

# The Journal



A Shepherdess International Resource for Ministry Spouses

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*Good Morning,*

*I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help. If the devil happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, **DO NOT** attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFJTD (something for Jesus to do) box. It will be addressed in **MY** time, not yours.*

*Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold on to it or attempt to remove it. Holding on or removal will delay the resolution of your problem.*

*If it is a situation that you think you are capable of handling, please consult me in prayer to be sure that it is the proper resolution.*

*Because I do not sleep nor do I slumber, there is no need for you to lose any sleep. Rest my child. If you need to contact me, I am only a prayer away.*

*Have a great day!*

## The Journal

- 3 The Minister's Wife:  
Superwoman or  
Super Sad
- 6 A Different Look at  
Romance
- 7 My God Is Real
- 8 I Don't Know What  
To Say (Part 1)
- 11 Ministry Shoes
- 13 A Witch Doctor  
Encounters the  
Power of God
- 14 Assigning  
Responsibilities to  
Ministers' Wives
- 16 A Mistaken View
- 18 Hold Up the Lamp
- 19 The Better Place
- 20 The Season of Love
- 21 Sometimes

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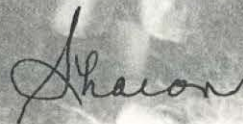
## Editor's Musings

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference."

I saw this little proverb in a magazine recently and began thinking about the impact my attitude makes in my life. As clergy wives, sometimes we have no input to the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Choices are made for us and our families, and it seems that others control our lives, not us. It is a challenging situation. So many times I have felt that decisions were made for me and my life without my consultation. It's a hard and bitter pill to swallow, but it's reality. So, what choice do I have?

Sometimes the only choice I have is my attitude toward the situation. And that attitude will make all the difference. I may not control much of what I wish I could. But one thing I can control is my attitude. I have complete jurisdiction over it. So, why let somebody else's choices make my life miserable? I may not make a difference to the situation, but surely we can make a difference in our reaction to it.

God bless each of you in this New Year!



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# The Minister's Wife: Superwoman or Super Sad

Vernee A. Stoddart

Times are getting more dramatic as the years go by. There is so much discord today in conferences and local churches. There is an alarming rate of divorce among members, the credibility of pastors and leaders are on the front page, a lack of unity, sympathy, and love among leaders and membership is increasing, and church-hopping is seemingly the new style of worship. While all of this is going on, there is another group of church members faced with crisis situations. Ministers' wives, believe it or not. According to one conference official there is reportedly eighty-two percent of marriages in the ministry that are in crisis situations. How could that be? It has been said that ministers' wives today are less tolerant, more career-oriented, and are less prone to taking active roles in church-related activities. However, another report concluded that a lack of love and appreciation for her gifts and talents is exhibited from both the church members and her spouse. I tend to agree; however, I believe there is more to this issue. I believe that a lack of personal fulfillment of goals and dreams is a contributing factor to the stress of many ministers' wives.

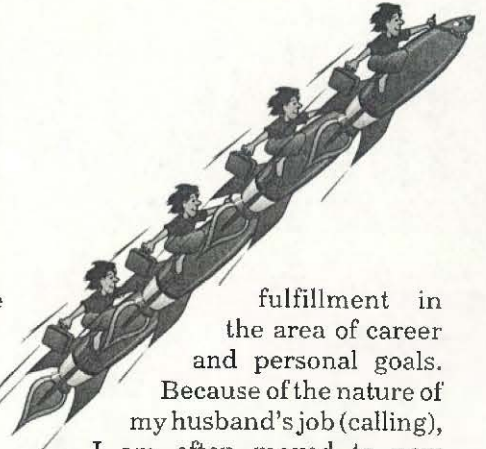
As a minister's wife of thirteen years, it has been very challenging for me to experience personal

fulfillment in the area of career and personal goals.

Because of the nature of my husband's job (calling),

I am often moved to new locations out-of-state and, of course, that means I have to quit that great, or possibly not-so-great, job. Once we are settled in our new environment, new home, and new school for the children, the job hunt starts all over again. It can be quite difficult to land a job outside of the church schools or conference offices. Unfortunately, a great percentage of job interviewer's questions are "Why do you move around so often?" Additionally, there are many of us who wait at least six months to a year to get a job in our field of work. We prepare ourselves educationally, but are unable to fulfill a long-term responsibility to our employers. As a result, we have to settle for the job that is less fulfilling. Just after receiving my master's degree in business and a promising job placement in the immediate future, my husband's new assignment landed us two states away. I, of course, went on like Sarah "following where he leads." I felt I had no choice or say in the matter because ultimately this must be the place where God called both of us to be. It was then that I knew I did not want to become lost in the church

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shuffle as my husband continued to excel in his career (calling) while my career and aspirations were at a halt. Does this mean that as a minister's wife I should let my personal goals and dreams diminish?

I have found that my experience is similar to other pastors' wives who have chosen to pursue their careers along with being a minister's wife and mother. There are those who enjoy their jobs, have great stability, seniority, and potential for growth. Knowing how difficult it is in the job market, their husbands reluctantly agree that the wife should remain in her job to fulfill her goals and dreams. Needless to say, this decision comes with a great sacrifice, commuting on weekends, loneliness, and being away from the family circle both at home and in the church. At another time, I spoke with a minister's wife who was working for the government. Her husband received a new district assignment out of state. Unfortunately, in that city there were no government facilities where she could possibly request a transfer. As a result, she quit her job. Years later, she returned and visited her former co-workers still working at the government facility where she had previously worked. She discovered that her friends now have high grades in the system, received promotions, and increased salaries. This sister was down. She felt so out-of-touch and disdained because she had given up on her dreams and goals.

Another minister's wife shared her experience of wanting to work part-time but her husband requested her not to work so she could be home to raise the children. She exchanged her dreams for her family. She now remains unfulfilled.

And finally, another minister's wife shared a dialog that occurred between her and her husband. He

lovingly admonished her not to forget that wherever he is called, she is also. She agreed with him except for one small point. She told him that she does believe that she has been called to be a minister's wife, but her calling does not bring home a paycheck or personal fulfillment (His call or her call?).

Does a career-oriented minister's wife bring a hindrance or liability to the ministry? Is it our duty to forsake our goals and dreams in order to do the will of God? Should we feel guilty for wanting something of our own to work towards? Are we wrong? Are we being selfish or self-centered?

All in all, there exists ministers' wives who are faced with a significant amount of discouragement, rejection, and loneliness in pursuit of their careers. The stress of being apart from their mates, raising children alone, traveling back and forth to be together on weekends, have caused the health and well-being of some wives to deteriorate mentally, emotionally, and physically. Some have substituted dreams and goals in exchange for food which caused them to gain lots of weight. There are those who lose interest in their careers, in their personal appearance, in the interest of their husbands' ministries, in their marriages, and also in the church. Sad to say, I know of one minister's wife who turned to alcohol for relief for her unfulfilled needs. The devil is taking advantage of the vulnerability of unhappy ministers' wives. Yes, there are crises that exist and we need to deal with them by the grace of God. Unfortunately, some of us are so stressed out and sickly that we cannot glorify God and exemplify His Word in our lives!

