



# The Journal

A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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*Human love may change, but God's love knows no change. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Circumstances may separate friends; the broad waters of the ocean may roll between them; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the love of God. "I am persuaded," Paul declares, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

*ST, July 13, 1904, par. 7*

# The Journal



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## Editor's Musings

As you opened this issue of the *Journal*, you found a new layout and design. A new quinquennium and a new year seemed the appropriate time to freshen our look. One thing in life is certain and that is change. We are experiencing a hearty dose of change here at Shepherdess International, the Ministry to Clergy Families.

First, Ann Taylor, who has creatively laid out the magazine for the past 13 years has accepted a full-time position in presidential. We want to publically thank you, Ann, for the good run. Despite your move to the West Coast and back to D.C. you diligently kept on track and on time with the magazine deadlines. Thank you. We miss you.

Secondly, Mary Fowler, who has diligently worked to make sure that the minute the magazine arrived from the printers, it was faithfully prepared for mailing, is retiring. The stacks of boxes that filled your tiny office made it nearly impossible to move at times, but you never complained. You made sure that ministry wives from Maine to Madagascar quickly received their *Journals*. We know already that we will miss you, Mary.

Thirdly, we have several changes in our Shepherdess Division Coordinators around the world. You will see several of them listed below and as soon as all are appointed and in place we look forward to introducing them to you. To those of you who are moving on from this responsibility to new ventures, we love you and wish you well. To those of you joining us, welcome to the greatest job you will ever have.

How are we coping with all this change? Shelly has assumed the awesome responsibility of layout for the magazine (thank you, Shelly!) and we are in the process of organizing the mailing. In March the division coordinators will meet in Washington and set the course for the next five years. And, I am so fortunate to serve the greatest group of women in the world.

Happy New Year, and God bless you every one.

#### Ministry to Clergy Spouses Division Coordinators

East-Central Africa—To be appointed	South American—Evelyn Nagel and Wiliane Marroni
Euro-Africa—Maevie Maurer	South Pacific—Merrilyn Webster
Euro-Asia—Galina Stele	Southern Asia—Hepzibah Kore
Inter-American—Gloria Trotman	Southern Asia-Pacific—Helen Gulfan
North American—Marti Schneider	Trans-European—Anne-May Wollan
Northern Asia-Pacific—Sally Lam-Phoon	West-Central Africa—To be appointed

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# Transformed by Grace for Daily Living



**Galina Steele**

*Galina I. Steele has a D. Min. from Andrews University. She was a Professor at Zaokski SDA Theological Seminary for more than ten years, and currently works as Shepherdess Coordinator for the Euro-Asia Division and director of Resource center of Institute of Missiology. Galina is married, with one adult son. She likes reading, teaching and gardening.*

A woman's daily life consists of many different responsibilities—housework, cooking, job responsibilities, children, husband, garden, ministry in the church, and so on. Yes, there are also some opportunities: Every day we can become somebody we were not yesterday. We can grow in every aspect, reach higher, do better, and accomplish more.

Daily living can also deal with the following questions: What is more difficult—daily routine or heroism in an extreme situation? Where is more love—in one act of love or in the devoted life of everyday living? And where can one take enough strength for daily living? Let us look at our life from the perspective of one book in the Bible.

## Daily Living as our Pilgrimage Back Home

There is a book in the Bible with a beautiful woman's name. It stands as a rose in a garden of biblical stories and books. This small book reveals the joys and sorrows of a woman's life, its sweetness and bitterness. It is about affection and relationships, domestic life, decisions, and Providence.

## Names

This book starts with the story of one Jewish family, the family of Elimelech. We know that in those times and in that culture, names were given with a purpose. Let us introduce the main heroes of this story.

The names of both the husband and the wife had strong connections to God. Elimelech means "God is King," Naomi – "God is sweet."

We can assume that their parents were godly people. And we can infer even more. It seems that Naomi's parents had a beautiful atmosphere in their home, sweet relationships. And when a girl was born, they decided that her name should manifest that God is sweet, as well as the lives of those who believe in Him. Interestingly enough, this girl really did spread the sweetness of His character in her life, despite the bitterness of her destiny.

There were two sons in this family. Although there are different opinions of the meaning of their names, it is obvious that they are not of religious origin. Perhaps they were common in those times with no particular meaning as many names are today. Or maybe they reflected the fragile nature of the boys. Mahlon may have originated from the meaning "tender in health," "sickliness," "tender in heart." Hileon—"consumption," "consume," "to complete." However, the names contained a prophetic picture of their life. They died at a young age, several years after their marriages.

Orpah could mean "neck" or "firmness."

Ruth—some possible variations: "a friend," "beauty," "rose."

Boaz—the root of the name was not found. Some suggest that it could have an idea of prosperousness. Obed means "servant" or "to serve."

The book starts with the story of relocation. Elimelech's family—father, mother, and two sons—moved from the city of Bethlehem, which means "House of bread," to the land of Moab to escape famine in Israel. Later in the story, the mother and a daughter-in-law will return back to the "House of

bread.” Our life is a pilgrimage back home. Our daily living is our daily traveling to or from our Bethlehem.

### Stages

In our pilgrimage we pass through all stages of life—childhood, youth, and womanhood.

This story is about all of this. Here we see three wives, three weddings, family happiness, and family sorrow. We see three widows, the birth of a beloved baby, and the happiness of parents and a grandmother. We witness moving, weddings, funerals, widowhood, courtship, engagement.

In this story, we see that our children can make their own decisions about whom to marry. However, the story reveals that girls from a distant land can be also virtuous, devoted, kind, and converted to the religion of their husbands. This story also reveals the terrible truth that we are mortal. Sooner or later, death knocks at our door. Naomi lost her husband and both sons.

Every woman’s worst nightmare happened to her. Of the two genders, women are the weakest—she was a woman. Of women, the weakest is the widow—she became one. Of widows, the most miserable are the old—she was elderly. Of old widows, the poor are the least fortunate—she didn’t have much. Of poor widows, those who have no children have no future—Naomi had none. Of childless widows, those who had children and lost them are the most miserable. It seemed like all possible sorrows climaxed in Naomi’s life. It was a double desolation—a dead husband and two dead sons. And now we see three widows in one house, three widows on one road. Each of them had her own sorrow, her own memories, and her own burden and grief, her unspoken words to her husband and her hidden “Whys?” to the almighty God.

How would you react if you had to start from this very stage—widowhood? Is there any hope, any future? Is there much sense in everyday living? It is interesting to note that the head of the family was gone, but his name was still with them as a promise: “God is King.” This name was a guarantee of a supply and protection. It was like an umbrella covering all three widows under a beautiful slogan. Let’s think about it. Without such a promise, any loss or grief would break us. But with this faith in God as a King of the whole universe and our own lives we can keep moving. The only question is: In what direction?

### Daily Bread and Daily Pilgrimage

We saw Elimelech’s family moving in the beginning

of the story, and after a while there, were three widows going slowly along the road. The beginning of the book reminds me of all of us. We all are in constant motion. Our pilgrimages start from different places. Some are born in religious families and start from Bethlehem, although later they may wander to Moab in order to return again some day to Bethlehem. Others start their journey of life in the land of Moab with an empty or wrong picture of God. But by the mercy of the Lord, they discover truth and the right road along the way. However, both groups will discover that what matters most is their destination, not where they started from. And both groups will discover that all their pilgrimage is to discover more about God, to understand Him more, and to come into full light of His presence.

What is also interesting: Our daily pilgrimage is about a constant search for bread, bread for daily living. Looking for it, we can be so busy that we forget the Bread Divine. Daily bread serves our body. Heavenly bread can feed the soul. With the first, we will hunger again; with the second, we won’t.

Nevertheless, our daily routine is for our daily bread. And sometimes we can be so busy that we do not have a minute to stop and think about, meditate on, or eat the Bread Divine. I think that we can resemble busy bees. Do you know that to produce 100 grams of honey, a honeybee has to visit about 1 million flowers. To produce one kilogram of honey, that bee has to bring 120-150,000 carriages of nectar. We are like honey bees with our many responsibilities in our daily living. We are driven by desire to find our daily bread.

