



# The Journal

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## Editor's Musings

Dear Friends,

The year is rapidly coming to a close. But these past months have found clergy wives consistently in the headlines of both American and world newspapers.

Some of our sisters fell asleep in Jesus—Ruth Bell Graham, Coretta Scott King, and Tammy Faye Baker. Each of these giants among clergy wives brought unique styles, gifts, and talents to their parsonages and ministries. If you and I are ever tempted to regret our days in the public arena, think of these women's struggles. Their lives, families, trials, troubles, and victories were all played out on the world stage. They were compared. They were adored. They were criticized. But they all loved Jesus.

Then there was Mary Winkler. Unable to cope with her pastor-husband's violence, she shot him and fled. Her troubled situation brought a whole new face to behind-the-scenes life in the parsonage. It was not pretty. Her trial dominated the evening news for weeks.

Four different women. Four women who had little in common except for the fact that they married ministers. And that one life step moved them along a road that is still traveled by only a few. According to biographical reports, Ruth and Coretta had to be mightily persuaded by their beaux to commit to life in the parsonage. They had other plans. Tammy Faye seemed destined by her upbringing to become an evangelist's wife.

Maybe each of these ministry wives has lessons for us. Lessons of endurance. Lessons of faith. Lessons of decisions. Lessons of surviving.

An old adage says that "experience is a hard teacher; she gives the test first and the lesson afterward." It is my prayer for each of us that, as partners in ministry, we begin the new year in Jesus by learning from someone else's experience. These four women were not perfect pastors' wives, but they were all loved by Jesus.

God bless us every one!

### Ministry to Clergy Spouses Division Coordinators:

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Southern Asia-Pacific—Helen Gulfan  
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West-Central Africa—Angèle Rachel Nlo Nlo

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**Editorial Office:**

12501 Old Columbia Pike  
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www.ministerialassociation.com/shepherd/shepindex.html  
Printed in the U.S.A.

**Phone:** 301-680-6513

**Fax:** 301-680-6502

**Email:** lowes@gc.adventist.org

**Coordinator & Editor:** Sharon Cress

**Editorial Assistant/Layout & Design:** Shelly Lowe

# The Month I Saw His Hand



***Maria Elena Perez de Gomez***

*Maria Elena Perez de Gomez is a pastor's wife in Naranjos, Veracruz, Mexico.*

It was a hot summer day in August. My husband made preparations to attend the monthly pastors' meeting in the port of Veracruz. He filled out expense forms so that he could be reimbursed and requested that the treasurer not deduct the materials so he could have the whole check. My husband left that summer day expecting to return with enough money left over to defray some of our expenses.

The day of his return, we went to the home of Professor Octavio and his wife, Elisa. While the professor helped my husband, Elisa and I went to visit an elderly lady.

Upon our return, I didn't see my husband. When I inquired, the professor said, "He was just here, but he went to phone the Conference."

"That's strange," I said. "He just came from there."

"I'm not sure how to tell you this, but your husband was robbed in Cd. de Mexico (where he had to change buses to Tula, Hgo.), and the thieves took all the money he had."

At first I wasn't too worried because I thought the Conference would help us. However, when my husband returned, he whispered, "They have to do some legal transactions in Cd. de Mexico, and at the next meeting, they will see what they can do for me."

I knew this was the way the insurance company wanted it done. Nevertheless, I said, "With what money are they going to make the transaction? How are you going to eat? The baby needs milk. We are two months behind

with our phone bill. You need money for your bus trips, and we have to wait a month?"

My hope was no longer in those men. I raised my eyes to heaven and put my trust in the only One who could help us, God. I made the mistake of not thinking first about God. I needed to learn to be happy in the ministry.

I came from a Christian home with no financial difficulties. Even though there were five of us, four had steady jobs. We thanked God for our things. It didn't seem possible that one day we would need anything. We placed our confidence in our stable salaries; we didn't entirely depend on divine help.

Now, ten months after entering the ministry, it was time to learn who is the giver of all things. My husband recounted how he had been attacked. They threatened him with firearms and took all the money he had, except a few coins—the exact change he needed for his bus fare from Cd. de Mexico to Tula, Hgo. There were two reasons to praise God: my husband's life had been spared, and he was with me. At that point, we started to depend on God.

The family with us that day did not have very much economically, but they had big hearts. They were the first to learn of our misfortune and the first to help us. The next day they brought us a box of food. Among other things, it contained beans, rice, oil, sugar, raisins, toilet paper, and milk for the baby. It also had something I will

never forget, “Mil” cookies. They are called Mil cookies because they are very little, and it takes a lot of them to make a kilo. The Garcia family knew us pretty well as we had eaten together several times. They knew that my husband really enjoyed eating this cookie after meals, and now they had included it in the food provisions—a detail that really delighted us.

During that hot month, some colporteurs stayed with us. They witnessed the miracles that supported us. For example, there was the miracle of tasty beans that we ate along with tortillas. This was something I had never eaten before, at least not in this way, but they were the best beans I had ever tasted. One colporteur asked, “Sister, what do you put in your beans? They are very tasty.” I believe the special ingredient was celestial and not from this world. We thanked God for the pleasure of enjoying the food, even though it was the simplest in the world.

A few days later, the church treasurer brought us a donation. The church family had heard about what happened. Another family brought us a food box. Thank you, Lord!

Then we remembered the phone bill. “What are we going to do?” We decided to go to the phone company, Telmex. The secretary suggested that we pay one bill, at least. This would keep our phone service from being cancelled. Once more, God was our only hope.

The next day Sister Elsita, a kind, elderly lady, came to see us. She brought a bag with a lot of change in it. She said, “We learned what happened to the pastor, so we collected an offering from the church members. It’s not a lot, but it’s given from the heart.”

There was enough money in the bag to pay one phone bill. Tears welled up in my eyes, and my voice faltered. I felt so thankful for God’s goodness and for these appreciative church members. (Even as I remember it, my eyes get moist.)

The next morning my husband went to pay one of the phone bills. About an hour later, another phone bill came in the mail. It should have been the third phone bill, but miraculously, it was just the second bill.

We clearly saw God’s hand supplying each of our needs that month, and even longer, as two months later, we were still eating from the food boxes. And the Mil cookies lived up to their name. They did not run out that month and were shared with the many people who ate at our table.

From this I have learned to thank God. This experience happened in the dawn of our ministry and just in time. Since then we have faced other financial difficulties and trials, but God has never abandoned us.

Paul boldly tells us, “My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Now I can say with all honesty, “Thank you, Lord, for everything you give to me.” I attest that it was many Augusts ago that I really “saw” His hand. 🙏



***“Glory to God  
in the highest,  
and on earth  
peace to men  
on whom his  
favor rests.”***

***Luke 2:14***

# Children in the Glass House



**Karen Carlton**

*Karen Carlton grew up as a very happy pastor's daughter and has been a pastor's wife for more than six years. Her husband is now the Trust Services Director for the Iowa-Missouri Conference. She enjoys writing, reading, and especially spending time with her family!*

“Shhhhh!” I whispered for the hundredth time! I glanced at my watch as my two young daughters squirmed and wiggled during church. I tried to keep a pleasant look on my face, but I was getting frustrated!

It was our first Sabbath in our new district. We had moved into a small house earlier in the week, and the girls were sharing a bedroom for the first time in their short lives. Sharing is a virtue I hold in high esteem, but having two youngsters share a room for the first time and then having to be the model family after short nights of sleep (or sleeplessness) were taking a toll on them and me!