To those of you who may have been faced with or are presently living in challenging situations such as these noted, I would like to

encourage and affirm you. How do we handle the question of being loyal to God while at the same time, exploring the idea of pursuing our careers and goals? I do not profess to be a counselor, psychiatrist, doctor or lawyer, but I come only through the peace and love reflected by the radiant character of Christ and also as a minister's wife who experienced this in my life. By firmly claiming the promises of God and experiencing victories through His power in my life, I share this with you:

**God is concerned.** *"For he satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness" (Psalm 107:9).* God is concerned about everything we feel and do. Everything that He touches is special. Has he touched your life? If so, your goals and dreams are special too. We must continue to believe that it is God who directs our paths through every stage of our lives whether we are at home with the children, living in an unpleasant area, attending school, or employed outside the home. We are placed where we are for His glory and to be His witness. Even though challenges arise as ministers' wives, life doesn't have to be vexatious because we know that God is concerned and He's working it out for us. In addition, whatever your circumstance, it is never too late to fulfill your goals and dreams. Remember God's promise: *"The Lord will perfect that which concerns me" (Psalm 138:8).*

**Don't lose heart.** *"Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands and let her own works praise her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:30-31).* A great deal of our time is expended as a homemaker and mother. Much time is spent ministering to the needs of our husbands and to the needs of our church family. And

praise God, these are wonderful and holy elements of life. It is a blessing to be an instrument of God! Yet, some of us neglect to take the time to cultivate our goals and dreams. We become less motivated and regretfully wonder what it would have been like had we fulfilled those goals and dreams. Some of us are so busy there doesn't seem to be enough time in a day for ourselves. Even if it takes ten minutes a day or one hour a week to work towards your personal goals or dreams, it is worth it.

**God created beauty and uniqueness.** Let's cultivate our characters to reflect the beauty and splendor of Christ. We are not usual women. We should possess a quality that outshines the usual. And yet, some of us are wearing a mask pretending to be the happy and perfect minister's wife. What is a perfect minister's wife? Is she content with who she is? Is she at peace with her fellow sisters? Is she at peace with God? Unfortunately, there are some ministers' wives who are mentally frazzled trying to keep a phoney appearance instead of just being themselves. Have you ever compared yourself to other pastors' wives who seem to have things all together? There are those who establish exclusive relationships within our circle (ministers' wives) to look and feel important. There are some who do not feel worthy to show ourselves friendly for fear of being rejected. We tend to lose our individuality and simply settle for being known as "the pastor's wife." Down inside lies insecurity, low self-esteem, personal dissatisfaction, and frustration. It's quite unfortunate that many people miss the beautiful flowers we really are if we just could be ourselves and not what everyone else expects us to be. Just as God created a variety of flowers and delightful fragrances, we are unique in many special and

delightful ways too. What God has for you, it is for you! You are one of a kind. However, we either experience burnout, become incognito, jealous, depressed, or spiritually dead. We may even want out of the marriage. Remember, *you are uniquely designed by God.* Trust God to know all about you and allow Him to mold you into something even more unique and beautiful. *"Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you'"* (Hebrews 13:5).

**Pray always and be thankful.** Talk to God. Stand until His will is clear. His promises are true: *"The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear the cry and save them"*

(Psalm 145:18, 19). Sisters, do service for God because you love Him and not because you are a minister's wife fulfilling a role. When we truly are trusting in the Lord we will be more confident and have an abiding trust that He will direct our paths in our goals and dreams. Hold fast to your dreams and goals. Seek counsel from mothers who love the Lord. I thank God for blessing me with a beautiful Christian mother who always encourages me to pursue my dreams and never let them go.

**God blesses us with talents and gifts for His glory.** *"The highest education for women is found in the thorough and equal cultivation of all her talents and powers"* (Daughters of God, pg. 20).



One day I took deep introspection and sought out my strengths, my weaknesses, what gives me personal fulfillment, my goals, and dreams. I realized that I am good at teaching. I have a real interest and burning desire to teach and reach people's needs in the area of health and lifestyle. I want to help others learn and recognize that health and lifestyle contribute to life's successes and dreams! I started with a vision, conducted research, studied intensely, carefully planned, organized, and now I am in the process of starting my own lifestyle consulting business. Praise God! Now, whenever my husband and I are re-assigned to a new area, I can continue to fulfill dreams wherever I go.

So there you have it. There is a way to glorify God without feeling guilty about pursuing your dreams and goals and still be a beautiful minister's wife. I found the key to it all. It is simply wrapped up in this promise: **"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart"** (Psalm 37:4). It is God in you, your love for Christ, the Holy Ghost that directs you and brings about the fulfillment of your dreams, hopes, and aspirations.

For those of you shepherdesses who have truly found the key to fulfillment and joy, praise the Lord! However, reach out your hand of experience, wisdom, and encouragement to other sisters in the ministry faced with trying situations. Don't criticize or shun your sisters because they may not have attained the heights of grace and the beauty of holiness. These godly elements are vital. They too, are candidates for the heavenly kingdom and we want to hear God say "well done" to all of us. /

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# A Different Look at Romance

Barbara Huff

It wasn't Valentine's day, it wasn't even my birthday or Christmas. One day last spring, however, my husband Lee performed the most romantic act in my behalf that I could ever imagine. Even though this happened in just one day, he had spent many days and involved many people to pull off this surprise.

For many years, it had become evident that I would eventually have to have knee replacement surgery. Even though that surgery was well thought out and we planned it for the most desirable date, it was still very difficult for me to leave my husband in Russia where we work, and go to Loma Linda, California for the surgery. Through no fault of his own, Lee's schedule was scrambled, and he couldn't be with me for my surgery. However, by readjusting appointments, he was able to come to California about ten days after my surgery. In the meantime, wonderful friends were attentive to my needs and helped me make important decisions.

The day Lee flew back to Moscow after his brief visit, I sobbed like a little girl with a broken heart. In our heads we knew that we had made the best decision about having the surgery done at that time. In our hearts, however, we couldn't bear the separation.

My doctor said to plan on staying in California for three months. Had I not lived so far away, I probably could have gone home a bit sooner. In spite of all my good intentions of getting well quicker, it didn't happen. I could not will my leg to heal any quicker than the normal process demanded.

E-mail was our lifeline. Two letters a day was our minimum. Often I would write several times during the day. Eventually my doctor let me begin planning my discharge date. I was going to spend the last week or so before returning to Russia at our daughter's home in northern California. Finally I was well enough to make plane reservations and plan that trip.

At that time our letters took on a different tone. After being away from home for so long, and accumulating many things, I was concerned about having enough room in my suitcases. Lee told me he had made arrangements with some fellow who would be able to help me by taking a suitcase full of my things from our daughter's home to Moscow. The plan sounded very workable. He didn't tell me the man's name, but said he would e-mail all the details to our daughter.

