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Appearance

by Sharon Dyer

*We spend a lot of time in front of mirrors;
checking our hair, smoothing our clothes
making sure cuffs and collars are straight
and hems and lapels
are in place.*

*We check the front and sometimes the sides—
occasionally even the back.*

*But others check
from a different perspective.*

*When we walk away they'll remember
if we looked like Jesus.*



- 3 One Lonely Saturday
- 6 My Experience with God
- 7 The Blessing of the Hummingbird
- 9 Turning of the Hearts
- 11 Wanted: A Reformation in the Home
- 13 Lovin' From the Oven
- 15 At Face Value
- 16 PK Means "Privileged Kid"
- 18 To Grandma's House We Go
- 19 The Wisdom of Boaz
- 22 Shepherdess International News

Between the Covers

How many times have you felt all alone as the pastor's wife? If I had a coin for every time that sinking feeling swept over me, I would be a rich woman. In our first article, "One Lonely Saturday," the author brings hope to this situation by looking at the circumstances with humor and hope.

Cheryl Retzer reaffirms that "PK Really Does Mean Privileged Kid." Again, we sometimes look only at the negatives and forget to focus on the positives. Cheryl reminds us how we can make our kids glad their parent is a pastor.

Vasti Viana shares some of her own womanly wisdom with us in "The Wisdom of Boaz." Wise is the man who recognizes and appreciates a wise woman.

Happy reading!



Cover poem:

Sharon Dyer lives in Wyoming, Michigan, with her husband, Ray, and their three teen-age children: Jennifer, Kelly, and Dan.

She has had more than 100 poems published in 29 different Christian magazines and periodicals. She especially enjoys writing poetry for teenagers and women.

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One Lonely Saturday

Jeff Barker

The following story is make-believe. Sort of. The events of the story actually happened, but they didn't all happen to the same person. They couldn't have. Or could they?

Jeff Barker is assistant professor of theater at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa. Reprinted from The Church Herald, January 1994. Copyright © 1994 by the Church Herald Inc. Used with permission.

It was a Saturday morning. She was expecting their third child. She had spent the morning feeling some contractions. At high noon, she could tell that this was it—high noon in more ways than one. She said to her husband, "Honey, it's time to go to the hospital." The trouble was that her husband was a pastor. And he had a wedding that afternoon.

At this moment it seemed to her that her entire married life had been a tug of war between her needs and the needs of the church. Like ketchup. Since their parsonage was right next to the church building, whenever there was a church dinner and the church refrigerator ran out of ketchup, one of the hospitality committee would turn to her and say, "Do you happen to have a bottle of ketchup we could use?"

Yes, she did. Yes, she would go get it. Yes, it would get completely used up during the evening. Yes, the money would come out of her personal budget. Ketchup. Mustard. Relish. Butter. Salad dressing. Milk. Coffee. Little things. But it was at moments of stress that all the little things spoke to her and said, "You don't matter. Only the church matters."

She should have known; she'd heard it the very first time she donned the role of pastor's wife. It was back when he was in seminary. He had a little student pastorate. One Sunday shortly after they had gotten engaged, she went along with him to the church. Several of the parishioners stood there in the lobby looking at her. Finally someone said, "Did you come to sing?"

"No. I don't sing."

"Are you going to play the piano?"

"No. I don't play the piano."

The silent stares spoke volumes. "You don't matter. Only the church matters."

Perhaps she had unconsciously responded by trying to win the church over—trying to prove that she was worth something. Like the time that she made a Thanksgiving meal for the entire congregation. Granted, it was a small congregation, but the money for the food did come out of her own pocket.

At the end of the meal, one lady who had stayed to clean up had commented, "That's an awful lot of leftover potatoes." And then with a smile and a nod, "A waste of money."

She had wanted to shout back,

"It's not the church's money! It's my money! And if I want to waste \$3 worth of potatoes, I'll waste \$3 worth of potatoes!"

But after all, what she wanted or needed didn't matter. Only the church mattered.

At least that's how she felt on this Saturday noon when she desperately needed to go to the hospital and none of the church people who had said they would take care of the other two children when the time came could be reached now that the time had come, and her husband continued to make preparations to go to the wedding.

Finally they found someone who would take the kids, and at one o'clock they pulled up to the hospital. And he, with the weight of the responsibility of his parish upon him, dropped off his wife with the promise to return as soon as possible. She walked through the hospital doors alone.

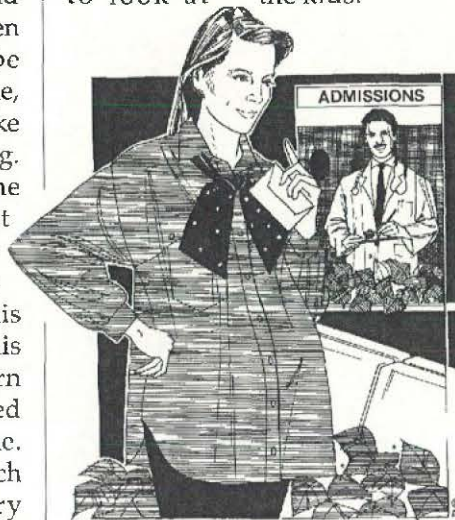
For her, this was the road much traveled. It started every Saturday night when he closed the study door to put the finishing touches on the next day's sermon. Sunday morning, he left early to prepare for the service. She got the kids up and dressed and fed and to church. She had lost track of the number of times her kindergarten son had made his Sunday morning pronouncement, "I hate church!" And as an afterthought, "And I hate Sunday school, too."

She sat as a single mother, wrestling with her children during the service. All the other children seemed to be perfect angels.

After Sunday dinner, which she prepared; her husband took a much-needed nap. When he got up, he put the finishing touches on his evening sermon, grabbed a sandwich standing up, and left

early to prepare for the service.

The rest of the week was equally lonely. Her husband kept office hours during the day, did some calling in the afternoons, and met with committees in the evenings. When he was home, he would observe, "You don't want me home for me. You just want a babysitter." It was true. She was getting so that she couldn't stand to look at the kids.



She knew that her husband was under pressure to keep the parishioners from saying, "He's not working hard enough." So she tried to do her part, but she was starting to feel like the wicked witch saying, "Get home!" How many times had she asked herself, "Is there something wrong with me? Don't I love God enough?"

Yes, she did love God. She loved him desperately, longingly.

"In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified." A snatch of a worship chorus floated through her mind as she walked down the hospital corridor alone. "In my life, Lord, be glorified today."

She pulled herself together and signed in between contractions. She settled into a comfortable birthing room. Things began to brighten a bit.

One day, they would look back at this and laugh. Like the time when they were first married and she was still in her professional mode. She had gone away on a consulting job, and her husband had made his own pink Jello salad to take to the church potluck. He had doubled the recipe but forgot to double the water. For years after that, whenever someone brought pink Jello salad to potluck, everyone laughingly referred to it as "Pastor's Plaster."

And the time one of their parishioners got arrested for bouncing a check, and they had to go down and bail her out. It was their church treasurer.

These were things to laugh about. Another contraction, and she suddenly was aware that she was incredibly tired and alone.

She was tired of having to cover for people who did not do their jobs in nursery, Sunday school, cleaning, getting special music, etc., etc., etc.

She was tired of feeling responsible at every Bible study whether she was the appointed leader or not.

She was tired of people complaining to her in hopes that it would get to the pastor.

She was tired of the annual salary evaluations.

She was tired of always having to say, "I got it on sale" for fear that people would say they were getting paid too much.

She was tired of not being able to share her true prayer requests.

She was tired and alone and empty. She felt like walking up to the church and saying, "I'm not smiling any more. In fact, I'm giving up my faith today. You have faith for me."