I glanced down and saw one daughter scooting under the pew and just about lost my put-together appearance! The church was filled with older people who had forgotten what it felt like to be a harried parent sitting in church with two little children. Most of them had no idea what it was like to sit *alone* with these same two children, trying to keep them occupied—while their father was preaching!

Finally the closing prayer was finished, and I leaned over to gather my things before exiting the sanctuary. As though released from an invisible restraint, my daughter hopped up on her knees and looked over the back of the pew. Just then, I heard a lady in the row behind me lean up to my daughter and tell her in a hushed but loud tone,

“You were very naughty in church today! You should sit still and be quiet!”

I spun around and looked this woman in the face. She had a pasted-on smile, but a scowl was lurking behind her eyes. “I can see *you* have your hands full!” she stated as she walked out of her pew.

Swallowing my tears, I picked up our bag and smiled as we walked out. I couldn't cry here. I still needed to meet the people in our new congregation and hope that my children wouldn't cause any more scowls! They were only 1½ and 4 years old!

The next week at church, I made sure to sit on the other side of the church from the scowling lady and then learned that she and her husband would be going to Arizona for the winter. Phew! Maybe we'd be more settled by the time they came back. Also, that next week, another lady came and sat with me during church.

“I'm sure it must be hard to be alone in the pew with the girls, so I'm going to sit with you every week!” she said as she took my oldest on her lap. She pulled a coloring book and some new crayons out of her bag and patted me on the back. I smiled back and brushed away my tears of gratefulness! Little did I know that she would be there every week for three years!

Fortunately my children do not remember the first lady's comments. But they will always remember the second lady, who has become our friend.

Now my children are much older and can sit still through the whole church service, but I think about all the pastors' kids out there. A lady in one of our churches asked me why we'd want to raise our children in a pastor's home (as if I would adopt them out just because my husband is a pastor!). But I looked at her and said, "Because I was raised in a pastor's home, and I wouldn't trade it for anything!" She shook her head and said that she had been a pastor's kid too and hated every minute of it.

As I pondered about this, I realized that when I was a child, I never thought that my family was different from the other families in the church. Sure, we had to attend all the meetings, never missed a Sabbath, went to camp meeting for two weeks instead of one, and got to go to Worker's Retreat and play in the lake for a week, but other than that, we were just like everyone else! No one (that I knew of) expected me to act differently because I was the pastor's daughter. I never knew what a glass house was!

Now as a parent of pastor's kids, I wonder if I'm raising my kids as "normal" kids without extra expectations. Sure, I have expectations as a parent, but they wouldn't be any different if my husband had a different occupation! We want our children to love Jesus and make Him first in their lives. We want them to be involved in the church and find ways to minister to others. We want them to be an example in school and Sabbath School and at the store. We want them to want to go to Heaven and live a life that will reflect that desire.

As I watch my children grow and mature, I pray that God will put a hedge around them to keep them safe from the critical words of people, that they will be safe from the harmful effects of bad associations, that they will be protected from the influence of people who just want to have fun and don't see the need to listen to Jesus.

In the book of Hosea, there is a beautiful story of God's love for the people of Israel even though they continually fall away from Him. In Hosea 2:6,7, God talks through Hosea to the wayward people. "I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths. She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now'" (NKJV).

Ministry families are different because there are so many demands upon their time and emotions. But I know that God is willing to hedge in my children and keep them from the paths that are not the right ones, to keep their hearts tender and gentle to Jesus in their lives. I also have a responsibility to teach my children to love the church and be respectful of its leaders. I have to be careful not to be critical of others but rather, to hold them up, so that my children can witness the benefits of being a pastor's child, and most importantly—a child of God! 

***“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”***

***Luke 2:4-7***





# Suzana and God's Protection



**Melita Tomovska**

*Melita Tomovska is the secretary of the Bible Correspondence School in Macedonia. She has two daughters—5-year-old Eva and 2-year-old Lora. Melita enjoys writing and preparing lessons for children. In her spare time, Melita likes to walk in the park. She also enjoys photographing God's beautiful creation.*

In 1991 my sister, Suzana, was wrestling with the decision to come back to church and be baptized. She had just started singing with a rock group and was doing well. All of a sudden people were noticing her and paying attention to her. But God was also paying attention and watching her. He was constantly trying to direct her toward Him, to bring her back to His family to which she had belonged since childhood. She knew all the Bible truths, but she was hesitant about her decision.

She said, "When certain conditions are fulfilled I will be completely on God's side." But time passed and nothing happened.

Then Suzana got a job as a secretary in a publishing house. All activities connected with the printing process were finished on Friday, so she had weekends free. She wondered, "Now that I do not have to work on Saturday, maybe God is telling me that I should come back to church."

Then she thought, "What is the purpose of my life? Where am I going?"

Influenced by her thoughts, she decided to come to church one Sabbath. She saw familiar faces, sang songs, and listened to Bible verses. One of God's commands became especially focused in her mind. She thought, "My boss is constantly telling me to lie, saying he is not in, when actually he is in. So I am lying. Though I am not working on Sabbath, I am breaking God's commandment that says, 'You shall not give false testimony'—the ninth commandment of God. I have to change and get baptized."

Finally Suzana decided to serve God faithfully and keep all the commandments.

Not long after that something happened to strengthen her decision. She told us, "While I was driving to my job, I noticed a rather strange sound coming from my car's engine. I managed to get to my office, but later I had to go to another part of town. I considered going by car or by bus. Finally I decided to go by car.

"While I was driving, the engine stopped. Somehow I managed to pull along the curb of the street. The engine was dead. At that moment a policeman came and said, 'You could have lost your wheel. It is almost off.'

"I decided to leave the car there. Usually when something was wrong with it, my father would come to fix it and take it home. I went back to the office.

"I asked a coworker, a courier, to check on my car. He checked everything that might have caused the problem, but he could not find anything wrong. But the wheel was just barely on the car.

"That was a miracle! There did not seem to be any connection between the stopped engine and the unscrewed wheel. But he made sure that my tire was properly attached to the car. After work we went together to see the car. As soon as we sat down and tried to start the engine, the car started. The sound was as regular as it could be. The presumably dead car started working as soon as I put the key in the ignition switch.

That was really marvelous! When I arrived home, I warned my father that we might have some problems with our car and told him about my morning experience.

I especially warned him about the irregular sound coming from the engine. But the engine never stalled again.

“I then realized that God was protecting me and intervened in His special way to save me when I was in danger. He stopped the car so my wheel would not fall off.”

Suzana was grateful to God for this experience and for the assurance that He was with her always; finally, she made the decision to serve Him completely.

Shortly after that she informed her boss that she could no longer work for the firm. Asked why she was quitting, she explained that she could no longer break God’s explicit commandment that says, “Do not lie!” Surprised by her new attitude, the boss accepted her resignation, though he

could not understand why something that seemed trivial to him was so important to her.

My sister Suzana remained firm in her attitude to keep all God’s commandments, and she was baptized. God became the center of her life, and He is now completely leading her. We attend the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Skopje together, along with our mother. We pray that one day our father will join us, too. We believe God has ways to answer our prayers. In His plans for our lives, He certainly planned for our father to be saved too. I believe this is going to be a new life story that I will share with you next time.



## *Helping Our Brother (and Sister)*

**I**t was a blustery, stormy Christmas Eve. A strong wind from the north was blowing the falling snow into drifts. All the earth was blanketed in white as night settled down on a small town in the Midwest.

