

The Journal



A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

Volume 15

Third Quarter 1998

Number 3

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw
you hang my first painting on the refrigerator
and I wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw
you feed a stray cat, and I thought it was
good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw
you make my favorite cake for me, and I
knew that little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard
you say a prayer, and I believed there is a
God I could always talk to.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I
felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw
that you cared, and I wanted to be everything
that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked . . .
And I wanted to say thanks for all the things
I saw when you thought I wasn't looking.

—Author Unknown

The Journal

- 3 Amazing Answers
- 6 Never Give Up
- 7 Meeting Him
- 11 Be or Being
- 13 Send Them to Me, Lord
- 15 Call 911!
- 17 The Torch
- 18 Depression
- 20 Do You Like Me?
- 23 The Challenges of a Shepherdess
- 24 Smile



Editor's Musings

In this issue, there are articles from pastors' wives living and serving in New Zealand, Germany, United States, Inter America, Ukraine, Brazil, and Zimbabwe. This is a lot of diversity—many different views of life in the ministry from many locations around the world. Binding factors include loving the Lord with all their hearts, wanting to serve Him to their fullest, desiring to be a part of His church and fellowship, and desiring to see our complete families in heaven to enjoy eternity with Jesus.

The role of the pastor's wife is simply complicated. Now, that's an oxymoron for you! Some expectations of pastoral spouses differ from culture to culture and others remain consistent throughout the world. It is my belief that we can learn from each other. We can learn how our lives as clergy spouses differ from one area to another, and we can learn how principles transcend country borders.

We solicit your input. As a pastor's wife you probably have your own ideas about life in the ministry—its joys and blessings—its challenges and difficulties. We welcome an article from you. And, we welcome your feedback about the magazine.

May the Lord bless and keep each one of you close to Him.

Your friend in Jesus,

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The Journal A SHEPHERDESS

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR

MINISTRY SPOUSES is a quarterly publication produced by Shepherdess International, an entity of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association.

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Amazing Answers

Robina Townend

Robina Townend has been married to a minister for 29 years and is currently living in Auckland, New Zealand. She teaches 30 vibrant students in an Adventist elementary school. She enjoys sewing and gardening in her almost non-existent spare time. Her two adult children are living and studying in Australia.



Are there times when you look back over your life and you reflect on amazing answers to prayer? Are there times when you are in awe of God's mighty power to deal with situations you felt were impossible? Can you recall times when He has stretched forth His mighty hand and lovingly protected you? When I hear of incredible answers to prayer, memories from my own life come flooding back. Let me share one answer to prayer with you.

After five years of marriage and working in the ministry in Australia, my husband and I were called to missionary service in Papua New Guinea. Our location was a place called Menyamya, which was tucked away in mountains and only accessible at that time by light aircraft. My husband's duty as mission pilot and district director over a large area ensured he was often away. Our house was close to the mission school where children traveled from mountain villages to receive early levels of education.

One Sunday morning as I busily worked in my kitchen, I gazed out of the window to enjoy the sunny view. I noticed something puzzling. The distressed look on

the child, Paul's face, as he trudged down the mountainside toward the house made me realize something was drastically wrong. Exhausted, he tried to tell me amid tears that his friend, Eli, had died. Terribly shocked, I questioned him on the whole story. He and several of the older boys from our school at Menyamya had gone on a long walkabout that Sunday morning. On spotting a Karuka palm (much like an extremely tall Pandanus palm) Eli excitedly scaled it, hoping to gather the delicious nuts. Then came the horrifying slipping sensation. He called hopelessly for help, snatching at one of the branches in an effort to save himself. Unfortunately the branch had rotted, causing him to fall head first on the rocky ground.

I remembered being warned about Paul's tendency to exaggerate. Again I questioned Paul. Had Eli actually died or was he close to death? I breathed a slight sigh of relief with Paul's answer. There seemed to be hope, but action had to be quick. The accident had occurred many kilometers away from the station.

My husband was away at the time. The government officer had gone to Lae and neither of our

male teachers could drive. For that matter, neither could I! I had no driver's license and little experience driving our dilapidated Land Cruiser. In fact, I had only had two lessons on how to drive it! I hardly felt capable enough to attempt the journey on these rugged outback tracks. Besides, the Menyamya area was so mountainous that such an idea was completely out of the question.

I frantically groped for some source of help, then remembered seeing a truck in the village across the airstrip. Directing Paul to go and ask for help, we all anxiously awaited for his return. When he heard that the driver was short of petrol, I again sent Paul with the suggestion that we would supply the petrol if he would only drive our Land Cruiser.

Hurriedly gathering a few things together which I thought might be necessary, I returned to find Paul completely discouraged. This time he had spoken directly with the driver. Unfortunately, the driver was recovering from a drunken spree and in no condition to venture out.

I was at my wits' end. There was no other truck or driver available in the district. What could I do? A sickening feeling came over me as I realized that only one alternative remained. There was only one person who could help now and that was "me." Somehow, I just had to drive that vehicle!

Explaining that I wasn't what you would term an "experienced" driver, I started the engine. The fuel gauge read empty. Many attempts to siphon petrol through a hose to fill the tank proved unsuccessful. The hand-

pump was useless. After what seemed an eternity, one of the boys emerged from the generator shed with a new pump. Soon the engine was purring. Those directed to stay at the mission with the head teacher (whose leg was injured) peered from behind trees and buildings for fear of being run over, while the boys in the truck and the literally "white-faced" Madam Townend drove off in the Land Cruiser. I shouted over my shoulder to the boys that they must pray for God's help.

I'll never forget that journey.

*The Land Cruiser veered
right into the clearing.
There was a large crash as
I hit the pile of stones,
nose first.*

The winding road, edged with steep ravines, seemed endless. Had I realized it was so far, I'm sure I would never have attempted the task. The steep descents into the creeks and riverbeds appeared enormous. Several times I found myself saying "Please Lord," out loud as we made our way up rapidly rising mountains only to stall out. I had instructed the passengers not to speak for fear I would lose my concentration. One boy watched constantly to caution me if I was too close to the mountain edge or river bank. More than once I had to discipline a wandering mind. My thoughts kept drifting to Eli. Would we be able to save his life? He was such a good boy, well-loved, and respected. I recalled

the smile on his face when he was ordained deacon at our little church. He was so pleased at the opportunity to serve God. I seemed to ache inside.

Sensing that it was unsafe to go further as conditions worsened, we came to a halt. Several hundred meters before us stood a rather shaky bridge and my courage failed. The boys and Paquito (the Year One teacher) gathered a sleeping bag and set off on foot. Two boys and I remained to work out some method of turning the Land Cruiser around so it would be ready for the long trip home.

Close to the bridge we discovered a small clearing. Although it was covered with a heap of dirt and large stones, we reasoned that if we could somehow get over them all would be well. The Land Cruiser edged down the mountainside and veered right into the clearing. There was a large crash as I hit the pile of stones, nose first. Jumping out I noticed a puddle of oil near the right wheel and I realized the old vehicle was not quite in the same condition it had been when we first left Menyamya! After numerous attempts to back up the mountain we decided to wait for extra "pushing" help from the others to free us.

At last the little procession came down the mountainside. Before a word was spoken, their crying told me of Eli's condition. I really had to fight back the tears. Somehow I had to be brave for their sakes. As they neared, I could see Eli's stiff body on top of the sleeping bag and bed they had made from pieces of wood and vines. His neck was broken. That was my first view of a dead person. Looking at his face,

I noticed how peaceful it was. "Although we are sad," I reminded the boys, "we can still be happy that someday we will see Eli in Heaven." Even through their tear-stained faces, I could tell they, too, believed it.

