

The Journal



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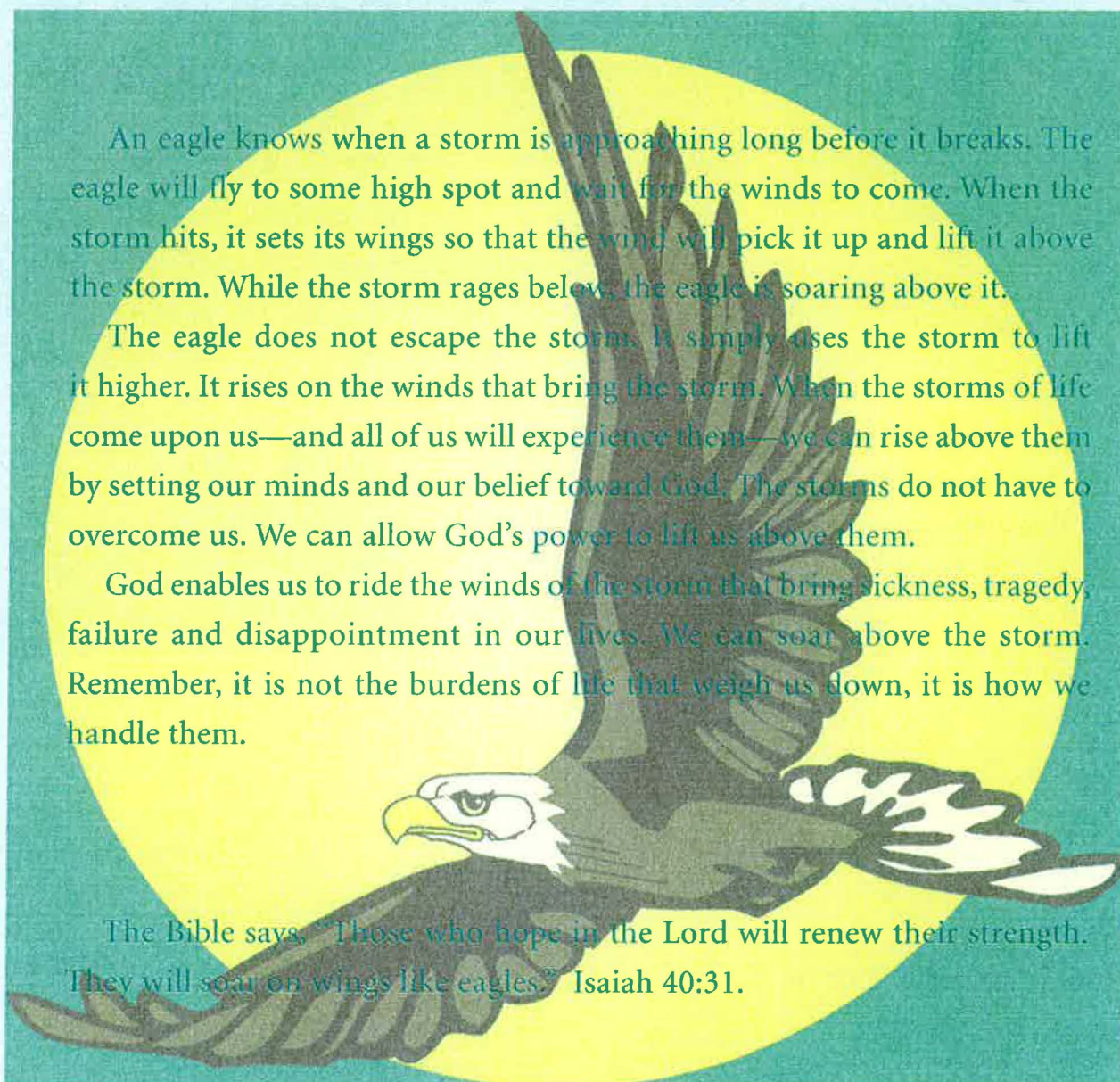
Fly Like the Eagle

An eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks. The eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it.

The eagle does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm. When the storms of life come upon us—and all of us will experience them—we can rise above them by setting our minds and our belief toward God. The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them.

God enables us to ride the winds of the storm that bring sickness, tragedy, failure and disappointment in our lives. We can soar above the storm. Remember, it is not the burdens of life that weigh us down, it is how we handle them.

The Bible says, "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." Isaiah 40:31.



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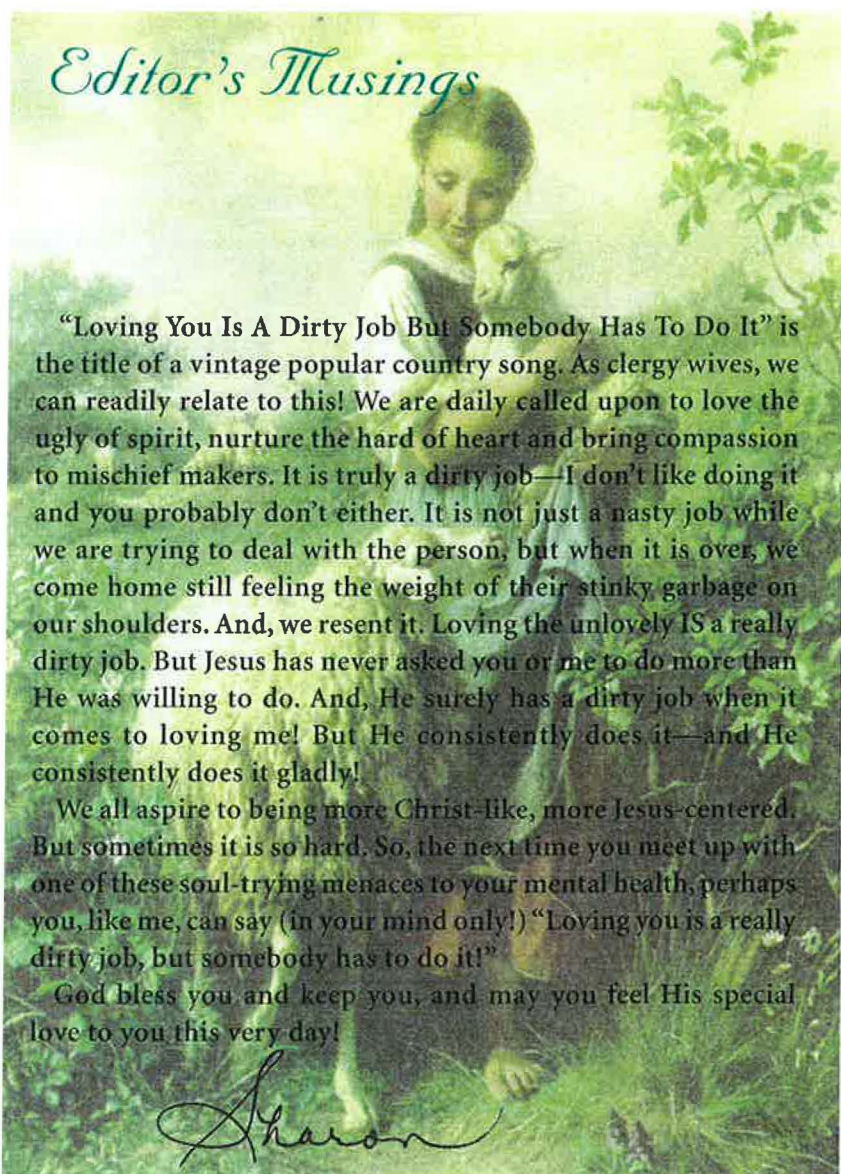
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Editor's Musings



“Loving You Is A Dirty Job But Somebody Has To Do It” is the title of a vintage popular country song. As clergy wives, we can readily relate to this! We are daily called upon to love the ugly of spirit, nurture the hard of heart and bring compassion to mischief makers. It is truly a dirty job—I don’t like doing it and you probably don’t either. It is not just a nasty job while we are trying to deal with the person, but when it is over, we come home still feeling the weight of their stinky garbage on our shoulders. And, we resent it. Loving the unlovely IS a really dirty job. But Jesus has never asked you or me to do more than He was willing to do. And, He surely has a dirty job when it comes to loving me! But He consistently does it—and He consistently does it gladly!

We all aspire to being more Christ-like, more Jesus-centered. But sometimes it is so hard. So, the next time you meet up with one of these soul-trying menaces to your mental health, perhaps you, like me, can say (in your mind only!) “Loving you is a really dirty job, but somebody has to do it!”

