



The Journal

A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

Psalm of the Pastor's Wife

The pastor is my husband;
I shall not complain.

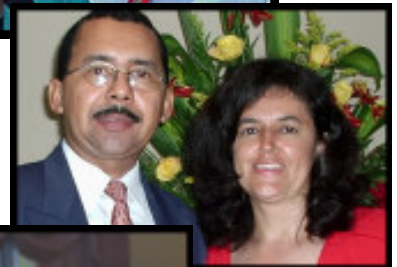
He maketh me to teach Bible School
and the young people's meetings.

He causes me to head the women's ministry.
He entices me to lead the music
so he doesn't have to.

Even though I walk through the attack
of the hypocrite, he stands behind me.
I will fear no gossiping tongue;
They cannot harm me.

I must stand at all dinners
in the presence of mine enemies.
The food I prepare will stand the test.

Surely patience and long-suffering
will follow me all the days of my life
as I dwell in the house of the parsonage.



The Journal



- 3 Transformed by Grace for Service
- 7 13 Ways to Enjoy Misery
- 8 Experiencing the Loss of a Pastor's Wife
- 10 Flood!
- 12 How Will You Be Remembered?
- 14 Jesus: The Sure Shelter in the Time of Storm
- 16 The Golden Rule
- 18 Party in Hell
- 19 Taps That Still Flowed
- 20 When God Calls Your Name
- 22 What Is a Mother?

In the last few issues, we printed the wrong volume number on *The Journal*. It is corrected in this issue. We are sorry for any inconvenience.

The Journal A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES is a quarterly publication produced by Shepherdess International, an entity of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association.

Bible Credits:

Text credited to NIV are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

All articles are printed with permission.

Editor's Musings

Not long ago, we lost a very visible minister's wife—Coretta Scott King. We knew her as one of the most influential and inspiring pastors' wives of our generation. But, she was more than a public icon; she was "a real woman who lived and breathed and got hurt and had dreams and disappointment." While much was written about her public life, I'd like to share some insights that show that her private life was just as rich.

"Corrie," as Dr. King fondly called his wife, was born and raised near Marion, Alabama, where her father ran a country store. To help her family during the Depression, young Coretta picked cotton. She once said of her childhood, "We were not poor...because in the country at that time, nobody had very much, and we had probably more than most people." She graduated valedictorian of her class at Lincoln High School and earned degrees in music and education from Antioch College in Ohio. She received a scholarship to study concert singing at Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, where she earned degrees in voice and violin.

She was planning on a singing career when a friend introduced her to Martin Luther King, Jr., a young Baptist minister working toward a Ph.D. in systematic theology at Boston University. In their first conversation—by phone—the young King laid it on pretty thick: "I am like Napoleon at Waterloo before your charms." She responded, "That's absurd. You haven't seen me yet."

She reminisced, "I wasn't looking for a husband. I still resisted his overtures, but after he persisted, I had to pray about it. I always believed that there was a purpose for my life...and that if I discovered that purpose...I would be successful in what I was doing. I thought I had found that purpose when I decided that music was going to be my career. After I met Martin and prayed about whether or not I should open myself to that relationship. I had a dream and I was made to feel that I should allow myself to be open and stop fighting the relationship—and of course the rest is history." She recalled that on their first date, he told her, "You have everything I ever wanted in a woman." Eighteen months later, on June 18, 1953, they married in the garden of her parents' home; the groom's father, Martin Luther King, Sr., conducted the ceremony.

Their first pastorate was the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, where she assumed the many functions of a pastor's wife. One senator observed, "She really was not just the wife, she was his full partner." You and I can glean much from the life of this extraordinary woman. One of my wishes for eternity is that Jesus will locate our heavenly parsonages really close together, so I can listen to her tell her story.

As fellow pastors' wives, we could make many tributes, but I will close by quoting tributes given at her funeral.

"Rarely has so much been asked of a pastor's wife, and rarely has so much been taken away."

"Her dignity revealed the deepest trust in God and His purposes."

"Others could cause her sorrow, but no one could make her bitter."

"Having loved a leader, she became a leader."

I hope it can be said of you and me, as it was said of her, "We are better because she was here."

God bless us every one,

Ministry to Clergy Spouses - Division Coordinators:

East-Central Africa—Milliam Kakembo	South Pacific—Merilyn Webster
Euro-Africa—Maeve Maurer	Southern Africa-Indian Ocean—Denise Ratsara
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—Angele Rachel Nlo Nlo
South American—Evelyn Nagel and Wiliane Marroni	

Editorial Office:

12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

www.ministerialassociation.com/shepherd/shepindex.html Printed in the U.S.A

Coordinator & Editor: Sharon Cress

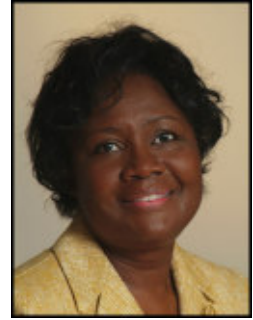
Editorial Assistant/Layout & Design: Shelly Lowe

Phone: 301-680-6513

Fax: 301-680-6502

Email: lowes@gc.adventist.org

Transformed by Grace for Service: All Dressed Up for Such a Time as This



Ella Smith Simmons

Dr. Ella Louise Smith Simmons was recently elected as a Vice President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists—the first woman to hold this position. Shortly before, she retired from her position as Provost and Vice President for Academic Administration and Tenured Professor of Education at La Sierra University, California. Throughout her career Dr. Simmons has been dedicated to service to her profession and her church. She has been married to Nord Simmons, a retired high school teacher, for 39 years. They have two adult sons, Darryl and Christopher, a daughter-in-law, Stephanie, a teenage granddaughter, Jannette, and a three-year-old grandson, Evan. She enjoys reading, walking, traveling, cooking, and decorating.

This sermon was originally given on Wednesday, July 6, 2005, during the Women's Ministries/Shepherdess Meetings at the General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri. Elements of oral delivery have been retained.

Our scripture lesson is from Romans, the twelfth chapter. Let us read together verses 1-8, and to make the passage more personal for our purposes this morning, substituting feminine-gender language where the masculine-gender language is used. I will read aloud from the New International Version of the Bible as you read quietly:

“Therefore, I urge you, sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and prove what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

“For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many mem-

bers, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a woman’s gift is prophesying, let her use it in proportion to her faith. If it is serving, let her serve; if it is teaching, let her teach; if it is encouraging, let her encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let her give generously; if it is leadership, let her govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let her do it cheerfully.”

We pray that the Lord will focus our thinking on these things as we proceed.

Many of you have heard of the Kentucky Derby that is held in Louisville, Kentucky, during the first weekend of May each year. For those of you who are not familiar with the event, I will just say that it is the most famous and most widely-attended horse race in the world. It brings together people from all walks of life, including movie stars, political leaders, royalty, farmers, and factory workers. Young and old come out, all hoping to pick the Derby winner or just to join in the festivities.

All have something else in common also. The Derby, which, by the way, is the name of a certain type of hat,

is known for its pervasive parade of fancy hats and head adornments. The women particularly get caught up in the hat mania, although many men sport their fancy headgear also. If you visit Louisville during the two weeks of the Derby festival, especially during the culminating weekend, you will see the most gorgeous hats and head dresses you will ever see anywhere. Louisville is my birth home, and I have always enjoyed this aspect of the Derby. I like hats.

This year, as I cast my gaze and admiration from one splendid head covering to the next, I was drawn to a much more serious consideration. Those heads were beautiful on the outside, but what about the inside? With what had those women filled their heads? What thoughts did they entertain? What were their purposes in life? Did their existence make a difference to the world beyond this grand display? Were they more than just eye-candy, or did they add sweetness to their families, neighborhoods, towns, and nations?

Jesus came upon a grand display of foliage beauty and apparent wealth of fruit one day when, as Matthew and Mark tell us in Matthew 21:18 and Mark 11:12, He (Jesus) was hungry. As the account goes, Jesus was in search of food, something to revive and sustain Himself, when He came upon this fig

tree that was fully adorned, splendidly arrayed, and standing there for all to see and admire. It was covered in the best head dress, the most well-formed leaves of the richest green you would ever want to see. If I had been there, although hungry, I probably would have paused to gaze upon that beautifully arrayed tree—at least for a moment—to indulge in that visual feast. Surely, the Louisville ladies' hats could not compare to that fig tree.