Let us return to our story. Is it not striking that sometimes the city of God’s people with the beautiful name “House of Bread” can be empty of bread? What was the reason? Maybe because the Bread Divine was forgotten? Sometimes we feel that our Bethlehem is empty, and we turn to search in other places as happened with Elimelech’s family. The family set out for Moab. They went from the empty fields of Bethlehem to the full fields of Moab. However, Naomi would say later, “I went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty” (Ruth 1:21). Life brings contrasts. She left the city with a husband and two sons in the full blossom of her womanhood but returned empty.

In our daily pilgrimage, we all are driven by hunger. Hunger can lead us to foreign countries. Hunger can force us to leave the House of Bread, and it leaves us hungry for more and better. This story shows us that we can be hungry for physical bread but at the same time be “full” because we have everything that creates



home. We can come to the city in the time of harvest but “be empty” because our home is gone. Yes, we can fly from famine but not from death. Change of circumstances is a common incident in human life.

Somebody said that one cannot build a house on a bridge. How true, although most of us are trying to do exactly this in our daily pilgrimage. We all, especially women, dream of having a nice house and a sweet home. And sometimes, only when it is swept away by the rolling waves, we realize that we have not yet completed our journey.

Why do we face so many troubles in our journey? Why should we deal with them in our everyday life? Maybe because otherwise we will settle on a bridge or in the land of Moab without completing our journey. Maybe this is why troubles sometimes come wave after wave, to remind us that every home is a tent life. We all are still on the bridge.

But what matters more in our journey? It is the people who create a family for us. With them we have the best that life can give. Because going together with them in our pilgrimage, we carry home with us. There is something worse than famine, worse than moving from a home: It is a loss of those who created home for us. And the book of Ruth is not only about journey, it is about relationships.

We see three widows in their journey to the Promised Land. They were going to the city with foundation and walls where they could find rest. In times of trouble, we have to decide what direction we should turn. Maybe we have to turn to our God Who is our refuge.

## Relationships

The book of Ruth is also about relationships. On this road of life, we have people around us going together with us along the road. Some are going the same direction to Bethlehem, while others go the opposite way—to the land of Moab, as happened with Orpah.

## Art of Good Relationships

The book of Ruth reveals that to establish and preserve good relationships is a true art. We can admire Naomi because it's doubly difficult to have good relationships with people outside your culture and your religion, especially when you live together within one family. But these difficulties can be overcome by kindness and love. And Naomi did it. Her reward? The deep devotion of her daughters-in-law.

The Bible uses an interesting word to describe Ruth's attachment to Naomi—“Ruth clung to her” (1:14).

This word “to cleave” is used in Gen. 2:24 to describe relationships in marriage. It means to be glued as, for example, two sheets of paper can be glued into one. Ruth decided to share her lot with her desolate mother-in-law. We see absolute unselfishness. How did Naomi achieve this? Maybe because she was always ready to recognize their kindness, their good deeds, was quick to encourage them and praise them. She said, “May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me” (1:8).

Maybe because she was always giving them freedom of choice, Ruth witnessed a full confession of love and devotedness. She decided to go to an unknown town by an unknown route to dwell in an unknown home and make it her own. From this example, we see that love and kindness are never in vain. It returns as it happened with Naomi.

In the book of Ruth, we also see the unselfish character of Naomi. She wished her daughters-in-law well, she insisted that they leave her and return back to their parents. She thought more of them than of herself. She also treated Ruth as if she were her daughter. She created and thought through a good plan for her. Good relations are created by thoughtful love that is seeking the good for others.

## Power of Virtuous Character

The book of Ruth draws a picture of two godly and virtuous women: Naomi and Ruth. Ruth was eloquent not only in words but also in her deeds to her mother-in-law. She was careful, devoted. She saved for Naomi a piece of bread from her lunch. She cared. She was also a respectful good worker. Watch her on the field. “She came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been in the house for a little while,” the servant told Boaz (2:6). Her piety and fidelity were recognized by others. “For all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence” (3:11). The price of a virtuous woman is above rubies. God also recognizes our piety and fidelity. It will be compensated even in this life. However, there are some rules to follow to protect our reputations (3:14).

In the book of Ruth, we also see a picture of a godly man. Note Boaz's salutation to the reapers—“May the Lord be with you” and his blessings to Ruth—“May the Lord reward your work and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge” (2:12). Benedictions in our lives reflect piety and our relationships with the Lord. Watch for religious people with pure characters. A good husband is one who respects God and takes good care of his people. We

also see mutual dependence on God both by the master and the workers, who replied, "May the Lord bless you" (2:4). We see their good relations and mutual respect.

### **Mortality and Value of a Home**

As we already mentioned, the book of Ruth teaches us to cherish people who are dear to us because all of us are mortal. This is a book of human mortality. We can build a nice house without people, but we cannot create a nice home without them. Naomi described home with the word "rest." We can conclude that something is wrong when our home is not a "rest" to its family members. Life without a home is not restful. We long to find a place where we can rest from our pilgrimage, happiness that can cover our sorrow, good companionship that will support us in our daily routine. But let us remember that a person can find true rest only in God.

### **Picture of the Lord**

The book of Ruth is also a book where God is pictured in a beautiful way. In our daily pilgrimage, it matters a lot what kind of picture of our God we carry with us along the way. Our theology will shape our attitude to the people around us, to our circumstances, to our losses and gains. It reflects our inner struggles. It can make it even more intense. It can also resolve it.

### **God as a King of All the Earth and All the People**

In the book of Ruth, we meet God Who reigns over circumstances, Who is a King, Who is sweet, Who is powerful enough to lead us through difficulties, and Who provides for us a true home and happiness.

A woman like Naomi, whose picture of God was sweet, was able to spread a sweet aroma around her. In her sorrow, she remained sweet and tender to her daughters-in-law. Grief and sorrow did not make her harsh, rude, and unpleasant. She remained sweet because her Lord was sweet even when she thought He dealt bitterly with her. She could treat others with sweetness because she knew the sweetness of the Lord.

Naomi knew that her God had a big heart, big enough to include Moabite people. That is why her

heart was big enough to accept her heathen daughters-in-law and give room to them in her heart and home. Her God was big enough to rule over all territories, He was a King over all the earth. That was why He could bless in the land of Moab, too, because He was merciful.

Ruth had never been to a synagogue or temple, but the character of God in the life of her mother-in-law was so attractive that she decided to belong to this Lord. In a foreign land, Naomi lived such a devoted life that Ruth could say: "Thy God will be mine God." Ruth began to live according to the customs of Israel; she went gleaning, she accepted the law of a kinsman and God blessed her even more than she could have ever dreamed. She became part of the chain in the lineage of the Messiah. God is really a King of all earth and all people.

### **God Who Provides**

In the book of Ruth, we also meet the God Who provides. He visits His people. He provides bread to them. He provides Ruth for Naomi. He provides a kinsman for Ruth. He provides rewards already on this earth to those who live according to His principles. He provides conceptions, He gives children.

As an old widow, Naomi became a provided pilgrim. Sometimes we can feel as empty as Naomi. But God provides. And He is able to provide us with people who will become our home and rest. A young

Ruth became a provided bride. She was rewarded by an honorable position and a happy life.

We can see that God's provision comes when we have faith in Him as the Lord Who provides. There was a religious foundation in Naomi's faith; there was a religious basis in Ruth's trust and fidelity. She decided to follow Him and His instructions even when it seemed she was losing.

True religious principles enable people to do the right thing. And they will bring a true reward. The burden of an ephah of barley was a burden of blessing. A kinsman became a redeemer for a widow's bitter destiny. A touchy drama of home life became a wedding song of a sweet home with the cry of a newborn baby.

When we follow God's way, we need to do our part



with faith; when we have done our part, then it is time for God to act. Then we can stand still and wait.

### God as Emmanuel

In the book of Ruth, we meet God Who is Emmanuel. We see God's living presence with Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. We can see the lessons. God watches over our situations. His Providence is there even when the circumstances are against us, when there is no hope, no bright future. He will guide you and me to the right field. He will give mercy in the eyes of the right people. The right field for Ruth defined her marriage, her prosperity, her destiny. Sometimes our daily circumstances and everyday routine seem to us as simple chance, but through small details, God performs Providence. In small unimportant things, our destiny awaits. That is why we should not regard anything as insignificant. Who is faithful in small deeds will be faithful in great also.