God bless you and keep you, and may you feel His special love to you this very day!

Sharon

The Journal A SHEPHERDESS

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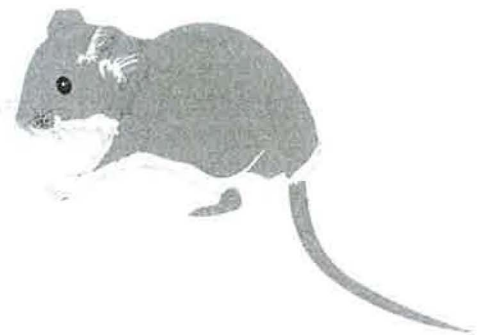
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A Mouse in My New House?!



*Diane Matthews
Brown*

Diane lives in West Des Moines, Iowa where she and her husband work in the Conference office. She is Women's Ministries Director and Conference Clerk and her husband, Walt, is president.

Diane enjoys traveling and meeting the church members on weekends as Walt speaks in the various churches in the Iowa-Missouri Conference. Diane and Walt have a grandson who is two and is such a joy.



Should we buy a house? This was the question we were tossing back and forth. Our girls were grown, married, and home only for occasional visits. It was just the two of us now. We had been renting a large house with way too much room for our present needs. True, we had managed to fill it up, but did we still need all those things?

My husband had just accepted a new position. This current job could be busier than his previous one had been. Yes, we decided we should downsize. We did not have the time or energy to keep up a big house and yard, nearly an acre, and both work in the office, as well as travel most weekends.

What a lot of junk we had accumulated over the years. More than you might think went right into the garbage. Our children took the things they still had at home, as well as other items we urged upon them and their husbands. After all of this we had a garage sale, and then gave away a lot more.

During this time we shopped for houses and decided on a new townhouse. (No more mowing lawns or shoveling snow!) This move would be number 22 for us! Several residences were apartments we rented in college and seminary, and some were only temporary housing, as we waited for a house to become

available. We had a bit of experience wrapping up those fragile dishes and maneuvering pianos and hide-a-beds around corners and up and down stairs, to say nothing of transporting tons of books!

Moving day was unlike any we had known since our early years of marriage. Our friends from work came about 8:30 a.m. on a Wednesday and we were loaded and unloaded by 11:30 a.m. Most everything fit into a 17-foot rental truck.

As we were in the process of unpacking, we saw evidence of mice. We even saw one peek around a corner and run across the kitchen floor. Out came the traps. The mice seemed to love the peanut butter and we wondered, are they such smart mice that they have figured out how to keep from getting caught? The problem was not only in our kitchen. While we were away for a few days, the mice found a bag of soybeans and put them all over the house. There were other beans available but they chose the soybeans. Do mice know that soybeans are a complete protein?

They had put some in a half-full bottle of vitamins, others had been tucked into other unlikely places, like under pillows on the sofa, or in a box of powdered sugar, etc. We checked on our return home, still no mice in our traps. There was a lot of

other mice activity in my kitchen including what looked like the beginning of a nest. I opened a drawer and there was a little mouse peering out at me as if to say, "Why are you disturbing me in my new house?" Well, I thought, this is not his house! We will get new traps—a different kind.


The new traps worked! They do make a better mouse trap! In all, over a period of three or four days, we caught seven mice! No wonder we had such a big mess! We had never seen mice colored like these were. Their backs were a soft light gray and their undersides were a pure white fur, and they had white tips on their feet. I was asking people about this at work and a friend, that had lived in the country, said they had seen mice like this. Since our townhouse was built on what had been a farm, we decided they must be country mice.

After this we saw no more evidence of mice except for a few soybeans that had been previously scattered here and there. One day, as I started to water my aloe vera plant, I noticed it looked like there were long shoots that might be blossoms. This was strange, as that had never happened before. I called Walt to come and see and as he bent down to look he said, "Those are soybeans growing in there!" There must have been thirty plants. Indeed, those were country mice and they had already planted a crop. I bet they would have harvested it, too, if they had been around. We had a good laugh.

Now I am not a lover of mice, so Walt had to be the one to dispose of those creatures, but I have been thinking of how industrious those little mice were. They didn't waste any time in preparing for the future. They also made the best of their situation of being shut up in our new house, and used whatever they found

available to provide for the future of their mouse family. Couldn't we learn a lesson from them?

Jesus is coming soon, are we industriously looking for ways to help prepare our families and others for His soon return? Let us use

whatever means we find to us to do this. God has given each of us our little corner to work in. Let's make the best of wherever we find ourselves. God provides everything we need to do whatever He expects us. 



Sarah, the Church Gossip

Sarah, the church gossip and self-appointed supervisor of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business.

Several residents were unappreciative of her activities, but feared her enough to maintain their silence.

She made a mistake, however, when she accused George, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his pickup truck parked in front of the town's only bar one afternoon.

She commented to George and others that everyone seeing it there would know that he was an alcoholic.

George, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just walked away. He said nothing.

Later that evening, George, quietly parked his pickup in front of Sarah's house . . .

AND he left it there all night.

What Price Camelot? What Price Eternity?

Hazel Gordon

Hazel Gordon lives in Orlando, Florida. She is a gifted musician and serves the Southern Union as advisor to Shepherdess and Women's Ministries. She is a pastoral wife, mother, and grandmother. Her husband, Malcolm, is president of the Southern Union.



Recently, America witnessed a phenomenon that truly boggles the mind. I am referring of course to the Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis auction that was held at Sotheby's Galleries in New York this past April. This amazing event was sandwiched as it were amidst worldwide reports of tragedies and catastrophic upheavals of lives and property.

There played out on the evening news as well as CNN special news bulletins from time to time, an unbridled and blatant display of fiscal irresponsibilities. An incredible 40,000 people patiently stood in line for hours just to get a glimpse of, and perhaps the chance to bid on some of the 5,914 items that were for sale. *Newsweek* commented, "It didn't matter much that the art was mostly decorative rather than important and that the furniture was largely reproductions, and a few items (baskets for example) were not far removed from junk. This aforementioned collection of baskets were pre-auction appraised at \$150 to \$200 but actually sold for \$9,200. *Newsweek* went on to report that many were obviously swept away by a giddy rush—a momentary thrill that some seem to experience when

spending large sums of money irresponsibly. There seemed, according to published reports to almost be a carnival spirit pervading the auction house. Even as some bidders wisely chose to drop out, others continued their bidding game, encouraged by enthusiastic clapping and cheering as prices soared higher and still higher.

As we now know, the prices paid far exceed everyone's wildest imagination including the professionals at Sothebys. It seemed that restraint and good sense seemed to have totally vanished. There were, for instance, three cushions that sold for \$25,000, as well as a Tiffany's silver monogrammed tape measure that brought a winning bid of almost \$50,000. Even a bundle of old magazines fetched a \$12,000 price tag. When the "successful" bidders were asked why they had paid such outrageous sums of money they all without exception pronounced themselves deliriously happy to be bringing home a piece of history—a part of Camelot. They were willing to pay any price just to own something of Jackie O's.

As we shake our heads in unbelief while simultaneously patting ourselves on the back in self

congratulation, we sanctimoniously declare that we would never indulge ourselves in such a selfish, wanton and irresponsible manner. If we are really honest, however, we probably have to admit to a few buying errors ourselves. We have succumbed more often than not to the message that relentlessly bombards us via magazines, billboards, and most of all the ad machine generally referred to as the TV. With clever, catchy tunes, and charming or amusing scenes we are fed a diet of smooth talk that urges us to “be good to yourself—you have earned it, you deserve it so what are you waiting for?” The world makes it so easy to want—to buy—to have. The main underlying message whether subtly or openly blatant tells us to have whatever it is they are selling to be happy. What price is your Camelot? Your piece of history?

We all must remember the timely counsel and perspective found in Matthew 6:19-21, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

I don't want just a piece of history. I want to invest in a piece of eternity. I have made a new determination to recommit my life and means for the promise of life everlasting. Of course I am looking forward to a beautiful mansion prepared especially for me, but most of all the thrilling opportunity of meeting my dear Jesus face to face. For 1 Corinthians 2:9 tells us, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” I choose to make my winning bid for eternity, how about you?