However, just as the Lord turned my thoughts during this past Derby festival to weightier matters, those matters that are more important than appearance, Our Savior took a deeper look at that fig tree. He looked beyond the outward adornment to the inside, and He was disappointed by what He saw.

We can be like that tree. Although there is nothing wrong with our looking good, we have to have something inside our heads, and we must be engaged in the work that is the fulfillment of our God-appointed purpose in life. Let us pray that when Jesus takes a deeper look at each of us this morning, He will find that fruit for which He is searching.

Ellen White tells us in her elaborative extension on that encounter between Jesus and the richly-adorned but barren fig tree that there is a second, more contemporary lesson in this biblical account of Jesus' hunger. She says that, "He [Jesus] represented a people hungering

for fruit that they ought to have had, but did not receive from an apparently flourishing fig tree [God's people = us]. The spiritual necessities were not supplied to satisfy the people whom Christ had pledged His life to save by His grace and righteousness."

Mrs. White goes on to say that "when the Lord is with the people who have knowledge and advantages in spiritual enlightenment, and when they impart that which they have received from God, they are fruit-bearing branches. They receive God's rich blessing and are producers of fruit. ... As a sure result," she says, "in the hand of God and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they are mighty men [and women]. Constantly they represent before the world the great goodness of God, not only in spiritual lines, but in temporal lines as well" (MS 65, 1912).

Let me then expand a bit more specifically on Mrs. White's observation, in consideration of the Gospel message as including the relief of pain and suffering and improving living conditions for every person at every place in the world. Current projection data from international sources tells us that world conditions will grow worse over the next decades. Their 15-year projections for the years 2000 through 2015 are already proving accurate, and if

*I am convinced we
are living in the
last days.*

Jesus should tarry for two more General Conference Sessions, the world will be in turmoil. For example, the National Intelligence Council projects that:

1. While food sources should be adequate to feed the world, the number of malnourished people will increase, and many areas will experience devastating famine due to conflicts and natural disasters. Will you bear the fruit to feed these hungry people?
2. They forecast that nearly half of the world's population, more than 3 billion people, will live with water shortages, and in some countries, utter drought. Will you bear the fruit to water their crops, bathe them, and quench their thirst?
3. They tell us that AIDS and other diseases will decimate the working adult populations, leaving huge groups of orphaned children in many nations. Will you bear fruit that will relieve their distress?
4. Predictions are that sick, starving, fearful people will flee into the cities in droves, doubling in some cases the populations of the world's largest cities in search of healthcare, food, and shelter. Will you bear the fruit that will provide for them there?
5. They suspect that criminal groups will increase the scale and scope of their activities—trafficking in narcotics, smuggling aliens, trafficking women and children, smuggling arms and toxic materials, and creat-

ing many humanitarian emergencies. Will you bear fruit that will meet these emergency needs and bring safety to the people?

6. Data indicates that internal conflicts will be vicious in many nations, long-lasting and difficult to terminate. Will you bear the fruit of peace and healing for your nation?

7. They predict also that terrorism will increase worldwide, achieving mass casualties. Will you bear fruit that will ease these fears and bring aid to the people?

And there is much, much more, with the breakdown of family units and increases in intolerance and hatred. God needs us to bear fruit that is mature for these times.

Women of God's Kingdom, I am convinced that we are living in the last days and that God is searching high and low at all stations of life for men and women who are prepared and willing to take up responsibilities of service in this doomed world, to give one final loud cry to the dying masses. God seeks for His cause an expanded band of servant leaders who are not limited in their contribution by race, ethnicity, national origin, social station, economic status, age, or gender. In fact, I believe to a great degree that those most naturally suited for this servant leadership are women.

In planning this message over the course of the past year, I sought not to use as my example Queen Esther, thinking, of course, that is what is typically expected. However, I am compelled to hold up Esther as our example today. The Bible tells us in her namesake book that Esther had risen from a quiet, perhaps obscure life to become queen of a world empire and achieve the heights of heroic action. It portrays her, according to one commentator, as a beautiful woman of clear judgment, remarkable self-control, and noble self-sacrifice.

Yes, Esther was a beautiful woman and was richly adorned, no doubt, but as her story demonstrates, there was much more to Esther. She possessed in head and heart the exemplary attributes of a selfless servant leader. She was intelligent, was a good listener, was a good communicator, had a pleasing personality and charisma, was sociable, was psychologically healthy, possessed a strong belief in God, had great moral strength and general courage, was secure, and held unusual sensibilities to the needs of others.

All these attributes came as gifts to Esther. The talents, characteristics, and personal traits all came from God to be used in His cause. Yet during her childhood, youth, and even early adulthood, Esther probably had no idea, no clue, of her purpose for life. She could not boast as Samuel, Jeremiah, or David of having heard

God's call to her while she was yet young. She was not even expected by her peers and her people to operate as a leader in service, for Esther was a woman. She was not expected to speak up at any time without being spoken to, for she was a woman; not to take a stand on any issue of importance, for she had no political authority since she was a woman. She was privileged and not expected to even concern herself with the plight of the masses, for she was a woman, meant only to be a delight for the eyes of the people and an ornament on the king's arm. Her only worth was her great beauty and splendid adornment, for Esther was a woman.

There is no doubt that this woman was gorgeous and impeccably clad, but as we have noted, Esther's great worth was more than met the eye, and when the time came, when conditions in her world had reached a crisis, God sent a word, His divine call, to Queen Esther. After

investigating the situation from which she had been sheltered and understanding the plight of the people, through prayer and fasting Esther recognized God's call and realized her life's purpose. The Bible tells us that Esther boldly declared that she would take up the cause, that she would initiate an intervention, and we know that she did so without concern for her

personal comfort and safety. She was willing to give herself for others, even at personal risk.

Some have defined "calling" as a divine summons. You know when you get a summons to appear in court, you do not decline the invitation—you just show up on time. So Esther answered God's call, the divine summons, with an unhesitating and resolute, "Yes, Lord." Her actions demonstrated that although she knew that God could save His people through a variety of means, He had chosen her as His instrument for that time. Only Esther could do the job in the appointed way, and she knew that.

Esther knew also that if God called her, He would sustain her, in life and in death. Yet she still had to exercise great faith, because as with most of us, God had not revealed to her the outcome of her actions. She did not know if she would be victorious or perish in the confrontation with evil. She simply knew what God wanted her to do, and that was all she needed to know. Like Gideon, Esther had begun life as the least of the least but had allowed God to transform her by His grace and to change her ordinary existence into extraordinary service for God's kingdom.

Our people—our families, our neighbors, our church members, our country people—all over this world have been targeted by Satan for annihilation, and God calls

*Esther's great
worth was more
than met the eye.*

once again for women who have been prepared, women who have something under those beautiful head pieces and artistic hairdos, women who will hear His call and realize that they were brought into God's kingdom for such a time as this. Now that we have been transformed by God's grace for growth and for daily living, that is, self-improvement, God wants to achieve another transformation in us—one that results in service for and to others.

God calls women who will give all to His commission to servant leadership. Through His gift of grace, God calls us today to take up His cause; our church calls us to greater service to humanity; and the world calls us to care. Further, this church will not be most efficient and effective in achieving its purpose until it draws upon the full array of talents and gifts that God has placed within its body. It will not be triumphant until women everywhere are free to fulfill the purposes for which we were born.

Ladies, we have a responsibility as well in this regard. We must rise up and come out, not to upset the church or the world or overthrow established structures necessarily. But we must arise from our places of privilege, emerge from our comfortable zones of labor, and take up our crosses in servant leadership, being willing to suffer discomfort, pain, frustration, fatigue, and in some instances, face death for the cause of God in service to a challenged church and a doomed world.

Now and in the years to come, the world needs servants who go beyond what they have known in the past. As the projections indicate, past actions will not be sufficient for the times to come. We who are here in God's garden have been chosen to take on leadership levels of service. No matter what we have accomplished in the past, we have a much greater work to do today and in the future. Here we are at the gathering of our world church, at the General Conference Session, hoping to hear something from the Lord. We are all dressed up, looking the part, but are we truly prepared for such a time as this in the world?