God Who is Emmanuel is willing to spread His wings over us and give us shelter and protection. However, His "wings" and blessings can come to us through other people and through us to others. Boaz talked to Ruth about God's wings. But God chose him to become these very wings. Obed was a "servant" to whom? He was a servant to all but especially to his grandmother and of course to God. Through him, God provided His care for the old and faithful Naomi. Obed was covered in fourfold love of his grandma, mother, father, and the Lord. But God wanted him to return this love to the people around him. He looks for our love for Him in our love for others. Through us, He can become Emmanuel for those who need His love.

### God Who Leads Us Home

In the book of Ruth, we meet God Who leads us back home. Maybe Naomi would have never returned to Bethlehem if she had not lost her husband and children. Even though Naomi became Mara ("bitter"), God made her through Mara Naomi again. Sometimes when we are challenged with difficulties and sorrows, we resemble an ant that is crawling on a beautiful carpet with a beautiful design. There are different colors in that design, but the ant cannot comprehend it. When it goes through a black line it thinks that all the carpet is black—only from above can the whole colorful design be seen. God knows the design of your life. He creates it. And when we pass through black parts of our life, let us not forget that this is just a part of a beautiful design that God has for our life. Through Mara, He is creating Naomies in us.


God wants us to have a happy end in His home which is full of bread. And even when we are passing through valleys of sorrow, let us not forget the true point of our destination. He longs to fulfill our hopes and give us a true rest in His beautiful home. The book of Ruth is about happy and sad circumstances in our life, circumstances that force us to make decisions how to live, where to move, where to settle, whom to marry, where to spend our senior years. But above all circumstances that could seem ruling, there is One almighty Ruler of our life—God Who reigns over all the earth, Who provides, Who is Emmanuel, and Who is willing to lead us back to His home. He is above all circumstances; He is the Star of Bethlehem that leads us back to the "House of Bread" in spite of how far away we wander in our daily routine for daily bread.

Each of us has a Moab and a Bethlehem. Where are you now on your journey? What kind of picture of God do you have? Your picture of God is important because, at the end of our pilgrimage, this is the Star that twinkles above the beautiful Bethlehem of our motherland.

The book of Ruth closes with a lineage of David, with genealogy, in other words, with a connection to Jesus. What kind of connection to Jesus do we have? What kind of relationship?

Let us remember that these relationships will shape our influence. And the influence of a godly woman will live long. We can feel the influence of Ruth even today. Do you smell the beautiful aroma in the life of the Rose of Moab who became a Rose of Bible? Be such a rose in your land and among your people! Spread this aroma in your daily life, in your daily pilgrimage till we reach heavenly Bethlehem, full of Divine Bread.

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# Prison Ministry



**Sylvia Ritani**

*Sylvia Ritani is a licensed volunteer missionary in New Zealand.*

A prison minister was the last thing I'd ever thought of being. For four years, my husband and I had been volunteer workers for the South New Zealand Conference and had been caring for a small church when the call came for my husband to enter "prison ministry." I breathed a sigh of relief; I'm not cut out to be a preacher's wife. I envisioned a new life where I would have plenty of time to do whatever I wanted and lots more time to visit with friends.

However, my dream was short-lived. Within days of the call, our conference president handed me a letter from an inmate of the local women's prison. The prisoner was requesting a visit from an Adventist minister.

Prison ministry—the very thought of it filled me with foreboding and brought up visions of dark corridors, clanging metal gates, and grim-faced guards!

I was reluctant and felt a little like Jonah must have felt. My constant prayer was, "Lord, if working in the prison is where you want me, and You have a work for me to do, then please give me a love for it."

I started visiting the women's prison one day a week—first befriending the women I met, then giving them Bible studies.

Female prisoners have a special need to confess everything to someone they can trust, so I learned the value of being a good listener. Although some of their crimes were horrific, I could not show disapproval or be judg-

mental. I would simply try to point them to God's love and forgiveness.

Twice a month, I would accompany my husband on his prison visits. I was very apprehensive at first, but the men were very grateful and said that they appreciated a mother's understanding.

Prisoners are often afraid of their family's reaction upon release, so we would often visit spouses to encourage reconciliation. Occasionally we provided clothing, household linens, and food.

We always placed cards for Bible correspondence courses in those parcels. We often invited the family to a special church program or the children to the nearest Sabbath School.

As well as caring for the physical and emotional needs of families, we have also, at times, been called on to speak before parole boards. We've had prisoners paroled into our care until we could find them suitable alternative accommodations.

When placing them in accommodations, we have always seen that they had warm bedding, clothing, kitchen utensils, and a food parcel.

Not all our experiences have been success stories though. I remember the hurt and disappointment when we returned home one day to find that a prisoner we had taken in and helped considerably had returned and robbed us. However, the success stories of changed lives and commitments to Jesus Christ far outweigh the sad times. Despite my initial misgivings, I've received a lot of satisfaction and fulfillment from prison work.





# God Answers Prayer

Twelve shepherdesses huddled together in the brightly lit Simply Food place asking God to intervene for Priscy. Priscy is one of the shepherdesses on Guam. Her eyes had been bothering her for quite a while. She was seeing double. Now she was experiencing some blindness and was afraid she would lose her eyesight altogether. Her doctor referred her to a doctor in New York. But she couldn't afford to go. Also, this would be her first trip to the United States. But if she did not go, she would become blind. Thus it was that the shepherdesses asked the Lord to help Priscy.

It was December. Cold! First trip to the U.S.A. Her doctor called again and said that there was another specialist in California. What a relief! Now the ladies prayed that the operation would be successful.

Priscy and her husband went to California for the surgery. We continued to pray for them until they came home. God answered our prayers! Priscy is well, and she has gone back to work at the Seventh-day Adventist Clinic again. God works in mysterious ways!




**Gorgonia Jimeno**

*Gorgonia Jimeno (seated on left) is the Shepherdess president for Guam-Micronesia Mission.*

This is one of the activities of our shepherdesses. We meet every second Monday of the month to fellowship, pray, and to do some activities such as cooking demonstrations, crafts, and recipe exchanges. We also ask people to talk to us about the subjects dear to them.

To make our fellowship more interesting, we have Secret Pals. We give presents to one another on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and Thanksgiving. We reveal our Secret Pals at Christmas, and we invite our husbands for a buffet dinner at that time. What fun we have!

This year's plan is to adopt a shepherdess in the far away islands of Micronesia to help build her Sabbath School materials. We want to do this project because many of our island churches need help in their Sabbath School departments. We hope that in this way, they'll be encouraged to do more to help their Sabbath Schools also.

There is much to be done by the shepherdesses on Guam and Micronesia, so we are hoping that projects like this can materialize to encourage our other shepherdesses in the other islands. 

# The Importance of Parents and Education



**Rosinha Dias de Oliveira**

*Rosinha Dias de Oliveira is the wife of Marcos Oliveira Jr., district pastor in Sao Borja, RS Brazil. They have a one-year-old child, Richard Dias de Oliveira. Rosinha is the director of the Sao Borja Seventh-day Adventist School in Rio Grande do Sul and she is currently taking undergraduate studies in biology.*

Education is a subject which has been widely discussed in the society in which we live. Many questions continue to arise. Are we educating our children through the correct role models which were instructed by God through His Word? Are we using the Bible as our manual and the Spirit of Prophecy as our inspiration?

We know of the negligence of many parents in the formation of characters similar to that of the Savior. A void exists where the correct method of education has been ignored. The home should be the first school of our children. "It is in the home that the education of the child is to begin. Here is his first school. Here, with his parents as instructors, he is to learn the lessons that are to guide him throughout his life" (*Child Guidance*, page 17). "Too much importance cannot be placed upon the early training of children. The lessons learned and the habits formed during the years of infancy and childhood have more to do with the formation of the character and the direction of the life than have all the instruction and training of after years" (*The Ministry of Healing*, page 380).

True education means more than following a certain course of study. It also means more than the preparation for this present life. It takes hold of the

whole being and the entire period of existence. The true education prepares a child to face society and teaches the child to value divine concepts.

The most important age range in the child's education are the first seven years of life. During this period, the child's character is formed for his/her entire life. "Deny them anything rather than the education that they should receive in their earliest years" (*Child Guidance*, page 17). The education of children begins in the relationship and in the union of the parents. It is necessary to have a very strong union; there needs to be much collaboration. It is important to be courteous and kind with each other and to refrain from disagreeing in the presence of your children.