With the extra help we were able to shift the Land Cruiser a short way back up the steep slope.

We thought it would be best if we drove down to the bridge and attempted to reverse into the small clearing. However, the steep slope and inefficient brakes made us go further than we had planned. Now we were in danger. The left wheel rested on a not-very-trustworthy piece of wood on the very edge of the bridge. To start the engine would have been suicidal. Somehow we had to push that vehicle up the steep ascent to the clearing.

Several kind natives passing by stopped to aid. After placing huge rocks in front of the wheel and to the chorus of "push," "push," we made progress. My arms ached from turning the steering wheel with all my might. Despite all our efforts, we ended up crunched against the mountain-side. It appeared all was hopeless. Then to top it all off, it started to rain.

And yet somehow I knew God would help us. He just had to. The daylight would soon be disappearing, and I had a three-month-old baby girl at home who needed me. Besides, although I had grown to love the local people, I was not greatly excited at the prospect of sharing a grass mat in one of the huts in an unknown village for the night!

Again we started the motor and ventured down to the bridge. The boys were tired. It seemed an impossible task to push that old

Land Cruiser back up that steep incline and over the pile of dirt and rocks. Calling them around, we prayed, first Paquito, then myself. Several times I had to stop to fight back the tears. God wouldn't let us down. The helping villagers watched intently. Again to the chorus of "push," "push," they worked in unison. Progress was amazing.

A strong vine was looped through the back bumper bar and with added pulling from behind we made remarkable ground. Eventually, I called for all to "clear," and after struggling with the temperamental clutch, we turned about half a meter from the large drop down the bank to the river and lunged up the mountainside ready for the homeward journey.

After gathering around to thank God for His help, Paquito invited the villagers to come to our church to hear more about our God. I heard one young fellow murmur, "Em I strong-pela God true."

Carefully we laid Eli's precious body on the knees of several of the boys and started for home. Although many immense ravines and mountainsides appeared to leer at us and several of the smaller boys were petrified, I knew that nothing was insurmountable. God had helped us and would continue to do so.

The light was quickly fading and we felt great relief when we reached Menyamya. We then faced the task of giving the heart-breaking news to the children on the station. Early that night we gathered in the church. A number of students were afraid for their lives. The "pay-back" system was very strong, and some feared the relatives of Eli

would blame those belonging to enemy villages for his death and try to kill them.

We sang hymns, and Stephen (the head teacher) read Psalms 91, explaining the promises. Bible stories of God's deliverance were related. The events of that afternoon were told, showing God's great love and protection. Although a number of fearful boys had spoken of running away that night, all were found in their places at worship the next morning.

To be totally honest, I had at times found myself wondering why God had sent us to a place like Menyamya. We had enjoyed a life of fun, loads of activity and fulfillment previously in Australia where my husband was youth pastor at a large church. I found life rather frustrating and lonely in such an isolated place.

However, walking back from the church that night, I felt warm inside. It was as though I had come to know God for real, for I had never had to exercise so much trust before. After the events of that day, my faith in God doubled. Sometimes the places we least want to go teach us the most valuable lessons. I found myself, from the depths of my heart, saying quietly, "Thank you God for sending us to Menyamya. And thank you for hearing and answering my prayers."

When my husband returned several days later, he was amazed. He confessed, with all his years of driving experience, he would never have attempted such a journey. In fact, with no oil in the engine, the return trip to the station should not have been possible. All I can do is look back in awe at the miracles God performed that day. ❀

Never Give Up

Maeve Maurer



"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16, NIV).

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:13, NIV).

When my oldest daughter started school, there were no Adventist schools in our vicinity so she went to the nearby public school. Though other Adventists attended the school, all her class mates were non-Adventists.

She soon made many friends and they often visited our home.

Maeve is married to Pastor Gabriel Maurer. She is the new Shepherdess Coordinator for the Euro-Africa Division where her husband serves as the Ministerial Secretary. They have two daughters, ages 4 and 8.

I got to know many of my daughter's friends' parents. Many were not Christian and were curious about our beliefs. One mother asked me why we prayed before each meal. It was a wonderful opportunity to tell her about Jesus.

The school's first festival fell on a Sabbath. We decided to go, visit some friends, and return home. We knew there would be games to play, food to purchase, and activities to enjoy, but we did not want to participate in such things because it was Sabbath.

I was very shocked to see other Adventists at the festival buying food, purchasing tickets for the games, and participating in non-Sabbath activities. I wondered how I could explain to my new friends what Adventism was all about when so many Adventists were acting like everyone else.

I got the opportunity the next week. My daughter was invited to a school mate's party. While there, the mother offered me a glass of wine. When I refused,

she said, "Well, we know that some Adventists eat shrimp, eel and other things, so we thought perhaps you might like some wine to drink." Because of the actions of some of the other Adventists, it was very difficult for me to explain how important most Adventists think it is to keep their bodies clean because they are "the temple of the Holy Spirit."

Still, I used that time to witness to those people. Though they may have been confused because of the conflicting messages sent from different Adventists, I wanted to let them know about my personal relationship with my Savior.

This experience encouraged me to always be aware that people are looking at my life, they are watching my behavior, they are listening to my words. I can be a channel through which God can speak or I can be stumbling block to my neighbors.

My prayer is that I can be like Jesus and sow the good seed. ✿

Meeting Him

Nancy Bassham

Nancy Bassham was the Shepherdess Coordinator for the Asia Pacific Division for many years. She and her husband, Steve, served in Thailand. They now live in California.

This article is based on a talk given at the 1990 General Conference Session.



The purpose of this article "Meeting Him" is to share some principles on how one meets God and assists others to do the same. In some respects, this is a very difficult topic because no two circumstances are the same when it comes to how God leads each individual step by step into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

God seeks us before we even have enough knowledge or desire to seek Him. God's seeking is tailored and planned to accommodate itself to each social, educational, gender, cultural and personality background. And we in turn meet Him within the context of our own world view. For example, my experience in meeting Jesus is measurably different from that of my husband. I am a woman and he is a man. I am a Thai and he is an American. I came from a Buddhist background; he came from a conservative Seventh-day Adventist background. Therefore, I will approach the topic "Meeting Him" by sharing the background and circumstances in which I met Jesus. Some general principles will be shared which I hope can be useful to some of you when you encounter other Asian

Buddhists to whom you would like to introduce your best friend Jesus.

First, it must be understood that from a traditional viewpoint we Asians, even some American Asians, have tended to be somewhat cynical. By this I mean even though we appreciate the Western culture and have begun to assimilate much of the Western world around us, we nevertheless tend to be somewhat suspicious and cautious with respect to Western concepts and ideas. From this then it can easily be seen that if Jesus Christ is presented as an American God and Christianity is seen as the Western way to heaven, the average Buddhist has little more than a curious fascination about our God.

A second point which must be kept in mind is the homogeneity of most Asian nations. Unlike the Western nations of Europe, Australia and the Americas where there is a diversity of people, races, and tongues all stirred up together in one big melting pot, in the Philippines there are Filipinos; in Korea, Koreans; in Japan, Japanese. Though such a statement may be a generalization, for the most

part people in Thailand are Thai; in other words, people act in a certain manner, eat the same foods, dress the same way, worship in like manner, etc. To be different is, to some degree, to be un-Thai.

The third point that should be realized is that in many third world countries, the dynamic tension between the sacred and the profane is highly amplified. People live from the cradle to the grave with a keen sense of the reality of the great controversy between the powers of light and darkness. Good and evil. Life and death. The spirit wall is not abstract, myth or fiction, but is more real than the life they are currently living. The supernatural is expected and therefore accepted. Western culture tends to compartmentalize and thereby segregate the religious and secular experience. In the Asian mind these two are always co-mingled.

