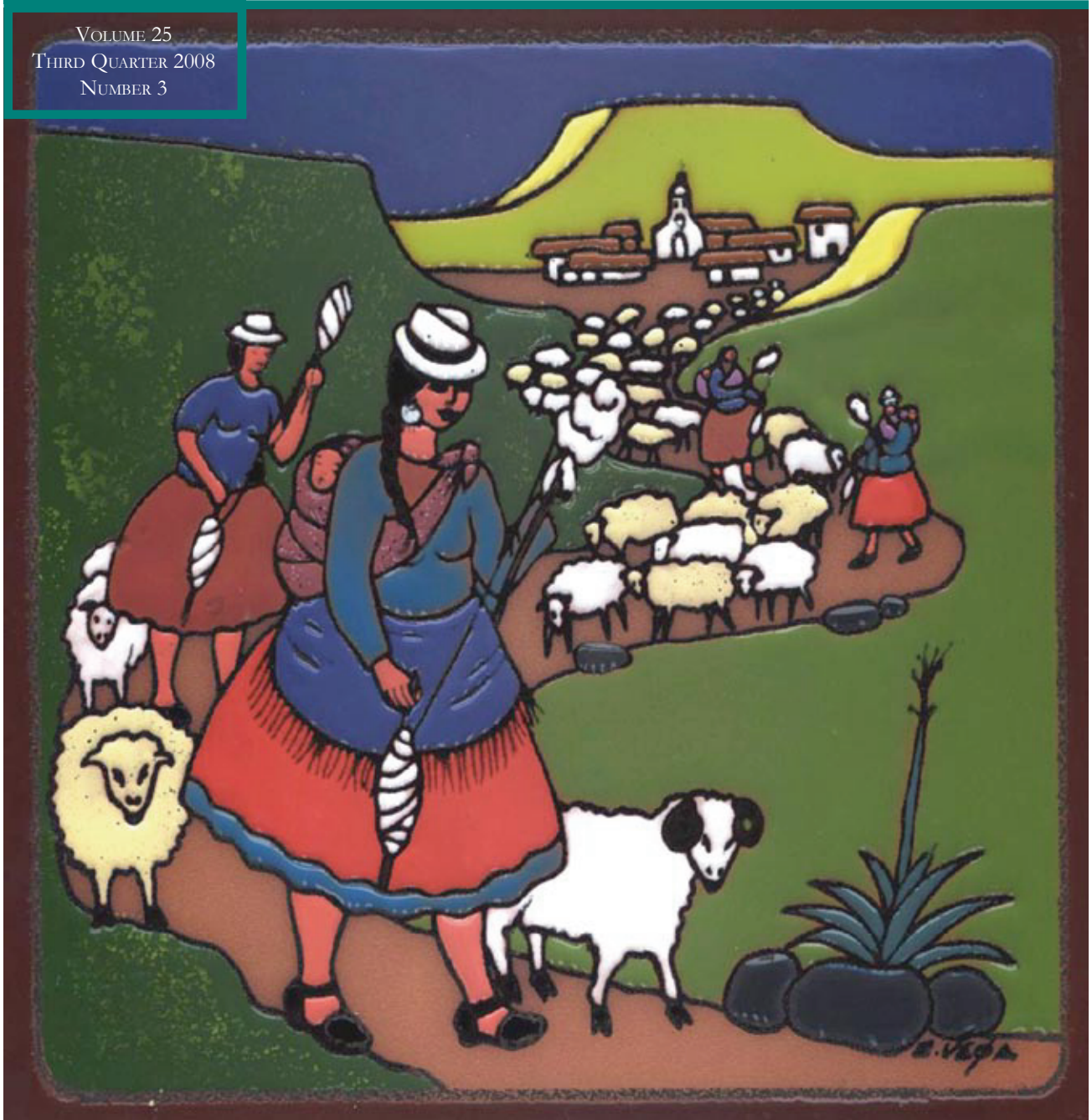




The Journal

A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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Traditional Shepherdess Art from Ecuador

The Journal



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Editor's Musings

Dear Friends,

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. Simon and his companion went to look for Him and when they found Him, they exclaimed ‘Everyone is looking for you!’ Jesus replied, ‘Let’s go someplace else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.’”