In Louisville and most of the southern part of the United States, people are very concerned with dressing properly for the occasion. So we Christian women must be concerned also, but not in ways we have been in the past, measuring skirt lengths and color intensity. Someone has said that we should have our war clothes on, for in offering our service to a wicked world, we will wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the supernatural powers of spiritual darkness. As we go forth, we must be clad in the whole armor of God. That is how I want to be dressed up this morning. I want my clothes to be hand-tailored by the Holy Spirit, and I want Ephesians

6 to be my designer label. When we have that, we can be adorned like Queen Esther.

You know Esther wore the finest fabrics in her long flowing skirts, but she was wrapped also with the truth. Her skirts were complimented by the most delicate and elaborate top coverings, but also she was fitted in the breastplate of righteousness. Esther wore the finest, most stylish shoes of her day and probably had a closet full of hand-crafted footwear, but more importantly, her feet were shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and although she carried a most dainty fan in her hand, as we considered earlier, she surely carried the shield of faith. Then to complete her outfits, Esther's head adornments were always elegant. Yet, over them all she wore the helmet of salvation. And while Esther must have carried exquisite handbags of the most precious stones and metals, we know she wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:14-17).

Yes, it is important to be dressed properly for the occasion. Are you dressed for the occasion? Are you wearing your Ephesians 6 designer attire as you march into the realm of greater service? It requires daily grooming, you know, and is quite costly. How then can we as ordinary women of limited means and influence achieve and maintain that standard of dress?

As I close, let's consider what Ellen White says in one of her analyses of Romans 12 (and again I will personalize the passage substituting feminine-gender language for the masculine):

“Woman, fallen woman, may be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that she can prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. How does she prove this? By the Holy Spirit taking possession of her mind, spirit, heart, and character. Where does the proving come in?” Ellen White says, “We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” (Surely she penned this for women!)

“A real work,” she says, “is wrought by the Holy Spirit upon the human character, and its fruits are seen. Just as a good tree will bear fruit, so will the tree that is actually planted in the Lord's garden produce good fruit unto eternal life” (MS 1a, 1890). She says an entire transformation will take place in our lives. Though expensive, it is really free! It is God's gift to us. Let us hasten, therefore, to say with Isaiah, “I heard the voice of the Lord saying, whom shall I send, and who will go [in service] for us? And we said, here I am, Lord; I am dressed and ready to serve, send me.

May God bless us all as we act to fulfill our life's purpose through service for such a time as this.



13 Ways to Enjoy Misery

This article appeared in the Australian Signs of the Times.

We're too hung up. It's a fact. And being so will affect your relationships, your performance and, eventually, your health.

How do you get to be that way and who's to blame?

Too often, unfortunately, we bring it upon ourselves. In a self-perpetuating and self-fulfilling cycle, we nurture the very substance of a poor self-concept with its resultant low self-esteem. This, in turn, reinforces itself by our thinking the worst of ourselves.

While our society's brutal demand for the "perfect 10" doesn't help us to think anything else of ourselves anyway, we still do, too often, perceive ourselves as being in worse shape than we really are. And while we can't do a whole lot to change what others might think or say of us, we can work on what we think and feel about ourselves. If we think positively, our outlook will improve.

Where do we start? The first step is to identify the negative ways in which we think of ourselves and begin to avoid them. Like someone once said, "Know your enemy."

What follows are 13 common cognitive distortions or false self-concepts, adapted from the research of Patrick White, that people do to themselves.

1. Filtering. You take the negative details of a situation and magnify them while filtering out all positive aspects.

2. Over-generalization. You come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something bad happens once, you expect it to happen over and over again.

3. Mind reading. Without their saying so, you know what people are thinking, feeling, or what they

will do. You know especially well how they are feeling toward you.

4. Catastrophizing and awfulizing. You actually expect disaster and, often, you're not disappointed.

5. Blaming. You hold others responsible for your pain, or take the other direction and blame yourself for every misfortune or reversal.

6. Control fallacies. If you feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless, a victim of fate.

7. Personalization. You think that everything people say or do is some kind of reaction—to you.

8. Shoulds/musts/have-tos. You have internalized a list of ironclad rules about how you and others should act. People who break these rules anger you, and you feel guilty if you violate the rules yourself.

9. Emotional reasoning. You believe that what you feel must be true—automatically. If you feel stupid or boring, then you must be thus.

10. Heaven's reward. You expect all your sacrifice and self-denial to pay off, as if there's someone keeping score. You feel bitter, resentful, and cheated when the reward doesn't materialize.

11. Being right. You are continually on trial to prove that your opinions or actions are correct. Being wrong is unthinkable, and you will go to any length to demonstrate your rightness.

12. Fallacy of fairness. You feel resentful because you think you know what's fair, but other people never agree with you.

13. Polarized thinking. Things are "black and white," "good or bad." You have to be perfect or you're a complete failure. There's never any middle ground, and it's all your fault.



Experiencing the Loss of a Pastor's Wife— Tribute to Our Teammate and Friend, Joy Liwanag



Rita Stevens

Rita Stevens writes from Amarillo, Texas, where her husband has been the president of the Texico Conference since December 1996. They have two adult sons, and Rita works as a medical technologist.

During more than 20 years in ministry, I had not experienced the loss of a pastor's wife in a conference where we were working until this past year. I want to share how this very sad experience had brought joy to many.

I became acquainted with Joy at a pastors' meeting more than two years ago. Her love for the Lord was so evident. Barbara Forss, a pastor's wife who had met Joy only once, sent me an e-mail following Joy's death. She wrote, "I'm deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic loss of Joy, her two children, and her niece! I met her for the first time at our Shepherdess get-together only a few weeks ago, but I found an instant friend. She was so full of energy and life with a delightful, ready laugh. We discovered we were the same age, my birthday just a little earlier in the year than hers, as I recall, making me the "eldest." It was wonderful to hear her account of meeting and marrying her husband. Her love for her husband, the Lord, and her life as a pastor's wife was very evident. I've thought of her many times since that meeting. I was so looking forward to seeing Joy again at the next workers' meeting. Now I'll have to wait until Jesus comes, and I feel a terrible loss, even though I barely knew her. I can't imagine the deep sorrow of her family! I am so ready for Jesus to come!"

At the Tuesday night prayer service for Joy, her two

children, Jasher and Jether, and her niece, Diadem, the audience was asked to share memories of them. I was unable to speak, as were many in the audience. No words seemed appropriate due to the magnitude of grief in that room. During Wednesday's prayer meeting, I shared Barbara's words with the family. I thought they would find comfort in knowing what a joy Joy had been to the pastors' wives, even to those who had known her for just a short time. Joy did not know cultural or language barriers. She had a way of identifying with every person in some way. She made everyone she met feel special.

I would like to share an experience I had with Joy which illustrates her kindness and love for others. My son had recently had a book stolen from his desk. It cost about \$100, and I had been praying that the Lord would provide so we would not have to pay for another book. At the church leaders' meeting, my husband and I were talking to Joy and her husband. I was telling her about our ordeal and discovered that Joy had a former edition of the same book and that she was no longer using it. We discussed the idea of having them mail the book to us once they returned to Abilene. After lunch, Joy said, "Why don't we drive to Abilene and get the book so you can take it back to Amarillo?" Thinking it must be fairly close, I asked about the distance to Abilene. She laughed and said, "Around 100 miles!" I replied that I did not

have a car. Dina Simmons, the education director's wife, was with us. She said, "Oh, you can drive my car."

"Are you kidding?" I exclaimed. "That would be wonderful."

Within a few minutes, the three of us were heading toward Abilene, with admonitions from our husbands to be back in three hours. We laughed and shared so many things. I thought at the time that the gift the Lord gave me was the book, but now I praise the Lord for our special time together; I now see that this was truly the bigger gift.


During our trip, Joy related a story about faith in the Lord. Joy had been a successful literature evangelist in the Philippines. Her husband, Rodel, was away from home and wasn't returning home anytime soon. Though Joy had little money, she was not worried because she was good at selling books.