Parents should be careful about using the correct manner of educating their children so that they are successful. "Not by scolding, for it will do no good. Talk to your children as if you had confidence in their intelligence. Deal with them kindly, tenderly, lovingly" (*Child Guidance*, page 33).

Parents should be models of self-control. The mother needs to be calm and patient; she should not try to accomplish everything in a hurry. She should have self-control and be free from all types of excitement. "Fathers and mothers, when you control your-

selves, you will gain great victories in controlling your children” (*Child Guidance*, page 217). “At all times the mother should endeavor to be quiet, calm, and self-possessed. Many infants are extremely susceptible to nervous excitement, and the mother’s gentle, unhurried manner will have a soothing influence that will be of untold benefit to the child” (*The Ministry of Healing*, page 381).

Never should parents give in to their child’s will. The child should be taught to accept the order of the parents as the decisive word. Many times parents satisfy the desires of their children so the parent will not be bothered.

The child needs to have discipline from an early age. When a child is not disciplined carefully and tenderly, this will later be reflected in a character with undesirable traits. How interesting is the proverb, *As the tree grows, so does its branches*. “How many lives are wrecked, how many crimes are committed, under the influence of a quick-rising passion that might have been checked in childhood, when the mind was impressible, when the heart was easily influenced for right and was subject to a fond mother’s will. Inefficient training of our children lies at the foundation of a vast amount of moral wretchedness” (*Child Guidance*, page 214).

Education in the home should never be considered as a secondary question. It is necessary to give extra attention to the child’s education.

Jesus acquired His education in the home. His mother was His first teacher. She taught Him humility, honesty, and above all, to carry out His part of the household responsibilities. He learned a profession, working as a carpenter with His father. He was an exemplary son.

If there were more mothers like Mary in our world today, there would be more children like Jesus. It is certain that we would not have so much wickedness, disgrace, and so many broken homes, which bring unhappiness to man and to God. “Most of the evils that are bringing misery and ruin to the race might be prevented, and the power to deal with them rests to a great degree with parents” (*The Ministry of Healing*, page 380).

Whenever we have the task of educating our children, we should first seek Divine knowledge. “Before correcting them, go by yourself, and ask the Lord to soften and subdue the hearts of your children and to give you wisdom in dealing with them” (*Child Guidance*, page 244).

We know that the task of educating is very difficult when we try to do it alone. For this reason, the importance of family worship should be a priority in our homes. We need to find suitable occasions to show these little ones the love of Jesus. “The angels of God are present, noting how the younger members of the Lord’s family are treated. The religion of the home will surely be brought into the church” (*Child Guidance*, page 552).

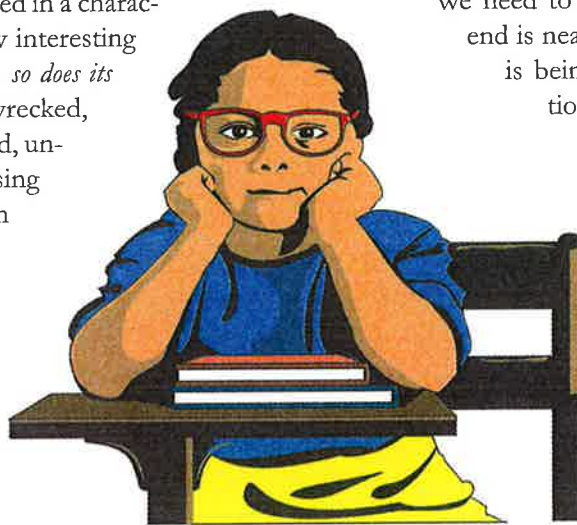
We need to be aware that the time of the end is near. Christ is returning. And what is being done in favor of the education of our children? Have we been exemplary parents? Have we, as mother’s and father’s, given our children the correct education, having education as the primary work in our lives? The negligence of this responsibility reflects a refusal to do the will of God.

As parents we should make our hearts humble before the Lord and seek divine knowledge to carry out this task. We should be-

gin now, without procrastinating, giving our children daily religious instruction.

Our children need to be educated. They need to be taught the principles of love, faithfulness, mutual respect, and friendship. If we educate in this manner, we will be participants in the joy of Christ. We will be doing our part to form a great family in heaven, and we will be beside a host of angels to hear these words from Jesus, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

The family should be the center of Christianity. It should consist of a loving father and a calm mother who are always willing to teach the children about the Savior. It is in the home that the degree of Christianity of each member is revealed, and depending on the atmosphere in which the child lives, his attitude will reflect the decision of whether it is worthwhile to be





worthwhile to be a Christian or not. However, the responsibility which falls on the parents is very extenuating; it will indirectly be deciding the direction of the children's decisions, especially the decision on whether or not to follow Jesus.

The word "educate" comes from a Latin root "educare" which gives the idea of taking from within. True education is not transmitted through words but with attitudes. Only 30 percent of the time spent with your child, in reference to education, should be spent with words, the remaining 70 percent should be expressed in attitudes. Personal example is the best educational method to teach truth to small ones.

There is a Chinese proverb which says, "Words teach,

example attracts." Words as well as example are important, but words without example lose their meaning. There are many parents among us who are adept in expressing words "do as I say, but not as I do." The result can be seen in a society which is corrupt and destitute of moral and divine values.

Paraphrasing the words of Ellen White in the book *Education*, page 57, "The greatest want of the world is the want of parents—parents who will not be bought or sold, parents in their innermost souls who are true and honest, parents whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, parents who will stand for the right though the heavens fall."





# Transformed by Grace For Personal Growth: A Double Miracle



**Sally Lam-Phoon**

*Sally Lam-Phoon is, first of all, a shepherdess who stands beside her pastor-husband in his ministry. After this, she is mother to two grown-up daughters. She also serves as Women's Ministry Director and Shepherdess Coordinator for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. Besides being passionate about people-building—whether in schools or churches—she seeks balance in life by listening to music, traveling, cooking, and reading.*

For those of us who have held our own babies in our arms, we can better understand the miracles of change and growth that can take place in a human being. Silently, imperceptibly, both these miracles take place on a moment-to-moment, day-by-day basis by the power of God.

Similarly, in the spiritual realm, the double miracle of transformation by grace and personal Christian growth is initiated and brought about by a personal God who is intensely interested in each one of His children.

The world is just as interested in personal growth but defined within a totally different paradigm. Never in the world's history have there been so many self-help books, online classes, paper chases. A check on the computer yielded 10 pages of information leading to 99,732 sites on self-help books alone. People are anxious to grow but mainly for the purpose of getting ahead and staying ahead of the competition. Thus, growing can be a very stressful pursuit because as soon as you climb up one rung of the ladder, you find that there is always someone ahead of you and another rung to be scaled.

On the contrary, Christian personal growth brings about a stabilizing peace and an inner joy that cannot be attained without a transformation that first takes place by this mysterious element called "grace." Grace,

that divine attribute that comes gift-wrapped from God, first saves us (Eph 2:8) and then helps us to grow.

Peter wrote: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18, NASB). Ellen White says that grace "was sent in search of us,"<sup>1</sup> and God abundantly provides this grace that "we may accomplish everything that [He] requires."<sup>2</sup> Philemon 1:6 (Living Bible) states: "I am sure that God who began the good work within you will keep right on helping you grow in his grace until his task within you is finally finished on that day when Jesus Christ returns."

Hence, this growth process will never be completed until Jesus comes. No wonder Ellen White says that Christian growth or sanctification is the work of a lifetime.<sup>3</sup> As long as Satan reigns, we will have self to subdue, sins to overcome, with no possibility of anyone saying, "I have finally arrived at maturity."

However, instead of being stressed out with personal growth, Grace says, "The point is not to try harder; instead you must strive less. You must acknowledge your helplessness and totally depend upon the Grace Giver. Sure, you are made for good works and holy action, but that has to flow out of a state of being that comes from spending time with and knowing the Source of Grace."

The Bible uses the beautiful analogy of the development of a plant as a representation of Christian growth. Let us learn some lessons from this analogy.