Large crowds followed Jesus wherever He went. Some followers loved Him and were convinced He was the Messiah. Others were awestruck at witnessing miracles. Some followed because they were curious. Still others followed to test and discredit Him. Each follower had an agenda.

Some ministry wives consider the words “Everybody is looking for you” to be a great compliment; being needed boosts their self-esteem. But catering to the crowd makes our lives chaotic and confused. We end up doing other folks trumped-up missions rather than our God-given ones. And, sadly, those looking for us often don’t have our best interests at heart. They ignore our privacy boundaries. The people at Capernaum who were looking for Jesus probably had their own agendas, and they were willing to violate His privacy boundaries to see that their priorities were accomplished. After seeing what Jesus could do and contemplating how He could further their plans, they were up early looking for Him, possibly for selfish or negative reasons. I doubt they wanted to serve Him a hot breakfast or clean His sandals!

Fast-forward 2,000 years. As ministry wives, we can relate to the fact that Jesus was tired of being surrounded by people. We, too, seek privacy, time for prayer and meditation to sort out our lives and priorities. We yearn for wisdom to do the right thing without being told what we should be doing in the church, how our kids should be raised, and what we should wear.

This text reminds us that Jesus left those who were looking for Him and went somewhere else. Consider some personal observations:

- (1) Jesus needed quiet time.
- (2) Jesus knew His mission and ministry. Nothing could distract Him from what God had called Him to do. The people’s agenda did not become His agenda.
- (3) Jesus didn’t base the success of His ministry on public opinion (or church opinion).
- (4) Jesus actively pursued His mission.

So, dear ones, think on this brief insight into the life of Jesus. Next time you are tempted to give up, give in, or just go with the tide of public opinion and wear yourself out, ask God for the strength to stay on His track!

Your friend in Jesus,

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Praying Together



Karen Holford

Karen Holford and her husband, Bernie, serve in the South England Conference Family and Children's Ministry Departments. They will celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in December 2008. They are qualified family therapists and have two adult children and a teenager. Karen loves to quilt and Bernie loves to fly kites. Karen is the author of 100 Creative Prayer Ideas for Kids—and Grown Ups Too! which has been published by Pacific Press.

Bernie was still a seminary student when we were first married. I had led out in student ministries, and we had both served in all kinds of public ministries, speaking, praying, and even singing. We had also prayed together from the start of our friendship. But soon after we were married, we found it harder and harder to pray together as a couple. We soon discovered that praying as a couple is quite different from praying in front of a congregation or praying privately. We struggled and felt guilty that it was so hard at times, especially since we were a ministry couple. But as we talked to mature ministry couples, we discovered that ours was a fairly common experience.

Praying together is challenging for most couples, and ministry couples are no exception. Before marriage, prayer has often been a private and personal experience; learning to pray together as a couple can feel strange at first. And because most of us have never seen another married couple pray together, we have no role models to follow. But persistence will help you find the best way to pray together. Prayer helps you stay close to your spouse, as well as to God, and invites you into a deeper level of love and intimacy. God's Holy Spirit helps you to know what to

pray for and how to pray together. Be open to listening to how the Spirit wants to work with you both as you develop your relationship with each other and with God.

Questions to think about and discuss together:

- ♥ What are my concerns about praying together?
- ♥ What might be my spouse's concerns about praying together?
- ♥ What might help make it easier for me to pray with my spouse?
- ♥ What might make it easier for my spouse to pray with me?
- ♥ How might God use prayer to help us grow closer to Him and to each other?

If your spouse doesn't feel ready to pray with you yet:

- ♥ Show him/her gentle kindness; it is the Holy Spirit's job to prompt, not ours to push.
- ♥ Prayer is a way of showing concern for others. Ask your spouse what he/she would most like you to pray for, and then only pray out loud about what he/she has requested.



- ♥ Avoid behavior which could leave your spouse feeling discouraged or spiritually inferior, as this can distance you from each other. Remember that the aim of your prayer time is spiritual intimacy with God and with each other.

Ideas To Enrich Your Couple Prayer Experience

Silent hands prayer

This is one of the simplest of all prayers. Talk together for a few minutes about your prayer concerns, praises, and thanks. Then hold hands and silently pray for your spouse. Squeeze hands after a few moments and say “Amen” together. It can feel so good to know that someone else is praying for you, even if you can’t hear the words.