"In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified . . ."

She picked up the phone and

called the church building. Her husband answered.

"How much longer? Is the wedding over?"

"No, it hasn't even started."

"Please hurry!"

"Is the baby coming?!"

"No. But I need you."

"I know. I'll be there as soon as I possibly can."

She hung up the phone. "In this room, Lord, be glorified today."

The minutes and contractions ticked by. The nurses were there. But no beloved soul mate to walk through the dark valley. The doctors came and went. Each time the door opened, her heart leapt in anticipation. Which was worse—the contractions or the opening and closing of the door?

She was close now. So close. The anesthesiologist arrived to prepare her for a spinal. It was a new procedure for her. She hadn't had it with the first two children. Had she made the right choice? Were the medical risks too great?

She was gradually learning that she could not confront human trauma with an institutionalized God. Like the time she had gone to visit the grieving mother whose suicidal daughter had been placed in a psychiatric hospital and then stabbed and killed by a fellow inmate. She had remained speechless as she sat in the presence of that heartsick mother. She had simply listened and learned and had herself been helped.

So now, with no one to speak words of comfort to her, a time when perhaps even Job's comforters would have been better than nothing, she was silent before the Lord. And oddly, or perhaps it wasn't so odd, she remembered the weekend a half a year ago when they had brought in a Lay Witness

Mission to their church. At the end of the weekend, there was an invitation to recommitment. She and her husband had walked forward and knelt to pray, recommitting their lives to Christ.

The door of the hospital room swung gently open. It was her husband. Never in the history of ministry had a pastoral call been so welcome.

A few minutes later, she opened her eyes and peeked around to see their seven-year-old daughter kneeling just behind them. And she looked beyond her daughter and saw that the center aisle of the church building was lined with kneeling people. So many people want to have strong faith—to live completely for Jesus—if only they have someone to show them the way.

The spinal was finished. Pain and fear now gone, she found herself alone with God. "In this new birth, be glorified today."

The door of the hospital room swung gently open. It was her husband. Never in the history of ministry had a pastoral call been so welcome.

A flood of such welcomings came rushing to her mind. Like the time that her husband had rifled her basket collection to make Easter baskets for a needy family—and upon discovering that he had given away a basket that had great sentimental value to her, he had gone and purchased brand new larger baskets and filled them and somehow managed a trade. He had been a welcome sight as he came up the front walk, bringing the lost

basket home to her.

A welcoming like the young woman she had shared room mother duties with at the grade school. A woman who wasn't interested in "religion," as she called it. They had many good talks, but she had never even invited the woman to church. She knew this young woman would say, "Back off!" And then one Sunday morning, this woman came into the church building, bringing her daughters. After worship, this very same hardened-against-God woman came to the back with tear-stained cheeks—it wasn't the pastor's wife who led her to the Lord. It was one room mother welcoming another room mother into the heavenly family.

And suddenly, before she knew it, it was over. The doctor was handing her husband the scissors to cut the umbilical cord.

Here was a wonder. Another child whom she would try to keep quiet on Sunday nights by nursing him under a blanket that the older two children would suddenly want to play tug-of-war with.

Another child who would think he had thirty-six grandmas because of the way the church ladies would spoil him.

Another child who would lurk around corners in the parsonage, listening to the many adult conversations, hoping to catch a glimpse of God.

That night when her husband kissed her on the forehead and stole quietly from the room, she knew he was headed to his study to put the finishing touches on his sermon for tomorrow morning.

And at this minute, she also knew that she wouldn't have it any other way. ❀

My Experience with God

Oxsana Bondar



Oxsana Bondar was born 1970 in Kiev, Ukraine. Her grandfather was a preacher, who instilled in her a love for the ministry. In 1991, she began studying theology at the Zaokski Seminary in Russia. Oxsana has one small daughter.

One beautiful winter day when I was only 13-years old, my family and I attended church in Kiev. The evening worship was a dedication for the New Year. The church members filled the pews. They were excited and in good moods for they were thankful to God who had helped and taken care of them throughout the last year.

The program was very interesting. A pastor preached, the choir sang, and members prayed. It was an unusual day in my life.

That evening the church choir sang a new song, written by a local Seventh-day Adventist, Modris Zakis. I heard the song for the first time that night. I had heard many Christian songs before, and I thought it would be one of the well-known melodies. But suddenly, as I listened to this beautiful new song, it seemed as though something was happening to the choir; instead of seeing familiar people, they looked like angels to me!

The song they were singing was about our prayers to God and His answers to us. I want to

translate some of the words:

"Everlasting God, the Creator of the universe, the Father of heaven and earth. You are hearing all our prayers. Please, hear us. We are asking mercy from you."

Then, after these words, there were exclamations from the women's section of the choir. They were repeating, "We know You are hearing us well. We believe it . . ."

It was great! Tears streamed down my face. I could not stop them. They were tears of joy and excitement. For the first time in my life I understood the character of my Lord. I saw Him in another light. I saw a new, merciful, loving God. He can understand me. I can trust Him. He knows everything in my life.

After the singing, the pastor had closing prayer. During that prayer, I opened my heart to Jesus and gave my life to Him.

I left that worship service a new person. I wanted to sing, pray and share my faith with everybody.

A long time has passed, but I have never forgotten about what God did for me that evening. Through that beautiful music, my life was changed. I believe music has great power in our world. ❀

The Blessing of the Hummingbird

Debra Fulghum
Bruce

I couldn't help notice the disappointment in my husband's eyes as he picked up his briefcase to go to the office that stormy day in August. Although I knew he understood why we had to miss our annual retreat to the Carolina mountains, I empathized with his feelings of regret.

Every summer when the hot, humid days in Florida seem endless, my husband, Bob, and I travel to the cool mountains of North Carolina for our personal retreat. This is the one time each year we celebrate our life together—no children, no relatives, no friends—just the two of us. Once we arrive at our cabin nestled deep in the lush, green mountainside, our

Debra Fulghum Bruce is a pastor's wife, parent of three, and the author of 14 books. Her latest book is Reclaiming Your Family: Seven Ways to Gain Control of What Goes on in Your Home (Broadman & Holman, 1994).

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worries seem to diminish. Our perspective on life renews; we become whole again.

Prepare for the hummingbirds

Before we even unpack the car, Bob and I go to the old, wooden shed and take out the bird feeding equipment stored from the previous August. We methodically sterilize the feeding jars, mix the special sugar water, and fill the jars with this nectar. We then hang these special hummingbird feeders in the sprawling oak tree near the cabin's deck and quietly sit in the wooden rocking chairs as we await our late summer guests. At that moment, we join the ranks of many avid bird lovers around the world as we marvel in the wonderment of these tiny, fluttering creatures.

As if on a master timer, an hour always passes before one iridescent hummingbird begins to flutter around the feeder to make sure it is safe. Then, as if the first hummer shouted the news to friends everywhere, more of the tiny jewel-like birds come to enjoy the nectar.

For four days in late August each year, Bob and I focus on this three-inch amazing creature. We dress in red shirts; hang strips of red cloth in the tree; and even tie

long, red ribbons on the porch deck—all to attract the hummer. Using high-powered binoculars, we study the reflecting colors on the bird's feathers, observe its flying patterns, and are amazed at how much nectar it consumes in such a short period. While awaiting our feathered visitors, we talk to each other, share our deepest feelings, and enjoy the tenderness of being alone. Yes, this retreat in August is special.

Until this year. Because of job conflicts, we couldn't go on our annual retreat. For days Bob and I had moped around the house, not daring to share our disappointment, but inwardly feeling each other's emptiness and frustration.