**“IT IS GOD’S GIFT THAT
ALL SHOULD EAT AND
DRINK
AND
TAKE
PLEASURE
IN ALL THEIR TOIL.”**

ECCLESIASTES 3:13



The Empty Chair at Our Table



*Pamela Keele
Cress*

Pamela Keele Cress is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Walla Walla College in College Place, Washington. She and her husband, John, a pastor at the Walla Walla College Church, have been married 25 years. They have two daughters, Jana, 22 and Jaci, 20.



*Beloved husband, son, father,
grandfather
DONALD RUEBEN KEELE, SR.
February 7, 1937 - April 20, 1996
Educator
Loving, Trusting, Faithful
"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
Rev. 22:20*

It was not quite a week after my father's funeral when I heard my mother remark rather offhandedly that "we were no longer a family." As I comforted Mom, I remember sputtering through tears a not so convincing reply. "Yes we are, we're just different now. Losing Daddy doesn't mean we are not a family."

I have often thought of my mother's words as our family has struggled to make sense of my father's untimely death from a five-month battle with melanoma cancer. Our family looks and feels differently in the wake of this loss. How are we coping? Some days, well. Other days, barely. The ache and loss is especially poignant around the holidays. The empty chair at the table is still a bleak reminder of what is no more on this earth.

My father was the energy of family gatherings. He always had some new and different activity planned for

when we got together. The activities he planned always led to laughter and discussion.

Thanksgiving was a particular favorite for Daddy. It was then he captured our attention before Thanksgiving dinner through a special worship celebration of giving thanks. Every year our celebration was different. One year Daddy planned a nature hike on the beach in Lincoln City. We were told not to return until we found something tangible to illustrate a spiritual lesson of thanks. Fourteen of us trooped back wet and tired, but happy, hoping to be the first to share so that we could get rid of whatever cold, clammy specimen we had found. Another year, Daddy posted blank pieces of paper around the house with the name of each family member at the top. Instructions were that every person had to write something affirming about each member of the family. Dad gave us all day to do this activity so that "we would have time to think," encouraging us to avoid shallow compliments or vain renderings about those we loved. The glow of the affirmations given lasted through the weekend and beyond.

Christmas was another time of year that Daddy took it upon himself

to make sure we did things together as a family. My mom instigated most of our planned Christmas outings, but it was Daddy who guaranteed that the already "fun" plan would be revised to an absolute cacophony of hilarity and joy. Our annual December treks to Portland were always anticipated as we never knew what Mom and Dad had up their sleeves. Whether it was going to view the outlandish lights on Peacock Lane, hear an extraordinary Christmas Eve concert at the "grotto," or have a turn in an impromptu talent show, we were always guaranteed hours of laughs, adventure, and fun when Dad was around. It made the Christmas presents under the tree secondary to the season.

Months have passed since we said our last good-byes to Daddy. Our family has trudged on day by day with aching hearts and souls. We have survived through Fourth of July's, Thanksgivings, Christmases, family birthdays, and several graduations without him. We have done it one day at a time, one holiday at a time, all the while cognizant of the fact that our table is missing a member.

Our first major holiday without Dad was grief filled and painful; yet in some ways it was healing. Thanksgiving found us together doing all the traditional things, including a major "bonding" activity in Daddy's honor. A candle was lit that day in honor of his memory. We spent the morning writing about and sharing special memories of a husband, father, and grandfather. Regardless of the empty chair, we concentrated on our many blessings and gave thanks to God. There was a richness to this celebration as we talked through tears and laughter about an earthly father who loved much and a heavenly Father who loves even more. Our traditional Thanksgiving meal that followed

included many of my dad's favorite foods.

The Christmas season found us inventing new traditions by gathering for a few days in the home of my brother in Battleground, Washington. We hiked through swampy grasslands to "birdwatch" with Mom, played Uno, Scrabble, and Taboo. We visited old friends,

*Make new memories
with your families while
cherishing the old ones.*

*Be comforted by the
knowledge that others
have experienced loss*

*and have been
sustained and*


*comforted by One who
knows firsthand what it
is like to lose a Son.*

*Live in hope that the
chair will not be empty
long.*

read a lot, and slept even more. We gave ourselves permission to skip the traditional Christmas dinner. We talked about all the things we could do, but ended up mainly tending the home fires and just resting.

On Christmas morning, we gave Mom a special 40th anniversary engraved crystal bell to commemorate the 40 years of marriage she and Dad had shared. Their 40th anniversary had been one month, almost to the day, after my father died. We wanted to celebrate their partnership and commitment. The memories were a comfort and brought additional healing in the midst of the intense pain of loss. We talked about the future without Dad and decided that it looked bleak in spite of the promise of the resurrection. Still, we were thankful for the presence of God and the comfort He gave us.

Our family, like many others, has a member missing. Holidays are poignant reminders that loss is part of the journey on this earth and there are none who go untouched. Thanksgiving and Christmas are holidays that remind us that we face another year without those we love. I encourage you to think of new ways that allow you to remember your loved one in a healthy, healing way. Make new memories with your families while cherishing the old ones. Be comforted by the knowledge that others have experienced loss and have been sustained and comforted by One who knows firsthand what it is like to lose a Son. Live in hope that the chair will not be empty long. Some day we will be together at a heavenly banqueting table and all the chairs will be filled. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

My father is asleep in Jesus at Mt. Hope Cemetery, College Place, Washington. His life and career was dedicated to his family and Christian education. When we meet again, my dad will be proud to know that after his earthly life ended, his family continued and still continues to run the race that has been set before us. "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20. 



The Martha in Me

Annie Machamire

Annie Machamire writes from the Zambesi Union where she works in the Accounts' Department. She and her pastor-husband have one daughter, Joy, and two sons, Kudzai and Tatenda. Her hobbies are cooking, sewing, and traveling.



An important Guest had come home. The elder sister was busy in the kitchen preparing a special meal for the Guest. The younger sister seemed not to care about what was going on in the kitchen. She sat down to chat with the Guest, Jesus. In my culture the elder sister should sit down and talk to the visitor while the younger one prepares the meal. But in the account recorded in Luke 10:38-41, Mary, the younger sister, sits down while her older sister does the work. It would appear that Martha was justified when she complained to Jesus about her. Doesn't Mary realize that as the younger one she should do most of the work. Doesn't she have any respect for her elder sister. She should, at least, get up and help.

A quick glance at this story makes one sympathize with Martha. It appears like she was reproved unfairly. She needed a hand. She was doing a good thing. Martha was practicing hospitality. Isn't preparing food the thing to do when a visitor comes home? Why is it that Jesus commends Mary who doesn't even care to give the visitor food. But what was Martha's problem?

Priorities

Martha needed to put her priorities right. The Guest was Jesus. He

wanted her heart more than food. My daughter (my son), give me your heart. Martha needed to put first things first. Jesus wanted Martha to have a meaningful relationship with Him. This should have been number one on her priority list.

Martha gets up in the morning and thinks of the number of things she has to do at home before she leaves for the office. She has no time for personal devotions. Martha says a short prayer and jumps out of bed, she just has to get everything done. She is always in a hurry. Martha is too busy to find time to sit down with Jesus. She has a desire to have time for Jesus, but there is just too much to do. Maybe if we had 48 hour days, then she would have time to sit and listen and talk to Jesus. She gets upset when people don't help her, especially when she is behind time.

Jesus warns her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:41). You need to take time to reconsider your priorities. Who has top priority in your life? Is it your duties or Jesus? Mary has her priorities right. She knows who is first in her life. "Martha, you need to sit down and make time for your Master."

Quick to draw conclusions

Martha had another problem. She

was more concerned about what Mary was doing than her own duties. Martha rushed to the wrong conclusion that Mary was being irresponsible and lazy. "Master, bid her to come and help me prepare the meal. How can she sit and chat as if she doesn't know what needs to be done? What she is doing is wrong. Please tell her." Martha doesn't care to call her sister aside and discuss the problem in private. She is determined to embarrass her before the Guest. Martha wants to *get things done* even at the *expense of relationships*. When Martha gets home from work, the first thing she notices is what the children should have done. "You should have picked up this and cleaned that."

Martha perceives that what she is doing is more important than what Mary is doing. So Mary must come and help.

It is easy to misunderstand the actions of others and draw wrong conclusions. Joshua 22 records the story of two and half tribes of Israel (Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh) who were settled on the land across the Jordan River. They built an altar as a memorial of the worship of the true God. Because they were far from the rest of the tribes, they perceived that their children would forget to worship the God of heaven and follow the heathen tribes around them. So they erected this altar, not to offer sacrifices, but as a reminder of the worship of Jehovah.