For some reason, Joy was unable to sell any books that morning. By noon she was very hungry, so she went to a cafeteria. She had \$5.15 with her. She was almost through the line when she dropped her food. She not only spilled all her food, she broke the dishes. When she got up to the cashier, the cashier told Joy she owed \$5.15. Joy paid the cashier, rejoicing that she had enough money to pay her debts, but she was still hungry. She went into the bathroom and shed a few tears, then washed her face. She prayed to God and asked Him to take care of her. He knew her needs. When she walked out of the cafeteria, she noticed a bank she had not seen before. She decided to canvass the bank president. She saw his name card as she went into the bank. She asked the cashier to speak with him. The cashier must have thought she had an appointment because she led Joy straight into the president's office. After hearing her canvass, he told her that he was looking for such books, and he made a large purchase.

Joy walked out of the bank with the much-needed money and headed back to the cafeteria. She purchased some food and enjoyed a good meal as she continued to thank the Lord. From that experience, Joy said she learned that it was not until she was empty—totally empty—and she had nothing left that she fully trusted the Lord to provide. She treasured this experience; it was a turning point in her faith and her trust in God.

We have an emptiness now that Joy is gone. We miss her sparkle, her laugh, her sweet spirit, her lovely singing voice, her prayers, her self-sacrificing ways, her cooking, her ministering beside her husband. But we will remember her most for her complete trust in the Lord; Joy had a deep desire to see "The Restorer."

Three months after Joy's death, I received a letter from her husband. He said, "The Lord is good. He has tremendously blessed our crusade here in Abilene. I'm sure if Joy were still alive, she would be happy, too. When I originally presented the idea of an evangelistic meeting to the church board, the result was not good; only 2

percent pledged to support it. I'll admit I was scared because of that response. It was Joy who encouraged me a lot. I vividly remember her saying, "This is the Lord's work. If it is God's will, it will be done even though there's not support from the church. Besides," she continued, "we have the backing from Jim and Rita. Go for it!" In August 1998, Joy started the Vacation Bible School, which resulted in 55 graduates, then she was actively involved in the Next Millennium Seminar up to the time she had the accident." Rodel shared with me the article "There's a Blessing in the Storm." He shared with me that the 70 people who had been attending the evangelistic meetings experienced a real revival. So far, 109 precious children of God have been baptized. I agree with Rodel when he says, "It is just another manifestation that God is still in control amidst the storms in our lives." 

A young Christian packing his bag for a journey said to a friend, "I have nearly finished packing. All I have to put in are a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of fine poetry, a few biographies, a package of old letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and a set of books I have been studying."

"But you cannot put all that into your bag," objected the friend.

"Oh, yes," said the Christian. "Here it is." And he placed his Bible in the corner of the suitcase and closed the lid.

—Our Times

Flood!



Lindriani Sihombing

Lindriani and her husband, Pastor Hiras Sibombing, pastor a 150-member church in Klender, Jakarta Conference, West Indonesia Union Mission. They have a young son, Jeremy.

Lindriani is known to many as Annie. She graduated from Indonesian Adventist University. She loves working with her church members, playing the piano, and focusing on children's education. She enjoys reading articles and books about children's education and children's activities.

Rain came without ceasing for three days and three nights. Well, it ceased for a little while, just long enough to let us walk to the store for our daily needs and for us to travel and visit our nearest church members. However, most of the time, we were surrounded by the sound of water falling on the roof. Radio and television broadcasters were telling the news of the flooding taking place in certain areas. The pictures of drowned houses and flooded streets filled the television screens.

On that particular morning, I woke up early because I wanted to make it to the office before the traffic jam. The rain was still falling, but not as hard as it had the night before. I hurried to the public transport station. (Normally, my husband takes me to the office, but he was attending a ministerial gathering in another town.) My mother lives nearby, and I took my son to her house.

At 10 a.m. I received a call from my mother. "Your house is flooded," she said, "Where did you put all the personal and family documents?"

I replied, "Those are in a safe place."

She asked if there was anything else she needed to save. I assured her that only the documents were needed. I then asked her how high the water level was. She said it was one meter high. She added, "The water is coming very fast; we cannot save anything

but your documents and your books. Don't worry about Jeremy; he is safe at my house."

My first reaction was calmness. Knowing that my son was safe was all that mattered. Then, slowly, the worry began welling up inside me. I called home and asked one of our servants, "Did you save the photo albums?" Yes, they were saved. I put the receiver down.

Then I called again, "How high is the water now?" I was told both my bed and the sofa were underwater. The servants were still in the house at that time, and they updated me every half hour about the water level. I called my husband and told him about the situation. He was unable to leave the seminar because the toll road was closed due to the flooding.

I went home to check on the house. Water was everywhere. The servants had already turned off the electricity, so there was nothing more to do. I locked the door and trudged through the flooded streets until I reached my mother's house.

The rain continued to fall. The news reports continued to show scenes of the city. Almost everything was covered with water. The rain level ranged from ten centimeters to three meters high. Eventually, the water even reached my mother's home. Though she tried to convince us to stay, my father agreed it would be best to leave the house. However, we were not


sure where to go. We were surrounded by water. By 11:00 p.m., we knew we had to try and make it to safer ground. We prayed that the car would not stall in the flooded streets. God answered our prayers, and we made it to a hotel that was full of people whose houses had been flooded. Fortunately, there was room for us.

The next morning, we heard that the water had subsided, so we went home. My floors were covered with thick mud. My home-sweet-home now smelled. I also found the table, chairs, and refrigerator turned upside down. The clothes and books were soaked. The walls and even the ceilings were wet. We could not close our door because the wood had bulged. Fortunately, the combination of water and electricity did not cause any terrible accidents.

As I looked at our home, I knew it was time for hard work. I spent a few minutes analyzing the damage. I reminisced about our furniture. Though the furniture was not cheap, neither was it expensive, so I found some joy in knowing the furniture had not been terribly costly. I felt God's comfort for I knew that had I purchased fancy furniture, I may have been more upset with the havoc this flood brought. Since I did not have anything fancy and expensive, the feeling of loss was less. It is really true what is written in Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Miraculously, our electronics still worked. My husband told me jokingly, "God knows that we cannot afford new ones, so He made the old ones work well."

This event led me to think of the first flood. I imagine that the people outside the Ark tried vainly to save their most prized possessions. Like me, they traveled to higher ground as the flood rose. Our local television stations broadcast pictures of people on their roofs, soaked and shivering, waiting for help. Some of them had no chance to leave their houses because the water came up fast. Some of them thought they were safe but found their houses drowning. They held out hope that rescuers would come to save them.

I wonder if the people in Noah's time had that kind of hope. They probably felt sad, tired, and upset. Their feelings were probably much like ours. Like us, they thought of their losses and feared drowning. The big difference is that they perished, while we still have another hope.

Eventually the flood subsided. With hearts flowing with gratefulness for God's guidance, we began the clean-up process. The time passed quickly, for we felt we were not only cleaning up our town, we were cleaning the unfaithfulness from our hearts. We praised God for His safe-keeping and love. 

It was a beautiful spring day, and a sense of peace stayed with me as I thought about the meaning of the death of Christ and His resurrection. I paused for a moment on top of the steps leading to the avenue, now crowded with people rushing to their jobs.

Sitting in her usual place, inside a small archway, was the old flower lady. At her feet, corsages and boutonnieres were parading on top of a spread of open newspaper.

The flower lady was smiling; her wrinkled old face alive with some inner joy. I started down the stairs. Then, on an impulse, I turned and picked out a flower.

As I put it in my lapel, I said, "You look happy."

"Why not?" she answered. "Everything is good."

She was dressed so shabbily, and seemed so very old, that her reply startled me.

"You've been sitting here for many years now, haven't you? And always smiling. You wear your troubles well."

"You can't reach my age and not have troubles," she replied. "Only, it's like Jesus and Good Friday ..." She paused for a moment.

"Yes?" I prompted.

"Well, when Jesus was crucified, on Good Friday, that was the worst day for the whole world. When I get troubles, I remember that. Then I think of what happened only three days later—Easter, and our Lord rose from the dead.

"So, when things go wrong, I've learned to wait three days and, somehow, everything gets much better."