### **Personal Growth Takes Time**

Since the invention of instant noodles, the world has seen scores upon scores of inventions that have pandered to our search for instant gratification of our needs and desires. Whether we are hungry or thirsty or bored, there is an instant solution. However, with growth, there are no shortcuts, no magical solutions; maturity simply takes time.

Once I had the luxury of owning a fruiting mango tree. It was a joy to watch the first fruits appear on this five-foot high tree and resist the temptation of picking them until they were fully ripe. After patiently anticipating for months, we finally decided that the fruit was mature enough and joyfully picked our first precious ripe mango off that tree. Then we left it on the table to “mature” it further for a couple of days before cutting it open. When our teeth sank into that mango, it was worth all the wait. It was simply bursting with juice and an unbeatable heavenly sweetness.

What a contrast to mangoes I buy from the markets in Singapore, a country which imports more than 90 percent of its fruit from abroad. These mangoes are picked for export thousands of miles away and are usually green and unripe when picked so they won't bruise in the shipping process. Then just before they are sold, the fruit are sprayed with CO<sup>2</sup> gas to ripen them quickly. Though the fruit is edible, it is a far cry from the mango that has fully matured on my tree. For true maturity to develop, it just takes time.

Why does growth take so long? We are often impatient. Rick Warren says it so well in his book, *The Purpose Driven Life*: “While we worry how fast we grow, God is concerned about how strong we grow. God views our life from and for eternity, so He is never in a hurry.”

God exercises abundant patience with us because there are so many things we have to unlearn and relearn; we are such slow learners. We are often sucked into the milieu that is around us, absorbing the world's values and standards, blindly following its priorities and forgetting our own destiny.

### **Growth Calls For Change**

That is why growth calls for us to rearrange our thinking and exchange our faulty paradigms for God's way and will. Our day-to-day living distracts us from the purpose which God has planned for us.

For Beth, life was absolutely filled to overflowing.

A modern “do-it-all” career woman, she wanted to prove that she could also be a caring mom and a supportive wife besides being a filial daughter to her in-laws and parents. From the moment she opened her eyes in the morning, she had a long list of errands to run and duties to fulfill in addition to doing a perfect job at work as well as in church. She hardly had time to stop and think, let alone read her Bible. To her, life felt much like running to catch a train, completely out of breath but never ever getting on.

At times Beth felt like she was stuck on a dizzying merry-go-round that was spinning and spinning so fast that even if she wanted to get off, she could not. There were too many bills to pay, too many obligations to fulfill, and the uncertain future to worry about. Yet she was filled with an unexplained restlessness, sometimes resentment and unhappiness with all she had to do. While she was a Christian and attended church regularly, she felt an emptiness, a stagnation within.

Due to an economic downturn, Beth lost her job. She felt devastated but it was Christ's way of getting her attention. He beckoned her into another paradigm where she could unlearn all that mind-racking speed, relearn how to slow down, to make intelligent choices, to rethink her priorities and focus on where she was actually headed. She turned to her Bible for answers and to prayer for solutions and experienced the joy and peace that she first knew when she encountered God.

Growth takes place when we are plugged into God and engrafted to His Word, and constantly aligning ourselves to His will through prayer.

Like Beth, when grace comes to look for us, if we respond to it, it will begin to transform us. It may force us out of our comfort zones to confront what needs to be adjusted for growth. When we are willing to plug into God and on a daily basis, He can change us, mature us, and make us complete, equipped to do what He has in mind for us. The Scriptures will teach us, rebuke us, correct us, and instruct us, causing us to exchange an earthly framework for a heavenly one (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Therefore, growth does not come by hard work but by first being still with the open Word of God and keeping an open mind to His voice as we communicate with Him everyday. Growth depends on an appropriation of grace from God the Father—an assimilation of His blessings through the Holy Spirit everyday, and abiding in the Word of God.

In the process, we get better acquainted with God, the Source of our growth, so He can personally in-

struct us regarding the what, the when, the where, the how and the why of life.

### Growth Is An Act of God

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered the plant but it was God who made the plant grow" (1 Cor 3:5-6). Growth cannot be forced; it is a natural phenomenon that takes place when the conditions are right. It is a divine process in cooperation with the transforming power of grace through the Holy Spirit.

Sam Chadwick puts it this way: "Christ lives in men through the Spirit. He is no longer a model but a living Presence. Christian faith does not copy Him; it lives Him. Christ is not imitated, but reproduced. Life is sanctified because He possesses it, lives it, transforms it. The Spirit of God does not work upon us; He lives in us."<sup>5</sup>

### Growth May Be Painful At Times

No pain, no gain. Although Christians should not be masochistic and go searching for trials, in the course of living, we are told that if we are growing, it will be natural to encounter some painful experiences.

James 1:2-4 tells us: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (NIV).

On many an occasion, those who are closest to us are sometimes the most trying. Most of us seek friends who like us and whom we like, but we don't have the choice of picking who our family or church community may be. It is often in these two arenas that we are forced to deal with people who may not like us and whom we may not like. In doing so, we may experience the greatest growth, resulting in the smoothing of our rough edges.

The Message Bible expresses Romans 5:2-5 in this way: "We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise.

"There's even more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the

contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!"

### Personal Growth Results in the Fruit of the Spirit

A life that is transformed by grace and growing in the Spirit will result in bearing the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22). Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, talks about bearing fruit shown in good works while growing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:9, 10).

As grace worked on the heart of Beth, she found peace in extending love and joy to her family members and church friends. No longer was she restless and striving, trying to prove that she could do it all; she was able to relax, let God take over the steering wheel of her life, showing her what He wanted to accomplish through her. She made the changes as she discovered them in her own daily spiritual journey with a personal God. Many times, life was not easy, but she found that grace could see her through her trials.

### Conclusion

I believe that you and I are not here by coincidence. God has brought us together to know Him and His will for us. He is inviting us to a feast of His grace, to exchange our faulty paradigms for His amazing and outrageous grace which is sufficient to change us.

Satan wants to keep us distracted, and he has been successful in keeping half of our church members so busy that they have no time to connect with God through His Word and prayer. God wants us to slow down, to be willing to change as we grow by His power alone as we firmly engraft to His Word. Although growth may sometimes be painful, the results are amazing as we bear the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and reach out to witness.

When He lives in us, He will bring about the double miracle of transformation and growth far beyond what we have ever imagined. Yes, personal growth is just waiting for us. Won't you say to the Lord, "I'm ready, Lord; let the miracle begin!"

1 Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1942), p. 161.

2 Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1941), p. 301.

3 Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), p. 560.

4 Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Quezon City, Philippines: The Campus Crusade for Christ, 2002), p. 218.

5 Samuel Chadwick, *The Way to Pentecost*, (Avonmore, PA: The West Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 87.

# Have I Been a Jonah?

*Joseline Chigogera*

*Joseline Chigogera lives in the East Africa Division, East Zimbabwe Conference, Harare, Zimbabwe. She has one child.*

My husband goes to week-long evangelistic meetings where everyone camps together. Mothers, fathers, youth, and children spend this time going door-to-door, witnessing for Christ. This method of family witnessing is very effective. After the week of witnessing is over, a Sabbath School is established in the area.

As my husband was planning his next evangelistic trip, I felt the urge to go with him. Our child, who was seven months old, was old enough to go with us to the bush for a week. The day before departure, my husband asked me if I had made up my mind about whether I was going to accompany him. I knew he wanted me to go so we could witness together. I told him I was still deciding and I would let him know the next day.

When I thought of a week in the bush with a seven-month-old child, I began having doubts about going on the trip. I ignored the urging that told me to go with my husband. I finally made up my mind and told my husband I had decided against the trip. I felt my time would be wasted because I would be taking care of our little one, and I was afraid there would not be enough water to properly wash her nappies. My husband was disappointed and tried to encourage me to change my mind. However, my mind was made up.

On the day of departure, one of our pastoral friends asked me whether I was going. I told him no. He asked if our baby was the reason I had decided not to accompany my husband. I explained to him my concerns about the water in the bush. He assured me that there was plenty of water. However, I had made up my mind and I decided it was too late to reverse my decision.

The moment my husband left, I felt a sense of unease. I began to feel I had done the wrong thing. I felt empty. Problems began. I went to visit a friend and was delayed at her house. Consequently, my sister-in-law, who was visiting our home for the first time, arrived only to find an empty house.