The other ten tribes misunderstood their action, and they gathered together to make war against the two and half tribes. They thought they were disregarding the altar of worship that was in the tabernacle. They sent a delegation to reprove them. Why should they erect another altar? This was rebellion against God. They should be reprovved and disciplined. When the delegation got there and heard the other side of the story, they

realized that they had rushed to a wrong conclusion.

Martha was hurting inside. She was quick to draw conclusions. Jesus wanted Martha to realize her mistake. She was self-centered. The phrase "Why should I?" is always in Martha's mind. Why should I do so much work when my sister seems to be relaxing? Mary is having a good time, but I think she should be here with me. Martha wants to enjoy both the cake and the conversation. Why should I be given so many duties in the office when other workers seem to be doing so little? Why is it that I am always asked to host visitors that come to the conference, yet there are so many of us around here. If we did it in turns, wouldn't it be so much easier? Others seem to have time for themselves, but I am kept so busy. After all, the president's wife should do it; it's her responsibility. Martha seems to worry so much about why she has such a heavy load while others seem to have none at all. Because of her thoughts Martha does not enjoy the aroma of the cake she is baking. She fails to experience the joy of service. Martha sets her mind on the fortunes of others and weighs them against her misfortunes. Other people's misfortunes don't bother her. She doesn't see Mary's need of the Savior. She sees in her a helping hand. Mary needs strength from Jesus to overcome sin (adultery). Martha's major concern is that the food must be ready; Mary should be helping with this and that. She wants to correct her irresponsible behavior.

Martha needs to concern herself more on how best to accomplish her work. What methods should she implement in order to produce best results?

Martha failed to produce her best results because she worried about what the other person should be doing to make her work lighter. Instead she should ask herself

whether she is doing what the Lord wants her to do. Is she doing it the way He wants her to? What is her attitude towards her work? How can she do better next time?

The Lord expects Martha not to find faults in others, but to assess herself and to set her priorities right, to make communion with God top priority, to depend on Him to help her accomplish His will for her life.

The changed Martha

Later Jesus again comes to the home of Martha and Mary. Their brother Lazarus had died. When Martha heard that Jesus was on His way to their home she ran out to meet him. She left all the people who had come to comfort her and went out to Jesus. Christ was now number one on Martha's priority list. The beautiful words, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25) were said to Martha. The Bible says Martha went back home and called Mary, her sister, secretly and told her the Master had come. She does not shout to her and embarrass her and say "Why do you sit here doing nothing? You should have come with me to meet the Master." She is a different Martha.

In Simon's house, Martha was serving. Again Mary goes to Jesus' feet and anoints Him with a sweet perfume. We are not told that Martha complained. She had learned the joy of serving. Martha had learned to put Christ first, and as a result, she enjoyed serving others. There is a time for everything: a time to cultivate a relationship with Christ and a time to serve.

"Lord, change this Martha in me. Let her learn to choose the good part which shall not be taken away from her, then she will experience the joy of serving.



Miracles Happen Every Day

Hanan Leon Wahbah



One Sabbath, about four months ago, my family and I were driving to Sabbath School. As was our normal custom, we had prayed for the Lord's mercies before we began our trip. We always ask God for His protection from the dangers of the road and we pray for a quick trip because many times we are delayed because of traffic congestion.

Fifteen minutes into our trip, we were hit by a speeding pick-up truck. The driver was heading in our direction and fortunately, both he and my husband swerved their vehicles and a head-on collision was avoided. However, our side mirror had broken and glass was thrown into our car. My husband no longer had control of the car and we headed toward a steep slope that led to Ibrahimiyah Creek. Incredibly, the truck driver never even stopped!

Miraculously, our car stopped before going over the slope. We breathed a sigh of relief and thanked God for His mercies. Also, none of us were cut by the flying glass. The only

major damage was to the back door.

Because the damaged door was open, we feared we would not be able to continue on our trip to the church. Suddenly, I remembered the robe in the car trunk. We tied the door closed with the robe and were able to make it to church on time. Our church members were amazed we had survived the wreck when they looked at our damaged car. We all gave thanks to the Lord for watching over us.

What a wonderful thing it is to trust in the Lord. Just think of Daniel and his friends. Their trust was so great they were willing to go into a fiery furnace. God rewarded that trust and saved them.

The Bible is full of miracles of deliverance. How grateful Jonah must have felt when God delivered him out of the belly of a whale. And can you imagine the amazement on those who witnessed the parting of the Red Sea. The wonder of the Lord's goodness is overwhelming!

Some people believe miracles are a thing of the past. I have such a friend, but even she agreed a miracle had occurred when she saw our damaged car and realized we had walked away without a scratch.

God is so good. Though the devil works overtime to destroy our faith, God continues to be ever-present in our lives. Once, when we had planned to help at evangelistic meetings, we ran into disaster. We had begun our trip

and stopped to get some gas. The attendant noticed we had a leak in our gas tank. He cautioned us about driving any further. He said if one careless pedestrian threw out a cigarette butt, our car could go up in flames. He encouraged us to go back home and take our car to a mechanic.

Disheartened we headed home. I called Pastor Wajdi to tell him we would be delayed and therefore be unable to help with the evangelistic meetings. I asked Pastor Wajdi to pray for us. As I was putting down the receiver, my husband rushed through the front door. His countenance was so joyful. He said the second mechanic had examined the gas tank and found no leak. Our gas tank had simply been too full! Right then and there, we thanked God for His blessings. We hopped into the car and quickly drove to the meeting. We actually made it to the church before the evangelistic meetings began.

Pastor Wajdi was conducting a Bible study with a group before the evangelistic meeting. When he saw us, he said, "We all prayed for you to arrive on time, but God helped you to come even before the scheduled time of the meeting. What a wonderful God we serve."

God is with us in all situations. We must only trust Him with all our hearts and prayerfully talk to Him every day. Then, just wait for the miracles to occur!



Hanan has a college degree in agriculture. She is married to Pastor Owaihad Wahbah who pastors churches located in Manyā, Oshrube, and Maghagha in Egypt. He is also in charge of the youth department in the Egypt field. They have two children, a six-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son.

Hanan's deceased father was an Adventist pastor and she looks forward to meeting him again on the resurrection day.

God's Promises

Magerova Tatijana Koltakova

Magerova Tatijana Koltakova was born in Arkangelszk, Russia. When she was one year old, her parents emigrated to Estonia. She was reared under Soviet rule by atheists parents. She heard very little about Jesus Christ until she turned 24 years old. She and her husband were married in 1986. Their lives consisted mostly on drugs and alcohol.

Meeting Jesus changed everything. On May 19, 1990, they gave their hearts to Jesus. In 1992, her husband started his ministerial studies at the seminary and became a pastor. Magerova's life has completely changed. Love, joy, and peace, that can only be found in God, now fills her heart. She has three children. She helps her husband serve his churches, and she is director of the Rehabilitation Center for Drug and Alcohol addiction. Today, she has meaning in her life—to rescue fellow human beings.



Sometimes when my husband is away on business, I help him by preaching short sermons. This is one of them.

When I found out that I will have to talk to you this Sabbath, I had to think long: What am I going to talk about? What serious and important questions can we discuss and study? Many topics came to my mind, but I decided against them. Problems in our church urged me to find something appropriate and timely. I wouldn't want to waste your time. I wanted my talk to be useful and supportive. Then I remembered something that we definitely should talk about. And not just talk about, but also study, discuss, and work on it together. The lesson that we had three weeks ago made me think of that. The lesson helped us discover how poor we are and why. How many trials we have in our lives. Why we lose our way in life's troubles, retreat, and fall. I am going to talk about it again, because we are indeed poor. And you know what we lack the most? God's promises. It's not that there aren't enough. The Bible is full of them, but we are too lazy to discover them.