On our way from the airport to her house, I asked my daughter if her dad had sent the infor-

*Barbara Huff is the co-coordinator for Shepherdess for Euro-Asia Division. She enjoys photography, birding watching, shell collecting, and swimming. Barbara is looking forward to retiring in 2000 and starting a new chapter in her life which will include spending time with her grandchildren. She is also looking forward to becoming active in a local church again after many years of being a church administrator's wife and having no church roots.*



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mation about this kind man who would transport my things. "Yes," she said. "I have all that at the house."

Katie, my nine-year-old granddaughter, was dancing at the door when we arrived. "Oma," she said, "can I show you our surprise?" Quite frankly, I was not interested in a surprise at the moment. I wanted to hug the child and kiss her. But Katie was persistent. I decided the hugs and kisses could come later. Katie ran to her room and came out leading her grandpa. I was speechless. Could this really be happening? How on earth did he manage to come to California from Russia without my knowledge? It was he that was the mystery man who was going to take my extra suitcase back to Moscow! I was surprised at how skillfully Lee had completely surprised me.

We were together one precious week at our daughter's

home. He flew back to Moscow and in a short time I went back to Loma Linda. After a few last



medical appointments I was on my way back to home and husband. I floated ten feet off the ground for days after the great surprise. His coming was in itself a wonderful love gift. What he had to go through to keep it a surprise from me, however, showed a mea-

sure of romance such as I had never imagined was possible. I thought to myself that these are the kinds of things we do when we love each other and that romance comes in different forms.

Most women wish that their husbands would be more romantic. We tend to think in terms of candlelight dinners, flowers, and boxes of chocolates. Your husband's idea of romance is probably much more creative than these traditional ones. It could be that you are so fixated on the traditional ideas that you are overlooking the many, many ways that he tells you every day that he loves you. According to Webster's dictionary, one aspect of romance is chivalrous devotion. I rather imagine that your husband shows you that side of romance every day. Thank him for these acts. Praise him for his efforts and you will be pleased at how the romance will increase! /

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## MY GOD IS REAL

GLADLYN WILLIAMS

I see Him in the sunshine,  
And at the setting sun  
He's there in every flower,  
In grass and tree and shrub  
Just look out there in nature  
God looks right back at you.  
He speaks through trees and rivers  
and in the gentle breeze  
He walks with me each step I take  
My hand he holds in His.  
I feel his touch, I know His voice  
He lives within my heart.

*Gladlyn is the president of Shepherdess in Grenada.*



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# *I Don't Know What To Say (Part 1)*

*Rae Lee Cooper*

I remember when Sandy's father died. She and I were classmates in the tenth grade. Every day we rode the bus to school, attended classes, talked and laughed like school girls do.

Then one day Sandy wasn't on the bus. I overheard my classmates talking about Sandy's father. He had a heart attack and died just after she got home from school the evening before. I wondered how Sandy felt. I tried to imagine how I would feel if my father died and my heart ached for my friend.

It was more than a week before we saw Sandy climb on the bus at her stop once again. She looked different; pale and quiet. The girl on the front seat made room for her and she sat down in silence. We were all silent. We didn't know what to say or do. For the next few days we kind of stayed away from Sandy. It was strange because we felt bad for her but didn't know how to go near or reach out to her.

Since that experience in my life, I have, on a number of occasions, come in contact with people who have suffered major losses in their lives. As their friend, I too, experienced their deep sorrow, but have felt so inadequate in knowing what to say or how to help them. More often it's just easier to stay away and yet I know that really is not right either. What can I do to help people in these circumstances?

Let's bring this closer to home. What happens to us when we experience a painful loss? When a well-meaning friend tells us to "snap out of it," how do we do that? Can we ever expect life to be normal again? Is there life after loss?

Through my studies and personal reading time I have learned some important concepts which have helped me in ministering to grieving friends. It gives me great pleasure to share some of this information with you through this publication.

## **There's no such thing as a minor loss.**

From babyhood to old age mankind suffers loss. The baby loses the security of the womb. The child loses close communion with parents when he is left at home with the baby-sitter or servant. The teenager's identity is lost during rapid physical and emotional changes. Young adults lose lovers during their search for a life companion. Then they lose their parental home. Middle age brings loss of children to school and marriage. Late life brings loss of health, independence, mobility, and future. While we go through these stages in the life cycle, we may also experience a number of unexpected losses.

Often we associate loss and grief with a lost relationship. But there are numerous ways in which

*Rae Lee and her husband live in Maryland where she works as an emergency room nurse, teaches music, enjoys aerobics, reading, gardening, and talking on the phone to her children in California.*





we can lose and suffer because of it. A simple definition of loss is to be without something we once had that indicates a change. Some significant losses could include:

- imminent death of self
- death of another
- loss of health
- loss of a limb
- loss of some body function
- loss of a meaningful item
- loss of employment
- birth of defective child
- birth of an unwanted child
- multiple losses of aging
- divorce
- abortion
- separation
- children leaving home
- financial loss
- moving
- loss of freedom
- loss of property
- loss of authority
- loss of position
- loss of ideals
- loss of parental home
- loss of lifestyle
- loss of a career (retirement)
- career change
- loss of a childhood belief
- loss of communication
- loss of a dream
- loss of reputation
- loss of a pet

Sometimes we see someone feeling very badly about something which seems such a small thing to us. We can even become impatient and think that person is overreacting. We might say they just want some attention or are being unreasonable.

However, it is important to remember that no loss is minor to the person experiencing it. We can slow down, and, in fact, damage an individual's recovery ability by encouraging him to forget his grief, or to "snap out of it." We might react in this manner more commonly with children. But their grief and tears over a seemingly small loss is no less real and heartfelt than ours might be in the event of a perceived major disaster in our lives.

## Grief is a healthy process

"You may think I'm a very weak person for coming to see you today," Beth said to her church pastor, "but my son told me I need to see a psychiatrist. Before I do that, I thought I'd come and talk to you. Please tell me, Pastor, do you think I'm crazy? Do I really need a psychiatrist?"

"How long has it been, Beth, since your husband died?" asked the pastor.

"Five weeks last Thursday," she quickly reported.

"Tell me some of the feelings you're having," he gently urged.

"Well, I cry a lot. I can't go out anywhere for fear of breaking down. And I have this terrible fear that something else is going to happen. I went to the shop to buy a few things I really needed, when suddenly a terrible fear came over me. I had to get out of there immediately. I ran out of the store to my car. You know, I used to be able to remember things really

**Many times people  
treat grief like it's a  
disease**

well, but lately I forget everything. Not only that, but I get a pain right here in my chest, and it moves up into my throat. I've also had some awful dreams. Wally's in them, but I never hear him say anything. Lately I've gotten angry a lot. I can't tell you what I'm angry about, but I know I'm lashing out at some of the people I love the most. The children notice it. I'm embarrassed. I've never been an irritable person. I did everything I knew how to do for Wally, but I've been thinking that maybe I wasn't fussy enough about how hard he worked. Sometimes I just wish I had died instead of Wally. I know it's terrible for me to feel like this, but I can't help it." Beth sighed and reached for a tissue to wipe her tears.

Many times people treat grief like it's a disease. We see a grieving person's reactions and feel uncomfortable around them. We wish their grief would go away like a headache in the path of a painkiller. We feel their unusual behavior must be emotionally unhealthy so we encourage them to get professional help to get them straightened out. However, fear, anger, guilt, poor memory, emptiness, and long crying spells are normal reactions for someone who has lost an important relationship. These reactions are a healthy attempt of the entire being to adjust and heal.