When I was born in Northern Thailand, my father was the governor. Therefore, I was born at home in the governor's mansion instead of the hospital. In those days each province was somewhat like a small kingdom, and the governor held ultimate authority, subject only to the king. All families, but especially parents of rank, were concerned with the destiny of a newborn child. Everything was to be considered—the time of day, the weather, any lucky or unlucky occurrences and even the flight of the birds. There was an old lady, a Buddhist nun, who was quite famous in those days in reading the signs and telling the

fortune of a newborn child. So she was summoned. She looked into the swinging cradle in which I was laying contently and said to my parents, "She will grow up to marry a non-Thai, a commoner of a different religion." Now, how would you like to be my parents? Because of this prediction, my father sent me to an exclusive boarding school for girls. He not only kept me away from normal association with boys but was careful that my friends and acquaintances be not only Asian but pure Thai. He even went so far as to set up an arranged marriage for me at the

In many third world countries, people live from the cradle to the grave with a keen sense of the reality of the great controversy between the powers of light and darkness.

age of sixteen to a rich, dignified Buddhist man ten years my senior. It was considered a perfect match. (Actually, he was a real bore to a sixteen-year-old like me.) However, my ideas differed from my parents.

Though my parents did not believe girls needed higher education, some of their friends recommended I be allowed to attend college. So at age 16, I was allowed to choose a Seventh-day Adventist school in America. Praise the Lord. The names of three colleges were sent to us by the Ambassador to the United States: Pacific Union College,

La Sierra College, and Union College. I checked on the map to see which college was closest to Hollywood, and so I choose La Sierra hoping to see Elvis Presley or James Dean walking down the street.

My father arranged for a holy Buddhist relict to be made into a amulet. A priest attached a charm to it which was supposed to protect me from the evils of America and from Christianity. I wore this charm around my neck at all times. However, my father was still somewhat reluctant to let me go unsupervised, so he sent me to the United States in the company of six Thai soldiers.

Let me remind you that I was only 16 at that time.

Unfortunately, while our plane was on layover for two hours in Hawaii, I wandered away, fascinated by the unusual sights and scenes and became separated from my escorts. The stewardess told them that

I had already entered the plane, so they quickly boarded and left without me. I still do not know what happened to them.

When I arrived alone in Los Angeles International Airport much later, I was frightened, tired and discouraged. I hardly knew a word of English, so I just sat on the bench and cried. A very kind lady, who happened to be a missionary from Japan coming home on furlough, came to my rescue and took me with her to a motel. She helped me make contact with the school. I was so impressed when Dr. Lee drove all the way from Glendale to Los Angeles to get me.

Everything at La Sierra was so

new to me. I hardly spoke English and had a difficult time with my classes. But I was very, very impressed with the attitude of the teachers who were very helpful to me.

I had a really hard time with the food. Even though Buddhist appreciate the concept of a vegetarian diet, I thought the food was terrible, I mean atrocious! Looking back, it probably was not so bad, it was just foreign to anything I had ever known or eaten. I suspected that from the beginning there must be something wrong with the food at the school cafeteria because before each meal, I noticed the students intently bowing their heads and appearing to inspect their food. And, of course, not wanting to be different, I did the same thing. I thought "Amen" must be an English word for the food is OK to eat. It took me a long while before I knew the students were saying grace. Still, I did not want any kind of gluten or potatoes, I wanted chicken and rice. So I found a way to order from Chicken Delight, a nearby restaurant. Food was delivered right to the dormitory!

One day while visiting the home of some Seventh-day Adventist people, I was left alone in the living room for a little while. I picked up a Bible, not knowing what it was and began to read Genesis, the first chapter. It may seem strange, but I immediately knew that there was something different about this book. As I read the first two chapters (that's all my English could carry), I felt the moving of

the Holy Spirit on my heart. Even though I had never heard about the Holy Spirit, instinctively I knew there was something different about this book. I had a very strange feeling which I cannot explain. It was as though there was a warm glow enveloping me.

Eventually I met Steve, a ministerial student. I became his evangelistic project for the year. Together we attended John Loor's evangelistic meetings. Elder Loor was the pastor at the Arlington Church at the time. I made a

Standing close to my bed was a Buddhist monk, bald headed, clad in a saffron robe. He spoke gently and kindly, but firmly, "Buddhism is for Asians. Christianity is for Americans. Both religions teach us to do good."

decision to prepare for baptism, but I was not able to break free and accept Jesus without a struggle.

One afternoon, while I was alone in the dormitory, I began to have the strangest sensation. At first I thought maybe I was going to faint, so I looked around for my bed and thought maybe I had better lie down. But standing close to my bed was a Buddhist monk, bald headed, clad in a saffron robe. He spoke gently and kindly, but firmly, "Buddhism is for Asians. Christianity is for Americans. Both religions teach us to do good. I spoke to your

father and told him you are going to be baptized and you are dating an American boy. He is very angry." It was like a dream. Yet I knew it was real because I received a telegram from my father in which he expressed his concern. He said, "The Buddhist priest told me that you are too interested in Christianity, and you are dating an American boy. Stop it!" Such actions were considered a disgrace to the family. The second time it happened, I saw a giant image of Buddha in my room, extending through the open ceiling high into the sky. I told Elder John

Loor that I did not want to be baptized. I told him about the visions, and he said, "Nancy, the next time it happens, just say, 'I rebuke you in the name of Jesus Christ' and I am sure you will have no more trouble."

A few days later, nearing the time for my baptism, I was in my room alone. I felt the presence of the power. I called out, "I rebuke you in the name of Jesus," as Pastor Loor had taught me. But the power was stronger than my will. I was in Bangkok at the temple worshipping like a Buddhist girl. I could see the temple dancing girls. I could hear the music. I could smell the incense. I was in that place. The sacrifices were very real. I had no control of my own. Many thoughts went through my mind. If Jesus is stronger than this power, then why didn't He help me? Maybe it was because I am a Thai girl. Maybe He is really

only interested in American and European people. Perhaps He did not want me now because I was in the temple and I had no power to resist.

Back in my room I spent many hours that night thinking about all the things that were happening to me. My heart agonized about everything and I was afraid to tell anyone. I didn't even tell Steve at the time. Early in the morning when I got up, I received a warning slip in my mailbox that a room check had occurred during the night and I was not in my room. The room check had occurred at the same time as the power had taken me to the temple in Bangkok. I was very frightened.

I told some friends of my experience. They asked, "How did you get there? Did you fly? Were you on the plane? Were you on a jet?" Brother and Sisters, I still do not know how Satan did that.

When I next met Pastor Loor for our Bible study, he immediately sensed something was wrong. I had not even told Steve the real reason I had decided not to be baptized. I gave Pastor Loor all sorts of excuses, but after he prayed with me, I wanted to confide in him. There is something about prayer with the pastor. I said, "Pastor Loor, you told me to rebuke the power in the name of Jesus and everything would be all right, but it wasn't." I told the whole story. He was quiet. What would you say if you were him? I broke the silence. "I was there Pastor Loor. I saw the sacrifices, the dancing girls. I smelled the incense and I heard the music. The heat was

intense. I was sweating and I felt very weak and faint. I had no strength to resist. I was there at the very temple where my father got this amulet." I took the amulet and showed it to him.

Many Christians today are on Satan's ground. They call on Jesus, but at the same time they have amulets which belong to the power of darkness.

"God wouldn't want me now anyway."

After awhile he spoke, "Nancy, perhaps you were on Satan's ground. There are two powers in the great controversy, and could it be that in order to vindicate His character and remain just in the eyes of the watching universe that sometimes God's hands are tied and He has the power to act but must limit Himself until you take off this amulet, this charm which identifies you as belonging to the power of darkness. Don't hold anything back. You don't need this other power. You only need Jesus Christ. Take off this charm and give your whole life to Jesus."