A busy pastor, weary from making last-minute calls before Christmas, was approaching his home afoot when he passed a boy in his early teens. Something unusual about the boy caused the pastor to slow down a bit. The youngster was carrying on his back a heavy burden. He puffed as he walked, and his breath was visible in the cold crisp evening air.

“You have quite a load for a boy your size,” the preacher said.

Stopping momentarily, the red-faced youngster replied with a smile in his voice, “Oh, he ain’t heavy, mister, he’s my brother.”

Sure enough, he had a small boy on his back. The pastor wished them both a merry Christmas and stood motionless in the snow as he watched the boy and his brother disappear in the darkness.

He could not get the boys out of his mind. “What a sermon for Christmas!” he thought as he made his way up the walk to his home. “He ain’t heavy, mister, he’s my brother.”

Surely this Christmas season you and I will know many troubled, overburdened, discouraged souls to whom we can give a lift. And after all, they are our brothers (and sisters)—yours and mine.

—By C.L. Paddock, *Signs of the Times*, December 21, 1954.  
December 2005 *Signs of the Times* Email Newsletter

# God's Greatest Gift

*Clyde Iverson*

*Clyde Iverson is the treasurer for Southeast Asia Union Mission in the Republic of Singapore.*

The greatest gift God has given His children is the gift of loving relationships. Man and woman were created to be friends with God. At creation God performed the first wedding where two became one. All through His Word, God uses marriage to illustrate the relationship He wants to have with each of us, the two as one. At creation He also gave the Sabbath as a special day to nurture and enjoy our relationship with Him and His children. You might call it a family day. Sabbath is a special day out with our Father.

God's law given at Sinai is all about this relationship. He doesn't want to share us with other gods. He wants a relationship that is personal and close without any objects between. He wants a relationship where respect is mutual. He reminds us of the day He set aside at creation. It's a day for building our relationship with Him without the distractions of our daily lives. We might view it as a weekend away with God. He loves us so much He wants to share this closeness every Sabbath. In the last six commandments, I believe God is saying, "If you love Me, you must love My children, because each one is important to Me." This is a principle that is easy for us to understand. We all want the people we love to love our children. Jesus summed up the law with a definition of total relationship: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

God uses the human relationship of marriage, the relationship between siblings, the relationship between friends, the relationship between parents and children, and the relationship between young people in love to illustrate the relationship He wants with the special objects of His love, the ones He created in His image to be friends with Him.

God's enemy, Satan, has used every weapon in his arsenal to destroy loving relationships. The focus of Satan's existence is to destroy the special relationship

between God and His human family. He knows that the heart of a loving God is broken when relationships are destroyed. He also knows that when we experience broken and defective relationships, we find it more difficult to understand the eternal, unconditional love God has for us. This has inspired Satan to focus his efforts on destroying the relationship gifts given to us at creation—marriage and the Sabbath.

One relationship that is natural for our fallen selfish natures is the business relationship. It is based on everyone looking out for their own interests. It is a relationship that has remained constant and predictable since the first trade was made. The business relationship has infiltrated human relationships, the ones God based on the principles of love, until love is almost gone. Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 5:44-48 that mixing a business relationship with a love relationship will destroy love:

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:44-48).

Combining a business relationship and a loving relationship brings much heartache. It fosters sexual immorality, divorce, abortion, child abuse, spouse abuse, and all other negative relationships.

Understanding our selfish natures and our desire for a bargain, God uses the reward-for-good-behavior model to get our attention and begin building the relationship He wants with us. We understand this approach because we do much the same when we attempt to build trust while

taming a frightened animal. God meets us where we are. Since the fall in Eden, God often finds us frightened, hiding in the bushes. This may be where our relationship with God begins, but it isn't the relationship His loving heart yearns for. He wants a relationship where our response to Him comes out of pure love. Nothing pleases Him more than when we come running to Him just for the joy of being with Him. He longs to remove our business motives and replace them with a love like His. Business is such a part of our natures that even our efforts to build a relationship with God are based on looking for a good deal. Only God can remove our business heart and give us a heart of love.

A story found in Luke 15 tells of a young man who had a business relationship with his father. He saw his father as the one who could satisfy his desire for an easy life. He was so self-focused that he didn't want to wait until his father died for his inheritance. He wanted it now. We can feel the heartbreak of the father as he honored the wishes of his selfish son. We sense his feeling of loneliness and rejection as he watched his son head down the road to the big city and the "good life." It wasn't the inheritance that broke the father's heart. He had always planned to give it to this son he loved so much. What tortured his soul was that his son wanted nothing more than a business relationship.

Arriving in the big city, the young man began spending his inheritance on all the desires of his heart. He was soon surrounded by friends who made him feel important and accepted. Life was just as he imagined it would be. Then his money ran out. He discovered that his friends only had a business relationship with him; they were not true friends. This prodigal son began to experience a little of what his own father felt the day the young man turned his back on his home and walked away. Feelings of emptiness and hurt in our relationships occur when we bring the self-interest of the business relationship into relationships that God has grounded in love.

In the story of the prodigal son, there was a famine in the land, and the young man was reduced to feeding pigs. He was so hungry that even the pigs' food began to look good. Suddenly he had an idea. His father's servants had plenty to eat. Why not offer his services to his father as a servant? With the possibility of a warm meal in mind, he headed for his father's house. As he traveled, he practiced his speech. "I have sinned and am no longer worthy to be called your son. I will be happy to serve as a servant for a servant's wage if you will just take me back." He still had a business relationship with his father. He didn't understand his father's love.

The Bible says that the father saw his son a long way off and ran toward him. He didn't even let the boy finish his businessman's speech. He started giving orders. "Bring my best robe, kill the fatted calf, prepare a great party. My son who was

lost is back home again." The father did not have a business relationship with his son; he had a father's heart of love that never lost hope that his son would return home.

There was another son in the family who had stayed home and done everything right. He had followed the rules, worked hard, and been obedient to his father's wishes. When he heard the noise of the party and realized it was for his "no-good brother," he was angry and would not go in to celebrate. Once again the father took the initiative and came to find his son. He asked him, "Why are you angry?" The son spilled out all his frustrations. "I have stayed and done everything you asked, yet you haven't thrown a party for me." This older brother also had a business relationship with the father. The relationship was based on what he might get in return for what he had done. The father again showed his heart of love. He said, "My son, everything I have is yours." We can hear his heart's cry: "Why can't you rejoice with me, my son? Your brother who was lost is found." The brother who did everything right and the brother who did everything wrong had the same relationship with their father—a business relationship. They both missed the joy and satisfaction of the true loving relationship their father wanted so much.

The Gospels, in fascinating detail, follow the relationship between the disciples and Jesus as they grow from a business relationship to one based on true love. In Matthew 19 we find the story of the rich young ruler. As he went away weeping, Jesus pointed out the danger of riches in man's relationship with God. Peter's response in verse 27—"Lord we have left everything to follow you! What will there be for us?"—shows the business side of his relationship with Jesus. Jesus makes clear that leaving everything is an embarrassing and pathetic offer for the gifts He promises out of love. Heaven with Jesus, in a loving relationship, is worth more than all we can give. It emphasizes that a business relationship with God will never work because we bring nothing of value to the table.

A business relationship with God always leaves us in the frustrating position of wanting something that we do not have the resources to buy. It leaves us fearful that we can never obtain what we want. When we allow God to move us

from a business relationship to a love relationship, we break into the sunshine of His presence. We understand that out of His great love, He has given us the desires of our hearts. This new relationship based on love will fill us with an overwhelming desire to please Him. We will no longer think about what we will get in exchange for our "hard work." We will just want to look in God's eyes and see Him smile.