There are three types of losses. The first is **situational loss**. Perhaps we have to watch someone die of disease. Sometimes we might have a choice regarding the medical treatment he or she might receive. **Maturational loss** is what we expect to experience, like our hair turning gray. The third type of loss, **accidental loss**, always comes unexpectedly and suddenly and is beyond any control.

Loss is easier to adjust to when we have some degree of control or choice. However, there is pain in loss even with control or choice. I may choose to take a new job in a different locality, but the loss I feel when I leave my friends and family behind is still significant and I have to deal with it.

Grief pain is three-fold:

1. **Emotional pain.** This can include sadness, guilt, anger, confusion, fear, despair, lethargy, boredom, and depression.

2. **Physical pain.** An individual could suffer from fatigue, insomnia, loss of memory, loss of concentration, pressure in the chest and throat.

3. **Behavior pain.** One could experience discomfort promoted by doing things he or she used to do with the person who is now missing, such as going back to laces they used to go together.

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## No two people grieve in the same way

There are five stages in the grief process.

1. **Shock and denial.** This stage is the body's helpful reaction which delays the full awareness of the situation until the person is strong enough to face it. It can last for a few minutes or for longer time, as in the case of Karen.

"I believe I'm finally beginning to heal," Karen quietly told the group.

"What makes you think that, Karen?" the counselor asked.

"Well, my husband died of cancer eight months ago over in the Dalton City Hospital. Every day since he died I have called the head nurse on the cancer unit and asked how my husband was doing. Every day the nurse has reminded me that he has died. This week I haven't called the hospital once. That's how I can tell I'm beginning to heal."

Whenever I recall the above episode, I feel admiration for that head nurse who so patiently dealt with Karen. She must have been a very patient and understanding person. Maybe she understood that it takes some people longer than others to accept a loss.

2. **Anger.** In this stage the grieving individual has acknowledged the loss but so keenly feels their helplessness in the situation that they become very angry. This anger is vented toward family, friends, church and/or God.

3. **Bargaining.** This stage is most evident in situational losses. The individual will bargain with God. They pray for a miracle promising to be good or to do good. Sometimes, as in the case of a person who is dying of some disease, relatives will spend a lot of time, effort, and money to try out unusual cures, hoping to prolong the life of the sick person.

4. **Depression.** As the sense of loss becomes greater and more real,

depression sets in. Feelings of despair and disorganization sweep over the person. They may feel they are losing their mind. It seems like life will never be normal again. It is during this time that relatives and friends become worried and encourage the grieving individual to seek professional help.

It is very important, as it is with each stage of the grieving process, that the individual be allowed to go through this phase. It is true that in some cases a person seems to become "stuck" in one stage and remain there for a long period of time. They aren't able to successfully resolve that phase and continue on towards healing. However, in most cases the person will come through if given the support they need.

In the stage of depression, it is as if an individual is sliding downward on a steep hill. In order to come out of this phase, they must be allowed to go clear to the bottom. We must not place roadblocks in their way as we try to "help." A grieving individual must be allowed to cry, to talk, to remember, to sit in silence, to do whatever they need to do. All we can do for them is to simply be there—to listen, to weep, to encourage, and to understand. They will go clear to the bottom, and then come up. They will rise to a level of normal living that is on a higher plane than previous to this experience. As they come out of depression, they move successfully into the final stage.

5. **Acceptance.** The person becomes quiet, reflective, and at peace. The loss can be recalled without extreme pain. New relationships are formed. With a strong support system, the person can become a strong witness of faith, often cheering those who come to visit.

No two people respond the same to a loss. Reactions can occur in various combinations and degrees of intensity. God made no two people alike and we must allow for individual difference even in the

process of grief recovery. All people have the same needs. However, the most important need a person has during a time of loss is to be understood, loved, and supported. Without these elements of care, the grieving person may run from the pain. They may turn to drugs, withdraw, exhibit angry behavior, become extremely bitter or reckless. It may take years for their grief to be finally resolved and for them to be able to live at peace with themselves, their family, and community. Loss potential for destruction can be turned into a source of healing and growth if support is there.

Loss or change + pain = sickness, destruction, breakdown

Loss or change + support = growth, healing, peace

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). /

*Personal note: My appreciation to Larry Yeagley for kindling my interest in grief recovery ministry through my attendance of his seminar at a GC session. Some of the material and stories used in this article are adapted from that seminar.*

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# Ministry Shoes



Pat M. Frelten

What was it like to come into the ministry later in life? you ask. How well I remember the beginning of our first appointment—standing in the middle of an empty house with tears of disappointment stinging my eyes. The house was completely devoid of anything resembling electricity, water, telephone, transport, and most importantly, our furniture, which was still, as the man ‘helpfully’ pointed out somewhere ‘out there.’ “So this is *ministry*?” I thought.

From the direction the man was pointing I imagined it was already lost—still inside its container—by now probably floating somewhere in that vast two hundred mile stretch of water so accurately named by the meteorological department as the ‘roaring forties’.

With the moving contractors garrulous promises still ringing in my ears, John disappeared to do something about it. Meanwhile, I was left to my thoughts and own devices as I made a quick check of the house, deciding which position on the floor would be the least uncomfortable to pass the night!

That was the beginning of our two-year ‘volunteer’ stint, which was, unknown to me at the time, about to broaden and

lengthen into a new life of ministry. It was a type of initiation course where I found myself in a sink or swim situation. I was thrown in at the deep end without even a rubber ducky.

Naivete tugged at my sleeve as we hurriedly planned ‘things’ with the conference president prior to our taking up the offer to fill the need of a mission ministry caring for a small Adventist group. Our assignment was a remote island where the only transportation available to the mainland was roughly the cost of a gold leg in air fare. The only other alternative was dusting off our water wings and running the gauntlet of sharks snapping at our splashing heels or slipping steadily into the grip of hypothermia between the freezing ice flows.

The thought of being involved in ministry sometime in the future could never have been further from my mind when I gave my heart to the Lord in baptism at the age of twelve in 1946. Although the love and fellowship I found in that first little church (which was actually only a rented room on the side of a house in the bombed out ruins of Midland’s, Birmingham) was an oasis of joy to me.

Later on I met and married a young man who loved the Lord,

Pat writes from Australia where she has lived since 1959. She was born and educated in England. Pat is now retired and loves her grandchildren, writing, snorkelling, handicrafts, arts, music, and of course, the Lord most of all!



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and who also enjoyed nothing more than bringing people to Jesus.

But now, as the mother of three grown up children, the whole concept of ministry was something entirely different from the comfortable life of a civil engineer's wife who was accustomed to having her husband finish work at four-thirty on the dot every day. As laity, our weekends were unfettered and predictable and our holidays were clear cut and organized.

Becoming a clergy family meant that I would never, apart from vacations, enjoy Sabbath School and divine service sitting with my husband, experiencing that special joy of companionship on Sabbath. After a few months I soon realized Sabbath could be a rather lonely time for me.