I was afraid at first. Wouldn't you be afraid? I had always worn some symbol of that charm on my person. I prayed in my heart for strength and for an answer to my prayer. My heart ceased to tremble and a marvelous calm and peace took place. I took off that amulet and the power of darkness was broken.

That night I spent some hours in the small chapel at the girl's

dormitory. My eyes were red, my cheeks were wet, but they were not tears of repentance, but tears of joy. I remember how some of the girls there wondered what happened to me, but I did not care.

There are many Christians today who are on Satan's ground. They call on Jesus, but at the same time, in their homes and in their lives, they have amulets, so to speak, which belong to the power of darkness. They are on the wrong ground, and yet wonder why they cannot seem to live a victorious life. Why they cannot seem to find peace and joy in serving Jesus.

Not many days after that experience, I was baptized. I never dreamed that someday I would be a minister's wife. Steve and I were later married. We have been in the ministry for 20 years, 17 years as missionaries. I want to thank all of the pastors' wives I have met in the past who have shared their experiences with me and have been models so that I could become a good minister's wife. And I want to say today, that I have two Christian mothers—Mrs. Carl Watts and Mrs. Marie Spangler. They have been my Christian mothers all the time that I have been involved in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I am very thankful for that.

Today, I want to give thanks to the living God for leading me step by step in my life. I am glad that I met Him. I long for the day when I can meet Jesus face to face. Then I can personally say to Him, "Thank you, Jesus, for seeking me and for your patience in waiting for me to respond."✿

Be or Being

Gloria Castrejon

Gloria Castrejon is a Spanish Literature professor and has authored numerous articles and poems. She currently serves the Inter-American Division in the translation department. She has accompanied her husband, Jaime, in their ministry for more than 30 years. He is now the Ministerial Secretary for the Inter-American Division. The Castrejons have three children. Gloria enjoys reading, writing, painting and crafts.



In some languages, the verbs used to indicate "be" and "being" are the same or else seem so similar that they are confused. In English, "I am" is used to express both permanent and temporary situations, both occupation and location. Although some languages use a different word for each, in practice those words are sometimes used interchangeably. *be* is taken to mean that we are there. Worse yet, we sometimes place greater importance on "*being there*" even if we *are not*.

What does this grammatical confusion have to do with the life of a minister's wife? In the first place, a minister's wife is one because of the profession chosen by the person she loves and to whom she is married. She may not have chosen this position. Maybe her husband accepted the call to the ministry after they were married, and she willingly accepted that position ... or she may have just resigned herself to it. Nevertheless, in most cases, she decided to marry her husband, either when he was a theology student or already a pastor, and together they accepted the divine call to become a ministerial couple. Whatever the case, she needs only to be the wife of that loving companion to

find herself in that privileged position as a minister's wife. And she is so legitimately, whether or not she is able or willing to fulfill the church's or even God's expectation of her ministry.

Most ministers' wives feel that their position is a privileged one. They are proud to belong to the ministerial team that works for the good of the church. They also feel a great responsibility and want to learn how to better serve in that position. For some, however, each day is a real challenge to improve their performance in the roles they must play within that special and unique drama of their existence.

Luckily, there are now many resources available to the minister's wife to help her fulfill her role in a more professional and appropriate manner. Numerous seminars with updated information can serve to enhance her performance. These may be very positive, provided the pastor's wife is not too idealistic in her vision. She must not forget that, although there are certain general expectations of a pastor's wife, every individual is a unique and special version from the Creator, destined for a peculiar service within His great and divine plan. Seminars offering advice and ideas are

helpful, but we must keep in mind that every person will apply the information differently.

Some books and articles would have us believe that there is an ideal model for the minister's wife, and that some privileged experts have been able to achieve it successfully. Unfortunately, many ministers' wives feel unfit and insecure, sure that they will never be able to reach that ideal.

Ministers' wives come in all sizes, colors and designs. Yet there is a basic model because the role of a pastor's wife is part of the entire gospel commission, from which her function stems. But this basic model has little to do with specific techniques for performing her duties.

It does not impose a specific personality, a given academic degree, or certain cultural traits. The basic model—and that "standard" which must be reached—is no different from that which any other Christian lady must achieve. The apostle Paul described it as "... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

This is the basic requirement. Without it, human virtues or skills become worthless. With it come a countless number of other virtues that the Holy Spirit will continue to add and mold in His own good time in order to fulfill His always appropriate and perfect purpose.

What then is the prime requirement for being a good minister's wife? To be a good Christian woman, to harbor the faith of Jesus in her heart. It is to give herself to Him, so that He may use her as an instrument on

behalf of not only her own family but also the church family, in the manner and measure that the Holy Spirit equips her. If she has learned to follow the marvelous voice that guides and enlightens, no one will need to complain about being confused or lacking a sense of direction. Not even someone in an isolated area, without access to experienced advice or without the books that educate and facilitate the task, will lack the guidance of the Spirit, who will enable her to fulfill her mission.

What then is the prime requirement for being a good minister's wife? To be a good Christian woman, to harbor the faith of Jesus in her heart.

If there is one thing which should concern us the most as ministers' wives, it is that we never lack the sweet company of Jesus. We must not become lost in the forest of science or in the voices of the experts. We must never forget that God has special and peculiar counsel and directions adapted to every human, in every personal and social situation.

Do you wish to be a good minister's wife? Then above all, wish to be a good Christian. Struggle within yourself to find those virtues which constitute the flesh and blood of true

Christianity: joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and *love*. ... As the apostle declared, "... against such, there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

We should not be judged, even by ourselves, according to requirements that someone has thought up and stated in a handbook. Although our intellectual level, physical appearance, rules of etiquette, and other things may be good and necessary in themselves, they are not the basis upon which we are judged. Our performance must pass the test of that which is eternal.

With regard to *being*, to occupy the privileged position of a minister's wife, we are all there, fulfilling the role or not fulfilling it, wishing to be there or wishing we weren't. The fact is that, whether we like it or not, we are all there. In order to really be what God intended for us when He allowed us to unite with His servant—the man who responded to the divine call—we must constantly place His will ahead of our wishes. We must decide in our hearts, struggle fervently on our knees, work diligently with our minds and hands and feet. We must overcome boredom, negligence, indifference, discouragement, temptation and sin. We must take hold of the arm of the Omnipotent and each day walk the path still entwined with flowers and thorns, until that day when we hear the words "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matthew 25:21).

As pastoral wives, we must *be*

while *being*. Let no one accept the privileges without being willing to also accept the responsibilities. Let no one be like the messenger of 2 Samuel 18:19-33, who arrived at his destination breathless, proud of having arrived, but unable to give his message because he had none. He ran the entire obstacle-filled way in order to be there, but he lacked the most important thing—a message, the very reason for such a hurried race to reach that special place.

How terrible it would be to be found lacking the necessary spiritual experience, and perhaps to be filled with selfishness, malice, impatience, intolerance, resentment, envy, doubt, laziness. It would be better not to have arrived at all. A messenger without a message is like the sun without heat or light, like a handful of salt which cannot add flavor. As the Master said, "It is good for nothing but to be thrown out and trodden under the foot of man" (Matthew 5:13).

We must *be* while *being*. In fact, whether passively or actively, we are already there. We must *be*, with good will and courage, and in the way and manner shown to us by divine providence. Let's not shy away from truly *being* pastors' wives, in every sense of the word. Let us constantly search for that personal and redeeming message, through prayer and supplication, not putting in first place our own choices and ideas about what should be or how it should be done. Instead, like Mary when she received God's call and instructions for fulfilling one of the greatest missions on earth, let us answer, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it [done] unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). ❀

Send Them to Me, Lord

Olga Murga

Olga Murga is the Shepherdess Coordinator for the Euro-Asia Division. She lives in the Ukraine where her husband is president of the Union.



