmental and questioning faces worth it. I hurried them back into the kitchen. They looked so alone and unsure in the midst of the members.

Raiding the Dorcas refrigerator and pantry, we soon had a modest meal put together on the table. They ate like they hadn't eaten in a year.

"One of our church members is a physician with an office next

door." I was talking before I knew it. "His light is on, he works late, and I know he would be glad to see you." It all tumbled out, as I looked right at Sue.

"Well, I don't know . . ."

"Please, think of the baby. He is a very nice man, and it wouldn't take long and it won't cost you anything." I was talking too fast again.

After the examination, Dr. Guest pronounced that the baby would probably be another month. Dispensing vitamins, he made her promise to take them faithfully and saw us off.

"Sure you won't spend the night? We have a guest room right here behind the office," Dr. Guest insisted.

"No thanks, really. We need to get on to Fort Myers by late tonight. We usually get rides re-

ally easy. If you could just take us back over to the Interstate . . ." Jeff said.

Reluctantly, I packed them a sack lunch and drove them to the ramp. The drizzle had ceased, and the night seemed unusually clear. She smiled faintly for the first time. "Thank you." Her voice was stronger.

"Fort Myers, here we come," Jeff announced.

As I drove slowly away, I saw Jeff's thumb go out. A large blue Chevy sedan slowed down and they clambered in.

Somehow the night seemed brighter. Maybe, somewhere in this modern-day madhouse of a Christmas season, we had found someone who needed "room in the inn" and we found the blessing that the innkeeper once missed. ❀

Progress Pointers for Effective Service

- ❀ Have a relationship with the Lord.
- ❀ Have a genuine love for others.
- ❀ Make self-development your first duty.
- ❀ Be understanding and supportive of your spouse.
- ❀ Develop good communication skills.
- ❀ Cultivate friendship with your children.
- ❀ Set priorities.
- ❀ Cultivate a positive attitude.
- ❀ Be adaptable.
- ❀ Accept and appreciate your God-given gifts and talents.
- ❀ Encourage each other instead of comparing.
- ❀ Be accountable only to God.
- ❀ Become involved in *some* way with the church program.
- ❀ Share responsibilities.

For Administrators' Wives



Alone in the Manse

Evelyn de Omaña

When my husband and I celebrated ten years of marriage, one of my students gave us a very peculiar congratulations card. On the front it had a figure of a dog dressed in a tuxedo. He had a frightened expression as he looked at the following message written in big letters: "Another year married to the same man! Poor thing, how much you have suffered!"

At that time, the card seemed very silly, but today, 15 years later, while my husband and I celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary, I remember that message and believe much could be said about the message it contained.

Ever since I met my husband, I believed he was one of the best gifts I have received from God. Our union began a long list of more gifts: three sons, a pretty daughter-in-law, and most recently a beautiful granddaughter who has come to fill our lives with

love and delight. But I should admit during those 25 married years, we have confronted many difficult situations and suffered.

For 16 years my husband has been a church administrator; he has served as secretary, dean of educational institutions, and now is president of the Venezuela-Antilles Union Mission. Each of these administrative positions has demanded strength, dedication, and almost unconditional surrender, not only on his part, but on ours as his immediate family. I have rejoiced in the benefits of seeing my husband grow in the service of the church. I recognize that through the responsibilities that he has been assigned to, he has developed skills, abilities, and solid criteria that have contributed to his spiritual and professional maturity. All this good could be summed up by saying, "Thank you Lord, that you called my husband to work for You, and You have prospered the work of his hands."

But also the years of administration have meant a lot of sacrifice for me. One of them, perhaps the most difficult to bear, has been the frequent times of being alone as his responsibilities take

him far from home. The distances in our country and the Union territory are very great, so that we were deprived of his company for days and sometimes weeks at a time. This made our children feel insecure. They would get fevers or some type of illness that seemed life-threatening and the worst thing was, "daddy wasn't home."

It never failed that the greatest "tragedies" in our family happened when my husband was traveling. Enrique, our second son, has always been the most active of our children. He broke his arms, legs, got hurt, suffered tonsillitis attacks and all sorts of sickness while his father was traveling. I remember one night when I tried to console him by stroking his hot forehead, he asked me, "Mommy, why do I always get sick when daddy isn't home?" Today Enrique is tall and handsome at 21 years of age; he is studying at the Adventist university in Puerto Rico. Recently my husband and I went to visit him for a weekend. The night before our departure, about three in the morning I heard Enrique moaning as if in pain. I went to his bed where he lay sleeping. I

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Translated by Annabelle Kendall.

—Via Shepherdess International

stroked his forehead and he recognized my touch. Taking my hands in his, he asked, "Mommy, why do you and my daddy have to go?" It was then that I noticed how hot his head was—another fever. Even today, at 21, he gets sick when separated from his dad.

It hasn't been easy to educate three boys without their dad's company. They have asked questions, demanded lots of attention, and missed the games they could have played with their dad. When nighttime came, I always asked Jesus to bless their daddy, and the boys asked so many questions that it made me sad. Many occasions, I went to bed with a bitter taste on my lips because I felt it was unjust for the children to be deprived of their father's company.

With the passing of time, through prayer and Bible study, I gained spiritual and physical strength to fight against these depressive thoughts that vaulted around me, the product of loneliness. At the feet of Jesus in prayer, I understood that the church wasn't to blame for our separation. The urgency of preaching the gospel made the work increase. We have been stretched to the limit because we lack workers, so that the few we do have carry various obligations at the same time and this costs sacrifice. I know that everyone is touched by a portion of sacrifice and this was what I have experienced.

I resolved to do something about this, to avoid falling into the error of closing myself in with sad thoughts. I didn't want the children to grow up with negative feelings against the church administration or if in the future they would feel that it wasn't good being a preacher's kid, or that the administrator wasn't

good—that would be a tragedy.

Positive Coping Mechanisms

I made a daily schedule for myself: time to read, to write, to do some manual work with other ladies in the church, and everything I could to keep myself and the children occupied. We began a plan of missionary work for our vicinity. The children chose a family across the street from us—to play and study the Bible with their three children. The night before this activity, we prepared little loaves of bread, cookies, or something from the refrigerator that the children selected. The next day we had a small worship with songs directed by our oldest son, who was learning the guitar; Bible games, prepared by son number two; and a short Bible story that I illustrated with flannel figures. After that they had play time and ate the refreshments of cookies and little breads. I know, without a doubt, that they liked the last part best, but this project led that family to love the Lord and some of them are members in our church.

Keeping Sabbath Special

The times most difficult for us were Friday night and Sabbath afternoons. We came upon a marvelous idea. One night at worship, I asked the boys to each think of friends or families they would like to invite to welcome the Sabbath in (sundown worship) and eat Sabbath lunch with us. We wrote all names on little pieces of paper and put them in a small hat. On Monday night, one of the boys chose a paper and told us the name of the person or family chosen. The children prepared Bible games and different activities with my help and in this way we didn't feel so lonely.