I didn't realize then that this 'house' on the island, which had been rented for us, was something of a contraption. It was a challenge to locate the bathroom in normal daylight. But in the wee hours, with only half open eyes, or during one of the island's regular blackouts, it was really an adventure because there were always scorpions doing a night shift.

I also didn't realize that our home walls seemed to become 'transparent' to the members and that my husband's smelly socks would be elevated to the 'peerage' of ministry and he would be placed on a pedestal by the church members. From this lofty perch it was difficult for me to reach him and find out what was happening in the congregation. I learned to thoroughly read the church bulletin and ask questions at the business meeting.

It also became clear that if something was going to happen in

our parish, we had to make it happen. *We were it!* Be it cooking demonstrations, weigh-rite or stress programs, I (the unpaid half) had to be willing, like the subject in Elijah's quest, not only to water the camels but produce food, too. Sometimes lots of it at the drop of a hat for unannounced potlucks. Then there were always the casual or intentional drop-ins needing a meal.

I didn't understand then that the loneliness of isolation could be so profound or that because my husband was so preoccupied with his other life (and actually getting paid for it), we would become like ships passing in the night. He was always busy with other people and their needs.

Because my first introduction to ministry was on an isolated, wind-swept, rocky island, I missed my mother's passing and services.

But it was there, during my long, lonely walks along beaches echoing with nothing but screaming gales, the pounding of the majestic ocean and the cries of wild sea birds, that I would discover the Lord as my dearest Friend. He would support me through the other personal family tragedies that could have completely engulfed me during those two long years.

In retrospect, it turned out to be a special training ground for our service to the Lord. It was sometimes inconvenient and lonesome but it was never dangerous as some ministerial appointments are in war-torn areas.

My heart goes out to the special women who serve in non-secure areas and to those ministry wives whose husbands are away from home for weeks at a

time. They have to steer the ship alone—away from loved ones and familiar things.

Glancing over the faces of the sweet young things (new ministry wives), gathered at the recent Ministry Council, I wondered what hopes and dreams they have for the future. What will they be called upon to cope with? What seemingly insurmountable problems could dim the stars in those trusting eyes?

I used to wonder why the Lord had allowed me to experience the hurts during my childhood and youth. Why had there been no love and protection for me at a vulnerable time? I discovered the Lord's answer in our ministry. Those early experiences prepared me to understand where hurting people were coming from. I am now able to support the heartache of the lonely and sad because I know what it is like from first-hand experience.

Yes, things are different in ministry. But it can be a difference that has a special joy. A joy that nothing else can supply. The ultimate joy of helping folks come to the Lord. The quiet satisfaction of being the woman behind the man that 'pulls the strings' for the Lord.

Yes, there is criticism. Yes, there is discouragement. But the Lord has been there before us. He knows we have the potential to be His disciples and win souls for His kingdom. Refurbished and renewed by the Lord, we will meet some day soon in the Kingdom. What a joy it will be to hear the words, "I'm here because of you."

I discovered that although ministry 'shoes' are often too big for me, they fit perfectly when the Lord has His feet in them, too. /

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# A WITCH DOCTOR ENCOUNTERS THE POWER OF GOD

JOYCE MNDAMBI

*Joyce C. Mndambi has a diploma in Secretarial Science. She and her husband pastor in Handeni, Tanzania. She works as a personal secretary in the Management of the GTZ Project known as "Handeni Integrated Agroforestry Project." Her hobbies are doing missionary work in unentered areas; playing the piano and guitar, singing, smiling, knitting, making friends, and doing charity work.*



In the Handeni District there is a witch doctor who is very well known for her powers. She works miracles through the power of the devil. She claims the power to kill anyone she likes; she can create problems for those around her. Many people are afraid of her because of her popularity and witchcraft skills.

Sounds of beating drums, raised voices, and strange noises emanate from her house every night. However, whenever we walk by the house, silence reigns. It is obvious the power of God rules over the devil. Even witch doctors respect the presence of the Lord. Devils tremble in the company of godly men and women.

One evening my friend and her husband invited my husband, a pastor, and me to visit the witch doctor. As we neared the house, we could hear drums beating and voices singing. Once the members of the household saw us the noise stopped. As we walked closer to the house, we earnestly prayed for ourselves and my husband.

The witch doctor warmly welcomed us. We began singing church hymns very loudly. After

two songs, my husband said a prayer. He gave a scripture reading and requested us to kneel down for special prayers for the family members. Surprisingly all the members of the family, including the witch doctor, knelt along with us.

The Spirit of God was seen rotating in that little hut. I felt the mighty hand of the Lord descending from above and touching each one of us. The Spirit of God was there. After the season of prayer, we left, praising God for the Mighty Power we had just witnessed.

The next day, the children of the family told us that after our departure they had continued meditating on the power of the Holy Spirit.

We who are out witnessing in those areas where the light of the Gospel has not reached many souls need your prayers. Pray for the family who lives in that small hut. They have witnessed the power of God, yet they still hesitate to follow Christ. Witchcraft is their business and they depend on it. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work on their hearts and we can meet them in heaven. /

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# Assigning Responsibilities to Ministers' Wives

*Dora Bognandi*

Even though almost everybody admits that the pastor's wife is a church member just like anyone else, something more might be expected from her simply because her husband is in charge of the church community. If within that community she does not perform her assigned duty, even though it is not a written law that the pastor's wife is responsible for it, there is a tendency to ascribe this deficiency or failure to her more than to any other sister member in the church.

There are certain types of responsibilities which seem to be expected of the pastor's wife: taking care of children, playing a musical instrument, being knowledgeable about good nutrition while also being an excellent cook. Without the ability to do these, she does not meet the expectations of the church members and that may give rise to painful comparisons.

But are there actually responsibilities which suit the pastor's wife more or less specifically? Or can she take on whatever needs to be done? Every human being is unique, a fact which contributes to the beauty and richness of the world. Yet there are tasks—both at home and in the church—which have to be done, and for that

purpose we all must work together, using the talents our Lord has bestowed on us.

Fortunately, all pastors' wives do not have the same talents. It is a useful policy to have our pastor husbands transferred from one place to another because the churches can benefit from the various types of gifts of each new pastor's wife. In my opinion, there is one thing which is indispensable in our ministry: availability. Some people think that a pastor's wife must necessarily hold only certain types of responsibilities, conferred as a matter of routine, but let us heighten our church members' awareness of the particular gifts the Lord has given to each pastoral wife.

Apart from her individual talents, the pastor's wife brings with her a specific stock of experience gained in other communities. That experience can be of service to church members.

Although I believe that all the position requirements and responsibilities outlined in the Church Manual for any church member can be conferred on the pastor's wife, there are two reasons why I do not think it is always judicious to apply it:

1. Some church members may be suspicious of the similarity of views coming from the

*Dora is the director of the Department of Religious Liberty, Public Affairs and Communications of the Italian Union.*

*She has published several articles and co-authored many on religious liberty and in 1997 did a weekly radio chat for women.*



pastoral home, and the pastor and his wife may bring pressure to bear at the Church Committee's meetings.