When I finally did get home, I discovered that the water supply had been cut off in the whole area because a pipe had burst. I felt as if it was all my fault. I felt like Jonah who had caused the wild storm.

I was in a bad mood. My child had bitten me when I had tried to breast-feed her. In my anger, I pinched her, then cried at the hurt I caused her. Eventually she cried herself to sleep.

Around 5:15, one of our church members came by to help me transport a refrigerator to my house. I looked for my keys so I could lock the house, but I could not find them. I thought perhaps I had left them with my friend. I asked the church member if he would mind driving me to the hair salon where my friend worked. When we arrived at the salon, we were told the shop had closed early because there was no water. I felt bad for making the church member drive so far out of his way for nothing.


We decided to go get the refrigerator. Another disaster awaited us. The fridge was so big it would not fit into the pick-up truck. We had to return home with no fridge.

As soon as we got to our gate, I saw my friend. When I asked her if she had my keys, she shook her head no. I scoured the house trying to find the lost keys. I finally found them in one of my jacket pockets. I couldn't believe I had forgotten I had put them there.

My day was not getting any better. I had nappies to wash and no water. I regretted not going to the meeting.

The next day I still had no water. I decided to spend my time witnessing. I went to have Bible study with a friend. She turned me away. She said she was too worried about the water situation to take time to have Bible study. I was so discouraged. I knew if I had gone to the meeting I would have had ample opportunity to witness to others.

The mishaps during those two days made me feel as if I had run away from God's calling. I believed I was at Tarshish, not Ninevah where God wanted me to be. I thought of my feeble excuses for not going to the meeting with my husband. I knew I had refused God's urging to do His will.

Like Jonah inside the tummy of a fish, I prayed for a second chance. I now know to take heed when I feel God's urging. I look forward to going where God sends me. 



# My Child and Prayer



**Evelin Gehbauer**

*Since Evelin was a happy PK, she married a minister. She loves to help as a physiotherapist in the health-program for their church in Villach, the most beautiful town in Austria. She and her husband have two boys. Evelin enjoys running a bell choir, playing the piano and violoncello, gardening and reading*

Last summer I was privileged to attend the Family Life seminar at Andrew University. The speakers were experts in their field, and I profited extraordinarily from their lectures. My special interest was in the spiritual development of children.

I also found lots of reading material regarding this theme in the university library. In addition, there have been so many new additions lately who have taken their first glimpse of the Light of the world. I have also found these lectures very helpful and would like to share the many inspirations and ideas with others.

If we want our children to grow spiritually, we have to lead them to find a connection with God through prayer. During prayer, people open their hearts to God and tell Him their joys, their hopes, and their worries. It is through prayer that people primarily open up to receive God. Prayer liberates man of his egocentric position—an aspect very difficult for children to comprehend, which makes more sense toward the end of childhood. Prayer is also the key to the treasury of heaven. This part of prayer is being rapidly understood by children. Many times little children perceive God as Santa Claus, who fulfills all wishes. Their prayers are mostly very egotistic. In their thinking they are the center of the world, and everything turns around them.

Scientists have established that children pass through five steps independent of their religious backgrounds on their road to a mature prayer life. Every

step reflects the changes in the thinking of the child, and it considers very carefully its prayer experiences.

If we understand the development stages which the children make, we can be more of help to them and can lead them to a more mature understanding of prayer. Furthermore, it has been established that children who had many experiences with prayer pass through the individual steps faster and reach a higher level of prayer sooner than those who do not have the opportunity.

## **Development step: 0-4-year-olds**

Since we pray with babies in our home and as soon as they are able to speak, we teach them spontaneous prayer. Donna J. Habenicht describes the time span from birth up to the fourth year as the first step in the development of a mature prayer life.

The baby experiences prayer through the prayer of the mother and father. We can rest assured, so Habenicht says, that the Holy Spirit is present during these prayers and that the baby feels the warmth and closeness of God and of its family. The child learns to associate prayer with love and closeness.

Neither does it take months until the child, for example, recognizes the connection between prayer and food. As soon as it sees the food, it folds its hands by itself. It has discovered that we pray before the meal, and imitates the prayer position of the grownups. It does not mean that it really knows what prayer means,

but through association and imitation, it folds its hands and expects a prayer to be spoken by someone. Often “Amen” is one of its first words, which is being spoken with joy and relief—“Now I can finally eat.”

Prayer during family worship and at bedtime are impressions which the small child gets and it makes prayer “the talking with Jesus” to a fixed and expected part of its life.

If children at the age of two or three refuse to pray sometimes, you should not take it seriously, says Donna J. Habenicht in her book, *How to Help Your Child to Really Love Jesus*. One should never force a child to pray, but insist that the child sit still and be quiet during prayer. If we give the child some time, it will soon show itself cooperative again.

Now some practical ideas for parents with babies:

1. Bathing time is prayer time. While you bathe the baby, thank God for each part of its body.
2. Write a special prayer of unusual occasions into the diary of your child. For example, at birth, (later at beginning of Kindergarten, school, etc.).
3. Pray with the child before a journey. (My children pray as soon as they step into the car for a parking place for Mother.)
4. Pray aloud for healing when the child is sick.
5. Sing a prayer. Find a nice, pleasant melody and sing the prayer. During the last centuries, nursery songs had a soothing and calming effect on babies. Let us use this knowledge!
6. Put a “thank you mobile” above the crib. Hang up a mobile with family pictures on it and pictures of animals or things for which you are thankful.

#### Development step: 1-1½-year olds

Though they can’t speak well yet, the child wants to join in prayer because everybody in the family prays and it wants to be grown already.

1. Start a sentence and let the child complete it. For example, “Dear Jesus, thank you for . . .”
2. After the child is able to speak better, then let it repeat short sentences after you. It will not take long before the child will want to form its own prayers.
3. Craft a prayer box. Cover a shoe box with attractive gift wrapping. Glue a picture of a praying child on it. Place pictures of things which the child can be thankful for into the box and have the child choose one and speak a thank-you prayer.
4. Prayer gallery. Glue pictures of family members, church members, your preacher onto the fridge or above the crib of your child and daily let your child pray for one of these dear people.
5. Integrate prayer in your daily life: The child sees

a beautiful sunset. Pray: “Thank you, Jesus, for baby’s good eyes to see the sunset which you have made so wonderfully.”

6. Children enjoy praising God with rattles and jubilee.

#### Development step: 2-3-year-olds

1. Prayer clock: Glue a picture of a small praying child onto the face of the clock in the time frame of your family worship. Children love to watch the clock ends move, and at the given time, call the family for worship.

2. Open eyes, close eyes. The child should open its eyes wide and tell you all the things they see. Then they should close their eyes and tell you what they see



now. Explain to your child that we close our eyes so we can think better about God and speak with Him. Most of the time, we pray with closed eyes, but sometimes if we thank God for everything we see, we keep our eyes open.

3. Thank-you chain. Cut strips of colored paper and glue small pictures (for which the child is thankful) on it. Glue the strips into a chain.

4. Pray after a reprimand. E. G. White also writes that after we punish our children, we should pray with

them. I find it especially important to the child after its punishment that you love it. If one speaks a short prayer asking God for forgiveness for the child and ask Him for the needed strength to do right, one can often feel the relief of the child. It is very important at the conclusion of such a prayer that there be hugs, kisses, and a smile.

5. Bible verse as prayer. "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. 136:1).

6. Prayer chain. Every member of the family brings a special request. Through that action, the little child gets the impression that his prayer is equal to the grownup ones.



#### Development step: 4-year-olds

1. Prayer in need. When you hear the sirens of a fire engine or an ambulance, say a prayer. Explain to your child that someone is in great need and danger, and that you want to pray for this person.

2. Prayer recipe. While your child helps you in the kitchen with the baking, then explain to him: "When we mix all ingredients together, that reminds me of prayer. In our prayer we also mix different ingredients. We say thank you for some things (place the flour

into the bowl); we praise God (add sugar); we tell God something which we have experienced (a little water); we ask something of God (add salt); and at the end, there comes lots of obedience to it (add remaining ingredients). That's how a prayer is made.