Several years ago in a small town in Siberia, there lived a young woman who lived a reckless, sinful life. She worked at a liquor manufacturing factory and was addicted to alcohol. When she had an opportunity, she stole alcohol from the factory, took it home and sometimes sold it to other alcoholics.

Fortunately, through God's power, this woman was able to change the path of her life; instead of living dangerously and selfishly, she gave her life to the Lord and great changes took place in her soul. She and her daughter became Seventh-day Adventists. She met a Christian man and soon they were married.

This couple, accepting God's love and forgiveness, dedicated their whole lives to serving the Lord. The man became a pastor and this couple always made their home available for church meetings. They organized song services, youth meetings and mission gatherings. There was always hot tea, pastries, hot potatoes and pickles waiting for those who came to meetings straight from work. This family's

home was always warm and friendly, a place where people could warm their hearts as well as their bodies. Neighbors and friends were able to have heart warming talks and share spiritual experiences.

The pastor's wife loved to witness about Christ. During that time there were no instructions on how to preach the Gospel. There were no evangelistic meetings, there was not even legal permission to hold church meetings. But the pastor's wife invented her own method of sharing the Gospel and shared it with others. She would tell those around her, "Every morning I kneel and ask God to show me where to go today and what to talk about." "And how do you know? Tell us," asked the young people in the church. "Don't be in a hurry, listen to God's voice, and you will understand," she replied. The young people, who were always running somewhere, sometimes did not understand the pastor's wife. But she was never in a hurry, never rushed anywhere until she was sure that God was leading her to those who wanted to get ready for baptism.

Every season her work was very successful. Every summer five to ten people were baptized. She nurtured these young Christians and laid a strong foundation for their faith. They did not doubt or question their faith. She helped them develop the ability to listen to God's voice and create strong ties with Christ and His church. She did this in spite of persecution and numerous problems with Sabbath keeping.

One day trouble came into the warm and cozy home of the pastor. The wife, perhaps because

of her age or malnutrition, got sick and ended up in bed. When she tried to get up, she felt dizzy and was forced to go back to bed. I visited her and thought to myself, "How will she now win the souls for Christ?" Though she was not a big talker, I had always learned from her. Her actions, her "door to door" evangelism had made an indelible impression on me and others around her.

"The worst thing for me now is that I can't go out and meet people and tell them about God," complained the pastor's wife. "I

*I know what to do now.
The fact that I can't
go out and visit people
doesn't mean that
people can't come to me.*

just can't imagine not bringing any new souls to Christ this year. Jesus loves me so much; I feel guilty not giving anything to Him in return."

One day when I visited the pastor's wife, I saw that she already had a visitor. It was a young woman with long hair that almost hid her eyes. She did not look Russian to me. "Who is she?" I thought. As if she heard my question, my friend introduced us. "This young lady represents the Tatar people of this city. She

is a real blessing from God." I shook the young woman's hand. Later I learned that she came to the pastor's home to ask a couple of questions, but ended up staying all day so she could listen to the pastor's wife.

The pastor's wife later told me, "I know what to do now. The fact that I can't go out and visit people doesn't mean that people can't come to me. I prayed, 'Please, Lord, send to me those whom you would like to become members of your church this year.' And this young woman came first. She has some relatives who want to listen to God's word. I will invite them over and we will talk about Christ."

During that difficult time for the pastor's wife, four Tatar women were baptized. By the time of their baptism the pastor's wife had almost completely recovered. By the end of the summer she had no reason to be sad.

Everything one does for the Lord counts: prayers, fasts, tears, and offerings that are given by those who themselves have nothing, but still give what they have to help do God's work. Though this woman had been sick and bed-ridden, she still brought four souls to Christ. How many people were brought to Christ all over the world?

Every year brought happiness into the family of this dedicated servant of God. The members of this household could not even imagine their lives without that feeling of rejoicing that is felt in heaven when a lost soul repents and turns back to God. Let this heavenly joy fill every pastor's home. Even when we feel weak and tired, let God hear our prayers: "Please, Lord, send them to us!" ❀



Call 911!

Mary Maxson

Mayday! What do
I do now, Lord?

Besides being a pastor's wife, Mary is a volunteer chaplain at a Maryland hospital and an editorial secretary for *Adventist Review*.



Scene 1: It was around 9:00 a.m. when the phone rang. I was cleaning up the long overdue, smelly kitchen. "Mary," Lilly, the caller, pleaded. "I need you to do something which none of the other pastors' wives ever did."

"What's that," I replied.

"There is a new doctor's family that's just arrived in town and I would like for you to invite them over to your house to eat."

At that particular moment, Benjie, 18 months at that time, had just awakened—stinky, dirty, and hungry—needing food immediately. In the background I heard the dog barking at someone at the door. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Laura, my 4-year old, spilling her milk as she tried to pour it on her cereal.

The last thing I wanted to do was have someone over—particularly when I didn't instigate the invitation! "Oh, Lord, what am I going to do!" was my "911" prayer.

"Lilly," I grudgingly responded, "let me think about it, OK?"

"Well," Lilly urged, "you must make them feel welcome because they are thinking about settling down here and we want to make

a good impression." My animated emotions were high, to say the least. This love-hate relationship I had, privately, with Lilly was overwhelming me, so I verbally struck out at the kids.

"Laura," I angrily shouted, "why did you miss the bowl?" "Benjie, you stink." "Oh, me," I sighed, quietly. "What a way to start the day with the Lord." Oh, how I longed to have just one minute of tranquil time set aside to drink in what the Lord had for me that day.

I refused to invite the doctor's family—it was a principle that I considered important—I didn't want to—no one, absolutely no one was going to tell me what I should or shouldn't do. "How dare Lilly," I sputtered in silent disgust. She didn't have small children darting around her feet; dogs barking at the next car that came by; someone knocking at her door all at the same time. I fumed. She lived in a sterile house—no children, no husband (at work all the time), no friends to call, and it seemed to me she delighted in making my life miserable—or so I pondered.

Scene 2: "Oh, Mary, I need the phone number of Sue Sams, do

you have that number?" I couldn't help but think that the church member was too lazy to look for her telephone directory.

On the phone again! I hated the phone—wishing I could pull out the cord. Holding injured, whimpering Benjie, now three-years-old, I was trying to find the neatly put-away phone directory to be gracious on the phone. The dog whizzed past, jerking the phone from my ear. As my grasp loosened, it clacked on the floor. "Oh, Mrs. Fields, sorry about the phone," I said so graciously. After giving Mrs. Fields the phone number, I griped and groused at the kids again for whatever was irritating me at the time.

Scene 3: "Oh, Mary," husband Ben phoned. "Joe and Lori are here and I thought we could have them over for supper. Would that be OK?" Ben rang asking permission (finally learning to call ahead) to bring some of our special friends over from a previous district. "What on earth am I going to do with this house," was my exasperated musing. Looking around the house I saw a dirty, stinky diaper in the toilet; a sink half-filled with water from Laura playing in it; the kitchen piled high with dishes; building blocks, toy cars and trucks, dolls, and riding toys strewn about the house. How could I ever get the house presentable before the company arrived!

"Oh, Lord," frustrated, lonely, exasperated, and desperate was my plea—my 911 prayer again. The Lord impressed me with a thought. I remembered an article I had read on how to clean the house in a hurry. Quickly I did the following:

1. I used window cleaner to

clean all the sinks, mirrors, and stainless steel kitchen sinks. It made the house smell clean, as well as give a quick shine.