2. Sometimes the pastor's wife holds an important responsibility for many years, preventing other church members from gaining the experience and from growing. After that pastor has left, such a church often finds itself deprived of healthy spiritual food.

How, then, can we reconcile the notion of availability with the growth of the gifts? Again, I believe that the pastor's wife could accept a responsibility when no one else can assume it. However, she must consciously work to train other people for that responsibility so that when she leaves, there are those members who can readily take her place.

It would be good for the pastor's wife to view church members as people with potential talents which can ultimately be developed. She holds a privileged position because of the ministry of her husband, who knows each member's problems and aspirations. Therefore she can, with a positive spirit, encourage them to blossom in one department or another. Thus she can discover new talents which will enrich the church.

Ideally, with her wisdom, availability, sensibility, insight and experience, the pastor's wife will not find that one responsibility takes up her time more than another. Instead she should make herself available to support, to help, to counsel, depending on the needs of the church members. Her "status" confers on her no particular authority, but she is

chosen to be an advisor by those who can see in her someone to turn to, a person worthy of trust and of esteem, one whose opinion is deserving of respect.

I feel this is perhaps idealistic, and what is ideal cannot always be carried out in reality. Yet let us begin by showing faithfulness in the least of things. Let us win the confidence of the members by

faithfully accomplishing our tasks without imparting unwanted advice or without setting ourselves up as models. Instead, let us work painstakingly, remembering that we owe an explanation to Someone greater than ourselves—Someone who will one day weigh up our work in the light of the Gospel and its principles. /

## THE MONTH AFTER CHRISTMAS

T'was the month after Christmas and all through the house  
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.  
The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste  
All the holiday parties had gone to my waist.  
When I got on the scales there arose such a number!  
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).  
I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;  
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,  
The grape juice and candies, the bread and the cheese,  
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you please."

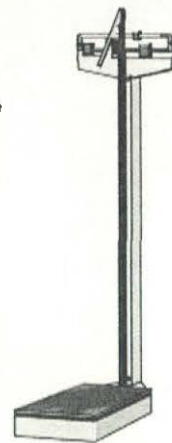
As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt  
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt—  
I said to myself, as only I can, "You can't spend  
a winter disguised as a man!"

So—away with the last of the sour cream dip,  
Get rid of the fruitcake, every cracker and chip.  
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished  
'Til all the additional ounces had vanished.  
I won't have a cookie—not even a lick,  
I'll only want to chew a long celery stick.

I won't have hot biscuits, or cornbread, or pie,  
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore—  
But isn't that what January is for?

Unable to giggle, no longer a riot,  
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!



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# A Mistaken View

*Mari Carmen Arnao*

Some months ago while sitting in the waiting room of my doctor's office, my eyes unconsciously rested on a picture that hung a few meters from me. The "L" shaped room didn't allow me to see the whole wall and the visual angle didn't allow me to see the total picture. Immediately that picture that I could only partially see grabbed my attention.

The canvas was approximately a meter and a half long and a meter wide. It had an intense shine with brilliant, harmonious colors; however, it didn't seem to be very expressive. It seemed unfinished. The part that I could see was the enormous back end of a big dog, and it was very pretty. As I waited, I kept staring at the picture. "Why did the artist paint only the back end of the dog? What did he want to show? Why did it seem unfinished to me?" I came to my own conclusions and answered my own questions. "If I had been the painter, I wouldn't have done it that way. And if I was the owner of that painting, I would not have placed it in this room." How subtle is the mind and how quick to judge, even when the whole truth is not present.

I was absorbed in my thoughts when my name was called. I went into the doctor's office and began filling out the necessary patient paperwork. I forgot about the picture. After the doctor was

finished, she asked me to go to the waiting room while she went to get the results of my tests. I went out and took the first empty chair. There facing me was the continuation of the picture, but now I could see the opposite side. What a surprise! What a beautiful picture! It was the front part of the dog. While the picture seemed incomplete before, I realized the German Shepherd was cut in two sections so that no one could completely see it in just one glance. Although I don't know much about pedigrees, it seemed to be a purebred: vivacious, noble, and expressive with its fine snout. It was powerful and well-groomed with shiny brown and black fur. His ears were erect and he stood expectantly. He looked a bit fierce and noble at the same time. All this captivated my attention for a good while.

Immediately the anecdote came to life about the incomplete picture. The missing viewpoint causes us to make mistakes about reality. We need a global vision if we want to be correctly positioned. Knowing only one part causes us to jump to rash conclusions about others, the circumstances, and things in general. And we can be gravely mistaken.

This is what happened to me with the dog picture. I saw it as incomplete and reacted negatively. I evaluated the picture from my perspective. I thought it

*Mari Carmen is the AMAF Coordinator for the Spanish Union of Churches. She is a pastor's wife married to Juan Lozano.*





was unfinished and I assumed some things that were incorrect and this distorted reality. While the front view of the dog was so noble and beautiful, his back end didn't say anything interesting to me.

Later I thought how we should pledge to avoid making judgements or forming opinions unless we have all the possible information about people and things. This should be the way for me to interpret life. Only in this way can I avoid being mistaken in the way I appreciate or judge others.

A similar thing happened at Calvary. The robber on one side of Jesus took hold of faith. He was sure about the future when he said, "Remember me when you come in your kingdom." However, the man on the other side of the Master was skeptical. Both men had the same view, but they had different perspectives that generated contradictory emotions and feelings.

Returning to the doctor's office, I situated myself again before

the picture. How easy it is to interpret life without the right balance, assuming views as positive or negative. In both cases, I can be mistaken because things are never totally good or bad. I would like to enjoy the balance of the wise man who said, "give me neither poverty nor riches. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you

**The robber on one side of Jesus took hold of faith.**

and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God" (NIV).

The apostle Paul says, "Do not look at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen." I am going to gently correct those who use this text to express their scorn for life. Those who look at what they can see (the reality of our life) look at it as a

platform to accede what they do not see, that is to say, our eternal perspective. Both are complimentary and necessary. Blending the present view *in* Jesus Christ with the eternal perspective *with* Jesus Christ always gives our existence a new and hopeful meaning.

I aim, with God's help, to balance serenity in face of sometimes dramatic aspects of life. I propose to look at the dog's head, or the good side of people and things, to support positive feelings, and to have greater confidence in others. Adopting a positive attitude doesn't mean living in an imaginary, utopia realm. It means, rather, that we don't forget hard reality, but we should find balance in the good side of people and things. In front of pessimism and adversities, we place our hope in the life and salvation of Jesus Christ and contemplate a renewed horizon of hope. /

To begin and enhance your week . . .  
ASAP (Always Say A Prayer)

There's a work to do,  
deadlines to meet,  
you've got no time to spare,  
but as you hurry and scurry,  
*Always Say A Prayer.*

In the midst of family chaos,  
"quality time" is rare.  
Do your best,  
Let God do the rest,  
*Always Say A Prayer.*

It may seem like your worries  
are more than you can bear.  
Slow down, and take a breather,  
*Always Say A Prayer.*

God knows  
how stressful life is,  
He wants to ease our cares,  
and He'll respond A.S.A.P.  
*Always Say A Prayer.*

—Author Unknown

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# Hold Up the Lamp

*María Felisa de Rando*

*María Felisa de Rando is the enthusiastic A.F.A.M. (Shepherdess) Director for the Austral Union Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where her husband, Carlos, is the Communication Director. For many years Felisa has also worked in radio broadcasting, directing the two-hour program "Entre Nosotros" (Between Us). Her hobbies are playing the piano, making Spanish cards, and creating new vegetarian dishes.*



For a meager \$11 per month, a young mechanic in Detroit, Michigan, worked 10 hours a day for the electric company. In the evenings, he went out to an old shed behind his house and labored until midnight trying to build a new motor.