One brother told me once: "Show them to me, and I'll recognize them." As sad as it may sound, he won't! And you know why? Let me tell you a story, and you make the conclusion. There is a great book by John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, which contains a number of wonderful

stories. I will tell you one of them. The pilgrim's trip to the Celestial City was nearing the end. He had to endure many trials, but he overcame them with God's help. However, he was losing his strength and getting tired. He looked ahead of him, and all he could see was the same old road: the same stone that made his feet bleed. Suddenly he saw another path paralleling his path covered with soft green grass. The Pilgrim thought to himself, "Why don't I use the grassy path? My feet will rest a little. I will regain my strength, and the hard stony road will still be there—it's so close, and it isn't going anywhere." So as he stepped off the straight path onto the grassy path. The day finished and the night covered everything with darkness, and he lost sight of the trail. When the sun came up, the pilgrim saw something he didn't like too much. Ahead of him was an enormous castle. In front of it there was a huge tree with a giant resting underneath it, surrounded by a field covered with human remains. The pilgrim was terrified and was ready to run as the giant woke up. He grabbed the traveler and took him to his castle. The castle was called Doubting Castle and the giant, Despair, lived there with his wife, Diffidence. They had killed many poor the pilgrims that didn't make it to the Celestial City. And now our pilgrim was there. The giant threw him in a dark, damp dungeon and locked the door.

The giant's wife was a wicked woman. Every day she sent her husband to the pilgrim to beat him, in order to make him commit suicide, as others did. Seeing that their efforts didn't pay off, they decided to kill the pilgrim. They told him he would be dead in the morning.

The pilgrim tried everything to get out of his prison, but all his efforts were in vain. He was especially afraid of the huge lock on the door, that he never thought he could open. He was about to give up. He fell on his knees and prayed until dawn. When the sun was coming up, in joyous astonishment, he realized that he had the key named "promise," which would certainly open every door in Doubting Castle.

Christian took the key out and tried it. The door opened immediately. Then he walked to the door leading out into the courtyard, and that door opened as well. Finally, he approached the iron gate. It took a little effort, but the key opened the gate as well. He got out and ran away as fast as he could. When he reached the end of the giant's land, he set up a pillar with an engraving saying, "Over that stile is the way to the Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the King of the Celestial Country, and seeks to destroy his holy pilgrims." Many people passed that place, read the sign, and escaped danger.

How many of us have found ourselves in a Doubting Castle? How many of us have been beaten by Giant Despair and discouraged by Diffidence? Perhaps some of us are still facing that kind of a situation. And if that happens, we should have our keys ready. So today I am not offering you a sermon, I want to find these keys, acquire them together with you through the study of God's word. Of course we won't be able to find all 5,700 keys (that's how many promises there are in the Bible). But

we can begin something you can continue at home.

The essence of the promises is that God promises to always be with us. His presence, His strength, His courage are the guarantee of our success in this struggle. And every time God calls us to be strong as we struggle with temptations, as we fight the enemy. With the call, He includes the words of promise. What is a promise? It is a promise to help. God doesn't call us to show courage through our positive thinking. Our courage, and later our victory, will come not from our strength, but because we accept God's promises.

If we are struck by sadness, we always can ask Him and be comforted by Him. Our faith in a personal God plants peace in our hearts and helps us become physically strong. Notice how children, who are afraid of darkness, sleep peacefully if they know that their parents are near. It doesn't make the room any less dark, but the very presence of their parents shatters the fear and comforts the child.

Speaking of courage, Ellen White always ties it with faith in God's promises: "I am telling you again: be courageous! Depend on the Lord, don't let the enemy take God's promises away."

So, what are God's promises?

2 Peter 1:3, 4 says: "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

His promises can fulfill our every need—spiritual and physical. Not one of His promises is in vain. Everything that God promised, He will do, because He is faithful. But

we should know that the enemy won't just sit there idly and watch you grow stronger in God. His efforts will be aimed at leading you off the straight path. You will begin to have doubts about God's love; you might think His promises belong to someone else, but not to you. Satan will try to place you in Job's situation. But read the pages of the Bible and listen carefully. In His promises, God speaks to us directly as if we were to hear His voice. Every promise given by the Lord belongs to us. They are yours and mine today. And you know why? Let's look at another promise:

Matthew 10:30, "And even the very hairs on your head are all numbered."

Jesus knows all of us by name. He knows the town we live in, the street, the house, and all our problems become His problems if we trust Him. He knows every one of us because He died for every one of us and paid with His blood for every one of us. Let's look at Acts 10:5, 6. Here Luke describes the angel's instructions given to Cornelius. Note how close God was with Peter, how well he knew him. He called him by his nickname, Simon Peter. Our Heavenly Father also gave the map of his journey. He knew that at the time Peter was in Joppa. God, who takes care of all the needs of humanity, didn't lose sight of any of his children. In fact, he gave Cornelius the address of Peter: "Simon, the tanner, whose house is by the sea." Even more impressive is His knowledge of our characters and His caring, when we remember the words "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." There is nothing about our lives He doesn't know.

Nancy, an old Scottish woman, was terminally ill in bed. Next to her laid a worn out copy of the Bible. One day a visitor came to see Nancy and asked, "What if after all your reading and prayers God won't keep His

promises and you will die?" What would you say? Astonished by such a thought, she put her hand on the precious book and replied, "My dear, it would be a great loss to God too. Poor Nancy would lose her soul, and that would be awful, but God also would lose His honor. Didn't I trust His promises completely? If He broke them, He would become a liar . . ." She continued after a short pause, "But you have no need to worry, because God can't let me down. All his promises are true. He will keep them all."

An apostle says, that we can trust every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He gave His only son to the world for the people to talk to and communicate with. Numerous times Christ demonstrated His strength as He performed miracles, as He helped people physically and spiritually. People saw that as the display of His godliness. Based on that Paul says that Christ, whom people saw and heard, is faithful, and He will fulfill all the promises given to us by His Father.

The next promise that we'll look at is written in Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things. And His other promise is in Ephesians 3:20, 21. It says that God will fulfill His promises in ways that we can't even imagine. Jesus Christ came to this world to serve humanity as its Savior. He had to fulfill every need of the people. He not only had to die for our sins, but he also had to take on all of our weaknesses and sicknesses. Let's go to Matthew 8:16, 17. During his time on earth, Jesus helped people in various circumstances. People were healed individually and by thousands. In every city, town, or village that He visited, He laid His hands on people and healed them. The Savior came to this world to

bring abundant life. But His mission wasn't completed on earth. He still takes over our burdens and sicknesses and gives us strength.

In 3 John 2, we can see how God is interested in physical as well as spiritual well being of His people. Through His word and the voice of prophecy, the Lord gave us the main principles, that will help us feel good when we are healthy, and get better faster when we are sick. That's where the right diet plays an important role.

And of course, the Bible demonstrates a close connection between physical and spiritual well being. It

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is shown in Exodus 15:26. "1) If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God, and 2) do that what is right in his eyes, 3) if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you." And of course all of you know the wonderful power of prayer. Our church has special prayers for those who are sick, for those who are in need, for those who are in the hospital. And the Bible encourages us to do that.

Nowadays many people are sick because their hearts aren't at peace. There are three types of questions that they ask: 1) What are we going to eat?

2) What are we going to drink?
3) What are we going to wear? Too bad they don't have the promise given in Matthew 6:30-32. God knows our every need and takes care of it. But He reminds us that taking care of those needs shouldn't be our primary goal. He calls us, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).

Do you want to be certain about your future? Then take the promise from Psalms. Of course, God does not always reward His children with material gifts, but God will be with His people when they are in need and will help them. I want to quote from Isaiah 33:16, "This is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him."

Now I want to tell you about a promise that we cannot ignore because I know how often people complain about their financial problems and blame God for not providing visible support. Often I ask them a question that uncovers their problem: "How are you doing with tithe?" Listen to this promise. It promises to open windows in heaven but it has one condition (Malachi 3:10). It's up to us to bring all tithe and test the Lord. It's up to Him to open the floodgates of heaven. Test the Lord today! But make sure that you brought all tithe to Him. Then, as we read further, the crops in your garden will be safe.

Look how many promises assuring God's love we've heard! Do you still have questions? Do you still wonder: "I am not sure if God hears me." This could become quite a problem but I want to assure you, based on the Bible, that God does hear you. I don't want you to even have thoughts of doubt. God has been helping people since the time of patriarchs and prophets. I want the God of

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be your personal God. His ear hears you, and His hand takes away all your problems. Read Isaiah 59:1.

And I am saying with certainty that God will not leave you alone on the battlefield facing your enemy. God sends angels to make every one of us so they can serve us. And what do we do? Why do we cry and moan when temptations come? Why don't we use that strength? If we only asked, the whole army of angels will be there ready to support us. But we don't.