Praise

Praise is so central to our relationship with God. It changes our perspective on God, our lives, and our experiences. Praising God together is one of the easiest ways to strengthen your spiritual connection with each other. Take turns praising God for different things until you have listed at least 10 praises.

Sentence prayers

Prayer should be simple. Try praying one sentence at a time, and then let your spouse pray one sentence. You might follow the ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thankfulness, Supplication) model of prayer and pray one or two sentences each for each section of your prayer together. As you get used to the idea, you can pray one sentence at a time but increase the number of sentences you pray under each section.

Prayer book

Keep a journal of thankfulness to God. At the end of each day, think of everything you want to thank God for and write these items in a small diary. In the morning, sit down together and write down the concerns you each have for the day. Promise to keep praying for each other through the day. If you get up at different times, take time

the night before to write a card for your spouse with your personal prayer requests for the day. When you get up and start your day, take your spouse’s prayer card and pray for him/her as often as you can.

Prayer notice-board

Use a bulletin board or magnet board (even a fridge door will do!) to create a prayer notice-board, with a collage of prayer requests, praising thoughts, thanks, cards, photos, texts, answers to prayer, and any other clippings. If you like being creative, make a beautiful prayer scrapbook together.

Conversational prayer

In conversational prayer, each person prays a few sentences and then stops to let the other person pray. Try to follow each other’s ideas and link your prayers together as if you were having a conversation with each other and with God.

Prayer cards

Buy some index cards in four different colors. Assign one aspect of prayer to each color (for example, yellow = praise, blue = confession, green = thanks, and pink = prayer requests).

Each of you can take a few cards of each color and write different sentence prayers according to the color-coded theme of the card. Lay the cards out together on the floor in rows of different colors and take turns reading the cards aloud as you pray together. Alternatively, lay the cards out and read them silently together while holding hands. Or shuffle the cards and deal them into two piles. Take a pile each and arrange them into a prayer sequence. Read each prayer aloud to each other.

Blessing each other

Try praying a simple blessing on each other when you part and meet and get up and go to bed. Create your own words and traditions for doing this, such as kissing each other on the forehead or hand before you say the words. Or create a special blessing gesture or signal so that you can secretly bless each other in public or show that you are praying for each other. Try Numbers 6:25; 2 Corinthians 13:14; or 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as simple blessings.

Be specific

Be as specific as possible when you pray for each other, and rejoice together when prayers are answered, even if the answers are not what you hoped they would be. It can be helpful to take a broad and eternal perspective on answers to prayer, remembering that God works all kinds of things into His plans even though situations sometimes look quite messy to us.

Confession

Prayers of confession may be best prayed in private until you feel ready to share together. If you’ve upset your

spouse in any way, then praying for forgiveness from God in your spouse's presence may be quite healing. Be careful that your prayers are not used to hurt your spouse, and be aware of the importance of praying humbly, so as not to spiritually intimidate the other person. There may also be a place for confessing to each other the wrongs you've done to others and for being accountable to each other and to God in finding ways to handle difficult relationships.

Prayer reminders

Carry a small item that will remind you to pray for your spouse when you are apart, such as a button, piece of ribbon, or small significant and symbolic item.

Daily prayer menus

Instead of praying for your entire prayer-request list every day, try grouping your prayer lists in some way, and pray for one category at a time. One day you may pray for your family members; another, colleagues and work issues; the next day, overseas issues and workers; the next day, local church and community issues, etc.

Prayer times

Pray for each other at a specific time every day. Set an alarm on your watch, mobile phone, or electronic diary. Perhaps you could text or e-mail your prayers, or pray together as an online MSN conversation if you are apart.