# Are Your Shutters Down?



**Mary Barrett**

*Mary is employed by her local church to work in ministry with her husband, Jonathan. They have two daughters who are in their late teens. Mary is also a writer and speaker. For relaxation, she enjoys being with family and friends.*

He had urged his friends to take him to Jesus. But they were too late. Jesus had been crucified.

His only hope of being rescued from the useless body that enslaved him was gone forever.

And so each day his friends carried him to a dirty pallet and left him at the entrance to the Golden Temple. Clean, beautiful, and sparkling in appearance with its gate of burnished bronze, the temple was a stark contrast to the tired, weary man sitting propped up against its walls. He was not alone; his many invalid companions sat with him or lay on the dusty paths, each intent on survival. The pious men and women walking through the golden gates would have had to have been extremely hard-hearted not to toss a few shekels at the begging entourage.

Everything about him spelled hopelessness. Dressed in clothes that were drab and colorless, he called out “alms, alms” in a flat monotone voice. Slouched over his tattered money purse, with dark eyes that clearly reflected the anguish of being a paralytic since birth, he exuded an aura of a man whose heart was brimming over with pain.

He looked with envy and longing at those who traipsed by him. He often wondered what it would be like to walk proud and purposeful and to feel the grass tickle his toes in his open sandals.

He looked at the children running with the wind blowing through their hair, broad smiles and laughter lighting their faces. How he yearned to be like them! He wanted to run, run, run, until his thighs ached and his feet cried out to stop and his body pulsed with life and energy.

But he never would. He looked at his legs, limp, without movement, just useless bits of flesh and bone, tagged onto his body. And he felt useless, incapable, crushed in-

side. He never knew what it was like to earn a wage packet, to take it home to a warm, affectionate wife and exuberant, energy-bursting children. Each day he woke up as a spectator to life; he saw it whirling around him, bustling, vibrant, alive, noisy, and exciting. But he could not be a participant; those ineffective legs disqualified him.

But at least he had his two friends. Daily they conveyed him to the Golden Gate. He was dependent on them. They took him to the bathroom; they pushed his sandals onto his awkward, heavy feet; they dressed and undressed him. He had no dignity, no privacy. And they laid him on a crude bed at night, while they went out to enjoy the “night-life.”

The nights were the worst for him. In the darkness, the hot, angry tears would fall from his sad eyes. So many empty, painful years, forced to be an invalid, to have life but not to be able to live life.

And then he heard about Jesus. Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus who worked miracles. Jesus who enabled people to live life to the fullest. He begged his friends, “Take me to Jesus!” They agreed, for at times they grew weary of looking after their crippled friend.

They were told Jesus would be near the Golden Temple. With each mile they trekked, the man let go of his pain. He dared to hope he would walk back instead of being carried. With excitement mounting, he let his mind luxuriate in all the things he wanted to do—splash in the sea of Galilee, kick a ball, run through a cornfield, dance at a wedding—perhaps even his wedding! With every thought, he became more and more desperate to meet Jesus, for Jesus would free him from this prison, this fortress, that was suffocating his spirit. But they were too late.

Jesus, the only giver of hope, had been nailed to a rough splintered cross. In Jesus' death, the paralytic died too. He died inside; he pulled down the shutter of his heart and resigned himself to a life as a paralytic forever. But God did not create man to live in darkness, in a shuttered world. God has a way of opening the shutters that others pull down. And He asks us to help Him to do that.

The Bible tells us in Acts 3 how God lifts the shutters of a man's heart. Read how God answers this man's deepest longing.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, several months after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Many people bustled and jostled against one another as they filed into the temple to pray, as was the practice of the Jews. Peter and John walked among them. These two men, who at one time competed to be first in Jesus' heart, gave up their childish behavior. After the special blessing of the Holy Spirit, they now worked together as a team. They were going to the temple to pray, or so they thought, but God wanted them to open the shutters of a man's heart.

Above the chatter of the people, they heard the feeble voice of the paralytic man calling "alms, alms." Peter and John stopped, looked at the man, and gave him the only thing they could. They had no "silver or gold," as all their money had been pooled in a common purse, but they did have their experience with Jesus Christ. With words mighty, powerful, commanding, and full of authority, Peter said, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Nine words, uttered by the conviction of the Holy Spirit and in the power of Jesus Christ.

The next thing the paralytic knew, Peter had grabbed his hand and pulled him up. He was standing, actually standing. It was great—all that he ever imagined it would be. His ankles became strong, the joints in his hips slotted into place, the limp flesh became firm. He jumped and leaped and ran and hopped and kicked a stone and pushed his toes deep into the dusty ground. He was walking. He was no longer a useless, incapacitated, overlooked paralytic, but a whole healthy human being!

Oh it was glorious, all his dreams had come true! All the energy he had bottled up within him now came flowing out with force. Tears of joy trickled down his face, lost among the creases of laugh lines that lit his expression. There was no stopping him. He ran up to strangers and shouted, "Look at me!" Over and over he performed his party piece. He jumped up and down like a Russian Cossack dancer, he lay down, he got up, he even attempted a cartwheel!

He hugged Peter and John, who were chuckling and muttering to themselves. "Well, Jesus did say He'd give us the power to do this sort of thing. Praise be to Jesus and the power in His name."

For a while there was confusion. Just as people clamber to the scene of an accident, they

flocked to the man. "Was this the beggar man who sat daily by the Golden Gate?" they asked one another. Questions bobbed up and down like a tiny boat on the open sea.

Finally Peter and John managed to slow the healed man down and persuade him to go into the temple and praise God. They almost had to frog-march him in so intense was his enthusiasm, energy, and excitement.

Let's pause there for a moment. Freeze that picture in your mind. Backtrack with me to another similar scene—one that involved Jesus of Nazareth. It is told in John 5:1-18.

This scene also occurred at a time when people were flocking to the temple—on this occasion for a Passover Service. It was equivalent to a camp meeting—great numbers of people, great music, great praise, great worship. They gathered together to celebrate a great God, but the One they were going to honor wasn't there.

Jesus had planned to be there. But He stopped en route. We watch this tall, white-robed figure move slowly among the ill at the pool of Bethesda. Instead of listening to praise, He listens to the aching hearts of people "not whole." We never know if Jesus makes it to the Passover Service! But we do know that He caused a 38-year-old man "to take" up his bed and walk.

Just as Peter and John emulated Jesus Christ, we too are to imitate Jesus and "stop" for those in pain. Everywhere we go we are surrounded by people who are struggling emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Jesus asks us to stop and share with others our experience with Him. But do we? Do we really share Christ with those who need Him?

Let me share with you something about a lady whom I shall call Sally. If ever Christians needed to stop, it was for her. But no one ever did. I met Sally in a grocer's shop; we started chatting about healthy living and she invited me over to talk. She told me something really bad happened to her when she was six years old—something so awful she closed down the shutters of her emotions. When older, she married and had two children. She never wanted children though; she was afraid that what happened to her would happen to them. Within time, she and her husband divorced.

Depressed and ill with various ailments, she looked for some kind of help but didn't know where to turn. Desperate to be free from at least the physical pain, she turned to the book, *Raw Energy*. Her health improved as she followed the diet in the book. It was then that one of her children, confused about the absent father and the depressed, emotionally starved mother, told her that he hated life. He wanted to die.