Near the date when my husband would return home, we pre-

pared cards and big cardboard posters to welcome him home. His arrival was like a festival and we fixed special foods. The children could hardly wait for him to sit down to give them some surprise from his trip and to tell them about what he had seen and done. Many church members sent along detailed reports for the children and this made them feel part of a big family. With time, our children felt proud to "share daddy" with the church members and this was their "quota of sacrifice" being a part of our family's ministry.

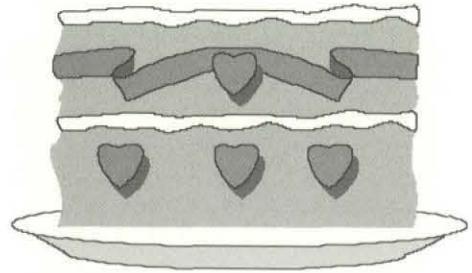
God Has Blessed

Today we are happy that our oldest son is part of the group of young pastors working in our Union's territory. Although he has much to learn, something is clear in his mind, "being part of the ministerial family is a privilege, although it costs a sacrifice." The other two sons are also preparing to serve the Lord and they share the same sentiments.

Loneliness can be our greatest enemy, but if we learn to accept the price of evangelization and the direction the church merits in this time of emergency, we can live without drowning in negative thoughts. Let's remember that our husband wants to be with us and our children just as much as we want to be with him. Let us take advantage of every moment to look for ways to be useful in the service of God.

When you feel so alone and sad, lift the telephone receiver and call a girlfriend, a sister in the church, some child from the children's department. Look for a young person to help, prepare a recipe and share the dish with someone. There are thousands of ways to dispel loneliness. Jesus knows, ask Him to show you what it is and do it. ❁

Expressions of Gratitude



Hepzibah Kore

It was a warm, clear summer day. Two brothers, John, aged 13, and Sam, 15, found the day long and boring. They had exhausted the list of things they had planned to do for the day. As they were sitting on the lawn wondering what they could do next, Sam suggested they climb the hill that was close by. It sounded interesting to John and he readily agreed to the venture. Sam, being older, led the way up the hill. Whenever they found something of interest they stopped for a while. They were in no hurry to reach the top.

When they reached a certain spot, they realized that the climb was going to be harder than they expected; yet, they did not want to give up and continued the climb. Suddenly, Sam felt himself slipping. A big rock loosened under his feet and went bouncing down the slope. Just as he called out a warning to his brother, who was following him, the rock struck John's head. He went limp and began to slide. Now both brothers went rolling down the slope. John, who became unconscious, hit the path where they had started the climb and fell into a deep ditch beside the path.

By then Sam managed to catch hold of a plant, broke the

fall and struggled to his feet. Soon he steadied himself and looked for his brother. After what seemed eternity, he found him lying in the ditch. It was so deep that he could not take him out. Without wasting any more time, he ran to his house as fast as he could and told his parents of the accident. They immediately contacted the fire station. The fire servicemen went to the spot right away in their rescue vehicle. By then the news spread like wild fire in the small town and a big crowd, including several newspaper photographers followed the rescue party.

With great difficulty, the rescue party got John out of the ditch. He was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance for treatment. Many prayers ascended to the throne of God. God answered the prayers and John recovered sooner than expected. It was a miracle that John suffered no broken bones.

Once John was back home, his mother decided that she would do something for the rescue party as an act of gratitude. After thinking it over for several days, she decided that she would bake a cake and take it to the fire service station. This was the only thing she could do within her limited means.

But, to young Sam, it was too

Hepzibah Kore is the Shepherdess Coordinator for the South India Union. This article appeared in the Shepherdess bulletin of the Southern Asia Division. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

small a gift for the men who saved his brother's life. He could visualize the men laughing at the meager gift. In spite of all the protests he made, when he woke up the next morning, he could smell the delicious aroma coming from the kitchen. He was always proud of mom's baking, yet, he felt that the gift was too cheap. Once again he protested, "Mom, haven't you changed your mind? Are you really going to take this to the men there?"

"I certainly intend to take this to the men who rescued your brother, Sam," she stated firmly.

The cake was a real work of art. Sam realized that a great deal of love and affection was baked in the cake. After much persuasion Sam consented to accompany mother to the fire station. "But I won't go in," he stated with finality. "I'll wait in the car."

Mother proudly walked inside the fire station with the cake in her hands. She was back in a few minutes, her hands empty, her eyes shining. For a moment she sat back quietly, savoring her happiness. She finally broke the silence and said, "I didn't have any trouble finding some of the men who rescued John." She continued telling how she expressed her gratitude and explained to the men, even though she could not do much in return, she wanted to show her thanks in a material way, so she had baked them a cake. They greeted her explanation with big smiles of appreciation, especially when they opened the box and saw the luscious cake inside.

"But can you imagine," she continued, "just as I was leaving, one of those men said to me, 'Lady, of all the people we've helped you are the only one who's ever come back afterward to tell us thanks.'"

Can you imagine it? Of all the

hundreds of people rescued only one family went to say thank you.

Does this sound similar to one of the incidents recorded in the Bible? When Jesus lived on this earth, He healed so many sick people. Among them were a group of ten lepers. He healed all ten of them at the same time, in the same manner. How many returned to say, "Thank you, Jesus"? Only one.

Stop for a moment and examine yourself. Are you thankful to God like the one leper or unthankful like the other nine? Are you thankful for today for the blessings you receive from God? Do you stop to thank others for the little acts of kindness you receive? It is not the quality or the quantity or the worth of

"Of the 17 people I saved, not one of them ever thanked me."

the gift that matters. What really matters is the thoughtfulness to say thank you.

It was a September day, 1860. An overloaded steamer, *Lady Elgin*, set off from the shores of Lake Michigan. It was wrecked in a storm just above Evanston. Spectators gathered on the shore. In Northwestern University the students formed themselves to rescue the drowning passengers. One of them was Edward W. Spencer, a student in Garret Biblical Institute. He spotted a woman clinging on to some wreckage far out into the breakers. He threw off his coat and

swam out through the heavy waves and brought her to the land and safety. He did not stop there. He went back for more and rescued 17 persons. When he brought the 17th person, he collapsed in exhaustion. While he was tossing in delirium that night, he cried over and over to his brother, "Did I do my best? Oh, I'm afraid I did not do my best!" When his brother tried to quiet him by saying, "You saved 17 lives," he would reply, "Oh, if I could have saved one more!"

The story does not end there. Several years later, Dr. Torrey told of this incident at a meeting in Los Angeles. A man in the audience called out that Edward Spencer was present there. Dr. Torrey invited Spencer up on the platform and an old man with white hair slowly climbed the steps amid loud applause. Dr. Torrey asked him if anything in particular stood out in his memory of that incident. Spencer replied, "Only this Sir. Of the 17 people I saved, not one of them ever thanked me."