Prayer consequences

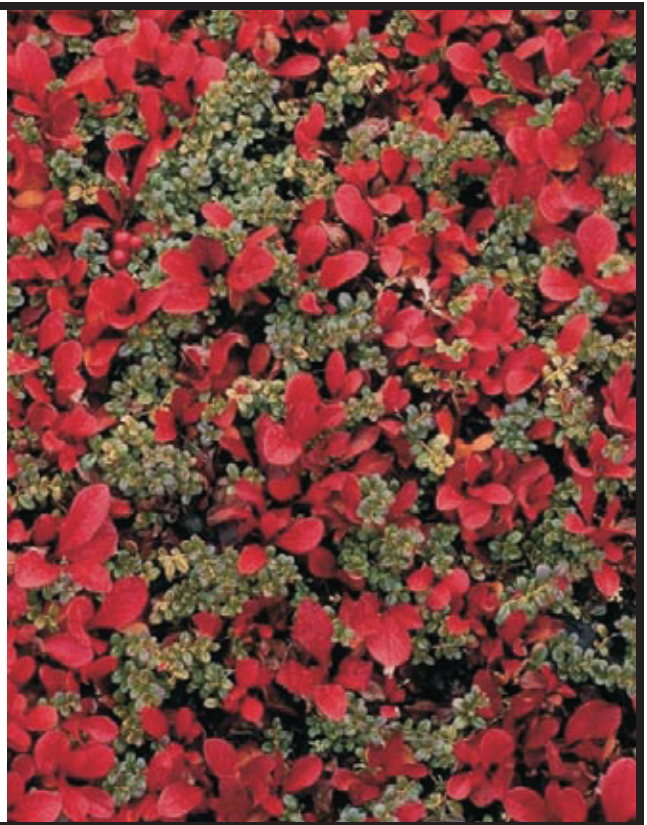
Write out your prayers on pieces of paper and pass them back and forth, adding a sentence at a time and folding over the top of the page. Follow the same sequence of themes and prayer requests and then read each prayer aloud as you pray together. Each prayer has then been created by both of you.

Depending on their unique styles of expression, their interests, their culture, and their spiritual experiences, couples can find different ways to pray. Take time to discover the best way to pray together. The Holy Spirit longs to help you develop this special relationship with each other and with God.

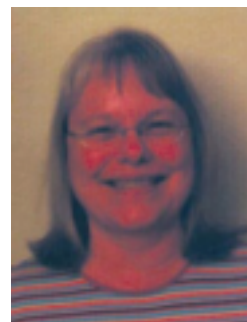


“We should study the Saviour’s parables where He spoke them, in the fields and groves, under the open sky, among the grass and flowers. As we come close to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our hearts of His peace and love.”

—Christ’s Object Lessons,
page 25



Recovery from Childhood Spiritual Abuse



Anne Fergusson

Anne Fergusson is a retired nurse and lives in California with her husband, Ed, who is a minister working for the Northern California Conference in administration. They have identical twin boys, Joseph and Michael, who are attending college and aspiring to become physicians. She enjoys music and helping people.

In 1968, singer/songwriter John Lennon released the song *Imagine*, in which he talks about what the world would be like without religion. If you experienced any form of spiritual abuse, you wonder, “What would life be like without religion?” War began in heaven when Satan thought his religion was better than God’s. It continued with Isaac and Ishmael’s lineage, war between the Jews and Arabs. During the Crusades, Christians were determined to destroy non-Christians. The attack from Islamic extremist terrorists on September 11, 2001, was religiously based. When I was growing up, my church was split between liberals and conservatives. Those of us who grew up under the extremes of these groups experienced great pain.

What is childhood spiritual abuse?

Childhood spiritual abuse differs greatly from adult spiritual abuse. As a child, you are religiously indoctrinated

with no real choice, and your developmental patterns and worldview are set by those early experiences. Even if you rebel later in life, you usually find yourself with tremendous guilt. Even if you believe that the views are wrong, you can’t break away because it’s the only imprint you know. To denounce these foundational beliefs is to have no self-identity.

The religious group I grew up in and knew as a child was fundamental and conservative. The Word of God was black-and-white with no room for private interpretation. This type of thinking is an earmark of spiritual abuse. My church believed that:

- One must be perfect by obeying all the rules to gain salvation (Matt. 5:48).
- Anything less than perfect obedience to all God’s commands means you don’t love Him (John 14:15).

- No pictures or portraits of people were allowed because they might become idols to be worshiped (Exod. 20:4).
- If you were caught violating the Sabbath as defined by the group, you would lose your membership and, therefore, your salvation (Exod. 20:8).
- No fun games, secular music, or television were allowed on Sabbath (Isa. 58:13).
- On Sabbath you could reheat food but never cook.
- Holidays were suspect, especially Christmas.
- Jewelry, make-up, and fancy clothes were associated with Jezebel.
- Voting was not allowed since your actions might expedite the “end of time.”