His father, a farmer, felt that his son was wasting his time. The neighbors said he was a nobody. Everybody laughed at him. No one believed that his crude instrument would be worth anything. Nobody, that is, except his wife. After her tasks in the home, she would go to the shed and help him. In winter, as night came early, she held the Argand lamp so that he could see what he was doing. His teeth chattered with cold and his hands turned blue, but his wife was there with him. She was sure that the motor would give good results. So much faith had she that her husband called her "the believer."

After three years of hard work, the extravagant contraption gave fruit. Shortly before his 30th birthday, in 1893, his neighbors were frightened by loud noises. People ran to their windows and saw the eccentric Henry Ford and his wife streak-

ing through the streets in a horseless coach.

Actually he only went to the corner and returned. Yet that event gave birth to a new industry—the automobile. Fifty years later, Mr. Ford was questioned about what he would want to be if he had the chance to live his life again. "It wouldn't matter what I had to do," he responded, "as long as I lived with my wife... I would like to spend eternity with her!"

Every man needs a wife that can be with him when people and circumstances are against him. When nothing goes well, when fires ignite around him, when he fails, the man should be able to count on his wife to have faith in him and help him tolerate the situation. If his wife doesn't believe in him, who will?

Believing is an active quality which rejects the idea that failure is a catastrophe and works at restoring lost confidence.

If anyone needs a believing wife, it is a pastor. He has a big job to do. He needs to be vigilant that everything goes well in the church and at home. In the implementation of new plans to win souls, he doesn't always have the support of his church members. He needs an encouraging

word from his wife when he feels all alone. If his wife prays for him, if she encourages and accompanies him, the task will bring positive results for the glory of God.

A good wife has a special insight to see the qualities in her husband that are invisible to others. She sees him with loving eyes. When he comes home discouraged or depressed by the difficult situations and worries of the day, and his strength seems to have escaped him, his sweet wife should greet him with a smile and encourage him to find peace in Jesus. She will pray with him and encourage him to continue in the task with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). This is the type of faith that a wife should help to inspire in her husband.

In this era of the feminist movement, how many women look for individual fulfillment and separate themselves from the work of their husbands? Yet the Christian wife who is joined with her husband as a helper in the ministry can find fulfillment in serving at his side.

It requires a big dose of humility to be at his side, holding the lamp and being there for him even in the most unpleasant conditions.

My friends, may the Lord help us to be adequate helpers to our husbands. Then, if anyone were to ask about their lives, they would be able to say as did Mr. Ford, "It wouldn't matter what I had to do, as long as I lived with my wife... I would like to spend eternity with her!"

## The Better Place

**Val Smetheram**

I see her face . . . full of love but heart-heavy .

"You'll never be home again."

Forgive me, Mumma,

I must travel . . . my insatiable curiosity drives me on.

Shocked by my father's tears,

a sudden realization of the depth of pain.

We would not see each other again. He knew.

I should have said how much I love you both . . .

now I am separated from my children too.

One day in a far off place

we will be together.

No goodbyes ever again.

I am looking forward.



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

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# The Season of LOVE

Karen Linderman

I woke that morning with a full agenda. I had house work to do, laundry to wash, errands to run, and a sermon to complete. On top of that, I had promised a young unmarried mother I would care for her little girl at 2:00.

After cleaning the house and washing the laundry, I got into my car to do my errands. I was looking forward to sitting down and relaxing as I drove. As the scenery passed by, I thought of my relationship with the Lord. It had been a while since I had been part of a one-to-one sharing experience. I longed to tell someone that Jesus had died for him; I longed to meet a hungry person who needed what Jesus could give her. I thought of an old hymn and was stirred by its words:

*“Work for the night is coming;  
Work through the morning hours;  
Work while the dew is sparkling;  
Work ‘mid springing flowers.”*

I thought of Ellen White’s words when she told us there are those waiting out in the highways and hedges waiting to be drawn in. I could not help but wonder if I was doing my part. Could Jesus say of me, “Well done thou good and faithful servant?” I really did want to do my best for Him.

I was singing the second verse of the hymn when I saw her. She was an older woman. She was

walking ever so slowly. With her threadbare coat clutched around her and her scarf whipping around her head, it seemed she had little strength to put one foot in front of the other.

My car’s momentum was such that I could not stop immediately. As I passed her and crested a hill, I saw an old white sedan stalled beside the road. My heart went out to this stranger. She was stranded in the middle of nowhere and I couldn’t leave her to walk in the bitter cold to the nearest house.

I found a place to turn around and made my way back. As I pulled up to her, I could see fear and distrust in her eyes. I smiled and reached across to open the door for her. “May I give you a ride somewhere?” I asked. “It’s a pretty chilly day for a walk.”

The lines in her face relaxed and she managed a weak grin. “My car just started sputtering and stopped,” she explained, “and I didn’t know what to do.” I told her that although I wasn’t a mechanic, I could take her wherever she needed to go.

As she sank back into the seat beside me, I realized she was younger than I had first thought. She interrupted my thoughts as she stammered, “I’m so sorry to delay you, but I surely appreciate you giving me a ride.” Soon the two

*Karen was born in Montana and has lived there all her life. She has 3 children and four “great” grandchildren. She enjoys public speaking, freelance writing, oil painting, decorating and interior design as well as solitude in the “wonderful world of nature.”*



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of us were chattering as she directed me to the home of some close friends. When we reached her friend's house, she paused before she got out. Her eyes became moist and her voice quivered as she spoke. She said, "You must be an angel straight from heaven." She hugged me briefly and was gone.

I sat there stunned. Me, an angel? I know she was expressing her gratitude, but her words burned their way into my mind. The plain truth dawned on me as never before. God's spirit was speaking through me to love and touch someone who may not have been touched in any other way. God gave me the profound privilege of being the channel through which He spoke. His glory is so brilliant, it must be shrouded by a cloak. That day, I had been the cloak.

As I drove into town that afternoon, it was with an exalted view of my time, my talents, my relationships. Every child of God is a channel through whom God speaks. Every Christian is a voice in the wilderness pointing the way to a loving Father and soon-coming King.

As His people unite their voices together, it will be as a glorious angel anthem proclaiming throughout the entire earth a message of love. As we unite our talents and time collectively, a lost world will see the hands, the feet, and the person of Jesus. "When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own!" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69).