She smiled 'good-bye,' but her words still follow me whenever I think I have troubles. "Give God a chance to help. Wait three days."

—*Author Unknown*

How Will You Be Remembered?



Valerie Smetheram

Val Smetheram lives in Queensland, Australia, with her pastor-husband. She has been a minister's wife for over 18 years.

Passionate about the environment, justice, and all growing things, she is an amateur writer and poet with more than 100 pieces published. Her ambitions are to become superfit, learn to swim, and write a book, not necessarily in that order.

We were talking, my friend and I, after attending another friend's funeral. The deceased had been a warm, friendly lady and was consequently popular. Her 14-year-old grandson wept inconsolably. She had been his mentor, encouraging him constantly with love and wisdom. The gap she was leaving in his life was obviously huge, his distress highly visible; he nevertheless bravely spoke to the congregation in the overflowing chapel to pay tribute to his much-loved Nanna. His pain was difficult to watch. She and her wise sayings, to say nothing of her love for him, will remain vivid in his memory all his life, just as my dearly loved father remains in mine.

"It gets to you, doesn't it?" someone said as we came out. We nodded, too full to speak. "She'll be remembered warmly by everyone," Irene said when we'd recovered ourselves a little. She thought for moment. "I wonder how people will remember me?"

"How would you *like* to be remembered?" I asked.

"Well, happily of course. I hope I've made people happy, you know, made them lighten up sometimes."

"Let me tell you, you've certainly done that for me, more than once."

She hugged me. "Have I? Have I really?" she said in surprise. "I'm glad, because that's what I really want to do. How about you?"

"Ah, well, I'd like to be thought of, more than anything else, as an encourager. People struggle with so many problems, and even one encouraging word is so helpful when you're disheartened. It's like water in the desert."

I pondered our conversation later. I thought how often you hear people being "put down"—so easy to do

without thinking. Especially if you're having an "off" day, unwell, worried about many things, struggling through the flu or some other ghastly affliction, or even worrying, in these uncertain times, if your job will be there tomorrow. Politicians, government officials, bus drivers, shop assistants—all kinds of people you interact with in everyday life, hand out less-than-kind remarks. On television, radio, and in the print media too. Often disguised as sharp comments, designed to be witty, but usually at someone's expense, and at its worst, discourteous and wounding. You encounter it everywhere. We're all guilty. I thought of my childhood and how one particular teacher seemed to crush my spirit constantly, eroding away any self-confidence I had. Now maybe it wasn't intended that way (I'd like to think that was the case) and certainly I was an over-sensitive child. However, the effects are unfortunately long-lasting. Even now, the hurtful words said to me in my childhood come back to haunt me, especially when I'm trying to complete a project, and my self-esteem takes a tumble. When I think of how often children, especially, are stung by words, I could weep for all of our collective thoughtlessness.

Kinds words, of course, leave a lingering presence of happiness. I ran into one of my ex-neighbours while visiting another town last year. Twenty-five years had passed since we'd last seen each other. Then we were young mothers, in an isolated country place, with both financial and transport problems, among many other difficulties. She, with three adorable little girls, had a difficult husband who treated her badly. She was also pregnant. She couldn't wait to remind me, at this recent meeting, that she still had the letter I wrote her when she was in the hospital birthing her fourth daughter.

“You will never know how much that helped me,” she told me. I was very surprised as I didn’t recall writing it, but thank God, for once I got it right. It was a real pleasure to reacquaint myself with two of her beautiful now-grown-up girls, and to know that all had turned out well. And yes, their marriage problems were solved too, and she and her husband were still together. Isn’t it the truth that we just don’t know how far-reaching a few kind words are? Unfortunately, the opposite applies as well.

During those early years, I remember castigating our elder son (he was about seven) for some carelessness. He’d broken something, I think. (I was very stressed at the time over other events in our lives. Not an excuse! Children don’t deserve that.) What he’d done was not a deliberate act. I also remember, many years later when he was grown up, being convicted that I must talk with him about it.

“Son, can you ever forgive me for that harshness?” He grinned and gave me a hug. “Mum, I’m not sure I can even remember it” (I’m sure he could but he’s very forgiving). I think he was actually letting me off the hook very kindly.

This whole subject, of course, takes me back to what our parents taught us, so long ago. “If you can’t say something kind, say nothing.” “Guard the tongue,” James tells us; if we fail to, we can do a lot of damage. Conversely, the tongue can be used for gentle, uplifting words. I am well aware of all this, yet I can still “shoot my mouth off” occasionally or, as someone recently described it, “open the mouth before putting the brain into gear.” Please God, help me not to be guilty of it. After all, if anyone ever remembers me when I’ve passed on, let the memory be of a time when I helped, not hindered.

So, how do *you* want to be remembered?



Something To Think About

Author Unknown

The young woman had lost her job, her husband, her security. She didn’t know which way to turn. So she went to see the old preacher.

Pacing about the preacher’s study, the young woman ranted about her problems. Finally she clenched her fist and shouted, “I’ve begged God to say something to help me. Tell me, Preacher, why doesn’t God answer?”

The old preacher, who sat across the room, spoke something in reply—something so hushed it was indistinguishable. The young woman stepped across the room. “What did you say?” she asked.

The preacher repeated himself, but again in a tone as soft as a whisper. So the young woman moved closer until she was leaning on the

preacher’s chair. “Sorry,” she said. “I still didn’t hear you.”

With their heads bent together, the old preacher spoke once more. “God sometimes whispers,” he said, “so we will move closer to hear Him.”

This time the young woman heard and she understood. We all want God’s voice to thunder through the air with the answers to our problem. But God’s is the still, small voice, the gentle whisper.

Perhaps there’s a reason. Nothing draws human focus quite like a whisper. God’s whisper means I must stop my ranting and move closer to Him, until my head is bent together with His. And then, as I listen, I will find my answer.

Better still, I find myself closer to God.



Jesus: The Sure Shelter in the Time of Storm



Jacqueline Hope HoShing-Clarke

Jackie has been an educator since 1979 and has served in the field of education as principal, assistant principal, and teacher.

She currently serves the Northern Caribbean University (NCU) – Jamaica as coordinator for the pre-college department.

She is married to Pastor Bylton Clarke, and they have two children, Deidre and Deneil, who are both students at NCU. Jackie enjoys writing, teaching the children's Sabbath School, flower gardening, and housekeeping. Best of all, she is in love with Jesus and looks forward with joy to His soon return.

As beautiful as the Caribbean is, it's located in the hurricane belt. Each hurricane season, we Jamaicans take much comfort in the fact that we are protected from hurricanes because our island is a mountainous masterpiece. Many of us look to the mountains for shelter from the storms. For decades these mountains have done exceptionally well in protecting us from the storms and hurricanes that have threatened our homeland, and surely they have won many victories. By now we have learned that the Jamaican mountains do not always guarantee us protection.

I have now experienced two major hurricanes in Jamaica: the Category 3 hurricane, Gilbert, in 1988, and Hurricane Ivan, of Category 5, in 2004. These two forces of nature were indeed forces to reckon with. Looking back now and comparing the two, Gilbert could be described as "bad weather;" Ivan as "severely destructive." Hurricane Ivan wreaked havoc in Jamaica, other Caribbean islands, and parts of the United States. For the very first time, I became a hurricane victim and was homeless for two nights because, in his rage, Ivan the Terror took the roof off what had been our home for nearly eight years. This was an entirely new experience for my household and me. Water flowed into our house from above as though it was not a house but an outdoor garden, receiving the torrential showers that gardens receive when it rains. We worked all night trying to see what we

could secure and to push out some of the water as it collected in each room of the house.

It was amazing, though, how Jesus provided peace for us in that tempestuous situation, for during the ordeal, I found that songs flowed through my mind in the same magnitude or more as the waters flowed through our house, and I was able to sing though the billows rolled: "All the way my Savior leads me; What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy, Who through life has been my guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell; For I know what'er befalls me, Jesus doeth all things well."

"Don't cling to this world and its treasures, this earth will soon pass away, oh give Him your love without measure, He's calling you today."

"My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary."

"Holy Sabbath, day of rest, by our Master richly blest, God created and Divine, set aside for holy time."