I realize that the struggle we have entered isn't easy. Every one of us has experienced the feeling of loss and betrayal. That's why every one of us seeks a fortress where we can find the guarantee of protection and safety. We want to be protected from war, fear, danger, persecution. Only God can give us that guarantee. Look at David. A man betrayed him. He was betrayed by his son, had to escape, and the man he respected was after him. My dear sisters, this could very easily be our situation. What are we going to do then? Fall down? Evil has no limit. Today people in the world rely on nuclear weapons, rockets, airplanes, armies, and money. But I want to join David in saying that the freedom will come. The Bible is not just a historical record about this, that and the other. It is a record of experiences of the people who relied on God's promises. You all remember the three young men in Babylon. It took amazing courage to talk like that to the king. They stood in front of him as foreigners and as prisoners. But their eyes looked above the throne, they only saw the King that they served, that's why their response to the king was quite blunt. They didn't compromise and they didn't show any doubt (Dan. 3:16, 17).

When I sat down to get ready for this sermon, I opened the book of Psalms and realized how limited our

time would be. I can't share even a small part of God's promises. The Psalms are wonderful. Every one of them strengthens the soul. Turn to them, whatever your need, God's word has a promise; it will fulfill your need. The Lord promised to take care of all your needs according to His riches. Are you asking for forgiveness? "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (Isa. 43:25). Perhaps there is doubt in your heart whether the Lord will accept you with your sinful past. Then think about these words of the Savior: "... whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). God has accepted us through His beloved son, for Christ came to seek and save the lost. We should never doubt His promises. Are you asking for peace and happiness? They will certainly come to all of us. Read this again, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7). The problem is, the promises aren't yours until you make an effort to get them out of the Bible. If you don't use them, they won't help your spiritual growth and they won't strengthen you. Seek them for yourselves, like treasures in a cave.

I am remembering a story of a woman, whose life was nearing the end. She told about her hard life, how she found Christ, how she got the Bible, about the troubles in her life and how God was always with her to help, and she learned to trust Him. She decided to test every promise of God. As it proved to be true, she placed a little cross next to the text in her Bible. What do you think her Bible looked like? When her children opened her Bible, they saw the whole book covered with crosses. This woman had collected great riches in heaven. Her face expressed peace, calm, and great joy.

We all have a need for that. It's up to you, where you find it. Jesus tells us about one great promise that the whole humanity has longed for for centuries, the promise of eternal life. But not everybody understands that it's all found only in God alone.

A missionary came to India where he preached about life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. An elderly woman attended every one of his sermons. At every meeting, every time the preacher said that Jesus had risen, she stood up, raised her hands, and shouted, "Hallelujah!" First the preacher regarded it with patience, but as she kept doing it throughout all of his sermons, it started to bother him. He decided to talk to her in private and ask her to restrict herself in her emotions. The woman promised not to do that anymore, but the next time the preacher said, "Jesus has risen," she again shouted "Hallelujah!" Then the missionary decided to visit her at home. When he saw how poor her house was, he asked her what it was that she needed the most. She replied: "I have to sleep on a straw mat. I don't even have a blanket." The preacher decided to make an agreement with her: he would give her a nice warm blanket if she stopped shouting during his sermons. The woman agreed. Happy, the preacher went home. At his next sermon, he talked about how Jesus lived and what he did for the people, and how cruel the people were to him. He talked about the redemption of all humans on the cross, and about the sacrifice that God gave. He told how God didn't leave Jesus lying in His grave but resurrected Him on the third day. At this moment, the elderly woman, excited and with tears in her eyes, got up and exclaimed: "Forget the blanket! Hallelujah! Amen!" 

Texts in this article are from NIV.

The Power of Roots

Mareike Senn-Grossberger



The root is a part of a plant that is usually hidden underground. It is the so-called ugly part that will not bloom or produce leaves and thus is better kept out of sight. Am I right? Are roots important?

Why does a plant need roots? Roots are anchors, they provide nutrition and absorb water and even store nutrients and energy. Roots play an important role in the life of a plant.

But how does a root function? How can it absorb water? Is there a pump or suction system somewhere?

The secret of the root is called "osmosis." What does this word mean? Let us imagine two cavities filled with water, separated only by a thin wall. Somebody has put some salt into one of these cavities. The wall is like a very fine filter with

pores so tiny only water can pass through them. Of course, the dissolved salt can't pass through the wall. But now the molecules have a basic need to disperse homogeneously. They want equality or harmony. Different levels of concentration are something they detest. But now the filter is their barrier (otherwise the salt particles would cross over to the unsalted cavity until there is an equal amount of salt in both) and they have to solve their problem in another way: the water from the saltless cavity is transported through the filter into the salty cavity and dilutes the salt content until the concentration on both sides is the same. Now one cavity has more water than the other, but the molecules are content. In other words, the concentrated solution sucks up the water.

Thus it is important that the cell fluid of the roots has a higher salt concentration than its surroundings. The root can only absorb water and pass it on if this is so. It is the salt that makes the water enter the roots. The root becomes "attractive" to its surroundings through salt.


Matthew 5:13 says, "You are the salt of the earth." Does Jesus mean that our lives will be so full of salt through Him that it will be attractive to those around us?

Osmosis can only happen in the direct surroundings, in the contact zone. It doesn't work through thick walls. The Ficus Benjamin in my husband's office will hardly get its water from the Scottish Highlands or the Fiji Islands.

In order to be attractive as Christians, we have to fulfil a basic requirement, we must get close to people. We have to pull down our fortifications and allow contact. Yes, even seek contact. We have to offer an "exchange area" in order to permit something to get close to us, to touch us. Christ's salt in us can make this happen.

A little plant has a lot of work to do to live and produce fruit. Did you know that the roots of a single wheat plant would be 80 kilometers long if we put them in a row? Eighty kilometers! For one plant! How many grains will it produce? A pinch of flour?

Are we prepared to go to as much trouble for just a little bit of fruit? Are we willing to make the effort and expend the energy it takes to grow strong roots even if the fruits of our labor may seem small?

Just as the root is hidden in the soil, others will not be able to judge how much effort goes into growing our roots, but be assured, the effects will be great. 

Mareike Senn-Grossberger and her husband, Pastor Manfred Senn, live and minister in Winterthur, Switzerland. Mareike attends the University of Innsbruck and plans to graduate as a medical doctor this year. She is also an artist. Her illustrations can be seen in the youth lessons, health magazines and promotions for children's activities.

Tumbleweeds and Other Needs

Annette Rice



When you have been in a faith ministry for thirty-four years you experience many ups and downs. A faith ministry depends on the giving of others. My husband, the evangelist, gets love offerings for preaching and frankly sometimes the people do not love him very much. We depend on those love offerings and the monthly giving of churches and others for our very existence. If giving is down, then naturally our finances are down. We pay all the expenses of the ministry and live on what is left.

Although I know that God is faithful and He will not let me down nor throw me a curve, sometimes I feel He is really pushing the "faith thing".

Like what happens when unexpected expenses take half of your monthly giving during the first week of the month? That leaves a long, long trail awinding before the first of the next month rolls around. You realize you can't even afford to have a cold!

The ole brain kicks into overdrive thinking of ways to tighten an already tightened belt, cut down on food expense, gas expense, laundry

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expense, and any expense that is not absolutely essential to breathing. No Sunday paper, no desserts, soda, or chips would be on the grocery list. **No ice cream!** Are you aware of the fact that you can live an entire month without **ice cream**? Well, you just have to sacrifice some things in order to keep basics in the house.

Then there is the "no more hair spray thing!" After about a week, there were no good hair days. I tried barrettes, hair bands, and even baseball caps, but all in all, it was pretty frightening. I tried to maintain the attitude that there was some redemptive power in *clean* hair.

And, there is the "Old Mother Hubbard went to her cupboard and found all the stuff that no one wants to eat and you wonder why you ever bought it in the first place thing." Not to mention watching the expressions on your family's faces when they see the rather strange combination of food you are serving for dinner. I tried the "think of all the starving people in Africa" speeches. Facial expressions remained the same. I tried, "It's not so bad eating beans and beets, they are really good for you." Facial expressions remained the same. I tried "mystery meat is not so bad." Facial expressions remained the same. Finally I said in exasperated Christian love, "This is it, eat it, or leave it! But if you leave it, most likely it will turn up in another form at your next meal."