Turn your thoughts to Golgotha where the Son of God hung on the cross to save you and me from this sin sick world. As He looked at the crowd that was insulting and mocking Him, perhaps the most difficult thing for Him to take was the ingratitude, for those were the very souls He came to save. Let us not be among those who despise Him. Are you thankful to the Lord for everything He has been doing for you? If so, why not join me in saying:

"Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul
Thank you, Lord, for making me whole,
Thank you, Lord, for giving to me,
Thy great salvation so full and free." ❀

A Woman of Value

Vilma P. Nepomuceno

God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18, New King James Version). I would like to believe that this was particularly directed to the pastor's wife.

"A helper comparable to him." What a privilege and a challenge. To work alongside our minister-husband in the gospel mission, not to be just a wife, mother, homebody and business partner, but also, a helper comparable in the great task of soul saving.

The pastoral wife plays a valuable and integral part in the work of her husband. It is here she must carefully choose well her role.

She can be the silent figure in the background, providing moral support. She lets her husband know that she is there every step of the way with her prayers for strength, wisdom, and guidance. Her bodily presence in church meetings provides the psycho-

logical edge of the "significant other." The pastor-husband knows that he has a ready critic, admirer, admonisher, guide, thermostat, and opinion poller in his wife. And when an uninvited occasion arises, he knows that she can be depended upon to provide the necessary assistance through her many talents that are kept veiled but ready anytime to be revealed. She is at the background of the pastor's success.

She can choose to be the active supporter, acting as public relations arm, organizer of activities, trainer for children's ministries, workshopper for cleanliness and beautification, promoter of livelihood programs for women by organizing classes in homecraft, dressmaking, veggie-food preparation, hair science, and many others. She can teach the deaconesses the proper procedure for preparing communion bread. She can teach the youth decorum and etiquette. Any or all these she can do by making herself available to the departmental leaders of the church as they plan their programs.

As a professional she can share her expertise as a doctor,

nurse, teacher, etc. She can share these talents not only with the church, but also, for community outreach.

The silent, yet effective and valid service that the pastoral wife provides within the church can be a model in a loving relationship with her husband, and a model to the parish that the pastoral marriage is an ideal laboratory for the principles and practices of a marriage made in heaven. She should be a real mother to her children, giving the right example in training and nurture. The pastoral home should be welcoming and comfortable to each guest spreading the hospitality table with bread baked with the leaven of love and a touch of Christ's grace. Her sweet and mellow voice speaks of generosity and kindness, and she models graciousness and compassion for the needy. Her face is radiant with smiles, her gentle touch fresh and smooth as a healing balm.

Can we find such a virtuous woman? Whose price is more than rubies? If we can find these thoughts in our hearts, the answer cannot be far behind in our lives. ❀

Vilma is Shepherdess president of the Central Luzon Conference in the Philippines.

—Via Shepherdess International

Religion in Warm Shoes



Mary Maxson



Mary Maxson is a pastoral wife in Spokane, Washington. She provides a ministry of support to pastoral wives in the Upper Columbia Conference.

—Via *Shepherdess International*

It was April 4, at 2:03 a.m. when I was awakened by the sound of sirens stopping in front of our house. For some reason, I knew something was wrong. I bounded out of bed, yelling to Laura and Ben, "Get up and get out. This is serious and we have to get out, quick!" I grabbed my robe and slipped my cold, bare feet into some fur-lined house shoes. As I ran toward the front door, I passed the chimney where the smell of smoke was very strong. I yelled back to Laura and Ben, "It smells like our house is on fire. Get out quick!"

I glanced outside from my front door and saw three fire engines in front of our house, four police cars, and the fire hose that was running down the north end of the street. I ran down the front steps, as I was looking from side to side, not knowing what to expect. Wow! It was cold—it seemed around 30 degrees but of course my blood still flows slowly (like my speech)! Laura came running out with the cat, Smokey, and then she wanted to go get Max, the dog. We were both freezing, so she ran back inside to get our coats, leaving Smokey in the house.

As we ran across the street, my neighbor on the north side thought that it was our house, but looking closer, we realized it was the house to the south of us. "There is an 82-year-old grandma who lives there," I hollered at the fireman. "Go, get Grandma out." He ran to the house and barged in trying to find Grandma. Thank the Lord, a neighbor who had noticed the fire from their window called 911 and alerted Grandma to come out. There was a sheriff who knocked at her door and rushed her out along with her grandson, who just "happened" to be staying with her that night.

Flames came roaring up 20 feet in the air from the roof of her house. "Oh, my God!" my neighbor yelled, "I just can't believe this." There were around five neighbors who had come out to see this sight. I was numbed with the awesome sight of this . . . once a lovely home . . . being destroyed by fire in minutes. All sort of thoughts raced through my mind. First, I'm glad it's not my house. Then I thought, well, there isn't anything valuable there, except my pictures and my Bible. As the fire kept leaping into the air, I was rather concerned whether or

not it would leap over to our house.

The firemen had tried to put out the fire from the roof, but as the fire chief described it, it was "spongy" which means that the firemen could fall through so they started on the inside gutting out the attic trying to put out the fire. The inferno destroyed half of her house.

I was so numb by what I saw, I wasn't thinking about Grandma. It dawned on me that she might be lonely and possibly going into shock, so I went down to the police car where they had taken her and her grandson. I had been over to her house several times to chat with her and taken her a loaf of bread to welcome her to our neighborhood, but other than that, I really had not become well acquainted with her. When I stuck my head in the car, she was white as a sheet and had this ashen look of shock on her face. My heart felt a stab of horror imagining what she was going through watching her house being destroyed by fire in just moments. I took her hands in mine and said, "Grandma, when you want, you can come to our house and stay warm until your family comes." She just grunted, "Whatever you think is best." I offered our house as their fire center to wait for the family to come.

As I lifted her in my arms, bracing her as she walked, Ben was helping on the other side. Looking down at her feet, I realized that she had nothing but socks on. I immediately took off my shoes and Ben helped her put them on. The only thing she said, was, "Oh, thank you! Thank you so very much!" We made it to the house, having to wade through the water from the fire truck. As we entered the house, I placed her on the couch. No sooner had she

sat down, then I realized that her breathing was very unsteady. I called the policeman to call the medic. I sat beside her with my arms around her and she started weeping and wailing! I sat and cried with her! I knew she was trying to tell me something, but I couldn't recognize what she was saying. Finally, I said, "Take a few deep breathes and start over so I can understand what you are saying." Then escaped the story about her husband who was burned in a fire five years ago. In her arms was her very special pet dachshund. However, she was asking for the other dog, Toasty, who was in the dog house, which had caught on fire. No one knew what condition the dog was in.

Looking down at her feet, I realized that she had nothing but socks on.

(Later, the fireman found Toasty had died in the fire.)