"Under His wings I'm safely abiding; Though the night deepens and tempest are wild, Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me; He has redeemed me, and I am His child. Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever."

"I will follow Thee, my Savior, Where-soe'er my lot may be. Where Thou goest I will follow; Yes, my Lord, I'll follow Thee."

Though the storm was raging and wailing, both inside and outside our house, I was amazed that in my heart there was a melody. Yes, Jesus placed a calm within me, a peace inside me that only he could provide and sustain amidst such billows. God was reminding me that in spite of what was happening, He was still in control and He would continue to lead me and take care of me and my family.

That night we were sheltered by friends, friends in whom the spirit of God dwells. Elder Ezra Fider and his wife Carol made us feel as though we were at home. What love! I thought about it: in just one night, life had changed so much for us. That night before going to bed I again sang, "My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine; Now hear me while I pray, Take all my guilt away, Oh let me from this day be wholly thine..." It is a good thing to look to God in faith because as I prayed that night I said, "Dear Jesus, I am your servant and I know you are in control, but since you didn't give your angels charge to keep the roof of our house on, then it is clear to me you have another place for us to live. Could you please tell me where that place is?" Before I ended my prayer, a name surfaced in

my mind. This person is a builder, and so I thought that at daybreak I would go in search of him to see if he could help me find a house. When I found him, he said he had no house available but that his brother had recently completed renovations on one of his houses. He took me to his brother, and in less than 24 hours after Hurricane Ivan blew the roof off our house, we found another place to live. Later that day, I found a second option—another available house was made known to me. Imagine finding two houses in less than one day after the storm! God directed me to take the first option. Today, I am settled again in my new home as though I had been living there for eight years or more. "My God shall supply all you need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19, KJV).

God is in every storm, and He provides not just calm and peace, but He provides songs, houses, and other solutions too. God indeed is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1). I suggest to all of us in Jamaica and elsewhere to stop looking to the mountains around us for security and start looking to Jesus, who is the sure shelter in the time of storm.



Story from the *Signs of the Times*

Leonora L. Warriner

A touching story is told of an aged Christian who had long grieved over her inability to remember what she read in the Bible. Day after day, as old age and infirmity drew on, she would read from the Book she loved, only to find that a few minutes after closing her Bible, she could not recall a word.

One evening, after going through the same experience again, she lay down to sleep, tired and discouraged, telling herself it was useless to read what so soon passed from her mind.

That night she had an impressive dream. She seemed to be standing, with a loosely woven basket in her hand, by the bank of a beautiful stream whose crystal waters flowed softly at her feet. By her side stood an angel in shining robes, who bade her stoop

and fill her basket with living water. Again and again she tried to fill it, but the loose mesh would not retain the water and it flowed out again. Disappointed and disheartened, she turned weeping away, but the angel, bending tenderly over her, whispered, "Look inside your basket, dear one." Gazing with tear-dimmed eyes, the woman saw that the basket, which had once been soiled and dusty, was now white as the driven snow, sparkling in the sunlight.

And so it is with the word of God. Even though we may often be unable to recall what we have but recently read, if we will constantly fill our minds and hearts with the word, it will exert its cleansing, life-giving power in our lives.



The Golden Rule



Reingard Schwenger

Reingard and her husband have two sons. They are living in Freudenstadt, a little town in the Blackwood Forest, Germany. She enjoys reading and playing the piano.

Several months after my family and I had moved to a new district, I was engaged in a conversation with a church member when something she said surprised me. She told me I had disappointed her. With some concern, I asked her to tell me what I had done to disappoint her. She said she had been excited when she found out she and I were approximately the same age. She had looked forward to becoming fast friends. However, she noticed something about me that disturbed her.

It seems that she was very bothered by the fact that I, the pastor's wife, did not walk up to all the church members and shake their hands. She felt I was failing in my duty as a part of the ministerial team. I did not fit the image she had of a good minister's spouse.

Have you ever been in a similar situation? Do members of your congregation have expectations of you that you do not meet? Have people ever withdrawn from you for no apparent reason?

Perhaps you've been on the other side. Do people in your congregation fail to meet your expectations? Do you find yourself being disappointed in others? Do you find yourself pulling away from those who are not what you hoped they would be?

What about expectations? I've often wondered if I have to meet everyone's else expectations. Do I have to meet anybody's expectations? Do others have the right to expect something from me? Are there just expectations and unjustifiable ones?

In my desire to find answers to my questions, I looked to Jesus. He was confronted with many expectations. Matthew 8:1-4 tells the story of the leper. He expected Jesus to heal him, and Jesus did just that. When Peter took his eyes from Jesus and began sinking into the water, he cried for help. Jesus saved Peter from a desperate situation (Matthew 14:28-31). Matthew 9:27-29 describes the faith the blind men had when they asked Jesus to heal them. Jesus responded to their faith and gave them sight.

The Bible is full of such stories, and there is a recurring pattern to each account. Humans were in desperate situa-

tions, they had wishes and expectations, they articulated their expectations, and Jesus helped them. I believe Jesus knew the expectations of these people before they mentioned them, yet He met them only after He had been asked.

Sometimes Jesus intervened without having been asked. In Matthew 8:28-32, the two demoniacs were healed without being asked. So was the demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb. These men were not able to express themselves; they could not tell Jesus what they needed. But Jesus knew their needs better than they themselves knew them. He helped them without even being asked.

However, there were times when Jesus did not meet the expectations of those around Him. The Pharisees and Sadducees asked Jesus to perform a miracle, and He chose not to. When the high priests and elders asked Jesus questions about His authority, He did not answer them. Jesus knew these people did not have genuine needs and questions. He knew their motives were evil. These were not people who needed help.

When Jesus died, the disciples' world collapsed. They had hoped He would become a great ruler and thought that they would share His government. Their expectations were not met.

Finally, Jesus is not going to meet the expectations of those who want to be rewarded for their good deeds. One day Jesus will tell them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers" (Matthew 7:23).

Jesus' reactions to others' expectations were as follows:

- Jesus met the expectations of those who asked for His help, stated their expectations, and had a genuine need or were in a desperate situation.
- When Jesus knew that people needed help but could not ask Him for it, He met their expectations.
- When people had expectations but not genuine needs or when they had selfish motives, Jesus did not meet their expectations.
- Jesus only met others' expectations if it was God's will.

With Jesus, we are in good company. He met expectations and did not meet expectations. Thus, he made some

humans happy; others, He offended. We also meet and do not meet expectations, and we will always do that, for it is neither possible nor good to meet all the expectations people have. Sure, Jesus had a decided advantage. He could see what was in people's hearts. He knew motives, wishes, and needs. As humans, we cannot read the thoughts of others.

Whenever I expect someone to act or react in a certain way and the person does not meet my expectations, I tend to create a mental image of that person. Often, this image is false. The image exists only in my head. It did not originate from experiences made with this person, but rather from unmet expectations. Therefore, it does not reflect reality.

In his book *Guide to Unhappiness*, Paul Watzlawick narrates the following story: A man wants to hang a picture. He has the nail but no hammer. His neighbor has a hammer. So, the man decides to walk over to the neighbor and ask to borrow the hammer. However, doubt assails him. What if the neighbor does not want to lend the hammer?

The man begins thinking, "Yesterday I met my neighbor in the hallway. He said hello when he passed; he did not stop to talk. Maybe he was in a hurry. But maybe the hurry was only a pretense and in reality he holds something against me. What could it be? I have not done anything to him. He must have the wrong mental picture of me. I would certainly lend him a hammer if he needed it. Who does he think he is, anyway! How can he be so selfish!"

In anger, the man runs over to his neighbor's door, scowls at the door, then rings the doorbell. When the neighbor opens the door, the man shouts at him, "Keep your hammer, you idiot!"

Have you ever been guilty of such an act? Such behavior is not fair. No one can meet unknown expectations.

If we always expect something from others, we make their lives and our own difficult. Our lives becomes uneasy because we will be disappointed repeatedly. Other people are uncomfortable because they live under constant pressure to meet our expectations.

Should we have no expectations of others? Or if we do have expectations, how should we handle them? Jesus gave us the answer when He gave us the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

There is a German proverb which says, "What you do not want to be done to you, do not impose it on someone else." This is not bad advice. It is good if we do not do something to our neighbor that we ourselves do not like. In this case a passive attitude is required. But Jesus requests much more from us. His rule challenges us to actively do good to our neighbor. Jesus' advice is simple.