After Bob had left for the office that stormy day, I decided to see if maybe, just maybe, I could attract hummingbirds to our Florida backyard. We had heard from friends, also hummingbird fans, that it is indeed rare for the hummer to come into our area.

Hoping for the impossible, I went to the local hardware store and purchased several plastic feeder jars and painted red stripes around the top and bottom of the jars. Methodically, just like on our mountain retreat, I sterilized the jars, mixed the sweet, red sugar

water, and filled the feeders to the rim. I then hung these around the large tree next to our kitchen patio. Knowing that the hummingbird seemed to be attracted to the color red, I tied several bright red Christmas aprons to the tree and even hung a large red overnight bag near the feeder.

Now someone looking into our backyard could think I had lost my mind, but this was worth a chance. Maybe we could create our mountain retreat right here in our backyard. Maybe the hummingbirds would be attracted to our home.

Surprise Bob

When Bob came in that evening, he still seemed out-of-sorts and moody until he looked in the backyard.

"What in the world have you done?" he asked in amazement, as he stared at the feeders of red nectar and the bright red fabrics waving in the breeze. "You know the birds rarely come to this part of the state."

"Well, it's worth a try," I said. "Besides, what do we have to lose?"

We both must have been hopeful, for that evening as we sat on the patio eating dinner, we could not take our eyes off the decorated tree. We had our dessert and even chose to watch the sunset instead of TV that night. We talked quietly and found ourselves laughing and unwinding, as if we were at our mountain retreat. But our hopes were in vain for there were no hummingbirds.

The next morning was the same. Nothing had eaten the nectar; nothing had even flown in sight. Bob left for work looking a bit despondent and just had to mention, "You know that today

is the very day we were supposed to leave for the mountains."

That did it. I had to lure a hummingbird to our home. I went to the local nursery and purchased some bright, red cardinal flowers and planted these around the kitchen patio. My obsession with attracting the tiny bird was becoming noticeably compulsive as neighbors began peering over our wooden fence that afternoon.

"Excuse me, Mrs. Bruce. Are you trying to decorate for Christmas in August?" one neighbor commented slyly.

Another neighbor commented on how my red "flags" didn't go with the yellow brick on my home, and my daughter's friend wanted to know if we were having a belated Fourth of July party. But I didn't let the humorous comments bother my efforts. I was determined to attract a tiny hummer.

Late that afternoon, just about the same time we were scheduled to arrive at our mountain retreat, I was washing dishes in the kitchen. I glanced outside at the shade tree, longing for a tiny bird to fly toward my feeder, when I thought I saw something shiny on the cardinal plant. Was it a shiny butterfly fluttering around? I leaned closer to the window to get a better look and knew it wasn't a butterfly; it was a hummingbird! We had attracted the most gorgeous ruby-throated hummer I had ever seen to our backyard.

I quietly perched myself at the kitchen table to watch the bird flutter and feed, only for it to fly away immediately. *I know it will come back*, I thought to myself, *it just has to.*

Bob arrived home that day about an hour later, and I couldn't wait to tell him about the visit of

the hummer. "It really did fly around the feeder," I said excitedly. "Maybe it didn't feed, but it was here."

They sit, look, and wait

I knew he was a bit skeptical, but again we took our places at the "lookout" table and stared at the tree. About an hour had passed when we finally saw action in the air. Not one, not two, but five hummingbirds were flying around the red fabrics and tempting feeders. They were flying up, down, sideways, and even upside down as they tried to suck the sweet nectar out of the jars.

As we held hands and watched the aerial acrobatics, Bob smiled with satisfaction while I laughed with a feeling of fulfillment. The hummingbirds had really come to our home and on the very day we would have observed them in the mountains. We felt contentment; our August retreat was complete.

For the past five years, Bob and I have sought this mystical bird sanctuary far away from our daily lives. We have planned, prepared, and driven miles to capture a brief four days of the hummingbird's marvelous habits. Then upon leaving our mountain retreat, we have waited all year in anticipation of experiencing this moment again, only to realize the bird was in our backyard all the time.

The blessing of the tiny hummingbird taught me an unforgettable lesson about God. Don't we all yearn for that mountain-top experience, that exhilarating spiritual high, that perfect retreat with Him? While we make plans and preparations to meet with God and search the world over to find Him, all we need to do is realize that He is with us all the time. ❀

Turning of the Hearts

Viorica Burlacu

See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

These final words of the Old Testament, set in the prophetic context, are in fact the times in which we are living. Their message makes us conscious of the significance unity and family devotions are in our everyday lives.

The end time does not favor the spiritual growth of the members; therefore, it is necessary to have a radical reform in this area. This will only happen if we accept the inspired manner of thinking of Elijah at Mount Carmel: "If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him" (1 Kings 18:21, NIV).

The family is the background which forms character in great measure for heaven, but the family altar is the place and time where we stand together before the Lord for the blessing and for receiving the power to overcome sin.

The living flames of prayer in the morning and in the evening unite this

nucleus and brings us closer to the throne of grace. Family worship in general offers a spectrum of caring.

In some homes the fire has gone out and the stones of the altar have crumbled and are scattered. Above this rises a foreign fire of television

"It is impossible to estimate the power of a praying mother's influence. She acknowledges God in all her ways. She takes her children before the throne of grace and presents them to Jesus, pleading for His blessing upon them. The influence of those prayers is to those children as 'a wellspring of life.' These prayers, offered in faith, are the support and strength of the Christian mother. To neglect the duty of praying with our children is to lose one of the greatest blessings within our reach, one of the greatest helps amid the perplexities, cares, and burdens of our lifework" (Adventist Home, p. 266).



Viorica Burlacu is a pastoral wife in Romania.
Translated by Minodora Kiesler.

or of misunderstanding between parents. Instead, characters should be modeled by the divine grace to shine like lights in the world unless it is like in the time of Elijah, "Why do you limp on both feet."

In some families there is hardly any flicker left, only the prayers at the table and sundown worship on Friday and Sabbath evening is maintained as a tradition.

Thanks be to God there are existing altars on which the flames of prayer are shining, spreading a fragrance of life, comfort and joy. This should be happening permanently in the pastor's family, which is an important center of influence and example.

What can be done, and especially,

what can the pastor's wife do in this respect?

First, understanding the necessity of reform in worship, she needs to take action like the prophet Elijah, in place of her husband who is absent from home. Many times he has to leave early or returns too late for worship. Therefore, the pastor's wife is to take the role of the family priest. Speaking of a mother's first duty, she is to serve the Lord first among other things: "It is impossible to estimate the power of a praying mother's influence. She acknowledges God in all her ways. She takes her children before the throne of grace and presents them to Jesus, pleading for His blessing upon them. The influence of those prayers is to those children as 'a wellspring of life.' These prayers, offered in faith, are the support and strength of the

Christian mother. To neglect the duty of praying with our children is to lose one of the greatest blessings within our reach, one of the greatest helps amid the perplexities, cares, and burdens of our lifework" (*Adventist Home*, p. 266).

The second time around, after Elijah repaired the broken altar, he placed the sacrifice and lifted up his prayer and the Lord gave fire. The people for whom he was sent to work rediscovered the true worship and the true God (1 Kings 18:39).

Today, the situation repeats itself before our own eyes. The servants of God, as well as the pastor's wife, are in the center of attention of the believers. If one would be a "mother in Israel," a woman of prayer, her influence would spread to "all the people." The door of her home would be open all the time to the district mothers in order to give

counsel in connection with the important rebuilding of the family altar. The visits made together with their husbands will have a good influence. If prayer and worship are the cornerstone of family life, the miracle the prophet Malachi spoke of will occur. We would have powerful, faithful and united families. The district would be covered with blessings and not struck by a "curse." Our pastors would not stay in never-ending committees to settle family misunderstandings, but they would make missionary visits and plan committee meetings for evangelism. This is the work in which the Lord would like to see us involved.