When the medics arrived, they inquired if she was presently taking medications. She said she was allergic to smoke. They put an oxygen mask on her and within about three minutes she began talking with the mask on. She told the story about her husband who was burned in a fire. She could not believe this was happening to her. His dog, Toasty, the one in the dog house, was so very special to him and she had let him down by leaving his dog in the house. Then she told more of the story about her husband's death. He had been working with some

electrical wiring and was burned very badly. He lived ten months in the hospital. Because his esophagus was burned from medication, which they had to give him for his lungs, the doctors couldn't save him.

The firemen were coming in and out of our house when her family began arriving. It was a night that I will never forget! The one thing that Grandma kept repeating over and over again, was that I stopped and took off my warm shoes and Ben placed them on her feet. She told that story repeatedly to the different family members who came and went.

The family left around 11 a.m. the next morning after eating a small breakfast. Family members came in and thanked me profusely for what I had done. I kept responding, "You would have done it for me." They responded, "Yes, but you have done more."

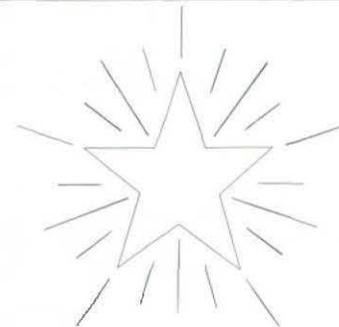
Through this act of kindness, I thought, "I hope they will see Jesus in what I am doing." I acted knowing that this is what Jesus would have done, not out of "this is what I should be doing!"

"If you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me." I gave no Bible study . . . I handed out no piece of literature . . . I preached no sermon . . . I didn't discuss any type of religion . . . I had no prayer with her . . . I read no Bible passages to her . . . I just took off my warm shoes and put them on her feet!

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27, NIV). ❀

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No Christmas Miracle on My Street



Jacquie Randall



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Jacquie Randall, M.S., M.F.C.C., is a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor. She specializes in individual psychotherapy, marriage and relationship counseling and clergy/spouse issues. She is also a pastoral wife in the Southern California Conference.

—Via Shepherdess International

It had been a difficult week. It was two weeks before Christmas—a time for hope and joy; but I was feeling failure and loss. I had been under stress studying and sitting for California's oral examination for marriage and family therapists. I had come away from the exam with the sinking feeling that I had not passed and would have to retake it. Added to this, my husband and I had discovered during the week that we just might have to spend Christmas Day alone. As with many clergy families, our extended families are thousands of miles away, and funds to travel at holiday seasons are not always available.

Although my sister and her husband live close by; I had learned that they preferred to spend a quiet Christmas Day alone without company; without us. It felt good that my sister could share her honest desires and feelings with me and I respected their decision; nevertheless, I felt the sting of tears on my cheek. Getting our friendship needs met, creating a sense of "home" wherever we are serving, making close couple friends,

has been an issue for us as a pastoral family. Perhaps for you also.

So, it had been quite a week. My husband, Rob, and I discussed options for our Christmas Day—finalizing on one: I would make an extra large batch of my (famous!) cranberry relish, and we would call on some of our friends and church members, dropping by some Christmas cheer and homemade cranberry relish. My husband rushed off to the supermarket to buy the fruit while I gathered containers and ribbons. Rob was back sooner than usual.

"Something went wrong with the cranberry crop this year and there are no fresh cranberries available," he reported.

"Oh, no!" I moaned, remembering my dismal attempts at making Christmas cookies and nut breads in past years. I feverishly began calling other supermarkets in town.

"I'm sorry, fresh cranberries are not available this year," they all intoned.

"Try Gelsons," Rob piped up supportively, "they're suppose to carry everything." So I tried Gelsons.

"No," they replied to my in-

quiry, "there are no fresh cranberries this year due to crop failure; but we do have frozen cranberries."

"I'll take them," I said, thrilled. "They'll do fine."

"Wouldn't you know it," I exclaimed getting off the phone, "the year we decide to give fresh cranberry relish, the crops fail."

And then, as if God were sitting there joining in on our conversation, a verse that I had seemingly forgotten hit me:

Though the fig tree should not blossom,

And there be no fruit on the vines,

Though the olive crop fails

...

My mind went to those we would be visiting on Christmas Day with jars of cranberry relish. Some had lost their wealth this year, business had failed; some had experienced career disappointments; some had experienced pain in their marriages, some in their relationships with their children; some had declining health; some had experienced personal failure. I thought about my own unfulfilled dreams, unmet desires and at times, sense of failure.

Yes . . . I mused, what happens when there is seemingly no miracle? . . .

I don't know whether or not you would say there was a miracle on my street this Christmas. I don't know yet if I passed the exam; I don't know what will come my way, your way in the New Year . . . But I know God provided frozen cranberries for the cranberry relish this Christmas. And more, He had something to say to me through it:

Though the fig tree should not blossom,

And there be no fruit on the vines,

Though the olive crop should fail,

And the fields produce no food,

Though the flock should be cut off from the fold,

And there be no cattle in the stalls,

YET, I will exult in the Lord. I will rejoice in God my Sav-

ior. The Lord is my strength.

And He has made my feet like hinds feet.

And makes me walk on my high places (Habakkuk 3:17-19).

P.S. I did pass the oral exam on that first try. Thank God! ❀

And God Said, "No"

Cynthia Niemeyer

I asked God to take away my pride, and God said, "No."
He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole, and God said, "No."

He said, "Her spirit is whole, her body is only temporary."

I asked God to grant me patience, and God said, "No."

He said that patience is a by-produce of tribulation. It isn't granted, it's earned.

I asked God to give me happiness, and God said, "No."

He said that He gives blessings; happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain, and God said, "No."

He said, "Suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me."

I asked God to make my spirit grow, and God said, "No."

He said that I must grow on my own, but He will prune me to make me fruitful.

I asked God if He loved me, and God said, "Yes."

He gave His only Son who died for me, and I will be in heaven someday because I believe.

I asked God to help me love others as much as He loves me, and God said, "Ah, finally you have the idea."

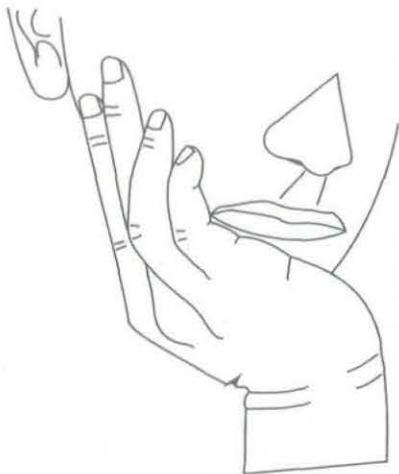
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—Via Shepherdess International

Help for the Solitary

Val Smetheram

*At times do you feel
alone and forsaken?*



Val Smetheram is a pastor's wife who lives in Australia.