If you want someone to pay attention to you, pay attention to others.

If you want to receive an invitation, do the inviting first.

If you want to be appreciated, show your appreciation.

If you want someone to be part of your life, take the initiative and make that person part of your life.

If you want to be helped, help first.

If you want to be called, make the initial call.

If you want others to speak kindly to you, speak kindly to them.

The examples could go on and on.

Many years ago my grandmother wrote a poem and placed it in my poetry album.

"If in life you desire happiness, aim at making others happy, for the joy that we give returns to our own hearts."

This is true. Jesus gave us this Golden Rule because He wanted to present a gift to us. He knew the blessing would return to all who lived according to this rule. Those who follow it will be enriched though they themselves are the initial givers.

God wants us to experience satisfaction by helping others become happier. Our own lives will be enriched as soon as we enrich the lives of others. Our lives are empty when we focus only on our own expectations and wishes. Nothing will happen if everyone waits for the other to begin. The Golden Rule challenges us to refrain from evil and get actively involved with others.

When people expect something from others without articulating those needs, disappointment is bound to occur. Disappointment leads to distrust and quarrels. People begin to build walls, and communication ceases to exist. However, when people live by the Golden Rule, bridges are built. A caring and happy climate is created, and a fellowship abounds.

What Jesus expects from us is not easy. It is not our normal human nature to leave our own needs behind. Yet, what Jesus demands from us, we can learn with His assistance. If we ask for God's help, He will surely meet our expectations.

LORD,

when I am hungry,
give me someone I can feed.

LORD,

when I am thirsty,
give me someone I can give a drink.

LORD,

when I am cold,
give me someone I can clothe.

LORD,

when I am sad,
give me someone I can comfort.

LORD,

when I fall down,
give me someone I can lift up.

LORD,

when my burden is heavy,
load me with my neighbors' burdens.

LORD,

when I need love,
help me to love others.



Party in Hell



Maree Worker

Maree and her husband Michael have 2 girls, Brianna and Madison. They enjoy the challenge and blessings of ministry in Australia. Maree is heavily involved in her local congregation as music director and personal ministries leader. Her interests involve music, singing, teaching, reading, writing, public presentations, and friendships.

There was a party held in hell on the day that Jesus died.
There was laughter, there was merriment, the devil did preside.
They joked of all the things they'd done to cause this day to come,
At last they had won the fight, they had overcome the Son.

So many told their stories of fights that they had fought,
The souls they had destroyed in just the way they had been taught.
Now they tasted the joy of victory, the spoils were all theirs,
It had been worth all the work, the blood, the sweat, the tears.

Then suddenly a word rang out, they could not believe their ears—
He's alive!

The Son of God has beaten death; He's risen and He's gone!
They say the stones have rolled away, it's clear that He has won.
He's alive and He has paid the price; all the sins now have no worth,
The Son of God, the Son of Man, the Savior of the earth.

The devil leapt up from his seat, his leadership to show.
"He may have won," he said to them, "but *we* will not let go,
We'll take as many down with us as we can lead away.
A pact I make before you now, He *will* regret this day.

"He may believe that He has won, He may believe He's right,
I tell you now that I'm here and I'll continue in this fight!
Every soul that we can win is one less He can claim,
Let's take them down, let's taken them out, this is now a game!

"It's not over till it's over, this is my word to you.
Death may not defeat Him, but I'll break His heart in two,
He says they're all His children, each one precious in His eyes,
That kind of sappy nonsense is the sort that I despise!

"Let's do battle justice, let's make a new game plan,
The rules have changed but I am still the ruler over man!
I will not give up that easily, I will not let go the fight,
Let's give 'em heaps, let's shake 'em down, and let's begin tonight!"

So the devil and his angels set forth for battle strong,
For each soul would need to choose on whose side they would belong,
No longer for supremacy was this duel to be fought,
Instead it was a numbers game, who's won, who's lost, who's bought.

And still the war is raging, even to this day we see
The souls who are choosing on which side they want to be.
And now there is one question, on whose side do you belong?
Are you seeking to love Jesus; are you trying to be strong?

Are you spending time in prayer each day? Are you listening to His voice?
It really is that simple, you just have to make a choice.
To the devil, you're a number, to the Lord, you are His child,
So choose the Lord above all else, let's get that devil riled!



Taps That Still Flowed



Maureen Mbdzi

Maureen Mbdzi is from Zambia. She and her South-African husband have three children. They are based in the Mafikeng District in the Trans-Orange Conference of the Southern Union. Maureen is a lecturer at a college offering commercial subjects. She is also working on her MBA degree. She enjoys people, reading, traveling, sight-seeing, and listening to music.

One Friday afternoon, as I was putting the final touches on my food preparation, I noticed a number of people from all around the mission neighborhood coming into our yard. Though I had lived around these people for nine years, I did not know all of them. Some of them had never been on the premises before. Some of them had been around when the church occasionally distributed food and clothing. I had met some of them in their homes when, as a member of a prayer band, I went to pray with them. The rest I had only seen from a distance.

The church and the mission house are located on one of the worst streets in the area; crime and poverty are rampant. Pensioners reside in two-roomed houses. Unfortunately, they live with their children and grandchildren, who, in many cases, are a constant threat to the community. It is not unusual to find 8-10 souls living in these two-roomed houses.

Time and again, an old woman or a girl is raped or even killed. Fighting is the order of the weekend, especially during a weekend that coincides with a month's end. Also, it is common to find groups of people sitting around drinking beer as early as 6:00 a.m. Such are the people who are my neighbors.

As I looked out my window, I wondered why so many people were coming to my yard. I soon found out that they needed water. A water pipe in the neighborhood had burst, causing water to flow freely in the streets and cutting the supply from homes in our neighborhood. Somehow our mission premises were not affected much. The pressure had decreased, but the water was still available from all the taps around the premises.

I do not know how my neighbors discovered that our taps still had running water. All I saw was a number of people coming onto the premises with all sorts of containers and buckets of various sizes and shapes. Only one person asked if she could draw water; the rest just fell into line and formed queues.

I watched all this in silent amazement. Instead of getting annoyed at the obvious facts of invasion of my privacy, an

increased water bill for the month, and security, I thought of how Jesus would have reacted in this situation. His disciples probably would have said, "Master! These people came with their containers to be filled with water, and do you know that there is no water around because a pipe has burst in the neighborhood? You know this is already a weekend, and the city council will not work on this problem until Monday afternoon. You know how slow they respond to problems. You also know what this will do to the water bill if everyone is allowed to fill their containers; besides, it is not safe, and also the Sabbath hours will soon be upon us. Should we be without water while they take all the water we will need? Bid them go back!"

And Jesus, filled with compassion, would have looked at all the people gathered to draw water and then would have turned to His disciples and said, "Leave them alone. Why do you worry about things that do not really matter? These premises are meant for such occasions. People should be able to come here and not only draw physical water, but spiritual water as well. Have you ever considered why there is no water anywhere else except here? This has been allowed as a witness to them, that they may know that God provides for His children all the time. Those who depend on God will never be disappointed—God will be their provider. Yes! Let them draw the water, that they may know the living God, who provided the water of life."

I learned a great lesson from this incident. The church of God is a place where people should come with all their problems and find relief. It should be a place of refuge from the battles of life. When everything else has failed, the church should still have its doors wide open to welcome weary souls. Sometimes though, as long-time members of the church, we stand in the doorway, not allowing others to come in and not going in ourselves.

May God help us realize that He is a God who extends His invitation to everyone, and may we reveal Him as He really is.



When God Calls Your Name



Mary Barrett

Mary Barrett is a writer and is also employed by the local church to work with her husband in pastoral ministry in England. They have two daughters. She enjoys spending her free time transforming her wilderness garden into a place of beauty!

Life is full of those special moments that really make life worthwhile.

Moments like

Discovering that you can finally reverse your car without hitting anything!

Finding out that if you breathe in deeply enough, you can still fit into your wedding dress!

Realizing that hair coloring really does work!