Help us Lord, the pastoral wives to stay next to our partners; let us be like Elijah at the time of the reformation and turn hearts toward home! ❁

I Must Go Shopping

Author Unknown

I must go shopping. I am completely out of generosity and want to get some. I also want to exchange the self-satisfaction that I picked up the other day for some real humility; they say it wears better.

I want to look for tolerance, which is worn as a wrap this season. I saw some samples of kindness, and I'm a little low on that right now; one can't get too much of it.

I must try to match some patience. I saw it on a friend and it was so becoming. I must remember to get my sense of humor mended, and keep my eyes open for inexpensive goodness.

Yes, I must go shopping today.

who came from a home where love existed. What a different world this would be if all homes were as loving as that one!

That scene reminded me of a story I read some time ago. A father was sitting in his favorite chair reading the newspaper. His little boy put his little arms around his dad's neck and whispered, "Daddy, I love you lots and lots. I want to give you a hundred kisses."

The father replied, "Son, I love you too."

The little fellow responded by showering kisses on both cheeks.

The father, wanting to get back to his reading, said, "That's enough for today, sonny. Keep the rest of your kisses for another day."

The son replied, "No, Dad, I want to kiss you now."

In exasperation, the father sternly said, "I said not today. The rest of the kisses can wait until tomorrow."

The disappointed boy walked away slowly. That afternoon he met with a fatal accident.

The remorseful father kept repeating, "Why didn't I let him kiss me all he wanted."

Love and selfless courtesy are lacking in many Adventist homes. The home should be a refuge for all of the members of the family. A child returning from school may have had a hard day. His teacher may have scolded him, his friends may have poked fun at him. When the home is filled with love and understanding it becomes a haven of healing for the troubled mind of the child. Unfortunately, all too often, instead of going to a happy home, a child enters the door where an angry parent waits to greet him. It is surprising how many children prefer to stay with

their friends than go to a home where there is strife and contention. Many children are tempted to leave home because of fault-finding, the lack of love and absence of affection. All too often they turn to drugs and to the streets to find acceptance and security.

Many homes need reformation, and reformation can result only when parents exhibit love and build a relationship upon God's Word. Positive results can be seen when children are invited to attend regular worship services with their families and are encouraged to join in meaningful worship periods. Families that share meal times together are generally able to communicate better; family members are encouraged to express themselves freely and are able to show appreciation for one another. Family ties are strengthened when special events and dates are shared. Children gain a sense of self-worth when they are asked to participate in family decision making, and children feel a sense of accomplishment when individual talents and hobbies are encouraged.

These are the ingredients that help make a happy home. Home can be fun and emotional bonds can be formed that will last a lifetime—a true preparation for heaven.

"'God is love' is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass. The lovely birds making the air vocal with their happy songs, the delicately tinted flowers in their perfection perfuming the air, the lofty trees of the forest with their rich foliage of living green—all testify to the tender, fatherly care of our God and to His desire to make His children happy" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 10). ❀

*Parents
should
allow
nothing to
prevent
them from
giving to
their
children all
the time
that is
necessary to
make them
understand
what it
means to
obey and
trust the
Lord fully.*

Child Guidance, p. 474

Lovein' From the Oven

Rodney J. Hugen

It was my wife's idea. In a mall window, she noticed the 8-inch, fluffy, white bunny with the pink heart on the bottom of his foot. It reminded her of a story she'd read about a family who used a stuffed bear to show love to each other. Our family could use him as our own Love Bunny, she thought.

At home, she explained to me and our two boys, ages 4 and 7, how her Love Bunny game would work.

"First," she said, "I'll hide the bunny where someone I love will find him. If you find it, you'll know I love you."

Justin didn't quite get the idea, "Do you mean if I find him, I get to keep him?"

"No," Kathy replied, "But you get to be next to hide the bunny where someone you love will find him. We'll just keep hiding and finding him. The game can go on forever unless we get tired of it and stop looking for him."

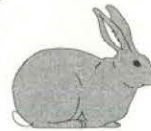
Early the next morning, our youngest son, Derek, found a big

lump in the middle of his pillow. He reached underneath and with a mile-wide grin, hollered, "I've got the Love Bunny!"

Later, I smiled, too, when I found the snowy bunny tucked in my sock drawer as I dressed for work.

Day after day, Love Bunny showed up in the washing machine, a bag of dog food or in the cookie jar. Once he was even "driving" the Plymouth when I left for work. Occasionally, he'd get lost in the toy jungle beneath the bunkbeds in the boy's room. Kathy she loved anyone who cleaned up enough of the mess under there to find him.

Gradually, Love Bunny lost his luster. The once bright eyes dulled and the red satin ribbon frayed. Shiny white fur became matted and stained. We stopped looking for him as intently, but were still pleased when he turned up in some unexpected place or at an unusual time. Finally, he just seemed to vanish; for several



Derek found a big lump in the middle of his pillow. He reached underneath and, with a mile-wide grin, hollered, "I've got the Love Bunny!"

Rodney J. Hugen is a part-time writer, part-time bookkeeper and full-time husband and father living in Phoenix, Arizona.

This article appeared in *Virtue*, May-June 1994. Used with permission.

weeks no one was able to find him.

The weather turned bleak and cold, and clouds covered our Arizona skies. On a particularly chilly October day, Kathy announced her intention to try a new cookie recipe. During the 115-degree summers we had seldom used the oven, so we looked forward to enjoying the goodies that cool weather brought. Arriving home from work, I jumped from the Plymouth and burst through the kitchen door, anticipating the aroma of fresh-baked cookies. What a stench! It was awful.

Kathy grumbled, "Smells wonderful, doesn't it? I don't know what went wrong with these cookies, but I ate a couple and they taste OK. If you guys are brave, go ahead and try some." The boys and I dug in eagerly. She was right. They tasted terrific.

A while later, she yelled from the back room, "Why don't you

clean the oven and work off some of those calories you're devouring? Maybe a dirty oven caused that horrible stink."

Ruefully, I opened the oven and began removing the racks. Then I spied, stuck high in the corner, between the wall of the oven and the broiler element, a very small, fully-baked bunny. The once beautiful white fluff was now chocolate-colored and crumbled, his fuzzy coat melted.

"I've found Love Bunny!" I shouted as I pulled the toasted remains from the hiding place.

"Where was he?" Kathy smiled.

I held him up for her and watched as her face grew angry.

"Oh, great! Now, he's ruined," she said. "Who hid him in the oven? What a stupid thing to do!" Disgusted, she turned and stalked from the room.

Tears welled in Justin's eyes. He raced into the yard, letting the door slam behind him. I followed and

tried to explain that he'd done nothing wrong. The look on his face said he didn't believe me. Together, we went searching for Mom and found her in the bedroom.

Justin began slowly, "Mom, I just wanted you to know, whenever you make cookies, I especially love you."

Kathy stopped dusting, looked down and whispered, "I know you love me and I love you, too. I'm sorry I yelled at you. I forgot the whole reason for Love Bunny. Will you forgive me?"

Then we all giggled at our poor, misshapen bunny and, with great ceremony, threw him away.