—Via Shepherdess International

Lonely in ministry life, you say? Surely not! How can that be when you are always busy and constantly mixing with people? But who was it that once said that you can be lonely in a crowd? The very nature of the job prohibits the minister and his wife from close friendships. How often have I heard it said that friendships (apart from those with other ministerial couples) are only superficial on account of:

- a. your position;
- b. appearing to favor some people above others;
- c. the likelihood of your stay being temporary.

Adventist pastors usually move after two or three years, which is just long enough to start to feel comfortable and make contact with people, members and non-members alike. Then the big upheaval of transferring starts again; it has always seemed to me to be counter-productive to everyone concerned. Sometimes I long to say to someone that WE are people, too, and have needs like everyone else. We need friends, too! But who's listening?

Psychology tells us that women in the 40-50 age group have a real "homing instinct"—

an intense desire to settle down in one place (usually the place or at least the country of origin). I can identify with that. After moving around for many years, I long to return to my home country and settle in a permanent home—just to feel I belong somewhere. My husband and I have lived in a succession of houses, but none of them have been "home." I realize that, in all probability, my menopausal time of life has much to do with it. Yet, knowing that does not help me to cope any better.

Knowing that God understands my feelings is a great comfort. If He made me, He must understand how I feel. He knows that I and my husband have had many problems and much stress over the years while raising children within the ministerial framework. Now that our sons are grown and gone, a very real fear surfaces from time to time: "What would I do if something happened to my dearly-loved spouse? Where would I go?" I don't even have a home because I don't feel I belong anywhere. And we don't stay anywhere long enough to make deep, caring friendships. A "rolling stone" gathers no moss!

In earlier years, I enjoyed moving around, and it did not bother me that we had no "home base." It may be a strictly female outlook for it does not appear to bother my husband as much as it does me. If the worst happened, I would call on my God, as I have in previous crises. He has not failed me yet, and I know that He would sustain me again, but there is the human element that remains.

I also understand that the physical changes in the female body at menopause can cause mental stresses that produce some very irrational fears. Loneliness, however, can strike at any age, so I feel that young ministerial couples particularly need our prayers and attention. Recently a young wife unburdened her loneliness to me. She is a very new church member (she met her husband while he was in seminary). This meant that in two short years she had made the transition from non-church member to pastor's wife. The change was drastic, to say the least. As a teacher, she spends her evenings preparing her next day's classes, while her husband is usually out; there is much call on his services. She is desperately, heartbreakingly lonely—thousands of miles away from her own family. My heart aches for her. Distance prevents my doing very much to help, but I will gladly bend an ear whenever possible. Unfortunately, she is one of many who seem to experience this alienation.

When my family joined ministerial ranks, I felt certain that things did not have to be that way. For us, it would be different. But, invariably, I discovered that, although people were friendly, there was always that barrier between us. Yes, you may be invited for lunch after church. Of course everyone mixes and

enjoys each other's company at a church social; you may even play a little sport together, but getting deeper than that was difficult. Would it be different, I wonder, if we stayed in a parish 20 to 30 years?

I would really appreciate our church members calling in from time to time and spending a few minutes in prayer with us and for us, but no one seems to think of it. Though I must say that when our elder son was seriously injured in a car accident a few years ago, many people did make contact to show they cared. It was so appreciated. But in everyday life it is forgotten. It would seem that the problem stems from the old idea of treating a minister with reverence akin to awe—a carry-over, if you like, from an earlier age.

Another ministerial couple, with many years of service, were delighted when called to a large city church and discovered friends from college days in the congregation. They assumed that they would renew the friendship of years before, for once they would have some real close friends, but it was not to be. Sadly, the title "pastor" got in the way. Although their friends were very happy to see them again, they could feel the barrier when they tried to resume that friendship. Of course, they were hurt, but they feel certain it was only on account of their position.

In an excellent article on pastor/congregation relationships, William M. Schwein said: "For the most part, our people see only the tip of the iceberg of our ministry and our life.¹ . . . We need to be understood, supported, and appreciated. In a word, pastors need pastors too."² Schwein also quotes from Nelvin Vos' book, *Seven Days a Week: Faith in Action*, where Vos writes: "Pastors are

human beings and they have real needs. That should be self-evident, but from many pastors and their families one hears of feelings of loneliness and isolation. There is no more urgent ministry than a ministry to church leaders."³ I heartily agree.

Several times over the years, we have been asked by church members and non-church members alike, "What exactly does a minister do with his time?" My husband has run Pastor's Role Seminars, which do seem to give some people a clearer view of what the pastoral role entails. Unfortunately, none of us really understands what it is like to wear another person's shoes. We can only try to empathize. For example, I can only guess what it is like to be in Princess Diana's position and have so much expected of her. I wonder how she perceives people's expectations of her?

How do we perceive our congregation's expectations of us? Are those expectations unrealistic? I have always thought so. Maybe we need a promotional campaign, a "new image" of a very normal family with stresses and strains like anybody else, with children who play up sometimes in church, teens who rebel, aged family members who are sometimes difficult. And, yes, we even have an overdraft on occasions. In short, normal everyday families.

On very rare occasions I have been able to fellowship with ministers' wives of other denominations in our town and have found it a very enjoyable experience. (The nearest ministerial family of our own denomination is a long distance away.) Unfortunately, these occasions are rare because all of these people are very busy with their own flocks, their church programs, and their own

families. But what time we were able to spend together was very rewarding. We were able to share our joys, frustrations, and the things we found difficult or pleasurable about ministerial life. The same problems and frustrations are evident across all denominations, it would seem.

If we encounter marital problems (ministers are supposed to be immune or exempt from these!) to whom do we go for help? The local marriage guidance service? What if you meet someone you have referred there? How about if you cannot manage your finances? Go to a budgeting service? You would refer others but not go yourself. So, sometimes ministerial couples feel more alone than ever. As yet, only one or two denomination administrations have become aware that there is a need and have provided a service to help their ministerial couples.

And, while we are about it, let us not forget our conference personnel. In our case, the pastor in charge of the local region is responsible for 60 churches and 50 ministerial families. Now, that is a lonely position. He could well feel more alienated than my husband and I. And while I am busy complaining and crying out for my needs to be met, have I thought about him and others like him? "Forgive me, Lord. Help me to remember always that every one of us needs the hand of non-judgmental Christian friendship, understanding, and support. Help us all to continually try to 'walk in the other person's moccasins.' Please help us to endeavor to alleviate each other's lonely feelings." ❁

¹ Schwein, William M., *Ministry*, May 1988, p. 8, "Whose shoes? On trading places"

² *Ibid.*, p. 9

³ *Ibid.*

The Night After Christmas

Adlai Albert Esteb

'Twas the night after Christmas, and all through the manse
The rooms were quite cluttered, one saw at a glance.
The toys had been scattered without due concern
While wrappings were thrown in the fireplace to burn.