3. Prayer bouquet. Every cut flower in a vase depicts a prayer request, e.g., the red flower symbolizes the request for someone's safe journey. The blue blossom symbolizes that this person may have a good time during his vacation. The yellow blossom means a healthy return. After you have prayer with the child, tie a ribbon around the bouquet of flowers and give it to the person for whom you have prayed.

#### Development step: 5-7-year-olds

Children of this age have only a vague idea how the prayer reaches up to God. Many children of this age believe that the prayers fly or jump up to God. Unanswered prayers of 5-7-year-olds cause them difficulties more than to some older children. They believe that God could not answer their prayers because they did not express or formulate it correctly. Furthermore, they think that if many people ask for a certain thing, the faster the answer will come. Many children in this age group believe that because they themselves pray, that all other people and even the animals pray.

It is important not to get stuck with the one-sentence prayer like: "Thank you, Jesus, for the good food." We taught our little one the simple prayer, but we should not miss the challenge to motivate the child to step forward in his development. Children of this age have to hear a prayer model which will help them reach the next steps inspiring them to grow. It is an art to find the balance between the prayer of a small child and the prayer of an adult.

There are some practical possibilities on how to support the child during this time in his prayer life.

1. *Explanation of the partial view of prayer.* The 5-7-year-old is fascinated by the different aspects of prayer. Therefore, explain to your child how to understand the request and thank-you prayer and what intercessory prayer means. Its interest will also be directed toward the "public prayer" which is being presented in church every Sabbath morning. Explain the different aspects of the pastoral prayer: praising God, gratitude, confession, asking for forgiveness, prayer for convalescence for the sick . . . . If you quietly question the child after prayer on Sabbath—"Did you hear the praise?"—this will help him to listen better during prayer, and he will have the feeling of being enclosed. Soon he will proudly proclaim: "This was a thank-you prayer; this was a praise prayer . . ."

2. *Prayer book.* Take multi-colored paper and make a little book. Choose praying children for the title picture or a pretty picture of Jesus. Keep a page for each area of prayer. The following model is simple, and children memorize it easily. Our prayer shall consist of the following:

- a) Thanks for the blessing from God
- b) Ask that He will help us and others
- c) Confess sins and request forgiveness
- d) Ask Jesus to help us love Him more
- e) Thank Jesus for His love for us and that He prepares a heavenly home for us.

The different sections of the book may be drawn, or use personal photos loved by the children, or cut out fitting pictures from newspapers. The prayer book does not have to be complete in order to start using it. Choose to begin with only a part and add more parts as the child grows in understanding. This way it becomes more aware of that prayer is communication with God.

### Development step: 7-9-year-olds

With completing the year, many children have abandoned the naive faith of their early childhood. They have recognized that “Santa”—God does not give them everything they want. They know by now that not all people pray and the animals not at all. Some children forget to pray, or they are too tired, or they have everything they need and don’t want to ask God for anything.

They believe that God can’t listen to and answer all prayers at one time, that’s why one needs to stand in line, so to say. If their prayers have not been answered, they believe they have spoken too quietly, or they have been bad, or it was a dumb prayer.

Even though they pray for their personal things, other people become more and more meaningful. They pray for freedom and for the poor and sick.

During these prayers the first trace of doubt starts to surface: “Does God really listen to my prayer?” Their answer is: “When I value God highly and respect Him, then He will hear my prayers and value them.”

Stimulation for 7-9-year-old children:

1. *Be transparent in your prayer life.* One can help children during this development phase by modeling for them a personal heart-changing prayer. Confess your own mistakes and ask God for forgiveness. This is a prayer which is always being positively answered by

God. Ask for help for your personal spiritual growth. Instead of asking God for a special answer to prayer, present your request and ask God for His suggested solution of your problems.

2. *Intercessory prayer.* If you pray for the concerns and needs of your fellow human beings, then you will discover the importance of intercessory prayer. The use of intercessory will help the child gain more mature, satisfying understanding of speaking with Jesus.

3. For this age group, friendship has become more real and comprehensible. Now they understand better if you explain to them that praying is like speaking to a friend. Jesus is their special friend: He never fights with them; He never leaves them; He never pushes them aside; He loves them; He is always there, and He likes to help them. Jesus, as their friend, fits exactly into their maturing understanding. They are on their way from being a grandchild to becoming a child of God.

### Development step: 10-12-year-olds

The 10-12-year-olds are of the opinion that prayer is a fully private and personal matter that enables one to speak to God about private things which one would not so easily talk about with other people. Prayer has an intimate character. Ten- to twelve-year-olds pray spontaneously when they are lonesome, worried, excited, or when they are in difficulties.

Positions of aid for this age group:

1. *Family prayer diary.* This is a steady reminder of how God cares for us, how He hears and answers our prayers.

2. *Personal prayer diary.* When children are 10-12 years old, they would like to have their own prayer diary. Each entry should be dated, and there should be a blank space left for God’s answers to prayer.

### Development step: 12-14-year-olds

Many children now recognize that prayer changes them. Prayer becomes valuable to them, and it is not only there to ask God for a favor. Older teenagers, on the other hand, doubt the effectiveness of prayer. Nevertheless, they pray as a matter of custom. During this time, hope gives way to doubt that God hears prayers, whether or not it makes any sense at all to pray. The young person finally sees God as a personal friend with whom he can communicate and to whom he can entrust his fears, his desires, and his worries. A prerequisite for the helping position dur-





ing this time is: A leader must know the way himself or else how will he lead his army? If we ourselves lead a living prayer life and really rejoice and enjoy a close relationship with our Lord, then our children will catch our enthusiasm.

However, if we limit our prayer life to routine prayers: "Lord, bless this food," and only pray at worship, then our children will get the impression that prayer is not that important. As in all other stages of development, so also during this time, our example is highly essential for the spiritual growth of our children. As you have certainly noticed, the practical suggestions become fewer as the children became older. The reason for this is because the young person does not get around the fact that he has taken his own spiritual development and his own prayer life into his own hands. We can promote and support, but the last decision must be made by the individual himself, the maturing young person.

In conclusion I would like to pass on the prayer of some parents who know that all human endeavors are incomplete but who nevertheless are certain that God loves their child and they are confident that it cannot fall out of God's hand.

Only two things of lasting value we can pass on to you: roots and wings, security and freedom. In all relevant books, you find that we must give you security and the feeling of being loved. But we are just human beings and as parents we are real beginners. Times might come when we no longer feel a strong love toward you and when the rough everyday life tears holes into the fabric of our family.

"Father in heaven, please equip us then with Your love! We still make many mistakes, but You are perfect.

"To mediate freedom is more difficult. Instinctively we wish to guard our child, protect it, shape and educate it, for it is surrounded by so many dangers.

"But in all of our loving care, you, little man, must be you. You ought to grow up into a unique personality, to which God has determined you and should not become the bad copy of another person.

"Lord, help him to discover his own gifts and to unfold them. And when we have done all we were able to do for him, then give us the courage to step back and to allow him to fly. We want to trust You that Your arms will hold him no matter wherever his way leads him."



## Little Tyke's Perspective

When I stopped the bus to pick up Chris for preschool, I noticed an older woman hugging him as he left the house. "Is that your grandmother?" I asked. "Yes," Chris said. "She's come to visit us for Christmas." "How nice," I said. "Where does she live?" "At the airport," Chris replied. "Whenever we want her, we just got out there and get her."



I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me and always she was correct. But it was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying sagely, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some of these yourself!"



A three-year-old boy went with his dad to see a new litter of kittens. On returning home, he breathlessly informed his mother, "There were two boy kittens and two girl kittens." "How did you know that?" his mother asked. "Daddy picked them up and looking underneath," he replied. "I think it's printed on the bottom."

# Shepherdess Experiences



**Boingotlo Mothaapula**

*Boingotlo Mothaapula is a nurse living in South Africa. She has a daughter and enjoys reading, gardening and caring for the elderly.*

I have been blessed to be a team worker with a man of God. In 1976, my husband was called to be a shepherd in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Prior to that time, he was working for the Botswana government as a police officer, and I worked as a nurse. When my husband heeded God's calling, we both resigned from our jobs and went to Solusi College in Zimbabwe.

At the college, I took some ministerial courses to help prepare me for the role of a Bible instructor. I also had the opportunity to study with other shepherdesses. The subject I enjoyed the most was child guidance. The material touched my inner feelings, and I decided I would not work outside the home until my children were grown.