Later, I rescued the bunny from the garbage can and hid him in a drawer. Now when I feel mistreated, or when people don't act the way I think they're supposed to, I'll get him out and remember the story. I know when I forgive my child, love does achieve its promise. ❀

I'm a Shepherd's Wife

by E. D. Baldovino

*If there's one person in the church,
Who knows about the shepherd's life,
Who weeps and smiles and prays with him,
That's me, the shepherd's wife.*

*I know him well, his weakest point,
Admire him so, his greatest power,
I hear him speak, in trumpet tone,
Rejoice with him, in triumph hour.*

*I hear him groan deep in his soul,
When bitterness rages in his heart,
I sit and kneel, all by his side,
'Cause I am his, the shepherd's wife.*

*Some people tell of other men,
Who walk their miles across this world,
Who change the course of history,
By raging words they boldly hurl.*

*But I will tell the other side,
Some women live their golden lives,
Who weep with them and smile with them,
It's us, the Shepherdesses!*

*Evangeline D. Baldovino is a retired public school teacher,
and pastoral wife at Manila Central Church in the Phillipines.*



At Face Value

Carolyn Pawlak

What value we women in the church have! As a Canadian wife of a Polish pastor in Poland, I have come to realize the great role Christian women play.

Recently my husband and I were discussing what we would do if one of us died. My husband surprised me by telling me that without me he could never be a pastor. I could not help but wonder what makes me so valuable to him and his ministry. After all, I perform no VITAL functions. My time is spent cooking, cleaning, entertaining, listening to my husband, and going with him to visit people.

All too often, we, as women, measure our VALUE based on our performance of VITAL functions set by today's society.

We fight and scream and yell, like we are told to by secular women activists, to redeem our rights. We allow them to tell us that we are second-class citizens because . . . we

Carolyn Pawlak was born in the wilds of Northern British Columbia where bears and moose roam free. She has had an interesting life of extremes ranging from the -40 degree weather of British Columbia to the sweltering heat of Central America where she lived with her parents when they became missionaries. She has lived in the luxury of Switzerland and the poverty of Poland, and traveled to over 17 different countries, experiencing joys, tragedies, and even kidnapping from the Mount of Olives.

While in Poland, she authored three books: one on diet during pregnancy, lactation and childhood, and two of vegetarian recipes based on Eastern European food supplies. So far 100,000 copies have been sold, and she just signed a contract with a publishing house in Russia.

aren't performing some VITAL functions that are supposed to prove our VALUE.

My husband washes and irons the clothes, vacuums the floor, and peels the potatoes. He hugs me, kisses me, and tells me he loves me several times a day. Should I assume he does not love me because he does not bring me flowers?

Women have fallen into a trap. We have allowed people to influence us to assume that we are inferior if we do not adhere to the image of today's woman. Many of us are leading stressful lives trying to be what we aren't meant to be; consequently our strengths and talents are being buried beneath that stress.

We are what we think we are. If we allow people to tell us we are inferior if we aren't being super mom, super employee, and super wife, we will be inferior. Not because we are but because we THINK we are, and then we spend the rest of our lives trying to prove we aren't!

What great contentment can be found in choosing to be satisfied in the position we find ourselves in! We can truly reach our fullest potential when we can learn to make the best of every situation we're in, when we focus on what is important to us, not what society deems significant and VITAL.

Separated from my beloved church in Canada, I found myself married to a pastor in Poland. Even though it was my own choice, and I knew God was leading me, it was hard to be content with my situation. I had little money for clothes and necessities, and our food supply was

scarce. (I lived in Poland one and a half years before I was able to get clothing other than some winter boots and a sweater!) I found it difficult to sit in church and Sabbath school and not understand what was being said. I was lonely and frustrated. During those tough times I asked God to teach me what I needed to know to help me make it through the day.

Today I am the author of one of the best-selling vegetarian cookbooks in Poland. I am invited to give cooking schools all over Poland. Newspaper articles have been written about me, and I have been invited to speak on talk shows. My life has changed from dull and lonely to widely exciting.

Does this mean that I am more valuable now than when I stayed home and kept house? By whose values am I measuring myself? My VALUE is not measured by what I do, where I live, or who I married, but rather my VALUE rests in whose child I am, God's. I am the most important person in the world! I am God's ambassador, His beloved child—no matter what I do!

Women have incredible talents for nurturing people. There are some people who will only be reached by a woman's special touch. Many times I can give my husband insight into situations by what I have observed.

We all need to realize we are not in a battle over who is more important. The battle is between good and evil. We, Christian women, standing side-by-side with our Christian brothers, can become a winning team. ❀

P. K. Means

"Privileged Kid"

Cheryl Retzer

Helping our children
experience the benefits
of ministry



Cheryl Retzer is a pastor's wife and a registered nurse whose specialty is OB-GYN. Her husband, Gordon, is president of Adventist World Radio. They have two grown children: Carissa and Timothy.

Many articles tell the difficulties and stresses that come upon a minister's family and I have even experienced some of these as the daughter and wife of a minister. But we must keep things in perspective. Some of these very same stressful conditions and trials are shared by the spouses of physicians, truck drivers, lawyers and business administrators, not to mention a few more problems that they have which we don't face.

Being a PK, rather than being a burden of awesome proportion is actually a privilege. I should know. I'm a PK, my husband is a PK, our children are PKs and, it's been that way for generations. Now I don't want you to think that we are privileged or special just because Gordon and I are third-generation Adventist ministers. Yet, we do feel privileged to know that we are part of an organization that is dedicated to bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world and knowing that our grandfathers preached the same message years ago which our fathers have preached for forty years and which we continue to share through our own outreach.

And what about our children? How do we keep them from feeling strange, different or "put on parade" because they are minister's

children? We have tried as a family to make the ministry a special and wonderful part of our family life. I'd like to share with you nine reasons why I feel that being in the ministry has been a blessing to me and my family. These are among the reasons why I think PK means "privileged kid!"

1. The ministry has taught each member of our family to be hospitable, caring more for others needs than for our own. Some of us come by hospitality naturally, others of us must work to develop this gift. But regardless of how we started out, each of us have learned to enjoy putting the comforts and feelings of others first.

2. The ministry was never crammed down my throat as a child. My parents never made statements like "you cannot do this because it will make your father look bad." The reason for not doing an action or choosing a particular activity was because it was wrong, not because it might impact Dad's career. With our own children, we have tried to use statements like "what you do reflects on what people believe about God and what people think you believe about God." Instead of being worried about their father's reputation, we

want our children to be concerned about God's reputation.

3. Our children and I try to travel with Gordon as much as possible. Trips and vacations are very special times when all of us can be together making good memories. Most Adventist ministers have more opportunities to travel than many of their members. This is especially true for departmental and administrative workers who can turn the handicap of being so often away from home into an advantage. We use some of the required travel as family time and sandwich fun time in between meetings, etc.

I once read about a family who enjoyed a very close relationship. Even as young adults the children enjoyed being with their parents, and vice versa. The parents had put a high priority on building "memories" rather than building things. When the neighbors were putting additions onto their homes, this family was taking a skiing vacation and making a memory. They never did get the bathroom remodeled, but when the kids got together, they didn't remember the shabby bathroom or the too-small house. They couldn't stop talking about the wonderful times they had all enjoyed together.

4. Like many other jobs, the ministry is very demanding. There is a certain instability of location or length of assignment inherent for Adventist pastors. Children, on the other hand, need a stable, solid basis while growing up. My mother provided that solid, warm, "always there" feeling when Dad couldn't be with us. Gordon and I try to make certain that one of us is always available on a daily basis for our children. Amid the frantic pace in which we work, play, travel and worship, my children need to know

that there is someone who puts them first and who is always there. They must have a rock of security, a listening ear, upon whom they can depend. I chose to make that one of my priorities while they were still at home.

5. When I was growing up, my parents never talked about problems in the church or "problem people" around their children. Consequently, I grew up with a positive attitude toward the church, its organization and its pastors and members. I was taught that God still works through the church and its committees. Even though I realize that not all is perfect in the church, I don't have a cynical or critical attitude. We are hoping to instill this same confidence in our own children.