And Florence, the pastor's sweet wife so trim,
Who always brought honor and credit to him,
Had been so exhausted, she went sound asleep,
And wasted no time in counting her sheep.

Her days of mad shopping and cooking were o'er,
And now she was so tired she heard no one snore.
Upstairs in the guest room were Aunt Belle and Ned,
And each of the children had been tucked in bed.

When all of a sudden there came such a noise,
It woke up the family, the girls and the boys.
They rushed down the stairs and saw at a glance
That pandemonium now reigned in the manse.

The fire had exploded, and smoke filled the room;
The screen saved their home from being their tomb.
So weary and sleepy and tired as could be,
They'd thrown in the hair spray, which they didn't see.

And that was the cause of the horrible noise
That frightened the family, might have burned all their toys.
And now in the darkness, in wild weirdest dance,
They leaped o'er the boxes that littered the manse.

Each reaching for gifts that were dear to his heart,
For fear of fresh fire bursting out with a start.
The doors were thrown open, the smoke cleared away;
A lesson they all learned regarding hair spray.

They went back to bed, to a more fitful sleep.
To dream of explosions, instead of white sheep.
Then all of a sudden they heard a great roar,
They leaped to their feet to hear Uncle Ned snore!

Plumb puddings were working, desserts had been sweet;
The pickles and candies seemed so good to eat!
Their sleep was more fitful, more dreams and nightmares;
How often they found themselves racing downstairs!

But finally they all were asleep once more—
All except mother who was thinking things o'er!
When all of a sudden, she shook me and said,
"Oh, dear, we are ruined!" And I leaped out of bed.

"Now what has happened?" I asked with great fear.
"I sent Jane the towel set she sent me last year."
'Twas the night after Christmas, and all through the house
Only one person worried—'twas the pastor's sweet spouse.

Adlai A. Esteb authored many volumes of poetry among them Scrapwood (1967) from which this poem was taken. Used by permission of the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Little Boy Blue

We have included this inspirational story with the desire that you will make reading it a Christmas gift to yourself.

Margaret Sangster

Christmas Gift Plan

- * *Set aside a block of time.*
- * *Make arrangements for pastor-husband to take the kids. (Plan B: Have someone else take the kids and read it out loud together.)*
- * *Unplug the telephone.*
- * *Brew a hot cup of herb tea. (I'm adding shortbread biscuits!)*
- * *Put on your favorite slippers.*
- * *Curl up in your most comfortable chair.*
- * *Merry Christmas and Happy Reading!*



Margaret Sangster was known for her short stories.

—Via Shepherdess International

Mr. Jones, the stout trustee from St. Luke's Church, settled himself gingerly in the farthest corner of the cushioned pew and thought of St. Luke's back in the city, with its deep carpets and velvet upholstery. His eyes took in the rude pine woodwork, and the choir loft with its folding camp chairs. Sighing gustily he told himself that never again would he feel called upon to attend Sunday services in an isolated village church.

All about him the congregation took its place—not the sort of silk-lined congregation that rustled though each aisle at St. Luke's but tired men with sun-cripsed faces and work-hardened hands, weary women with children clinging to either hand. These people showed unmistakably and pitifully the mark of a poverty-stricken farming community. A young girl sat at the organ. The sunlight from one of the plain, high windows tangled itself in her uncovered, moon-gold hair. She played rather well, drawing a certain quaint sympathy from the rusty instrument. One could sense an undercurrent of reverence and knew that the

congregation rested beneath that reverence.

At the side of the pulpit a door opened and a man came out. He was a young man, in a shabby serge suit, who looked thin and a trifle tired; his face also showed the mark of the out-of-doors. He was like his congregation, this minister. Not over them, not above them, common clay was he.

Again Mr. Jones sighed. Then all at once he was swept into the melody of the first hymn—so simple that they never sang it any more at St. Luke's. It surprised him that he knew the words and that he had joined lustily in the singing.

Then all at once, and for no reason that he could explain, Mr. Jones was glad he came; yet the realization didn't come until the thin preacher knelt to pray. When he prayed, he was transformed into a glorified disciple with a golden message to give. Under the power and loveliness of that prayer, Mr. Jones found himself remembering many things—things that he had almost forgotten at St. Luke's. He had heard the greatest preachers of the times in the pulpit of St. Luke's—suave they were and polished, word-

perfect and elegant. But of all of them, none had been able to make Mr. Jones remember the prayers that he had learned at his mother's knee, nor the other prayers that he had said above her grave. These other sermons hadn't made his young ambitions wake.

He found himself staring into the keen, almost hungry face of the young minister trying to read there the secret of the fellow's eloquence and appeal. All at once, Mr. Jones discovered it, the sympathetic understanding of the need. This congregation, this pitiful over-worked congregation, needed loveliness. Through divine power, this young man gave it to them.

"If only," Mr. Jones said to himself, "if only we had someone back in St. Luke's that could give this to us! We—we're just as tired and overworked as these people. We have money and luxury, but we haven't this sort of thing. Oh, what a man like this could do . . ."

The minister paused and bent his head in a personal benediction while the girl in the choir loft answered it with a thin, sweet thread of music. Mr. Jones found himself filing out of the plain little church. He went away with his heart refreshed and his soul a living thing.

Six months later, the young minister received a letter upon the engraved stationery of St. Luke's. His face grew white with surprise, and his eyes darkened with unbelief! He started post-haste for the little cottage where the girl lived, the girl who had always, since he had entered the ministry shared his hopes and his ambitions and his dreams. Her eyes opened with surprise when she saw him on the threshold.

"Why Jamie, why dear! Shouldn't you be doing your mid-week sermon? Has something

happened?"

"Read this! Read this! It's a call! It's more than a call! It's a great opportunity! From St. Luke's! On the Avenue! In the city! They want me!"

She read the letter. Her eyes too, widened and darkened. But her comment was almost irrelevant. "The Reverend *James Lane Hall*," that's how they address you. It sounds so grand! And then all at once, the tears coursed down her cheeks. "I'm crying because I'm so proud of you. Because it's so wonderful—so utterly wonderful. Because we'll miss you terribly!"

"But of course you'll go, too, if I go. If I decide that I should go."

And yet when he went to the city, for he decided to go, James Hall went alone. Not because he wanted to go alone, but because he and the girl had decided that for the present it would be best. Later if everything was as it should be, if he still wanted to stay at St. Luke's and if they wanted him, she would go to him in the spring. So James Hall left for the city, but not until he had pressed many hands in farewell, not until he had looked deep into many wistful eyes. He left with a battered suitcase in his hand and a great desire in his soul. And with, at the very last, a picture printed on the surface of his heart—the picture of a girl with moon-gold hair and red quivering lips.

Mr. Jones and two slimmer and lesser trustees met the young

He went away with his heart refreshed and his soul a living thing.

man at the station. They felt very radical as they saw his shabby suitcase and his thread-bare overcoat. They felt very poised and sophisticated as they heard his exclamation of the limousine in which they drove. They felt even more proud as they drove up the Avenue toward St. Luke's and saw the growing wonder on his keen young face. But when with him, they entered in through the great arched doors of the church, they knew satisfaction. The look in his lifted eyes held a swift radiance. They were proud of St. Luke's, these men.