Desperate to pull herself together emotionally and to be mother and father to her children, she turned to reflexology. Frequently she visited her reflexologist to inspire her with a hope and a future. But my Bible



tells me that the only One who can truly give us a hope and a future is God. But the woman learned to depend on seven bottles of aromatherapy oils, each one for a particular problem—stress, decision-making, patience, etc.

I felt ashamed that in all her 40 years of life, in all those awful periods of need, no Christian had stopped to share Jesus Christ with her.

And so I shared. I told her that Jesus Christ was my closest friend, and that He supplied the inner resources to cope when everything went astray.

She tilted her head to one side, looked at me with sad eyes and very slowly said.

“Does God really work? You are so lucky!”

There are so many people who need to know Jesus, but how do they get to meet Him if we don’t make the introduction?

Perhaps that sounds strange. Here I am reminding Christians to stop and share Christ with others. After all, that’s what Christians do, isn’t it? It is our soul’s desire to stop and share Jesus Christ with the broken people of this world—but do we? Are people having to rely on substitutes because we are too weary to share the real thing with them?

Some time ago, a pastor said to me, “I just can’t face running anymore seminars or evangelistic programs. I’ve done so many and the results have been so minimal. I just can’t do it. I don’t even want to talk to people on a one-to-one level; nobody wants to know about Jesus. All I ever wanted to do was to share Christ. I just can’t face the pain of disappointed dreams.”

I imagine that pastor is not alone. I imagine that many of us feel disillusioned because the ministry we live is vastly different to the ministry we planned to live.

In reality, some of us live with a crushed spirit because we do not preach as passionately as we dreamed we would. We live with the frustration that we do not evangelize as effectively as we yearned. We live with the despair that we have not been able to feed our congregations so dramatically that their spiritual lives have stretched in our presence. We live with deep despondency because we have not been able to robustly raise the rallying cry to our members to stop and share Jesus Christ. We flounder with our lack luster Christian experience and wonder where all the power to achieve our aims has gone.

The hurt is just too much, and to deal with it, we pull down the shutters and with sadness lay aside our calling to serve God passionately and settle down to caring for His earthly family.

Donald Whitney says, “Despite the divine command to spread the word, many Christians redirect their energies into areas of spiritual activity that are more satisfying and in which they are more likely to achieve success.”<sup>1</sup>

We settle down to being a referee to the endless power struggles that simmer in our churches. Like a jack-in-the-box, we squash down our desire to battle against things unseen and instead fight the inevitable battle of whether

the church organ ought to be placed two feet to the right or two feet to the left.

We smother that longing to tell the good news of Jesus and concentrate on renovating our church to make it user-friendly for the odd non-Christian who may stumble through our doors. We submerge that yearning to evangelize and sit by while the church board spends time discussing what color curtains should hang in the sanctuary.

There is nothing wrong in building up a supportive, loving community and making our church the best it can be. After all, look at Acts 2:42.

Peter and John healed the paralytic. But notice it was only a springboard to launch them out to share Jesus. Have we wrapped ourselves in a cocoon that is so comforting we have closed our ears to the cries of those beyond our church walls? Have we allowed ourselves to focus more on church procedures than on God’s runaway children? As long as this world continues, there will always be people out there entrenched in the pain of sin. The question is,

does God have a group of pastors who refuse to let go of their passion to share Him—a group of ministers so filled with the Holy Spirit that nothing can prevent them from stopping to heal those who are hurting? Or have we pulled down the shutters because we feel our ministry is a failure? Do we fail to reach out to the needy?

If you have, ask God to lift that shutter. He did it for the paralyzed man. He can do it for you! God asked you specifically to serve Him in the unique role of ministry. God does not make mistakes. He called you and He will use you. In Psalms 138 we read “Though I walk in the midst of trouble you preserve my life. The lord will fulfill his purpose for me.” You know one of the reasons we may feel so disappointed in the ministry is because God isn’t using us the way we want Him to.

When Jonathan and I entered the ministry, we had a very clear-cut idea of how we wanted to work for God. I had only intended to work within the church. Jonathan intended to focus primarily on evangelism through seminars. However, his apparent lack of success caused him to want to quit the ministry on several occasions.

But in the last few years, God has been opening avenues we never considered. Jonathan’s recently-discovered acting ability makes him a natural for child evangelism. His patience with those most of us would give up on targets him to use his counseling skills in the ministry. His love of all things modern causes him to work with contemporary-style worshipers to attract non-Christians.

As for me, my desire to be creative has given me a passion for child evangelism too. My love of being with people causes me to network with non-Christians and for times when my life has to slow down, God has opened up writing as a means of sharing Him. The strange thing is that this unplanned ministry that we now live feels so right. It’s like slipping your hand into a pair of gloves that fits perfectly.

**Everything about him spelled hopelessness.**

If ministry has become bland and no longer has that “zing” for you, if ministry no longer challenges you to seek out those who need Him, perhaps you need to give God your plans for the ministry and tell Him you want to work completely with His purpose for you. And when you give Him permission to use you the way He sees best, also give Him permission to do it in His time. God has not called you to be a carbon copy of another minister but to be yourself, to use your spiritual gifts the way He intended.

Ministry will then be satisfying, not because of the 10,000 people who may come flocking to your campaigns but because you know that you are doing the will of your Father. And ultimately that is really all God asks of us. Even though you will go through discouraging times, you will not be so disturbed because the peace of God will be within.

Let’s leave that thought for now and return to the picture of Peter, John, and the healed man. Let’s accompany them as they enter the cool austere interior of the temple. Many times the healed man dreamed of entering the temple in an upright position, and finally it has happened. His face radiates gratitude and pleasure.

But on that day the quiet, soft, reverent atmosphere was laid aside, for as Peter, John, and the man walked to the altar, the whispering began. “Surely, this is the man we’ve seen begging at the temple gate, look at him!” Soon amazement and curiosity overtook the usual hushed, hallowed tones of speech, and the place was alive with animated talk. Very soon our heroes were encircled by a flock of people, some with heads nodding, some with heads shaking, some with fingers pointing, and some just standing with their mouths open in disbelief.

And as for the healed man, he just drew himself up to his full height, linked arms with Peter and John, and wore the broadest grin you have ever seen. And his eyes? They no longer portrayed pain but sheer unadulterated joy. God had lifted the shutters of his heart for eternity. But once God gets started on the healing business, it is hard for Him to stop! He had healed the man with the paralyzed legs, now He wanted to heal the men with the paralyzed hearts, hearts rendered frozen and numb by the delusive power of Satan.

He does so through Peter’s speech. Follow it with me in Acts 3. Peter gives a response to the questions fired at him and his friends. There is no hesitancy in his voice, no sweaty palms, no thumping of the heart. With boldness and firmness, Peter declares how the miracle took place.

Backtrack again with me. Compare this strong, fearless man with the way Peter was before receiving the Holy Spirit. Remember the boastful Peter, the one being engulfed by the water as he attempts to walk on it? Remember the frightened Peter who impulsively severs an enemy’s ear in the garden of Gethsemane? Remember the unconfident, unsure Peter who questions whether he should build temples after the transfiguration? Remember the cowardly, weak, shivering Peter who denies Jesus in the

courtyard of death? Finally, remember the weeping Peter, who in the darkness of a lonely night cries bitterly for the way he denied Jesus.

What a changed man! The old Peter is changed into a brave, strong, resolute Peter who, because of the Holy Spirit, is able to powerfully share his allegiance to God. He begins in verse 12 by saying “Men of Israel . . .” You can almost imagine him shrugging his shoulders, lifting his hands as he answers the questions. Notice the way he takes the spotlight that is focused on his actions and redirects it so it is focused on God.