6. Growing up as a pastor's child helps you understand the minister is not on the pedestal that some people expect. When members have unrealistic expectations of clergy—that they have achieved perfection or are beyond encountering difficulties—then it is easy for them to become disillusioned when we are not always perfect. As a pastor's child, I realize that we are simply weak vessels willing to be used by God to accomplish His plan of proclaiming the gospel.

7. Minister's children receive a first hand knowledge of witnessing and they should be included in our work of evangelism. This is the best way to get their hearts involved in the ministry of caring for those who are not members of our church. One of my best childhood memories is going to Bible studies with my family. We would all have something special

to eat and then we would study the Scriptures together.

Our own family conducted a Revelation Seminar. Each evening our son would help Gordon with the presentation and our daughter assisted with greeting and record keeping. Several young people attended and our children were very interested in their becoming involved with the church. When decisions were being made, our son wanted to know when "we" could baptize these people. His dad took Tim into the baptismal pool with him during the baptism and he had the dedicatory prayer. Our children enjoyed being a real part of that soul-winning experience.

8. Pastor's children get a broad view of the church and its mission. Many of them are world travelers which gives them a more balanced picture of our church's work around the world. Seeing this worldwide work and experiencing its trials and blessings helps to instill a special mission in our children's hearts.

9. One of the blessings which I cherish from my own youth is the involvement I had in the close relationships between my family and the church family. In a ministry of serving, when you truly give, you receive until your cup is full and overflowing. What other church family gets so many invitations to dinner, has their garden plot plowed for them or gets so many cookies and baked goodies at Christmas time. Their love and trust is a precious trust we must not betray.

As ministerial families, let's talk and act positive about our lifestyle. Let's pass on this beautiful Adventist heritage to our children—the privileged kids! ❀

To Grandma's House We Go

Tom Eisenman

Family visits can be a source of joy. But, they can also be difficult. Grandma says to a friend, "How can I be so glad to have them come, and then so glad to see them go?" A daughter-in-law confides, "Every time we visit, sooner or later we explode at each other. I vow never to go back again. But here we are talking about our next trip."

Simply forgetting about problems you had on your last visit does little to ensure that the same problems won't occur the next time around. Sit down together as a family and try to remember where the rough spots were. Brainstorm ways to avoid past problems.

Nothing is worse than creating a perfect vision of what your time at home will be like, and then seeing your dream crushed in the first few minutes together. More realistic expectations will reduce your frustration level, and you will not be so easily disappointed. Consider the general principles below that can make your visits go more smoothly:

Tom Eisenman is Minister of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church in Boulder, Colorado. He and his wife have four children.

Excerpted from Storehouse of Family-Time Ideas (David C. Cook Publishing Co.) by Dave and Neta Jackson. Used with permission.

Don't vacation from responsibility.

Having a positive family visit requires hard work for everyone. Be even more alert to the behavior of your kids than you would be at home. Beds cannot go unmade. Messes need to be cleaned up. Mealtimes and dishes need volunteer help.

Staying alert is usually more of a problem with our own parents than with our in-laws. It is all too easy to slip into the old childhood pattern of expecting your parents to pick up the majority of the work load. Determine before you go that you will work as hard (or harder) on your visit as you would in your own home setting.

Plan well for the kids.

A common problem when visiting grandparents is bad behavior from the kids. One reason is that adults enjoy catch-up visiting with one another, and often to the exclusion of the kids. Plan activities that include the children or keep them happily occupied—and save most of the adult talk for late evenings when they're in bed.

Sometimes grandparents' mealtime schedules conflict with children's hunger pangs. If you're going out for a long afternoon, and experience has shown that supper may not be until 8 or 9 p.m., make sure fruit, sandwiches, or other

snacks are along to stave off the crankies.

Provide for adequate rest.

Everyone needs rest time to cope with the added pressures of interrupted routine. When we're tired, we're less patient. When we're exhausted, it's difficult to be sensitive to what's going on around us.

A number of things contribute to tiredness when we're visiting. We don't always sleep well on someone else's bed or couch. If you need your own pillow, bring it along. If summers are notoriously hot, and grandpa is notoriously frugal with air conditioning, take your own fan.

Also, protect grandparents from excessive visit burnout. Sometimes your kids will want to go to the park or have a story read and grandparents won't be up to the task. Make it clear to both your children and the grandparents that it's okay to say "no" sometimes.

Allow time for mid-course corrections.

Relational dynamics occur differently in every family. You may feel at home in your parents' house; your spouse, however, may feel like an outsider. No matter how well you've planned, you and your spouse will need at least 15 minutes a day alone to talk over how things are going and to make mid-course corrections on feelings, expectations, and attitudes. Give yourselves time as a couple to pray together and keep your communication level high.

Keeping these general principles in mind, and planning specifically to meet the difficulties you've experienced in past visits can make your trip to grandma's house one you will want to remember forever. ✿

The Wisdom of Boaz

Vasti Viana



Vasti S. Viana is the South American Division Coordinator for Women's Ministries and Shepherdess. She is married to Elder José Viana, the South American Division Associate Ministerial Secretary. She participates in the area of pastoring by being involved in church activities and training Shepherdess and Women's Ministries associates. Vasti holds a piano degree. She encourages her children, Ricardo and Joyce, and her piano pupils to use their musical gifts to uplift Jesus.

Let us consider a very interesting love story written in the Bible. In fact the inspired record sets apart a whole book to tell us the story of Ruth and exalt the qualities of the couple, Ruth and Boaz. Who was Ruth? A widow, a young lady born a Moabite, therefore, of pagan origin. Who was Boaz? An important businessman from Bethlehem.

Among his successful businesses, Boaz owned cereal-producing land. He dealt with other shrewd and wise businessmen, each wanting to have advantage over the others by using their commercial strategies. Boaz was skillful in treating the crossers who were looking for a way to gain much at the expense of others.

As busy as he was with all his endeavors and concerns, Boaz took time to go, during harvest, to his plantations to accompany the harvest closely, and to come to know each of his many harvesters and employees. Boaz greeted each one and treated them kindly and courteously (Ruth 2:4).

Is it possible that we consider the servants as inferior beings? Do we withhold our greetings? Are we less attentive to them? Do

we ignore them? Boaz was devoted in his greeting to his workers. To each and everyone, he gave a blessed greeting, "The Lord be with you!"

Boaz knew even the poor and the aliens who gleaned his land. Therefore he noticed that new people were gleaned and asked about the girl (2:5).

The foreman knew his master well and gave him detailed information about the new gleaner (2:6, 7).

What an interesting report the foreman gave concerning Ruth, mentioning that she had asked, "Let me go and pick." Ruth did not want to share in the gleaned without being duly authorized. The foreman noted this and told Boaz.

We often meet shy people who come and mingle with others, remaining anonymous, unnoticed, secretly utilizing some fortuitous opportunity. But we meet others, like Ruth, who enjoy things being clear and offering adequate explanation. She introduced herself and asked permission to glean. Her attitude was that of a winner.

When Boaz found out who she was, he instructed his harvesters to treat her with kindness and deference. He went to her and

welcomed her, offering her good working conditions (2:8, 9).

Boaz praised her for what she was doing for her mother-in-law and for the deceased's family. Using beautiful and poetic language, Boaz asked the Lord to give Ruth His blessing (2:11, 12).

Ruth replied gracefully to Boaz, showing herself to be respectful and appreciative (2:10, 13). At lunch time, Boaz invited her to eat and he served her himself with generous portions (2:14). She ate sitting comfortably, without haste, until she was satisfied.