2. The oven—ah, yes. It was empty. All the dirty pots and pans were placed in there. I could clean them later. (**Warning:** Just remember not to turn the oven on while they are in there.)

3. I enlisted the help of my kids and we found an empty laundry basket and picked up all the toys. We put the basket in the closet until we had more time to separate the toys and put them where they belonged. What team work this teaches.

4. Vacuum—Benjie loved playing with moving "toys" that made noises—I had him help me push the vacuum. Only one room needed vacuuming.

5. I closed the doors to all the rooms in the house I didn't want anyone to see.

6. I sprayed the whole house with air freshener and lit candles. Whoola!

Wow! 911! God is good! You see, He impressed me with these tips from a book and helped me remember them. God is very interested in my day-to-day chores.

I have more time to call Him now, the children are in academy and college. Still, I have those 911 calls!

Scene 4: It's now 1997. My precious cherubs are adults, ages 22 and 18. I actually sometimes long for those days when life was so hectic. My 911 calls are even less frequent but I know the Lord is listening when I call.

"Help, Lord, I'm checking in again. 911!"

"Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am'" (Isa. 58:9, NKJV).

He smiles!

"So, Mary, my child," my precious Lord answers, "you're checking in again?"

Then He lovingly laughs! ❀



The Torch

Vasti Viana



During the introduction to the Olympic games, the lit Olympic torch is taken from a Greek city and carried to the location where the games are to be held. The torch is passed from one runner to the next until it reaches its destination.

Newspapers and newscasts report this tradition. Pictures are shown of one athlete passing the Olympic torch to the next. Each runner is participating with interest, joy and efficiency to assure that the torch reaches its destination in time for the opening of the Olympic games. The time when the torch arrives is documented by the press and is applauded by the multitudes. The focus is on the torch and not the athlete.

As pastors' wives, we frequently find ourselves in situations similar

to that of the Olympic runners. We are symbolically holding the torch as first ladies of pastoral districts or as coordinators for Shepherdess. Like the athletes who pass the Olympic torch, we must also pass our "torches" to our colleagues.

Some torches we enjoy more than others because they seem to shine brighter, have more decorations or are light-weight. There are other torches, however, that do not bring us much joy. They are heavier, obscure or wanting. But all are torches! They may vary in their intensity, but they all shine!

Every so often the time arrives to pass the torch to a successor. If it is an interesting torch that we enjoy, we become lonesome and are sorry to have to leave it. If it is a heavier and more difficult torch, we are relieved when it is passed on.

In the change of torches we can see that our Christian experience is enriched. We grow in life and better learn how to deal with various situations. Therefore, it is not wise to become proud when carrying a beautiful torch nor to lament when carrying a more difficult torch. It is intelligent behavior to ask the Lord for wisdom and humility to carry each torch willingly and to recognize the lessons He wants to teach us

in each situation.

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:4-7, NIV).

The Lord certainly has a purpose with this interchange. Divine purposes are always the best ones.

Next time we have to pass the torch that we are presently carrying, let us do it happily and willingly, even when lonesomeness assails. Let us encourage our successor with words of incentive and, if she asks, some guidance. Sadness should not be part of our feelings.

Our run with the torch of the mission of the church is permanent. Unlike the athlete who stops running when he has passed the torch, we simply exchange one torch for another, and keep on running. Our run takes us to different locations and places us in varied circumstances, but through it all our job is to continue to let the torch shine.

The Lord decides which torches we should carry. Let us look to Him for wisdom and power so that we may carry our torches willingly and courageously. ❀

Vasti S. Viana is married to Elder José Viana, South American Division Ministerial Association's Associate. She is the coordinator of the South American Division Ministerial Association's Shepherdess. She participates in the area of pastoring by participating in church activities and training. Vasti holds a piano degree. She encourages her children, Ricardo and Joyce, and her piano pupils to participate in church music and congregation singing, which is a source of spiritual energy.

Depression

Susanne Jorgensen

Book shops are a dangerous place for me to be (even more dangerous than clothing shops—I think!). Before we moved to England, my family lived in Denmark and one afternoon I went to a book shop. While I was browsing around, the title of a book caught my attention. It was called *Depression—Your Name is Woman*. I have heard depression described as “a woman’s cross.” And, actually it is true. In about every study carried out in this country and scores of other countries, the evidence is clear and overwhelming. From adolescence onward women are far more vulnerable to depression than men. What are the factors that make women more vulnerable to depression than men? Recently, this question has generated much research. Unfortunately the answer has not been found.

An inner London survey conducted in 1989 estimated that seven out of 10 women and four out of 10 men will experience at least one clinically significant episode of depression by age 65.

Depression, however, is not a modern phenomenon, nor does depression happen only to bad people or to people who normally are not well adjusted. The frequency of depression in the Bible suggests that it must have

been quite common even in Bible times.

One well known example from the Old Testament is that of Job. He was a very rich man, but almost overnight his entire wealth was taken away. Then he received word that his children had been killed, and on top of that he was afflicted with boils from head to toe. “Finally Job broke the silence and cursed the day on which he had been born ... I wish I had died in my mother’s womb or died the moment I was born ... Instead of eating, I mourn, and I can never stop groaning ... I have no peace, no rest” (Job 3:1, 11, 24). Job’s response was one of deep depression (dare we say he expresses suicidal thinking?). And there were others: Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-4), Jonah (Jonah 4:3), Jeremiah, also called the weeping prophet (Jer. 15:10), and Moses (Numb. 11:11-15). You do not even have to go further than the book of the Psalms where there are recorded a wide range of human emotions, emotions that express extreme joy to emotions that express extreme sadness, including depression.

If we quickly look at the symptoms of depression, they can be broadly divided into four categories:

Emotional: A sense of sadness,

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hopelessness, guilt, loss of sense of pleasure.

Cognitive: Negative thoughts about self, the world in general and about the future; low self-esteem, self-blame for failures.

Motivational: Passive, difficulty in initiating activity, tendency to isolation, lack of concentration, indecisiveness.

Physical: Loss of appetite, sleep disturbances, fatigue, loss of energy.

The more symptoms one has and the more intense they are, the worse the depression is.

Compare those descriptions with what is written in Psalm 102: "I am beaten down like dry grass; I have lost my desire for food. I groan aloud; I am nothing but skin and bones . . . I am like a lonely bird on a housetop" (Ps. 102:3-5, 7). A perfect description of depression. Yet, the wonderful thing about the Psalms is the honesty. The Psalmist does not start saying, "I feel so very depressed, but I know I shouldn't." The Psalmist admits how he feels. He is sometimes up and sometimes down but he is always *honest*.

Sometimes we tend to overlook the fact that Jesus was depressed too. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he said, "The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me." Other translations say that Jesus' "soul was sorrowful even to death" (Mark 14:34). Yes, even Jesus experienced the emotions of depression. He understands how the depressed one feels.

It feels as if the connection with God has been severed when one is depressed. It becomes difficult to pray and to feel God's presence. And when our "friends" remind us that it is not spiritual to be depressed (like Job's

"friends" did) we feel more and more separated from God. But this is not biblical. These are cruelties we Christians inflict on one another. Jesus felt that separation from God as He hung on the cross when He cried out "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani?" (Matt. 27:46). Jesus understands the total isolation and helplessness that the depressed one feels. He felt it too.

It is hard to live with one who is depressed, but it is also hard to be the one who is depressed. Both are suffering. It is a burden on any relationship. The depressed person is irritable and this is directed at the partner. The depressed person becomes unwilling to socialize and begins to withdraw, lacks energy, loses a sense of pleasure in things that used to bring pleasure—and that includes interest in sex. The partner of the depressed individual feels anger or hostility because no matter what he/she does, it is never good enough and there is no thanks, recognition, or love in return. The depressed person withdraws more because of guilt. The partner may criticize or become sarcastic and so the vicious cycle is set up. The couple needs help, and it is important that they get help.