And then life is full of those extra-special moments that are printed on your heart forever.

Moments like

Graduating from the university or getting that long-awaited promotion.

Realizing that you have found the one you want to wake up with every morning.

Holding your baby in your arms for the very first time.

Discovering that money doesn't make you rich, but friendships do.

And then, life is full of those extra-special, special moments, moments that you cherish in your heart like nuggets of gold, moments that bring unbelievable joy to your soul.

Moments like

The very first time you heard God call your name, and you stopped to listen.

Or the moment when you looked down at your sins in despair looked up at the cross in hope, and experienced God's forgiveness for yourself.

The realization that God holds a place in your heart that no other one can, and you want to tell everyone about it.

The great thing about these extra-special, special moments are that they do not have to end if we choose to stop and listen when God calls our names each day.

One of the greatest battles that we have to fight as pastors' wives is the one where God calls us every day to sit with Him, talk with Him, and learn from Him. Unfortunately, our temptation is to ignore Him. Ask any pastor's wife, and she will probably tell you that she spends hardly any time alone with God on a regular basis. She will tell you it is one of the hardest battles she has to fight. In our hearts, we may want to spend time with God; in reality, the majority of us don't. Yes, we hear God call our names, but we pretend that we haven't.

God knows how great a battle this is for us. He knows that amidst the busyness of our days, the pressure of a demanding job, the struggle to take care of our children, and the dilemma to be the kind of ministers' wives that our congregations demand, time with God is always postponed until tomorrow. And so in Matthew 6, God says to us, "Seek you first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you."

Another version of that reads, "Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human

concerns will be met” (*The Message Bible*).

I wonder what would happen in our lives if we really followed through on God’s advice? How different could our lives be if we really put our time with God before anything else? How would it be if we let nothing come before our time alone with God?

Why don’t we look at the key words in that passage and find out?

Steep Your Life in God-Reality

“Steep” is a strong, powerful word. It means to soak or to be soaked. So we are to soak our lives in God-reality. What is His reality? Everything that is written in His Bible. We are to know it, love it, and live it. His values, His aims, and His purposes are to become our values, our aims, and our purposes.

It is all too easy to live our lives as if this world were reality, instead of the world that God speaks of in the Bible. We can be so busy putting roots down in the world that we see that we forget the real world—the one that we cannot see, the world which speaks of the conflict between good and evil, truth and lies, eternal death or forever life. Steep your life in God-reality, and you will find that the distractions of this world will not have such a strong hold on you.

Steep Your Life in God-Initiative

Steep your life in God-initiative—this phrase is so exciting! This means letting God lead in every part of your life, inviting Him to open up doors to great adventures, great opportunities, and great ways to serve Him. It is giving God permission to make the first move, to take the first step, in every aspect of your life. When we steep ourselves in God’s initiatives, it means that we want our lives to be fully directed by God. Don’t be scared of doing this. God really has your interests embedded in His heart. Don’t be timid of all the thrilling things He can do for you, if you ask Him to take the initiative in your life.

Steep Your Life in God-Provisions

Steep your life in God-provisions. This gives you permission to give to God everything that is heavy in your

heart—the big problems, the little ones, the insignificant ones, and the gigantic ones. Share them with God and be confident that He will provide solutions that are even better than yours. Just trust Him, just depend upon Him, and see what happens.

Just as God provided for Abraham and other Bible characters, He will provide for your needs.

Then, when we steep ourselves in God-reality, God-initiatives, and God-provisions—we don’t need to worry about missing out on anything. We spend an awful lot of time worrying about what we are missing out on in this world, but our lives could be so different if we worried instead about what we are missing when we do not spend time with God.

Sometimes our eyes are more focused on the riches of this world than the greatness of God.

The result of soaking ourselves in God’s reality, His initiatives, His provisions—is plain and simple—it is contentment. We will find that our everyday human concerns will be met. Sounds far-

fetched, doesn’t it, too good to

be true? Not so with God. God has a perfect track record as Someone who keeps His word. When He says He will take care of all our needs as a result of the time we spend with Him, He means it! In exchange for our time, God will give us His calm within our hearts.

God can give us something else, too, when we worship Him regularly—the ability to inspire others. Mia had been the pastor’s wife at a particular church for nearly two years when one of the church members said to her, “You really have something with God. All of us in this church see it.”

A few years later, in another church, a young girl named Alice said something similar to her, “You really have something with God, I know you have, I can see it in you. I wish I could have what you have.” Mia started studying the Bible with her, and a few months later Alice was baptized.

Our relationship with God is probably one of the greatest things we can bring to the ministry. If you spend time with God, it rubs off; people see it, and they are encouraged to spend time with God too.

And that certainly is an extra-special, special moment! 🙏

Just as God provided for Abraham and other Bible characters, He will provide for your needs.

What Is a Mother?

Louise Shattuck

Do you know that Webster defines a mother as “a female parent”? This is the understatement of all time, and I’d like to tell Mr. Webster why his description should be revised.

A mother is a walking encyclopedia who is expected to know Stan Musial’s batting average, how to tie a half hitch, and where somebody left last Sunday’s comics. She must answer unhesitatingly such questions as where the sun goes at night, how jet propulsion works, what the principle exports of Thailand are, and where baby kittens come from.

A mother is a master mechanic who can get a trouser leg out of bicycle chain, and can fix anything with cellophane tape and a hairpin. She is a plumber who knows that the water won’t run out of the bathtub because the tissue-paper sails have come off the children’s boats and are clogging the drain. She is an electrician who can make the electric train back up without blowing a fuse.

A mother is a practical nurse who knows how to make a splint for a bird’s broken wing. She must also be able to remove splinters and loose teeth painlessly, stop an earache in the middle of the night, and cure a case of measles before the fourth-grade picnic.

A mother is a detective who finds the missing mate to every sock. When her scissors and flashlight disappear, she can recover them long before the culprits plead guilty.

A mother is an untiring seamstress who sews on Pathfinder badges, designs tricky patches for jeans,

replaces lost buttons, and lets down and takes up dozens of hems. She must also be able to make such a beautiful halo and pair of wings that the school play audience will never notice that the angel’s two front teeth are missing.

She is a sage who is wise enough to know when her son has reached the stage at which he would rather die than be kissed in public, and when her daughter’s best friend has won the admiration of the only boy in the world. Yet she is also an innocent who never ceases to wonder at the miracle of life when the first crocus peeks through the snow and the first blue egg appears in a robin’s nest.

A mother is an heiress! Although she may not feel wealthy when she is trying to stretch the family budget to include braces on teeth, she is rich in rewards. She is rich in the pride that engulfs her when her teenager offers to mow the neighbors’ lawn while they are away on vacation, or her Little Leaguer insists on pitching with a sprained finger rather than let his teammates down. She is rich in investments. As she watches her small daughter tenderly tucking her doll into bed, she hopes her child will grow up to know the happiness of being a mother. It is then that she knows, Mr. Webster, that a mother deserves the longest definition in the world!



This originally appeared in The Pioneer.

Be Careful, Your Sins May Find You Out

Received via internet

Have you ever told a white lie? Then you are going to love this. For all ladies who bake for church events ...

Alice, as a pastor's wife, was to bake a cake for the church ladies' group bake sale, but she forgot to do it until the last minute. She baked an angel food cake and when she took it from the oven, the center had dropped flat. She said, "Oh dear, there's no time to bake another cake." So, she looked around the house for something to build up the center of the cake. Alice found it in the bathroom—a small roll of toilet paper. She plunked it into the middle of the cake and then covered it with icing.

The finished product looked beautiful, so she rushed it to the church. Alice then gave her daughter some money and instructions to be at the sale the minute it opened and to buy that cake and bring it home. When the daughter arrived at the sale, the attractive cake had already been sold.

Alice was beside herself. A couple of days later, Alice was invited to a friend's home. A fancy lunch was served, and to top it off, the cake in question was presented for dessert.

Alice saw the cake, and she started to get out of her chair to rush into the kitchen to tell her hostess all about it, but before she could get to her feet, one of the other ladies said, "What a beautiful cake!" Alice nearly fainted in her chair when she heard the hostess (a prominent church member) say, "Why, thank you, I baked it myself."



The Lord Is My Shepherd