When returning home, Ruth carried the result of her work, and the food that had been left after lunch and gave it to her mother-in-law (2:17, 18). She worked in the fields of Boaz to the end of harvest time.

The aged Naomi worried about Ruth. "When I die, how will my young lady do?" Naomi pondered. Then she explained to Ruth what customs and laws the Israelites had about marriage and inheritance. Naomi was expectant: "Will Ruth accept our behavior and act accordingly with our customs and laws?"

Ruth listened attentively. As a matter of fact, this was one of Ruth's great virtues—TO LISTEN! The Book of Ruth tells us, at least 17 times, that she listened attentively.

In fact, the best way to know what another thinks is to listen. Giving importance to what is being said and listening carefully to know what a person is saying is a desirable trait, one that is essential for personal growth and development. Moreover, a speaker can be encouraged by pertinent, short and well-thought out questions. These skills help

improve understanding and promote good relationships!

After hearing Naomi's instructions, Ruth might have refused, maintaining that it was ridiculous to take the initiative. After all, in paganism where she had been raised, she had learned to obey the orders



proffered by men without questioning their commands. And even if she had dared to speak, she would not have been heard, nor her ideas accepted. On the contrary, she would have been punished. This attitude represses the feminine soul. It produces wilting and frustration, destroying a woman's self-esteem.

Verily, this is the purpose of the pagan social system, even today. The objective is to keep male impunity, freedom, supremacy and despotism, even at the expense of destroying the soul of the woman, who in many men's concept has less value than an object. What a loss!

Ruth, however, had self-naturalized as an Israelite even before she left her country. She declared: "Your people will be my people, your God my God." Everything changes for the better when a person says to the Lord

Jesus, "You are my God."

Jesus responds to the invitation, enters close to the heart and gladly produces a transformation so wonderful, complete and perfect in the soul, there is no room left for trauma, guilty feelings, or even the sense of loss for the interruption in the practice of cherished old sins.

Ruth was, at that time, living this transforming experience in her life and when she heard Naomi's instructions she again showed her mother-in-law that she had totally assumed the Israelite citizenship. She willingly conformed to the customs of the people of her choice and to the laws of her new country. She said to Naomi, "I will do whatever you say."

That night Boaz was at the threshing floor to accompany the winnowing of the barley. Ruth prepared herself and courageously went to do her part of the project.

Imagine her anticipation. Ruth did not sleep, but stayed vigilant. Later, Boaz awoke and noticed the presence of a woman at his feet. Startled and surprised, he asked, "Who are you?"

When she heard this question, she did not disgustedly say, "Well, I'm your foreign servant and am here because my mother-in-law told me this and that about laws, etc. . . ."

NO! Ruth was there by her own decision after becoming acquainted about the usage and customs of the people of Israel, and not because Naomi had commanded. She assumed her position in the Israelite society and was able to firmly say, "I am Ruth, and you are my kinsman-redeemer."

Those who study psychology

say that when a person feels confident and accepted, she expresses herself better, more clearly, without fear, objectively and with intelligence. Ruth felt accepted, so she was able to speak with confidence.

The fearful person is indecisive, blocked and shows by these attitudes that there is a feeling of not being understood or not being accepted by the parents, by the surroundings or by the spouse. It is not a question of temperament or personality. Even those who are introverts and quiet, when they feel accepted, express themselves without fear, with clarity and objectively. This facilitates dialogue and helps promote a good relationship with others.

It is interesting to note that Boaz did not criticize Ruth for having taken the initiative or for having come to see him at that time of night. On the contrary, he expressed his appreciation for her choice (3:10, 11). Boaz knew what he should do as a kinsman-redeemer and said, "I will do whatever you ask." What joy Ruth must have felt! The mission was achieved. The result? "I will do whatever you ask." How marvelous!

And now? How would Ruth return home alone in the darkness? Both feared God and had a good name to maintain. They both decided they would be the first ones to preserve their pure characters. Ruth stayed at Boaz's feet until before dawn.

Praise the Lord! Today we can still find men with good correct characters like Boaz; men that, even facing tempting situations, show respect and maintain pure hearts; men who, above all, fear the Lord and consider themselves sons of the celestial king.

Long before the sun rose, Boaz said to Ruth, "Bring the mantle you are wearing and hold it out" (3:15). Some translations say, "Put your mantle on the floor." Ruth may have refused by saying, "Why on the floor? It is going to get dusty!" or "It is so cold, why should I take it off?" But she trusted Boaz, and when there is trust, the prompt attending to even a "strange" order is more spontaneous.

Boaz measured about 45 pounds of barley and laid it upon her, telling her to take it as a gift to her mother-in-law. He was showing Naomi his approval of the instructions given to Ruth. In the same day, Boaz took the legal procedure. Several days later, he married Ruth and they were a lovely and happy couple. They became the grandparents of King David and from their descendants Jesus our Savior was born.

Pastor, without doubt, you and your wife wish that your marriage will last forever, full of love and happiness. Would it not help to observe the wise attitudes that Boaz had with Ruth? Reviewing, we see the following:

— Boaz, even as busy as he was, took time to speak gently with Ruth. Open communication between two people is very important.

— Boaz looked at Ruth when he spoke to her. Looking deeply into the eyes of the beloved one draws hearts closer.

— Boaz gave words of appreciation and praised Ruth for her behavior and attitudes. Sincere praise, words of recognition and gratitude, please and encourage the loved one.

— Boaz was sensitive toward Ruth's expectations and he endeavored to provide

conditions of comfort for work and rest. Such an attitude warms the heart and unites the bonds of love.

— Boaz invited Ruth to lunch, without haste. Special invitations, whether on commemorative occasions or not, make the wife feel appreciated.

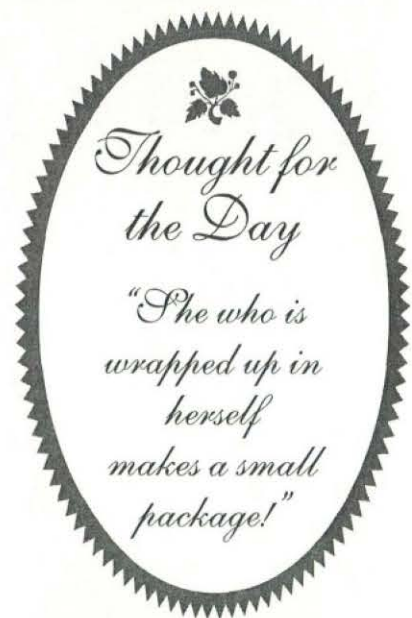
— Boaz prayed the Lord's blessings on Ruth. Praying and worshipping together nurtures the spirit and the soul.

— Boaz did not criticize Ruth; he understood her. Criticizing wounds the heart, but understanding builds solid affections.

— Boaz had a public conduct that preserved his good name and that of Ruth. Mutual respect promotes the relationship's endurance.

These wise attitudes enriched the lives of the couple Ruth and Boaz, and will, undoubtedly enrich the lives of every couple who consider it worthwhile to follow the wisdom of Boaz.

May we think on this and pray that our hearts will accept and live this most gratifying experience. ❀





Shepherdess International News

Asia Pacific Division

Pastor Ulysses Camagay and his wife, Pleny, of the *South Philippine Union Mission*, worked together in evangelistic meetings at Talairon, a barangay within the City of Oroquita. As a result of their husband-wife efforts and the work of the Holy Spirit, 80 persons were baptized into Jesus Christ. Each nightly meeting featured a Vacation Bible School for children, health lectures, a Bible quiz, Bible-marking class, a feature on family life, and gospel preaching. The visits that Pastor and Mrs. Camagay made in the homes of their interested students made a great impact on the decisions of many to accept the Lord's invitation for baptism.