Healing of depression requires healing for the whole person—the emotional, the cognitive, the motivational, the physical, and the spiritual. Prayer is important but it is not enough. When Elijah was depressed and the angels came and ministered to him, it is interesting to note that Elijah was not told to pray, to have more faith or to be more spiritual. The angel that ministered to him said, "Wake up and eat." For Elijah, physical healing was the beginning of the healing of his whole person.

An acquaintance works as a psychologist in a hospital. She says that often the first thing she does for a severely depressed person who is admitted to the hospital is to give the patient good nutritious food. Often the depressed have not eaten well and are physically very weak. This physical healing is the beginning of the healing of the whole person.

Likewise healing of a relationship that has been wounded by depression requires involvement of both partners. Both of them. When working with couples, I sometimes find spouses who think only their partners are in need of help. I tell these spouses, "If you are not part of the solution, then you are definitely part of the problem."

It is important that we, as friends and part of the body of Christ, are there to give our support to the depressed person. If Jesus felt the need of support when He prayed in Gethsemane, then our depressed sister or brother certainly does too. It is also important to remember that God does not abandon the one who is depressed, even though it may feel like it. "When depression settles upon the soul, it is no evidence that God has changed. He is the same yesterday, and today and forever. You are sure of the favor of God when you are sensible of the beams of the Sun of Righteousness; but if the clouds sweep over your soul, you must not feel that you are forsaken" (*Review and Herald*, January 24, 1888). "Do not be afraid—I will save you. I have called you by name—you are mine. When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you; your troubles will not overwhelm you" (Isa. 43:1, 2). ❀

Do You Like Me?

Karen Collum

Karen met her pastor/husband Mike when he was her youth minister! She grew up in Tasmania, which is a beautiful little island state with wonderful scenery and a slow pace of living.

She is a primary school teacher at a public school, Burnie Primary School, and does team teaching in a grade 5/6 class. She and her co-teacher have 45 students between them. This is her first year of teaching. She loves being a teacher and finds a great deal of fulfillment in her career.

Mike and Karen work as a team running camps, youth retreats, youth rallies, and other youth

events as often as they can. There are a lot of young people where they live and they are a great resource. Their focus is to develop a new generation of leaders within our church.



Life is full of changes. In the past year I have gone from living at home and studying for my Honors degree in Primary Education, to getting married and living 100 km away from my Mum and Dad. I have also gone from being a student to working full-time for the first time in my life. Throw in a two-month honeymoon to America to meet my new in-laws, and that adds up to a whirlwind 12 months!

And now, at the ripe old age of 22, I find myself in the role of "the minister's wife." There is slight trepidation on my behalf at the sound of this job description. In my mind, a minister's wife is someone middle-aged, who cooks wonderful dishes for the potluck lunches and takes the ladies' Bible study group every Wednesday afternoon. My problem is I have a limited repertoire of dishes that are actually edible, and I work full-time so Wednesday afternoons are out!

In just eight months "on the job," I have been amazed at the expectations placed on ministers and their families. I have a newfound respect for the women whose husbands are dedicated to spreading the Good News to their communities. I never imagined there would be so many interruptions, so many jobs that had to be done yesterday, and so little time to spend together as a couple.

Although I am a novice and still have much to learn in both my job as a teacher and my job as a minister's wife, I believe I am already beginning to understand that there are a great many parallels in both professions. Increasingly, older teachers are telling me how much teaching has changed over the past two decades. No longer are we just teachers—we are substitute mothers; we are social workers; we are confidantes; we are judges; we are nurses. Similarly, the demands on ministers are increasing as our society faces the wide array of social disasters that we have created. My grade five students have given me a greater understanding of the needs of the congregation in our little church and have taught me a few important lessons. Meeting the needs of children in the classroom and the congregation in the church is getting harder.

1. Do you like me?

I have a vast range of children in my class, as does any other teacher. Some come from stable home environments, others from homes I never dreamed existed. Some have the skills and confidence to tackle and achieve goals, while others struggle to sort through the flood of emotions they are experiencing, let alone face the challenges I set for them in the classroom. My primary

role was made very clear to me one day when one of my boys, Bradley,* came up to me with a simple, but serious question: "Mrs. Collum, do you like me?" I was taken aback at the honesty of his question and immediately put my arm around his shoulder and told him just how special he was to me. Of course I liked him. I pondered his question for a while and the sadness of the situation made me want to cry. Here was a child, at the age of ten, who had seen his dad go to prison for a violent assault. After his dad was released, he took care of Bradley because his mum didn't want him as she was living with another man. Mum and Dad are now back together, but mum can't sign notices that are sent home because she is illiterate. Dad's skills are not much better. Bradley has extreme learning difficulties which means he is at least six years behind his age group in many areas of school. And amidst all that, all he wanted to know was if I liked him.

I think I can apply that to the ministering role I have along side my husband. Everyone needs to feel loved. Everyone wants to have another person tell them they are special. Just this morning, we received a 5 a.m. phone call regarding a woman Mike had been studying with. She had overdosed on a cocktail of alcohol and prescription drugs. This was her sixth attempted suicide. The reason? She feels worthless. She feels as though nobody in the entire world cares. As far as she is concerned, she is a failure. We sat with her in the hospital for four and a half hours. Essentially, she too is asking the same question, "Do you like me?" All we could do was tell her she was special—of course we liked her.

Why would we be out in the wind and rain at 6 a.m. on a Sunday morning if we didn't think she was important? And the best part is that we were able to share with her that God loves her too. It was heart wrenching to see this lady, a mother with two lovely children, try to end her own life because it was too painful. She couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel or the cloud with the silver lining. She needed someone to tell her she was special.

My primary role as both a teacher and a minister's wife is to let love shine through everything I do. I need to take every opportunity to reaffirm people from all walks of life. I need to let them know that I like them, and so does God.

2. What's the magic word? Cooperation!

I team teach with another teacher who is responsible for the grade six class. This means we have 45 children in one room. Although at times we work as separate grades, the majority of our time is spent working as a whole unit. Obviously, with 45 little people who are testing their wings of independence and learning the skills necessary to operate in a community, there are bound to be conflicts. So it is in the church; there are some people who are wonderful facilitators of discussion and others who lack the skills to disagree without becoming aggressive. I guess maybe the only difference between primary school and church is the way we show aggressiveness—you don't see too many adults stamping their feet or pulling hair in church board meetings!

We saw a need within our classroom for lessons in working

co-operatively with others. In particular, one of my boys had extreme difficulty even carrying out a simple conversation with someone without becoming aggressive or angry. The word "compromise" was not in his vocabulary. The solution we came up with was to schedule at least one and a half hours a week on a co-operative activity which required all the members of the group to work together to succeed. We called this time our "Tribe" session.

We strategically placed the children into groups of four. The children stayed in these groups for a term, which is about 12 weeks. We placed the aggressive children with those who had well-developed skills of negotiation. We put the children who were struggling academically with those who found learning easy and enjoyable. We sometimes put strong personalities in the same group in order for them to learn they can not always be the boss. We made sure the group had a combination of both grades and sexes, and we placed the quiet children in groups where we hoped they would feel safe enough to assert themselves more. In each session all group members had defined roles and clear job descriptions such as the recorder, the time keeper, the materials person, and the reporter. If they didn't do their jobs properly, the tribes could not succeed.