Verse 16 shows Peter’s passion; he continues to say that it is faith in Jesus that made the healing possible. Faith in the power of His name and that faith is a gift from God. It is as if Peter is saying that the fact that God worked through him is irrelevant because everything that made it possible was from Jesus, through Jesus, and by Jesus!

With immense courage Peter now turns this temple for God into a courtroom for God, and he becomes the

prosecutor. He points the accusing finger and exclaims, “You, you delivered Him up, you killed Him—you disowned Him, you slaughtered the Son of God.” No skirting around the issue, no gentle intimadations. Peter directly levels the blame at the Jews. He now moves to the other side of the courtroom as it were and suddenly

becomes the defense lawyer. In verse 17 he says, “But it’s okay, brothers, I know you acted in ignorance, and it had to happen to fulfill prophecy.”

Then Peter points them to the Judge of the trial—God. In verse 19 we see the intense love and mercy of God. These very Jews who spurned the ministry of John the Baptist, who ridiculed, scoffed at, and crucified Jesus are being given yet a third chance to accept a free pardon from God.

We surmise that the horrific murder of God’s Son took place several months earlier. Some of these men may actually have hurled the words, “Crucify him, crucify him” at the tortured Jesus as He staggered past them dragging that heavy cross. Yet God gives them another chance. Peter then utters the only words that will give life to those with a paralyzed spirit. Verse 19 says, “Repent then and turn to God . . .”

Many did repent that day; according to the following chapter, the church grew to 5,000!

This final part of Acts 3 is passionate, powerful, and portrays the main intent of Peter and John and any follower of God—to glorify the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 3 is also a vibrant, inspiring, action-packed snippet of the New Testament, one that surely warms our heart and brings smiles to our faces. It also brings praise to our lips when we see the power of God unleashed. But when the razzmatazz is over and the colorful snapshots of this story are tucked away in the corner of our minds, there remains a vital question to be asked, “Lord, why do we not see much dramatic results to our sharing of You?”

**We need the Holy Spirit to “spring clean” us.**

The answer comes, “You can, if you really want to.”

There’s a church in America whose members truly want to stop and share Jesus with those with paralyzed hearts. I do not know the growth figures for the adults, but I do know them for the children. Twenty years ago this particular church started out with a handful of children and two or three women who liked to work with youngsters. Their lessons took place in the church foyer. These ladies never let go of their passion to share Jesus with unchurched children. Twenty years later, 6,000 children attend their church every weekend. They now have 400-500 teachers. Every week these children bask in a warm Christian environment and know that Jesus Christ is on their side!

Oh, you say, but that’s America. Everything happens in America, but that’s not possible in cold, conservative Europe! Isn’t it?

Last year an Adventist church in London ached to share God with those on the outside. Together the 45 members and their pastor decided that within one year, they were going to double their membership. Many laughed and perhaps thought the pastor was under too much stress! Well, at the end of last year they didn’t baptize 45 new converts, they baptized 50 instead!

What made it possible? What made it possible for these two churches to reach out and to be effective in their sharing of God? The same thing that made Peter and John (just two men) effective in healing a man with a paralyzed body and 3,000 men and women with paralyzed hearts. The same thing that took a frightened man and turned him into a hero for God—the Holy Spirit!

We need the Holy Spirit. But that’s nothing new. You know that. But what are you doing to receive the Holy Spirit? Ellen G. White tells us that if you want the Holy Spirit, you need to spend time with God. She says, “Nothing is more needed in our work than the practical results of communion with God. . . . Men will take knowledge of us, as of the first disciples, that we have been with Jesus. This will impart to the worker a power that nothing else can give” (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 512). We need to make sure we have time with God and in that time we need to pray for the Holy Spirit. Ellen White again says, “He who calls men to repentance must commune with God in prayer. He must cling to the Mighty One, saying ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. Give me power to win souls to Christ’” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 509).

Have you really pleaded for the power of the Holy Spirit in your ministry and in your church? Really pleaded, as if everything depended on it?

When Jonathan and I began ministering at one of our current churches, no one congratulated us on taking up pastoring there. In fact, most people commiserated with us. The church has long had a reputation for internal fighting. The situation was aggravated by a split in the church by Firm Foundation followers. The atmosphere of the church was awful, and the Firm Foundation members were increasing. Our regular members could stand the conflict no longer and were threatening to leave the church

at the end of the year, allowing it to be run by extremists. Jonathan had to visit the conference to see if the church could be disbanded.

There seemed to be no other solution to what was a thoroughly bad situation. However, a group of us began to pray regularly, asking God to send more church members so that the extreme influence was not so strong. We prayed for more official backing from the conference to discipline the members in rebellion. For one year we prayed. We prayed with real depth of feeling, and at times, we shed tears. We asked God to unleash His power through the Holy Spirit and to deal with the problem. By the end of the year, we received the notification we wanted from the conference and two new families moved into the church with so many spiritual gifts the church began to heal. In fact, now it is a pleasure to worship there, all because of the mightiness of the Holy Spirit!

The potency of the Holy Spirit did not end with Acts 3, it only began there, and there is no stopping what it can do in your life, your ministry, your church, if you really ask for it.

We need the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to “spring clean” us. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to scrub away the discouragement within, to lift up the shutters we have pulled down, and to polish us so our dreams of sharing Christ will not be tarnished by the obstacles we meet.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to wash down the walls of our hearts that are stained with the ugly blotches of self-exaltation and to repaint our hearts with the desire to glorify our gracious God.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to vacuum away the deposits of self-righteousness and to freshen us with purity of attitude and action.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to gently dust away the hurts of a damaged ministry and to make us sparkle with a vision of what we can do for God when we let Him use our talents the way He wants.

We need to ask God to make us clean so the Holy Spirit will be delighted to take up residency within. And we need to ask God to pour within us the beautiful fragrance of Jesus Christ so we may become bold like Peter and stop for those with paralyzed hearts.

If you plead individually and collectively for the Holy Spirit, perhaps Acts 3 will not just be re-enacted in a church in America or a church in London. Perhaps it will be reenacted in your church too.

Are you ready for that?



#### Notes:

The author gratefully acknowledges the thoughts of Max Lucado in *He Still Moves Stones* (Dallas, Texas: World Publishing, 1993), p. 106.

1 Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Bucks, England: Scripture Press, 1991), p. 97.



# Shepherdess International News

## Euro-Asia Division

Recently the pastors' kids from Caucasus Union Mission met in Taganrog City for a congress. The motto was "I Need You," and about 130 pastors' kids participated in the meetings. They were a cheerful group who enjoyed working in ministry with their parents. At the end of the congress two young people were baptized. Following are pictures from this event:



*Pastors' kids from Caucasus Union Mission*

## North American Division

*Texico Conference:* Laughter, tears of joy, shared emotions, crafting, treasure hunting, eating, and gift-receiving made up the primary activities of the fourth bi-annual conference pastors' wives retreat. Thanks to Rita Stevens, wife of conference president Jim Stevens, and a host of gracious sponsors and supporters, the wives were treated to a special weekend that took place at conference headquarters in Corrales, New Mexico.

"Preparing for the Bridegroom" was the theme of every activity that took place. The ladies were invited to a banquet, given gifts of bath products and lip balms, and participated in a treasure hunt. Carmen Griffith, Southwestern Union women's ministries director, was the keynote speaker. The banquet included crowns and a foil river of life, with trees and everything, touching the aesthetic senses.