"If I could glorify God as greatly as this setting deserves! If . . . only that!"

He justified all that Mr. Jones had said of him. On his first Sunday in the pulpit at St. Luke's, James Lane Hall preached a sermon unique in the history of the church. With black silk robes adequately covering his leanness and his shabbiness, the young minister told his new friends the miracle of miracles. He made them feel that they were his friends and told of the things that crowded his heart. He told them of his desire to help them, to serve them, to lead them.

At first his speech sounded a little awkward, a trifle halting and slow, but before long, the thrill of the moment caught and held him. He again addressed a group of farm folk who had come to him for beauty. There was no realization in his soul of the fact that he offered aid to men who controlled millions of dollars. He only knew that he reached out a hand of fellowship, a hand that, much to the congregation's own surprise, was swiftly accepted. It wasn't until they were dining at home, an hour after the benediction that any of the congregation had a desire to smile over his earnestness. And when the smile

came, it was always a kindly, fatherly smile.

The people of St. Luke's came back the next Sunday to hear what James Lane Hall had to tell them, of his amazingly simple religion, and his amazingly personal God. And in a month or two, people had to stand in line for admission to St. Luke's commonplace services.

For James Lane Hall had a great deal to tell them. They loved him for his earnestness and inspiration—these were new to them. Eloquence and rhetoric they had known, but they had heard little of the church itself, and of their part in it, and of God's part in them.

Mr. Jones told him, "It's the way you put it over, you're wonderful!"

James Lane Hall, used to pouring out his soul to an articulate group, wondered indeed if he had a special gift. He had always held his audience in the hollow of his hand, but his audience had been unable to tell him so. Now he knew words of praise. He knew a crowded church and faultless gloved hands to clasp his own. Sometimes he found himself thinking as he wrote his sermons, "They'll be caught by this line," or "this will make them like me better." He never thought of sermons in the old days in quite this fashion.

Winter passed and with it went the shabby overcoat, the old traveling bag, and the shabby serge suit. Spring was born and the life of James Lane Hall went briskly successfully on according to schedule, except for one matter. The girl with the pale golden hair did not come to the city as the new pastor of St. Luke's was too busy when spring came. He wrote back to the village sincerely and loving in explanation.

"Darling," he wrote, "I want

you more each day, but this business of adjustment is terrific. You'd be surprised with the work that goes with a big church. All the clubs, the social duties, and the demand upon one's time. I have four helpers but even so . . ."

The girl read the letter and then with her hands in her lap, she sat silently for a long time looking at the waking work of spring. She saw across the rolling meadows a small wooden church with a gaunt grey steeple that pointed with a certain gallantry toward the sky. As she sat there, she thought of the man who had, not more than half a year ago, captained that little church. She thought of him and the other man who had grown to take his place, who despite four helpers could not adjust.

It is hard to place one's finger upon the time of change. It comes so quickly, so subtly. This outline grows blurred and that another outline grows more distinct. Then all at once the change has taken place, and there is no denying it anymore than there was a chance to follow it. So it was with Jamie or James Lane Hall, after his first six months at St. Luke's. He least of all realized how he changed—his sermons had become studied instead of spontaneous. Still he fell to his knees in prayer and waited until the music from the organ pipes reached a certain height. His final pause followed his sudden, shy benediction sent people away with an urge to return. But the suddenness of that benediction climaxed after a particularly poignant sentence.

The congregation at St. Luke's and the outsiders who weekly besieged the church doors did not realize what had happened. They did not understand exactly what change had come. Morning service, evening service, young

people's clubs, business men's clubs, the weekly radio talk—James Lane Hall, in immaculate broadcloth officiated them all. And his letters to the fair-haired girl became less and less.

During the second spring, after a triumphant sermon on the awakening of a rebirth, James Lane Hall went into his study and found her there. At first he did not recognize her. It took a moment for his gaze to focus to clarify. And then . . . he exclaimed, "My dear! My Dear! Why didn't you let me know you were coming? And how did you get in here?"

The girl looked at him queerly. Her moon-gold hair, escaping in little tendrils from under her country hat made her seem very fragile and lovely. He had forgotten how dear she was, how desirable.

"No, no James I've come really to see you, not to renew something—something that isn't any more. I've come to tell you something instead. Jamie, you see, I've loved you and our whole village has loved you. And we've hated to see you go down!"

"Go Down?" James Lane Hall started. Was it possible that he had heard the right words? Why this very study was larger than the whole church back in the village. And his salary in a month was more than a year's salary back there. And his congregation . . .

But the girl went on, "My dear, after you left, we missed you so dreadfully. The new man, just a boy out of the seminary, couldn't begin to fill your place. We skimped and economized, all of us, and bought a radio and put it in the church so that just once a week we could have you with us. We, we noticed the difference in you. Jamie, we noticed it almost immediately! About a week ago,

we took the radio out. We could hardly stand it anymore. And it was then that I decided to come to you."

The man was about to speak but she continued, "I do not think you realize what has happened or else you'd be so sorry that you wouldn't be able to go on. But we, oh, we know . . ."

"What . . . what do you know?"

"Why Jamie, we know that it's not you. It's the city and St. Luke's, the velvet and the grandeur. You are talking to it and about it. You aren't preaching God anymore. You're preaching about things. You are using the realness of you to make it sound real. And, for that reason there isn't any realness left. Do you understand? It's all become a clever trick! You, why Jamie, you're not honest anymore that's what we know . . ."

She paused, "I came to the church early this morning so that there would be room enough for me to get into the lobby. I stood next to a man from a newspaper. We listened together and he took notes. Finally when you had nearly finished, he suddenly went outside. I followed him; he looked at me and laughed. 'Little Boy Blue,' he said, 'isn't he cunning? Only how long will it be before the sheep and the cows know that he is tucked away under the hay stack of importance? That he hasn't a horn to blow—not, not anymore!'"

Her cheeks flushed. Her eyes were bright, and she rose to her feet. "It was then that I walked around to the back of the church and found your study, James. I came inside and waited and listened to the organ. All the time I was saying a nursery rhyme the stranger had put into my mind. Saying it and wishing that you might wake up, Jamie and shake

off all the things that don't matter. Wishing that you might sound the bugle and call again for your flock to hear."

All at once she turned and left. She went so swiftly that all James Lane Hall saw was her shadow against the outer wall of the church, and a taxi hurrying away. An hour later when Mr. Jones came in search of him, James was still in front of his broad desk with his head lying upon his folded arms.

That night, at the evening service, the pastor of St. Luke's became Jamie Hall once more. He had not eaten his dinner and skipped his radio hour. But at evening service, he was early.