The difference in our classroom after 12 weeks of tribes was amazing! During this time the children had planned a trip to the moon and gradually eliminated unnecessary items as they could only take five items altogether. They had created posters which showed the name of their tribes,

along with rules for their behavior, and pictures which portrayed the identity of their tribes. (One tribe named themselves "Three Kings and a Queen" and have a slogan, "We treat each other like royalty!" I think that's one we could all live by.) They had also made up word puzzles, acted in plays, and problem solved as a team. The benefits of these activities were not limited to just the tribe time. At the start of the year, the boy who could not co-operate or compromise sabotaged his tribe's efforts because he didn't get his own way. He is now working effectively as part of a team (most of the time!) and contributing in a positive way to his tribe. His behavior in general has also improved. He has less difficulty following instructions and fewer confrontations with me or the other students.

I see a need for tribes in our churches. Inevitably, there are going to be conflicts of varying degrees of severity. These conflicts can result in a positive manifestation of the individuality in the church, or they can be extremely damaging to the morale and cohesiveness of the church. If church members are equipped with the necessary skills for effective communication, problem solving and conflict resolution, surely our churches will benefit. Perhaps there should be time in Sabbath School for us to work cooperatively on a trip to the moon. Perhaps we should have a Sabbath afternoon time where we decide the basic guidelines on how we are to treat each other. Perhaps, every once in a while, it would do us the world of good to learn from our children and work co-operatively in a fun but

purposeful activity, each carrying out designated roles to the best of our ability and achieving the end goal together. I can see the benefits would be far reaching in our churches, just as it was in my classroom.

3. Flexibility, flexibility, flexibility!

Each day there seems to be more demands on my time as teacher. There are wonderful opportunities for the students. We have a Life Education program, special performances presented by visiting artists from Greenpeace and numerous chances to pat snakes, blue-tongue lizards and other crazy, creepy critters in the show "We're All Little Aussies." At the end of the day, however, I often wonder when I get time to teach the basics—things like equivalent fractions and how to use a question mark in a sentence. Some days I don't feel like I have fulfilled my obligation as an educator. But when I see the faces of my children when they become aware of the death of the Wandering Albatross due to long-line fishing, and their enthusiasm for campaigning to save this endangered species, I realize that they have learned. They have learned to be passionate about something that is important to them. They have learned to care for animals who are so often victims of civilization and its demands. They have learned how to effectively stand up for what they believe in. Ultimately, they have learned they do have the power to make a difference in this world.

In our churches, things often don't go as planned. Perhaps the power went off Sabbath morning and the potluck lunch is not ready when church is finished.

Perhaps the young people have an item that they'd really like to share, but they didn't remember to ring the senior elder and have it included in the program earlier in the week. Maybe someone really needs to be prayed for, but it's not on the agenda for today. In all these situations, so much more can be gained from being flexible. I guess it comes down to the age old question, "Does it really matter?" In the whole scheme of things, is it important? If the answer is "Well, not really," then go along for the ride and enjoy it. You never know, a young person may be busting to share his or her exciting experience this week, or a person's life may be changed from the half an hour spent in prayer instead of the usual Sabbath School preliminaries. And after all, so what if the soup is cold? This may become one of those church legends that are brought up and laughed about every now and then!

A primary school classroom and a congregation really aren't that different after all. And my role as a teacher and a minister's wife aren't that different either. I know I'm only a beginner in both aspects, but I can use the knowledge I have and continue to learn from those who are older and wiser. I can use the day-to-day experiences I have from my teaching to help my ministry and vice versa. I can strive to learn more about what it means to be a teacher, a wife, a partner in ministry, and one day, a mother. In the process, I hope I will become more like the person God intends me to be. Along the way, I hope I can help others to do the same. ✨

**Not his real name.*

The Challenges of a Shepherdess

Judith Mutanga



My husband Douglas and I received our first appointment to a district which had accommodation problems. There was no pastor's house. From June 13, 1995 through October 3, 1995, we were temporarily settled in a place far from our working district. We did not unpack our luggage for we were expecting to be moved any time. Finally after three months, we moved to our district. Once there, we found the area to be terribly affected by mosquitoes and flies. Diarrhea and malaria were common ailments of the people. Praise God none of our family was affected.

The churches in the district were quite small. Usually only eight to 12 people were in attendance each Sabbath. Most who attended were quite passive and many members refused to take any leadership responsibility. Because the district was so big, Douglas was away a great of time. The members expected

me, as the pastor's wife, to take responsibility for most of the church duties. I was expected to be the church elder, lesson teacher, motivator and general caretaker of the church.

I tried very hard to meet the needs of the local people. I gave Bible studies, taught classes on nutrition, better cooking methods, sewing and knitting, listened to members and non-members who were critical of the church and nurtured the members as best I could. It was a really hard time for me in that district. With so many responsibilities and so many expectations to fill, I eventually burned out and gave up my work to spend time with my family. At times, I felt I was failing my duty as a shepherdess.

I was still very involved with the ministry in the area. I was busy planning and preparing for a Dorcas Federation, which was to take place April 24, 1996, when we were informed we were being transferred to a mission school (Nyahunu) in Murewa District. My family and I were dismayed. We wondered what would happen to all the programs we had started. Tears gushed from my eyes as I looked at my field, flourishing with different crops, of which we had not picked first fruits yet. Since I was not employed, my only income came from selling the fruits of the field.

For several days we waited for the truck that was to transport our belongings to our new district. On January 20, 1996, we moved to the Mission. It was raining heavily on that day and our hearts were heavy as we loaded the lorry (open truck) in the rains, covered the goods with tattered, muddy plastic and drove off through the rain to the mission, which was about 23 km. away.

We have been here for several months and have found there is much work to be done at the Mission. The "ladies group" Dorcas is very weak. Though there are about 40 women at the Mission, only three to five women attend. The people are not very social, gossip is rampant and hatred permeates many relationships. I feel a tremendous responsibility to help improve the situation for I know it is destroying all that is good.

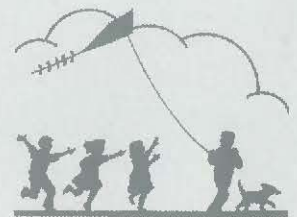
I pray to God for unity in this Mission. Prayer bands have been started, lessons and activities that promote friendship and unity have been planned, and witnessing and visiting one another has been encouraged.

Though the challenges before me are sometimes overwhelming, my faith in God and the miracles He can perform keep me optimistic. Like my fellow shepherdesses, I stand firm on the solid rock (Christ) through thick and thin. ❀

Judith Mutanga is currently serving as a secretary at the Nyahunu Adventist Secondary School in Murehwa (Zimbabwe, Africa). Her husband, Douglas, and she were married on August 2, 1992. They have a three-year old daughter, Tafadzwa/ Samantha. Judith's hobbies are gardening, singing, taking nature walks, reading and visiting. She and her husband have worked in the district for a year. Judith plans to be a full-time worker in God's ministry.



She smiled at a sad looking stranger.
The smile seemed to help him feel better.
He remembered past kindness' of a friend
And he wrote him a thank you letter.
The friend was so pleased with the thank you
That he left a large tip after lunch.
The waitress, thrilled by the size of the tip,
Put the whole thing on a hunch.
The next day she picked up her winnings,
And gave a part to a man on the street.
The man on the street was so grateful;
For two days he'd had nothing to eat.
After he finished his dinner,
He left for his small dingy room.
He didn't know at that moment
That he might be facing his doom.
On the way, he picked up a small puppy
And took him to his room to get warm.
The puppy was exceedingly grateful
To be in out of the blustery storm.
That night when the house caught on fire,
The puppy, he barked the alarm.
He barked 'till he woke the whole household
And saved everybody from harm.
One of the boys that he rescued
Grew up and became a famous man.
It just goes to show what we can do
If we but follow God's simple plan,
and *Smile*.



—Author Unknown