*The pastors' wives received love messages from their husbands, along with heart-shaped boxes of chocolates.*



*The ladies enjoyed a treasure hunt.*



*Pastors' wives dressed for their banquet*

*Oklahoma Conference:* Pastors' and officers' wives had a ball at the 2006 Shepherdess Retreat. It was a "women only" affair for conference pastors' and officers' wives. The 2006 Shepherdess Retreat at Wewoka Woods was a first-rate experience for those who normally work behind the scenes to support pastoral husbands and the work of the church. The women enjoyed a weekend full of listening, sharing, eating, sleeping, and exercising. Many of the presentations, led by Teresa Costello, were held around the large, cozy dining-room fireplace. There the participants laughed, cried, and encouraged each other.

When it came to meals, the bounty was unparalleled! Lisa and Robin East prepared and served the most beautiful food imaginable in an equally beautiful Hawaiian setting. Tiny lights twinkled about the room, and onstage a large, rectangular Kon-Tiki fountain spouted water into a little, blue swimming pool complete with fish, shells, sand, and rocks. A video of Hawaiian scenery was shown on screen as ukulele music played.

It was with reluctance, hugs, and profuse thanks that the women parted ways on Sunday afternoon. The retreat helped to lift spirits, refocus perspectives, and renew relationships for the "less visible half" of the ministerial team.



*Relaxing around the fireplace*



*A chocolate fountain added a special touch to dessert.*

**Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division**

Madagascar is the third largest island in the world. On May 5-12, 2007, the 76 shepherdesses from Indian Ocean Union Mission met together for meetings. Denise Ratsara, SID Shepherdess Coordinator, presented uplifting topics to the ladies. It was their first time together, and the

participation was tremendous. Another shepherdess who is a medical doctor spoke on "Nutrition for the Pastoral Family."

The week concluded with the ordination of 11 pastors. A choir of pastors and shepherdesses was formed during the week and on Sabbath afternoon presented a special song for the ordination. There were 1,151 baptisms. The shepherdesses vowed to go back to their fields and work in a mighty way for their Lord until He comes.



**Southern Asia-Pacific Division**

*West Indonesia Union Mission:* Poppy Lubis reports that 411 participants attended the recent Shepherdess Council which was held together with the Ministerial Council of the West Indonesia Union Mission at Indonesia Adventist University (UNAI) in Bandung, Indonesia, on June 13-16, 2007.

Pastor Johnny Lubis, WIUM President, opened the program with a spiritual challenge to be more like Jesus. Elder Anthony Kent, the Associate Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference, gave a talk called "A Pastor Speaks to Pastors' Wives." He shared the experiences of his grandmother and mother as ministers' wives and how they supported their pastor husbands in the home, in church, and in the community.

Delegates from each mission/conference/field presented their inspiring and heart-rending testimonies on how the shepherdess in their respective fields are working with their spouses to "Tell the World." Beautiful songs were also presented in that meeting by the delegates.

Helen Gulfan, Shepherdess Coordinator for SSD, nurtured the participants' spirits with her presentation entitled "A Team Ministry." Her talk addressed communication issues of the pastoral couple. She also demonstrated how shepherdesses can be team partner with their husbands.

Dr. Prema Gaikwad, professor at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), inspired the participants to "Live a Balanced Life." She emphasized that everything in our lives should be balanced, especially if we want to be more like Jesus.

During the closing program on Sabbath afternoon, all delegates presented the work developments in their field/mission/conference. The highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of ministerial pins to all pastors. Asked about their impressions of the event, some participants said it was "memorable and inspiring to be together with all pastors and shepherdesses, to learn together and fellowship together to enhance the quality of service for God."



*Shepherdesses from each mission/conference in their official uniforms*



*Poppy Lubis, West Indonesian Union Mission Shepherdess Coordinator (right)*

*Special Indonesian Shepherdess orchestra*



*Peninsular Malaysia Mission:* The following is a pictorial report of the Ministerial Council in Santubong.

*Mrs. Helen Gulfan, SSD Shepherdess Coordinator (below left), with Julie Griswold, Shepherdess Coordinator in Thailand*



*Ministerial and shepherdess leaders in Kuching*



*Union and conference Shepherdess leaders with Sharon Cress in Kuching*



*Ministry wives of Thailand*

*Sangihe Talaud Island Mission:* All the shepherdesses met and held an evangelistic meeting in a Tahuna Church. One hundred people were baptized, and another baptism will be later on. The South Minahasa Conference shared the idea of holding an “open house” for all pastors and their families. They created a team that visited all the pastors’ homes in that conference. The pastoral families appreciated the visits and time spent in prayer.



*Thresye Sepang, East Indonesian Union Mission Shepherdess Coordinator (top photo: third from right; bottom photo, center)*

*North Philippine Union Mission:* Eleanor Roque, NPUM Shepherdess Coordinator reports that on May 4-6, 2007, 142 PKs attended the first union-wide Preachers’ Kids Convention. This unique event was launched mainly by the Ministerial department through Shepherdess International and in coordination with Family and Children’s Ministries, Youth Ministries, Women’s Ministries, Health Ministries and the Communication Departments, with a five-fold intent which are as follows: (a) to celebrate God’s goodness and guidance to PKs through the years; (b) to establish friendship, camaraderie, and support for pastoral children; (c) to recognize PKs varied talents and spiritual gifts; (d) to help PKs understand their special roles; and (e) to listen to their stories and life experiences.

The speaker for the opening ceremony was Elder Gary Rustad, Associate Executive Secretary of Southern Asia-Pacific Division. He realistically presented what it’s like to be a PK by making use of object lessons taken from biblical truths, concepts, and principles and his own experiences as a second-generation PK himself. The Sabbath message was given by Pastor Abner Roque; with him as worship participants were selected PKs—Dr. Raul Morena, Miller Payoyo, Ben Omar Saban, Francis Ray Gayoba, Verby Bermudez, Francis John Tejano and

Rangie Mar Perdido—sons of previous and present denominational leaders and directors. Pastor Carmelito Galang, Jr. and Pastor Oseas Zamora jointly led out in a solemn Commitment Ceremony held at the prayer garden of the 1000 Thousand Missionary Movement campus.

The team-building program included activities such as small groups, sharing, brainstorming, scavenger hunts, crafts, and scrapbooking, which fostered camaraderie and enhanced closer bonding among the pastors’ kids. Many PKs expressed their wish that the convention be a yearly event.

The success of this event suggests the need for similar conventions in other missions/conferences. PKs have special needs’ and like other kids in our church, they deserve our constant support and prayers, and varied programs for them should be included in our strategic plans. Caring for pastoral kids can go a long way in achieving the noble purpose of the pastors with their families to advance the kingdom of God and prepare people for the return of Jesus.



*Bangladesh Union Mission:* Lucena Chambugong reports that on July 16-18, 2007, a training seminar was held for ministers/shepherdesses/elders at Kellogg Mookerje Memorial Seminary of South Bangladesh Mission. The theme of the training seminar was “Know, Learn and Do.” Mrs. Helen B. Gulfan, Women’s Ministries Director/Shepherdess Coordinator, gave inspirational speeches for women. Pastor Edward P. Chambugong, BAUM executive secretary and Dr. Douglas D. Roy, religion department chairperson of BASC, led the training seminar for ministers and elders. The 83 attendees were interested and eager to join in the meeting.

Mrs. Lucena Chambugong, Shepherdess Coordinator, also promoted a new project by the women of the SBM: “Project B = B is for Bible equals Baptism”. This project is totally new in Bangladesh and exists only in SBM now. Mrs. Chambugong gave 10 Bibles to the volunteers so they could share them with others to help them learn about the Bible and Christ. The women were eager to participate in the project and ready to bring souls to Christ through Bible study.