My husband and I had planned on spending two years at the college, but due to the war, the college closed down and we could not return until 1982. During that interim, we returned home and worked as a team,

pastoring churches.

I am proud to serve my God and have been fortunate to have a variety of jobs that allowed me to spread the Gospel. As a nurse, mother, Sabbath School teacher, Women's Ministries leader, and Shepherdess, I have been able to share my love of Christ with others.

My different roles helped prepare me for the role of a single mother, Sadly, my dear husband died of stomach cancer in 1991. The years since then have been trying. My family does not visit me because I will not allow them to practice pagan rituals around me. I struggle to make ends meet, and I am sometimes overwhelmed at the responsibilities of being a single parent. But through it all, I have never doubted my God. I spend more time with Him now than ever before. My trust in Him is complete, and I ask for your prayers as I continue this journey called life.



# Lost and Found



**Procena Mundu**

*Procena Mundu and her pastor-husband have worked in the Fiji Islands and India, and have three daughters. Even though they are retired, they still enjoy doing the Lord's work. Procena enjoys music, gardening, and cooking.*

Matthew 28:20 tell us, "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the earth." This is one of God's promises that I have experienced first hand.

In December of 1966, I was traveling with my two young daughters. Phyllis was not even two years old, and Preeta was only a month old. We were on our way home to Meghalaya. One of my husband's students, Suleman Kandulna, was with us to help with the luggage transfers when we changed trains.


Our first train ride took us from West Bengal to New Bangaigaon. We arrived at that destination at night. After unloading, we sat in the station waiting for our next train. A couple joined us at the station. Though we did not know each other, the wife and I soon found we had lots in common. We discovered we were going to Guwahati on the same train. We were excited about the prospect of continuing our trip together.

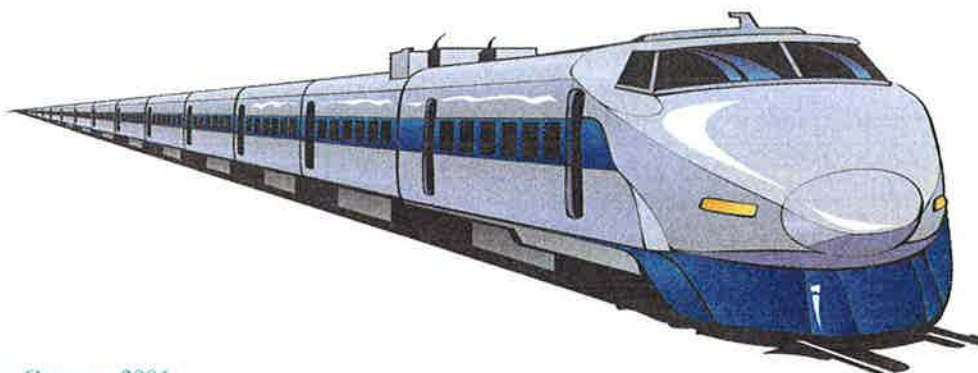
The train arrived at 1:00 a.m. It was very crowded, and I was concerned about my chil-

dren. I had Preeta in one arm and was holding Phyllis with my other hand. My new friend said she would help me by taking care of Phyllis. I boarded the train, thinking they were behind me. But once I got on the train, there was no lady and no Phyllis. I was so worried I began to cry. Suleman went to search for Phyllis but was not able to find her.

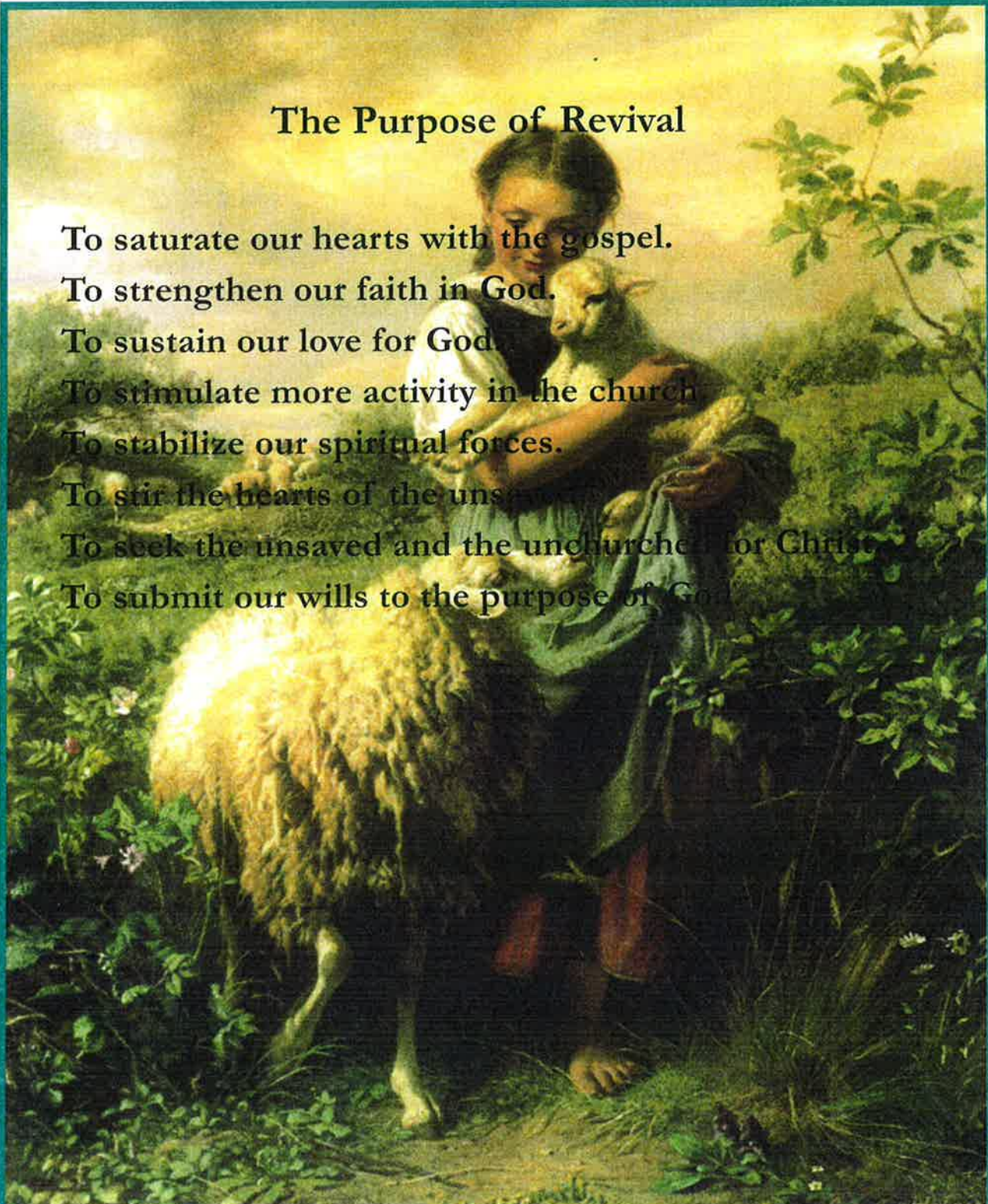
The train began to move. I was in a panic and my crying became worse. People around me asked why I was in such a state of distress. Once I told them my story, they felt sad for me.

At the next station, Suleman again went in search of my daughter. Fortunately, he found her. She was sobbing and asking for her mother. We were both so happy to be united that we cried for some time.

I thank God for giving my daughter back to me. She is now married and blessed with her own child. Using her own money, she built a church in Jillingkella. She is an elder of her church and an example to those around her. Praise God that what was lost was found. 





A painting of a woman in a green dress holding a lamb in a field. The woman is looking down at the lamb with a gentle expression. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with green foliage and a warm, golden light. The entire scene is framed by a dark green border.

## The Purpose of Revival

To saturate our hearts with the gospel.

To strengthen our faith in God.

To sustain our love for God.

To stimulate more activity in the church.

To stabilize our spiritual forces.

To stir the hearts of the unsaved.

To seek the unsaved and the unchurched for Christ.

To submit our wills to the purpose of God.

*May we each do our part to start revivals first in our hearts  
and then in our churches.*