As he stood erect and tall behind the carved pulpit, some in the room noticed a change in him. Something humble appeared in

*You aren't preaching
God anymore. You're
preaching about things.*

his bearing, something almost pleaded in his eyes. As the old simple hymn played on an ancient organ, Jamie Hall started to talk.

"My friends, I am here tonight to say good-bye to you. Not because—not because I want to go away, for I love you and the church and the city. But because I have forgotten my job since I've been here. Friends, I guess, I guess I wasn't big enough to come to you here.

"Back in my home, I could preach a simple faith to simple people. But here, well, I don't exactly understand it myself, but

here, I've gone to sleep. I've forgotten that a pastor's first duty is to sound a call, to keep sounding it—a call to duty, to ideals, to truth. I've been content to let that call go unsounded, to say pretty things, to pray pretty prayers that you expected me to. I—I started by giving you my concept of God. But lately that God has not been so clear in my heart.

"My only excuse is that, though I could crowd this church, I couldn't hold the attention of a little group of people who knew me and loved me and were my first audience. While you stood to listen, they turned off the radio that carried my voice to them across the miles and went sadly and silently away. They knew the real me and they wouldn't be fooled by any others.

I'm going home to them, to people who are farm folk, who see God in every tree and cloud and blade of grass. And when I'm able to satisfy them, then I'll know that I am awake. Then if you want me back again and they are willing, I'll come to you and bring a wife with me. Will you let me pray with you once more, before I go?"

Suddenly he knelt and began to pray. All through the church, men and women bowed their heads and found that they were remembering things, things that they had remembered once when a young pastor, fresh from the country, preached his first sermons to them. As the prayer went on, they were caught up in the midst of the might-have beens and were brought back refreshed. When the prayer ended, they surged forward to touch their master's hand, but he had already gone through the little side door that led to his study and from there to the Avenue and down that road toward yesterday and tomorrow. ❀



Shepherdess International News

Euro-Africa Division

- ❁ **Portuguese Union**—Following consultation with the Division and as proposed by the Health and Temperance Department of the Portuguese Union, Laura Teixeira was awarded a golden medal and diploma from the General Conference as a "missionary nurse." Laura was distinguished as a nurse in support of others and in support of her husband's pastoral ministry. Her lifestyle is an example of Adventist health principles. Laura is one of the first nurses in Europe to receive this distinction.



Pastoral wives from the Swiss-German Union

- ❁ **Swiss-German Union**—Hanni Klenk reports that pastoral wives from German Switzerland met for three days of meetings in May.

Euro-Asia Division

- ❁ Peggy Tompkins, Shepherdess coordinator for the Mid-

America Union, met with Olga Stasyk, Shepherdess coordinator for the West Ukraine Conference during meetings in the Ukraine.



Peggy Tompkins and Olga Stasyk

North American Division

- ❁ **General Conference**—Jeanie Ryan, wife of Pastor Mike Ryan (Global Mission), was recently responsible for a booth on men and women's issues at the White House Health Fair.

The health fair was sponsored by the Wellness Center of the National Naval Medical Center. Jeanie works as an adult nurse practitioner at the Military Medicine Clinic, National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.



Jeanie Ryan at her Health Fair Booth.

- ❁ Marie Spangler, co-founder of Shepherdess International, just made what she hopes is her last move until she moves into her heavenly home.

She and her husband, Robert, packed their earthly belongings and moved to Southern California where their two



Marie and Bob Spangler with a travel gift from the Ministerial Association

daughters live. Marie and her cheerful ways will be missed here at Shepherdess International.

✧ **Minnesota Conference**—On Sabbath, March 26, church members and friends of the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist church in South St. Paul, Minnesota, met to praise God and to celebrate the origins of the Hispanic work in Minnesota. Guest speaker, Pastor Alvin Smith, had his sermon translated by his wife, Eva. A commemorative plaque was presented to the Smiths as a token of appreciation for their leadership and pioneer work with the group.



Eva and Pastor Alvin Smith

✧ **Northern California**—The Northern California pastoral wives enjoyed a retreat weekend in which Yara Young was the main speaker. She presented ways to gain the richest blessings from the Sabbath. In the words of one pastoral wife, "On this retreat weekend we were free to share with each other our joys, sorrows, and frustrations. We knew that the words we used or the stories we shared wouldn't be used against us or to divide the church. We laughed and cried, let our hair down, and rested... that was the real pleasure of this retreat."

✧ **Oregon Conference**—The pastoral wives of the Oregon Conference enjoyed fellowship and renewal at their annual retreat held at Silver Falls.



Oregon Conference pastoral wives at Silver Falls.



Oregon pastoral wives enjoy fellowship.



Northern California Conference Pastoral Wives Officers

South American Division

- ❖ Pastoral wives' meetings were conducted in several areas of the South American Division by Mrs. Margarida Sarli. Local Shepherdess coordinators reported that the pastoral wives enjoyed the spiritual meetings and being able to participate. They especially appreciated the practical advice Margarida shared with them and the tremendous energy and enthusiasm she brought to her presentations.



Margarida Sarli conducting a seminar in Brazil.

Southern Asia Division

- ❖ Mrs. Margaret Nathaniel, Shepherdess coordinator and associate director for Church Ministries, was presented the Arthur and Maud Spaulding Award for distinguished service to families by Ron and Karen Flowers from the General Conference Church Ministries Department. Margaret is well known through the division for carrying out action plans to minister to families. Congratulations, Margaret!
- ❖ **South Tamil Section**—Mrs. White Antonidass, coordinator of the South Tamil Section Shepherdess organization,



Central Union, Brazil Shepherdess Coordinators.



Pastoral wives who attended the Shepherdess meeting in the Sao Paulo Conference, Brazil.

reported that 23 pastoral wives of ordained ministers from the South Tamil Section came together for three days of meetings in Madurai.

Hepzibah Kore, South India Union Shepherdess coordinator, was the invited guest speaker. During the vespers service, eight pastoral wives delivered concise, three-minute messages on "The Women of the Bible." Hepzibah also spoke during the divine worship service on

"True Sabbath Keeping." The pastoral wives expressed their desire to have more fellowship meetings and exchange experiences.



Margaret Nathaniel is presented her award by Ron and Karen Flowers.



Cookbook Deadline Approaches

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From the kitchen of: All Pastoral Wives

Shepherdess International Cookbook Guidelines

1. Recipes do not need to be original with you. We are publishing a book of pastoral wives' favorites, not their originals.
2. Recipes should use readily available ingredients. Try to limit the use of commercially produced vegetarian products, by our food companies, since they are not available in many places.
3. Vegetarian recipes, please. Dairy products, cheese, and eggs are fine.
4. Recipes can be written in either cups or grams.
5. Categories:

Appetizers	Entrees—Main Dishes
Beverages	Desserts
Salads	Miscellaneous
Vegetables	Ethnic—International
6. Share as many recipes in as many categories as you would like.

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