Mrs. Gulfan gave the morning devotional. As an illustration, she planted a litchi tree in front of the principal’s quarter.

After the meeting, the ladies visited the South Bangladesh Mission at Gopalganj, where students were waiting in an honor guard. Mrs. Gulfan, Dr. D. D. Roy, and Pastor E. P. and Mrs. L. Chambugong planted guava trees in a ceremony.

The meeting was fruitful by the grace of our loving God. Everyone was so happy to join in the seminar to learn more about helping the church and working for God. Everyone enjoyed the training seminar. They learned many new things to help them more effectively work for God.



*Mrs. Chambugong (right) and Helen Gulfan (second from right)*



*Shepherdesses enjoy meeting*



*Helen Gulfan, SSD Shepherdess Coordinator*



## Southern Asia Division

*North East Andhra Region:* Kamala Jesudas, North East Andhra Region Shepherdess Coordinator, shared that on April 17, 2007, the Shepherdess Advisory was held at the region headquarters. Mrs. Hepzibah Kore, SUD Shepherdess Coordinator; Vinodhini John, Union Shepherdess Coordinator; and Madhuramani Wilbert, Union Associate Director, were presenters at the shepherdess meetings. The messages were inspiring and beneficial, and many valuable lessons were learned.



*Hepzibah Kore, SUD Shepherdess Coordinator (right)*



## Suffer the Little Ones To Come

Mrs. Margaret Nathaniel, retired SUD Family and Children's Ministries Director and Shepherdess Coordinator, reports:

The Titan Watch Company is about three miles from our Division Headquarters. The company has built 200 homes for their employees; three Adventist members have also purchased homes in this vicinity. One Sabbath afternoon while visiting one of these homes for potluck, we saw several children playing on the road. The children were from well-to-do homes; in most cases, both parents worked at the Watch Company, so the children's grandparents often

cared for these little ones. Instantly we decided this would be an ideal place to start a Story Hour.

We contacted Dr. Helen John, who had purchased a home in the area. We asked if she would let us use her porch for story hour, and she readily agreed. We distributed about 40 invitations. Parents seemed interested, and several asked if there was a cost for the story hour, and we told them it was totally free. That Sabbath ten children attended. The next week we asked them to bring their friends, and every week, four to six more children attended. At one time more than 60 children came to the story hour. We now have an average of 40 attending.

We told nature stories and character-building stories, and we taught the children some good action songs. After one quarter, we included talks on the different parts of the body; we always referred to the God who created the different parts of our wonderful bodies. The third quarter we told Bible stories, talking about Daniel, Elijah, and others. Now we have started regular Bible lessons, beginning with Creation.

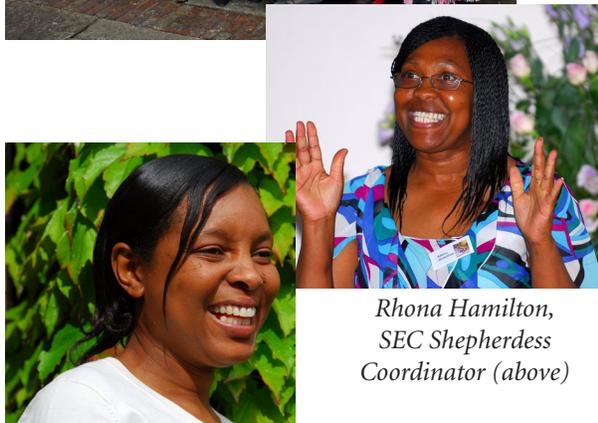
The children are intelligent and eager to learn. They ask sensible questions and want to know more. We believe these little ones can reach the hearts of their parents, who will then be touched by God's love and realize who the true God is. We need your prayers so we can one day establish a church in this area. We believe nothing is impossible with God.

*Margaret Nathaniel (right)*



**Trans-European Division**

The ministry wives in the Southern England Conference recently had a garden party. The following is a pictorial report at their English country garden.



*Rhona Hamilton, SEC Shepherdess Coordinator (above)*



*Karen Holford, SEC Family Ministries*



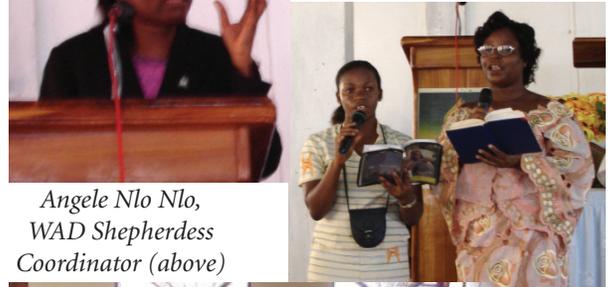
*South England Conference group*

**West-Central Africa Division**

The Sahel Union shepherdesses met at the Togo Mission for meetings. Following is a pictorial report.



*The Shepherdess Coordinator for Togo Mission presents a special number with her daughter (below)*



*Angele Nlo Nlo, WAD Shepherdess Coordinator (above)*



## SPECIAL REPORT

# Pastors' Kids: Ready to Face the Challenge

**Emily B. Alejandro**

*Emily B. Alejandro works in the Adventist International Mission School in Muak Lek, Thailand.*

Twenty-four pastors kids accompanied their moms and dads to the Ministers and Shepherdess International Seminar held in Baptist Camp, Pattaya, Thailand, on June 4-6, 2007. The children were of different nationalities, but their parents were working in the different missions under SAUM: Vietnam, Singapore, and the host country, Thailand. Mrs. Debbie Saul-Chan, SAUM Shepherdess Coordinator, and Mrs. Julie Griswold, TAM SI Coordinator, invited Ms. Emily Alejandro, a teacher from the Adventist International Mission School, to create a special program for these children. Ms. Alejandro then recruited three other teachers: Nerliza Sales, Belle Morley, and Marizel Belnas, who willingly dedicated their time and effort to implement this program. The children were divided into two groups according to their ages. Children ages 0-5 were under the supervision of Teachers Belle and Marizel, while children ages 6-14 had their own program under the care of Teachers Emily and Nerliza.

With the theme "I'm a PK, I'm Special", children participated in every activity prepared for them. Activities such as singing, storytelling, cutting, coloring, pasting, painting and outdoor play were enjoyed by the little ones. T-shirt printing, figurine painting and picture-frame-making were done by the older children. They learned lessons on how to be co-workers with their parents at home, in school, in the church, and even in their own communities. Activities such as a sound

maze, tower-building, puzzle-solving, and blind-fold-walking enabled them to learn these concepts. They experienced how to lead a group and speak in front of others. For many of them, this was the first time they had participated in a special program for children while their parents had meetings. As one child commented, "I really like this. I thought we just had to sit down with our parents in the session hall all through the seminar, but they have a special program for us—the PKs." The children also participated in the social night; in fact, four children led some of the games.

The program ended with a performance by the children in the last session—the commitment service for the adults. The younger children sang a medley of "Jesus Loves the Little Children," followed by a slide show

of pictures of all of the things that they had done during the program, and the children sang an interpretative song entitled "For God So Loved the World." Not only did the children enjoy their program but their parents did as well. One parent said, "It was nice to attend the seminar without any interruption from our children." The adults could concentrate on the seminars because they knew that their children were in good care,

learning something from all the activities prepared for them.

The children went home that Wednesday afternoon full of enthusiasm and ready to face the challenge of being pastors' kids.