Ministers and families at St. Gilgen.

Euro-Africa Division

Hannele Ottschofski reports that the *Baden-Wuerttemberg Conference* hosted all their clergy families to a pastoral family retreat at presumably the best youth hostel in Europe. It is located in St. Gilgen on the borders of Lake Wolfgang in Austria. The program left plenty of time for personal encounters and excursions, as well as just plain good times. If anybody ever thought pastors are not allowed to laugh, they were proved falsely informed. The atmosphere was

relaxing and enjoyable. One afternoon the program included an interesting trip to the salt mines in Hallein. The clergy wives especially enjoyed sitting down to three meals a day with no obligations and, of course, getting to know each other better. It really was a treat that made each one feel appreciated.

Many Shepherdess meetings have been taking place in Germany. The Shepherdess meeting at Marienhoehe was well attended and Dieter Luetert, from Friedensau, was the speaker on "Charismatic Movements."

A Shepherdess weekend at Bad Kreuznach featured the theme "The Different Temperaments." Waltraut and Paul Gerhard Ebisch substantiated the presentations with practical applications from their own marriage and family. The pastoral wives enjoyed a very relaxed atmosphere and returned home feeling they had gained a better understanding of their fellow "men."

Euro-Asia Division

Olga Murga, Division Shepherdess Coordinator, reports that the *Central Conference* sponsored a seminar by Maria Kulakov and Augustina Zuzulina. A special feature on spirituality was given by Lidia Stolyar.

✿ The *Southern Conference* had Shepherdess meetings where all, but two, of the pastoral wives were able to attend. The subjects presented were "Personal Spirituality," "Facing Hard Times in the Pastoral Family," and "The Formation of Character."

✿ The *Volgo-Vyatskaya Conference* had a special meeting and 14 ministry wives attended. They discussed the reasons why pastoral children do not want to become ministers.

Inter-American Division



Pastoral wives from Cuba



Elder Jaime Castrejon, Division Ministerial Secretary, attended a Shepherdess reunion meeting in Cuba. The pastoral wives suffer extreme circumstances, but their faith is strong.

South American Division



Pastoral couples in Brasilia after a delightful luncheon.



Vasti Viana honors a retiring pastoral wife in Brasilia.



Mrs. Oliveira, the North Parana Conference Shepherdess Coordinator, and Vasti Viana



Vasti Viana and Felicia Ramos.



Austral Union Shepherdess Coordinators with Vasti, Sharon, and Felicia.



North Parana Conference pastoral wives with Vasti Viana and Sharon Cress.

Vasti Viana, Division Shepherdess Coordinator, and Sharon Cress, from Shepherdess International, itinerated through the Division and met with ministry wives at several different Union and Conference locations.

In Brasilia, at the Division headquarters, a one-day meeting included beautiful special music, a seminar, and a lovely luncheon at a health-food restaurant for the pastoral families. José Viana, Associate Ministerial Secretary for the Division, and Meibel Mello-Guedes, the Union Shepherdess Coordinator, co-hosted the event.

✿ The North Parana Conference administration planned a wonderful weekend for all of the pastoral wives. A beautiful city auditorium was leased and the activities included seminars, special music, and mission presentations. The event was so well planned and attended that the local news station came and filmed the activities, and they gave a very positive report on the evening six o'clock news.

✿ River Plate Adventist University hosted meetings with the theology student wives and pastoral wives of the area. At a special chapel for the theology students, Vasti Viana and Sharon Cress spoke to the students and answered questions about life in

the pastoral family. Felicia Ramos, the Argentina Union Shepherdess Coordinator, hosted the events. All of the local Conference Shepherdess Coordinators met for two days with Vasti, Felicia, and Sharon. Felicia hosted a delightful special luncheon for the coordinators and wives of the University administrators.

✿ The Chile Union Mission Shepherdess Coordinator, Ruth Castillo, hosted two days of events for the pastoral wives. In the beautiful seaside town of Valpariso, the pastoral families from the Pacific Chile Mission gathered for a full day geared especially for them. On Sunday, pastoral families from the Santiago area met for an afternoon seminar and meeting.

Southern Asia Division

Thirty-four wives of ministers recently completed eight weeks of training enabling them to be employed as part-time Bible Instructors. Subjects completed during the two, four-week sessions

included Bible doctrines, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, better living, and personal evangelism. To date, 274 ministry wives have attended the training sessions and are employed part time in 15 sections (conferences). This program is taught by Pastor and Mrs. I. James for the Division Ministerial Association. It has proved to be a double blessing for the work in Southern Asia. Pastoral families receive additional income and the gospel is advanced to many people. So far nearly 500 people have been baptized as a direct result of ministry of these pastoral wives!

Rae Patterson, from the General Conference Office of Mission Awareness, presented seminars to the spouses of ministers during the Division meetings. Over 50 wives of ministers attended for three days. The women enjoyed Rae's messages, devotions, praying together, exercising, and sharing their experiences of God's leading.



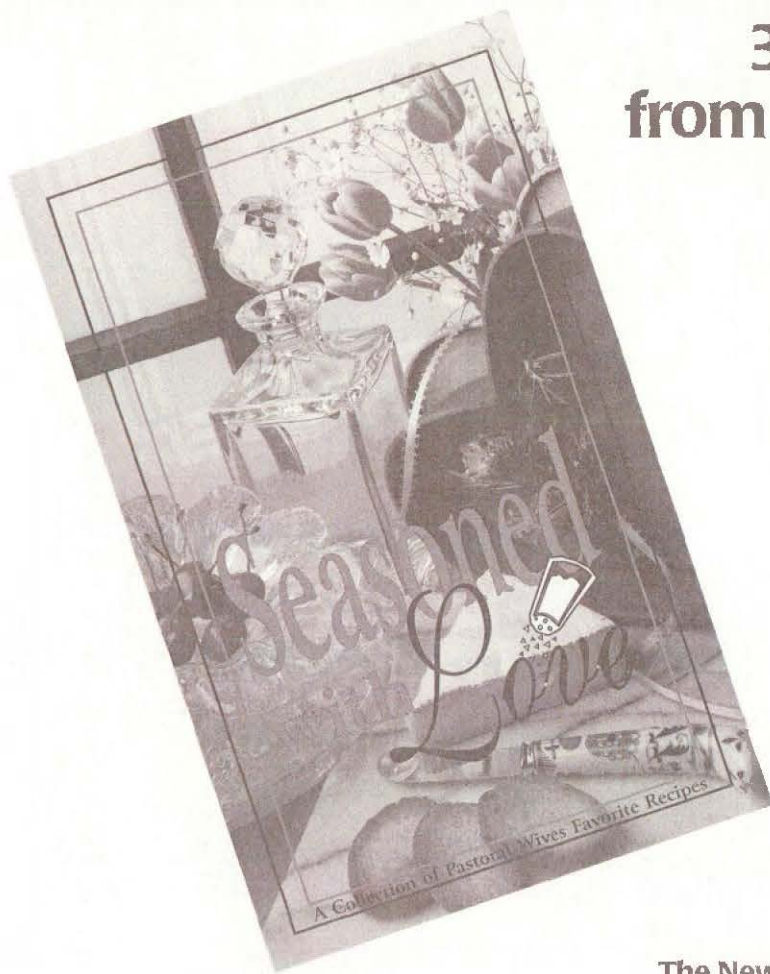
Pastor and Mrs. I. James, Margaret Nathaniel, and Hepzibah Kore at the graduation for pastoral spouses who completed the Bible Study Training Course.



South India Union ministerial wives who completed the Bible Study Training Course.

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