Let us be the channel through which God speaks. /

# Sometimes

**Sylvia Occhipinti**

Sometimes—the load is too heavy  
Sometimes—my faith is too small  
Sometimes—the pain overwhelms me  
Sometimes—I can't even crawl  
Sometimes—the days pass so quickly  
Sometimes—the nights are too long  
Sometimes—God seems on a journey  
Sometimes—He gives me a song  
Sometimes—the clouds hide the sunshine  
Sometimes—the winds blow so strong  
Sometimes—in crowds I feel lonely  
Sometimes—I like being alone  
At all times—  
I know God is working to show me His undying care  
Ever and Always—He loves Me  
Not Sometimes—But Always  
He's there

*Sylvia Occhipinti lives in New Jersey where she enjoys writing poetry and sharing it with friends and family.*



# Shepherdess International News

## Euro-Africa Division

Maeve Maurer, Shepherdess Coordinator for EUD reports the following:

**Baden-Wuerttemberg Conference** sponsored a Shepherdess meeting held on October 24 in Ludwigsburgm. Twenty six wives attended the meeting. The main topic was using your voice to the best advantage. Practical exercises about how to use the voice to an advantage and how we misuse our voices were demonstrated.

**Bulgaria Union** had special periods of time each morning and afternoon for Shepherdess meetings during their recent Ministerial Council. Gabriel and Maeve Maurer from the Division office were the featured speakers. Maeve's topics were "Today's Situation of the Pastors Wives" and "The Education of the Pastor's Kids". She also gave a report of Shepherdess around the world. Because of the enthusiasm for this program, another one has already been scheduled for 2000. They are also planning to begin a regional newsletter.

**South France Conference** wives held a fellowship retreat at a beautiful wilderness retreat center in the mountains of south France. Delightful fellowship highlighted the occasion. Marcelle Guenin, the Shepherdess Coordinator for the conference, planned the entire event. Child care was provided at all times so the women could completely partici-

pate in the program. Delicious food was presented at each meal. Sharon Cress was the guest speaker for the meetings.



*Christian (the official translator); Christian, the Shepherdess sponsor; and Marcelle the Shepherdess Coordinator for South France Conference.*



*Pastor's wives enjoy food and fellowship in a beautiful, natural setting.*

## North American Division

**Lake Region Conference** Shepherdess was reorganized in the Spring with Marva Kelly elected president and Mable Dunbar, vice president. On June 20, Elder Van Lange chaired a meeting that voted they will serve as Co-Leaders. The pastors wives have expressed their need to resurrect this program because of a desire to fellowship and know each other better. This need led to the Oakwood Conference and Retreat Center on beautiful Lake Wawasee in Syracuse, Indiana where the first annual

Shepherdess retreat was held. The theme was "Getting to Know You." Besides the desire to know each other, the theme was taken a step further and the pastors wives talked about knowing God better and understanding His purpose for their life. It was a weekend long journey of renewal, refreshment and revival. Interactive exercises built community among the group and the final act of the weekend was for each woman to tell something she had learned about the others during the weekend journey together. The Second Annual Retreat will be held in September, 2000.



*Lake Region Conference Shepherdess Retreat.*

**Central States Conference** reports that Mrs. Joy Thomas was honored in her home church (Emmanuel Seventh-day Adventist) in St. Joseph, Missouri as the members celebrated "Pastor's Wife Day" one Sabbath

in the congregation. Russell Walters, Communications Director for the Conference, reports that pastors wives are often thought of as just "the pastors' wife" but the first lady of the church plays an important role by setting a positive example of involvement. Besides her church responsibilities, Joy works as a registered nurse at the hospital in Atchison, Kansas.

### South American Division

**Central Minas Conference** Shepherdess reports that despite cold weather, the hearts of the pastors wives were warmed during a counsel in Campos do Jordao, Sao Paulo state. The fellowship shared banished the distances that separate these women (1400 km from end to end). Lectures, orientations and shared experiences were exchanged. Nilma Melo Freire, AFAM Coordinator for Central Minas conference led in planning the retreat.



*Central Minas Conference Shepherdess at retreat.*



### Southern Asia-Pacific Division

Netty Rantung, Shepherdess Coordinator of SAPD reports that

August 16-September 6 she was in Jakarta and Bandung holding Shepherdess meetings and a reaping evangelistic meeting in Pematang Siantar, North Sumatra Mission. Praise to the Lord for the 167 souls which were baptized as a result.

### South Pacific Division

Kay Winter hosted the **Greater Sydney Conference** ministerial wives for a retreat at the South Pacific Division office in Sydney. Recognized as PIM (Partners In Ministry), the organization of pastors wives in the area has blossomed. Ann Browning and Sharon Cress were the guest speakers. The venue was a beautiful conference room and Kay had arranged for the food to be catered in to provide a special treat for the women.

The Division office was also the setting for a PIM Coordinators Advisory. Kay Winter, Coordinator, organized the thirteen Conference and Union coordinators who met together. Ideas were shared for nurturing and ministering to the clergy wives in their regions. Long range plans were also discussed.

### General Conference

Annual Council in October was highlighted by the special meetings for the Administrator's spouses hosted by Sharon Cress. Kathleen Kuntaraf from the

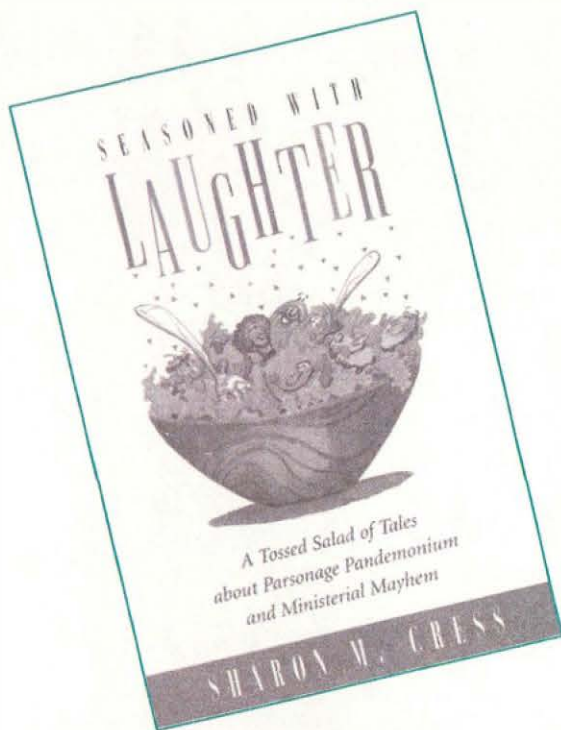
General Conference Health and Temperance Department held a seminar on "Growing Old Gracefully," and Pam Cress, Associate Professor from Walla Walla College, conducted a seminar on "Coping with Loss." Both seminars were filled with an abundance of material and interaction. Rae Lee Cooper added her special sparkle with an exercise program each day. Frances McClure, Shepherdess Coordinator for NAD, featured a get-acquainted session the first day that brought laughter to all. Kari Paulsen, the new General Conference Shepherdess sponsor greeted the ladies the first day by sharing her experience as a pastors wife and the road she has traveled in ministry. It was a compelling story.



*Kathleen Kuntaraf sharing a seminar.*



*Administrators wives enjoy the three days of involvement.*



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