All in all everyone kept pleasant about the shortages and were even helpful with suggestions like "let's go to McDonalds!" It was hard giving up all that grease and artery clogging cholesterol for several weeks. Wow, these addictions can really get a hold on your appetite!

I was absolutely elated to find that on the last day of the month we actually had \$29 in our bank account. How *did* we do that?

On the first of the next month, my son, Peter, called me at the office. He said, "Mom, are you going to the grocery store today?" I assured him that I was, and asked him why he wanted to know.

"Well," he replied, "I opened the refrigerator door and a tumbleweed rolled out." I love how young people perceive life. The refrigerator had been an empty, barren wasteland for so long, that in his way of thinking, tumbleweeds had appeared and were rolling about.

But, God is faithful! It is amazing to experience how much you can actually do without!

"Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning

new mercies I see;

All I have needed,

Thy hand hath provided—

Great is Thy faithfulness,

Lord, unto me!"

—Thomas O. Chisholm


Does God Still Speak to People?



Author Unknown

A young man had been to Wednesday night Bible Study. The pastor had shared about listening to God and obeying the Lord's voice. The young man couldn't help but wonder, "Does God still speak to people?" After service he went out with some friends for coffee and pie and they discussed the message. Several different ones talked about how God had led them in different ways. It was about ten o'clock when the young man started driving home. Sitting in his car, he just began to pray, "God, if you will listen, I will do my best to obey." As he drove down the main street of his town, he had the strangest thought to stop and buy a gallon of milk. He shook his head and said aloud, "God is that you?" He didn't get a reply and started on toward home. But again the thought to stop and buy a gallon of milk. The young man thought about Samuel and how he didn't recognize the voice of God and how little Samuel ran to Eli. "Okay, God, in case that is you, I will buy the milk." It didn't seem like too hard a test of obedience. He could always use the milk. He stopped and purchased the gallon of milk and started off toward home. As he passed Seventh Street, he again felt the urge, "Turn down that street." This is crazy, he thought, and drove

on past the intersection. Again, he felt that he should turn down Seventh Street. At the next intersection, he turned back and headed down Seventh. Half jokingly, he said out loud, "Okay, God, I will." He drove several blocks, when suddenly, he felt like he should stop. He pulled over to the curb and looked around. He was in a semi-commercial area of town. It wasn't the best but it wasn't the worst of neighborhoods either. The businesses were closed and most of the houses looked dark like the people of the houses were already in bed. Again, he sensed something, "Go and give the milk to the people in the house across the street." The young man looked at the house. It was dark and it looked like the people were already asleep. He started to open the door and then sat back in the car seat. "Lord, this is insane. Those people are asleep and if I wake them up, they are going to be mad and I will look stupid." Again, he felt like he should go and give the milk. Finally, he opened the door, "Okay God, if this is you, I will go to the door and I will give them the milk. If you want me to look like a crazy person, okay. I want to be obedient. I guess that will count for something but if they don't answer right away, I am out of here." He walked across the street and rang the bell. He could

hear some noise inside. A man's voice yelled out, "Who is it? What do you want?" Then the door opened before the young man could get away. The man was standing there in his jeans and t-shirt. He looked like he just got out of bed. He had a strange look on his face and he didn't seem too happy to have some stranger standing on his doorstep. "What is it?" The young man thrust out the gallon of milk, "Here, I brought this for you." The man took the milk and rushed down a hallway speaking loudly in Spanish. Then from down the hall came a woman carrying the milk toward the kitchen. The man was following her holding a baby. The baby was crying. The man had tears streaming down his face. The man began speaking and half crying, "We were just praying. We had some big bills this month and we ran out of money. We didn't have any milk for our baby. I was just praying and asking God to show me how to get some milk." His wife in the kitchen yelled out, "I asked him to send an Angel with some. Are you an Angel?" The young man reached into his wallet and pulled out all the money he had on him and put it in the man's hand. He turned and walked back toward his car and the tears were streaming down his face. He knew that God still answers prayers. 

Prevailing Winds for Growth

Frankie Roland

Frankie Roland is a retired teacher and pastor's wife. She enjoys cooking, sewing, reading, walking and fishing.



I noticed right off that the young trees in the parsonage yard were leaning to one side instead of standing up straight. Looking closer I saw they were tied to lean that way!

We had just moved to the parsonage in Kansas and I went straight to my husband with this information. He was not sure why the tree was tied that way so he asked for an explanation from a church trustee. Bill looked at him sort of funny and then, realizing my husband was serious, started to explain.

In Kansas, he said, all trees are planted two degrees to the south. There is a constant, prevailing wind that blows from this direction. If a tree is not carefully tended to and staked the two degrees south of straight it will most likely grow up crooked, leaning to the north and looking like a hard wind is blowing it at all times.

I began to think of the young children in my home. They were like trees, I thought, sprouting up almost overnight. I wondered what the prevailing winds were that blew on them. What were the stakes that held them, the water and sun that made them grow?

My children had the concern, prayer, and influence of parents but

because they were part of a minister's family, they also were cared for by godly church leaders on all levels from local to District to General.

I thought of the prevailing influence of teachers, both at public schools, and later on, at a church college. The prevailing influence of godly counselors at church camp had also been of great value.

Then there was the influence of the children themselves on each other. Individual differences were quickly laid aside if any of the four siblings had a problem. No doubt, the influence of the older two had a profound influence on the younger children.

I then began to examine the other side of the prevailing winds. If the sapling is left not staked and not planted the two degrees to the south, it will surely lean to the north instead of standing straight. The root system will not be as sturdy on this tree and heavy winds will uproot it in a storm.

Again I made the comparison to my children.

There were the battles over "but everyone else gets to!" This usually means one other person. The complaining of church attendance was another battle, especially if few young people attended. We had to

take our stand a few times in places we have lived to keep Wednesday night "church night." No Sunday evening baseball make-up games were played in our town either because Christian parents guarded and nurtured the children.

I thought of the prevailing winds of selfishness I had seen at times in my children's peers and I had wanted to say, "Hey, you need a missionary family to pray for. You need to feel burdened to give the money you've saved for a new bike to a home missionary project; a home for wayward teens or a prison ministry."

Clearly the prevailing winds of the godly concern and influence of Christian people help to straighten young saplings of children to perfection.

The mission of the church has been a great factor in shaping the lives of our children. The Home Missions, Foreign Missions programs, camps, and the privilege to serve, have all had a bearing on the growth of our children. Prayer and gentle nurturing in the home, godly advice and love have been the fertilizer to the growing trees.

All this is weighed against the prevailing winds of the unrighteous, the worldly influence and the evil forces Satan throws across their pathways. It is, in finality, a losing battle for Satan.

The child takes all the prevailing winds of good and grows straight to Christian adulthood. He or she becomes a steward in the church, a servant to God and to humanity.

As the growth is completed there is no crooked leaning to the north. The roots are solid and the spine is straight.

I have learned many things from "The People of the South Wind" during the 15 years we lived in Kansas. How to plant trees is just one of them.

As the sapling is staked, so grows the tree.

Questions of a Velveteen Woman

Brenda Waggoner



If we want things fixed, nailed down, and all figured out, living with questions will be miserable. Family therapist Virginia Satir so aptly stated, "Most people prefer the certainty of misery to the misery of uncertainty." But if we can get comfortable not having answers today, and get on with embracing the questions themselves, we can begin to relax and live in freedom.

My search for a love that was powerful enough to transform life began with the question "What is Real?" Asking that question opened the door, and relationships with friends became more transparent. A few seemed to hold little substance and fell by the wayside. I began to feel more alive.

The questions I once held back: "Do You love me?" "Why couldn't my marriage be saved?" "How can You forgive me when I've made so many mistakes?" were now being recognized, explored, occasionally pondered, and deeply valued. But they weren't always answered. As this realization began to creep into awareness, my once black-and-white life took on hues of Technicolor, one

Brenda is married to Frank and has two grown sons and a stepson. She is a licensed counselor practicing in Greenville, Texas who enjoys music, and just being real.

Excerpts taken from The Velveteen Woman by Brenda Waggoner, Chariot Victor Publishing.

after another. I began to relax. Questions could be asked, but they no longer drove me crazy. When I asked, "How long, O Lord, must I bear this burden?"

He might respond, "Long enough."
"Oh. Okay."

At last I began to recognize God's sovereignty as the most adequate of all answers. His presence as my main source of security. When I was a little girl about six or seven, I used to sit beside my dad in his rocking chair while he watched television. Dad was hard of hearing, so the volume was usually turned way up, and he often watched sports or political reviews, and I wasn't really interested in the programs. I just loved sitting beside my dad in his favorite chair. It was as if nothing in the world could harm me as I sat in the security of my dad's presence, snuggling close to his heart.

I think perhaps this is how it is with God. We learn to relax by His side even as we hold our unanswered questions. Knowing that He knows the answer is enough. This is a part of the mystery of life with God. It's His presence—sitting close to His heart—that brings security, not knowing every answer to life's unending questions. Like a child resting her head on her mother's breast, we learn to rest contentedly on our Master's chest.



Shepherdess International News

Euro-Asia Division

✿ Galina Stele, Shepherdess Coordinator, reports Shepherdess events with these pictures:



Some participants of the Shepherdess/ Ministerial Congress in front of the church



Participants during the seminar



Working in small groups



Working in small groups



Blessing of the children was also scheduled during the Congress



Part of the Ministerial/Shepherdess Congress in Moldova



The choir at the conference



Many young pastors' wives. Some of which are from the program 300/300/300

North American Division

✿ The Southeastern Conference Shepherdess organization is active. Sandra Taylor, president of the group and Renee White, newsletter editor, regularly keep communication channels open through the Shepherdess newsletter and events.

✿ Wisconsin pastors wives held their annual retreat at Camp Wakonda. Clear skies and warm temperatures welcomed the ladies as they settled into the lodges. Each wife helps to provide meaningful ministry by the side of her husband and often her role goes unnoticed and perhaps unappreciated. So, the Wisconsin Conference administration has established this event to say "thank you" to each lady, to support her in her role, and to provide an opportunity for fellowship and bonding with the other ladies on the team.

Cheryl Retzer was the guest speaker. She talked about issues such as devotional life, support to the ministry and the importance of prayer in our efforts to be who God wants us to be. Her "down to earth" presentations were greatly appreciated. Phyllis Corkum is the facilitator for the event and Susan Boone, Sue Pehler and Pat Rucinski also led out in the activities.

✿ Southern College has revitalized their theology wives organization. Ron Clouzet, dean, reports that led



Southern Adventist University ministerial student wives

by a visionary president, Teresa Gonzalez, the WTS (Wives of Theology Students) has been a flurry of activities since its resurrection last fall. Margarida Sarli from the General Conference Ministerial Association conducted two seminars on the role of the pastor's wife and family. They now have a Bible study and prayer group every Sunday night, and they have organized family outings with their husbands and children. Dr. Clouzet reports that WTS is largely funded by the School of Religion and fulfills a wonderfully-needed role in the spiritual and intellectual preparation and emotional support of ministerial spouses.

"They need not wait to see what is 'out there' after their student husbands are hired in the field, they can prepare today for the work they will do tomorrow."

✦ Retired clergy families met in Pine Springs Ranch for their annual retreat. Organized by Dr. John Rhodes of the Southeastern California Conference, these dedicated couples



Elder Purdie leads the music at the Southeastern California Conference retired clergy families retreat



Retirees enjoying the presentation

enjoyed a delightful time in the beautiful mountains.

South American Division

✦ The Chili Union held their first Shepherdess retreat in 10 years during the meetings for their quinquennial session. Over 200 pastors wives came together at the University



Logo for the Shepherdess retreat in Chile



A pastoral couple prays together at the Shepherdess retreat in Chile

to experience fellowship and nurture. Evelyn Nagel, Division AFAM Coordinator and Soledad Sanchez, Union Shepherdess leader, organized the event. Dr. and Mrs. Estrada from Brazil and Sharon Cress from the General Conference were guest speakers. Magnificent views of the



John Rhodes organized the retired clergy family retreat in California



Pastoral wives sing praise songs in Chile



Soledad Sanchez, Mrs. Cardoso of Brazil and a pastoral wife led out



Evelyn Nagel, South American Division AFAM Coordinator



An ordination ceremony was a highlight of the meetings in Chile

Andes Mountains and warm sunny days set the natural beauty for this spiritual retreat.

South Pacific Division

✿ A recent survey in the North New Zealand Conference indicated a high degree of involvement in what could be considered the core tasks of a minister: church-visitation, counseling, administration, and preaching sermons. Tracie Mafil'o (a member of the executive committee) who administered the survey, says it was clear that spouses were undertaking an integral and significant amount of ministry. "This unpaid work needs to be valued and recognised," she said.

Southern Africa Indian Ocean Division

✿ The Trans-Orange Conference held a retreat for adult pastors children.

Pastor S. L. Mautia, Ministerial Secretary for the Conference, organized the event. The theme was "Putting Things Together". The objectives for this event were (1) to bring pastor's children together, (2) to nurture and uplift them spiritually, and (3) to identify them. Twenty-seven children attended the event. The ages of the attendees ranged from 20-60 years. The mood of the meeting at the beginning was tense and emotional. A nine-page report on "Reflections on Stories of Faith, Betrayal and Survival" was released. When all the stories that could be told had been told, when all the tears that were shed dried up, they resolved: (1) to recommit their lives to God and the church, (2) to support their parents, and (3) to support and develop each other.

✿ Zimbabwe Union Conference reports a Shepherdess effort in Crowborough North Church, Harare. After three weeks of preaching and visitation, 27 people decided to give

their lives to Christ and 22 were baptized. Shepherdess led efforts brought 119 souls to Jesus in the West and through a Guest-day at Makokoba church, 50 visitors were welcomed and given literature which will introduce them to Jesus. The University is developing a strong program to educate the Shepherdess wives of ministerial students on campus.

✿ Mrs. R. Juwa from Central Malawi Field reports conducting health seminars on "symptoms of cancer." One woman was discovered to have the early symptoms and received early diagnosis which saved her life.

✿ Mrs. Edith Kahiigwa Abwooli of the Western Uganda Field reports conducting a Family Life Seminar for the Shepherdesses and seminars on the uses of herbs in reducing diseases.

✿ Mrs. A. F. Ng'ambi reports a Cooking and Sewing Class which attracted village women to attend. They seek our prayers in their efforts.

Southern Asia Division

✿ The Kulamavu tailoring school came to reality through the Shepherdess International Cookbook funding projects. At present 12 families are benefitting from this project. Mrs. Usha Suresh Babu and



Tailoring school ladies with their gift Bibles learning sewing and salvation

her team are giving Bible studies to 20 ladies connected with this program. God's word is being taught every day in the institute as well as to the interested people around the building.

✿ The West India Field organized two 3-day meetings in August. One for Gujarat Conference held at Maninagar and another for Maharashtra held at Salisbury Park, Pune, West India Field Headquarters. The topics presented were "Women's Involvement in Ministry", "Small



Gujarat Conference pastors' wives who attended the meetings



Gujarat Conference group discussion



Hepzibah Kore (right) and Kalpona Rao, translator at the Gujarat Conference meetings

Group Ministries”, “Giving Bible Studies”, “Discipleship” and “Health Issues.” Mrs. Hepzibah Kore, Shepherdess Coordinator for the Division, conducted most of the seminars. Small group discussions enhanced the presentations.



Pastors wives who attended the seminar in Pune



Ordination at the South India Union



Mrs. Hepzibah Kore (blue and pink sari) with the Shepherdess at their husbands' ordination

✿ Mrs. Suman Khajekar, the founder and instructor of the Jalna Tailoring School, which was the first Shepherdess Cookbook Project, sends us the following pictures which tell a story of God's work through her to lead women to Jesus.



Mrs. Khajekar, center, with two of her helpers at the Tailoring Center



Mrs. Suman Khajekar, far right in red and white sari, and Pastor B. S. Khajekar, far left, with 25 of their baptisms from the Tailoring Center

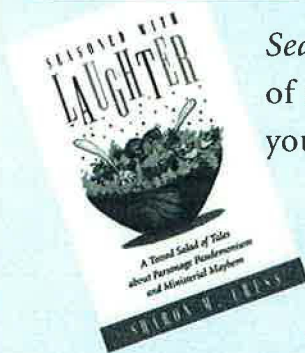


Pastor B. S. Khajekar baptizes a girl who learned about Jesus and tailoring. Mrs. Khajekar is sitting at right



Pastor Khajekar baptizes a precious woman who found Jesus at the Tailoring School

*“A cheerful heart is good medicine”
Prov. 17:22 NIV.*



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