Those who grew up under these strict circumstances know that these beliefs are so imbedded that rational thinking does not change our emotional response. Failing to obey the rules was evil. Anyone who attempted to deviate would be verbally abused with phrases such as “Get thee behind me, Satan.” Others endured physical abuse. One family padlocked their refrigerator during the Sabbath hours.

When you experience this type of control as a child, you struggle as an adult. Your spirit has been taken from you in a manner that some have called “soul murder.” Some people who have lived through this still believe these ideas and control their children similarly in order to purify their family. This behavior is related to the “Stockholm syndrome,” so named after the 1973 incident where four people were taken hostage in a bank robbery in Sweden. At the end of their captivity, these hostages resisted rescue and refused to testify against their captors. It only takes about three or four days for the psychological shift to take hold, making you sympathize and follow your tormenter.

When I finally “woke up,” my first response was, “I’ve been lied to!” I questioned God and His existence. Many survivors of childhood spiritual abuse are unable to differentiate truth from lies. Religious interpretations of spiritual things are seen as another twist on the same old lie you have heard all your life.

How do parents develop such power over a child’s life?

It starts with a parent that has developed narcissistic attributes. The word “narcissistic” is derived from the Greek myth of Narcissus. Echo fell in love with Narcissus, but he paid no attention to her. The gods punished his crime of unrequited love by causing him to fall in love with his own reflection. Each time Narcissus reached for

his adored image mirrored in a pool of still water, it would dissolve into ripples. People with narcissistic tendencies attempt to cover up their own poor self-esteem and are haunted that they are not all they claim to be. They need to follow every biblical rule and control their families through this oppression.

Mary lived in a middle-class home with her parents. Things looked fine from the outside; her mom stayed home with the children, and they attended church weekly. A closer look at this family revealed that her mom inflicted her religious beliefs on the family. The mother’s course was the only right one. Studying the Bible regularly, she would get up at 4:00 a.m., locking herself in the study. Many times Mary didn’t get breakfast because her mom refused to come out of the room, saying that the “bread of heaven” was more important than the bread of this earth. Even though Mary was hungry, she learned that all love is conditional. Her mom defined Mary’s reality, and Mary saw her mother’s “god” as being more important than herself.

This type of narcissist behavior comes with a sense of entitlement. These people are unable to empathize because they devalue other people. This activity often leads them to verbally attack and demolish the child’s interests. Children have no value. The parent is “god” and should always be obeyed without question.

Susan was diagnosed with rectal cancer. She was upset that her parents arranged for her to be excused from health classes because there was no value in learning about her body; they said that God would always determine the course of her life. Now, as she studied the pictures in the doctor’s office and tried to understand what a colon was, she felt stupid and scared because

of the ignorance that her parents had forced upon her in the name of God. Her mind understands differently now, but her emotions can’t seem to match.

Ironically, every narcissist was once a rejected child. The narcissist controls the emotions, thoughts, and feelings, and defines what love is. Any attempt by the child to move away and become a separate person is discouraged, and the child is forced back into submission. Since independent thinking is not allowed; isolation and control are keys to maintaining this process. Any movement toward independence is treated as betrayal. Autonomy is greeted with resentment and leads to punishment for sins. Many in this situation see suicide or homicide as their only way of escape.

Many people don’t want to talk about their experience of religious abuse. They don’t know what to do with the information. Friendships are often frustrating and

Failing to obey the rules was evil.

unfulfilling. Some believe, because of the indoctrination they received, that their parents did the right thing. An example of this was portrayed in the 2003 “Prime Time” special on the children of Waco, ten years later. When the host showed them the film footage of the burning buildings, he had a hard time controlling his emotions because all these children had lost their parents in the fire. But most of the children had no reaction as their parents died because they were programmed to believe that this is what would happen in the “last days.”

There are other effects of childhood spiritual abuse, including the desire to be perfect and consistent, being hypersensitive about being mistreated again, and trying to be invisible. All of these effects that can cause dissociation, nightmares, and altered reality.


How to recover from childhood spiritual abuse

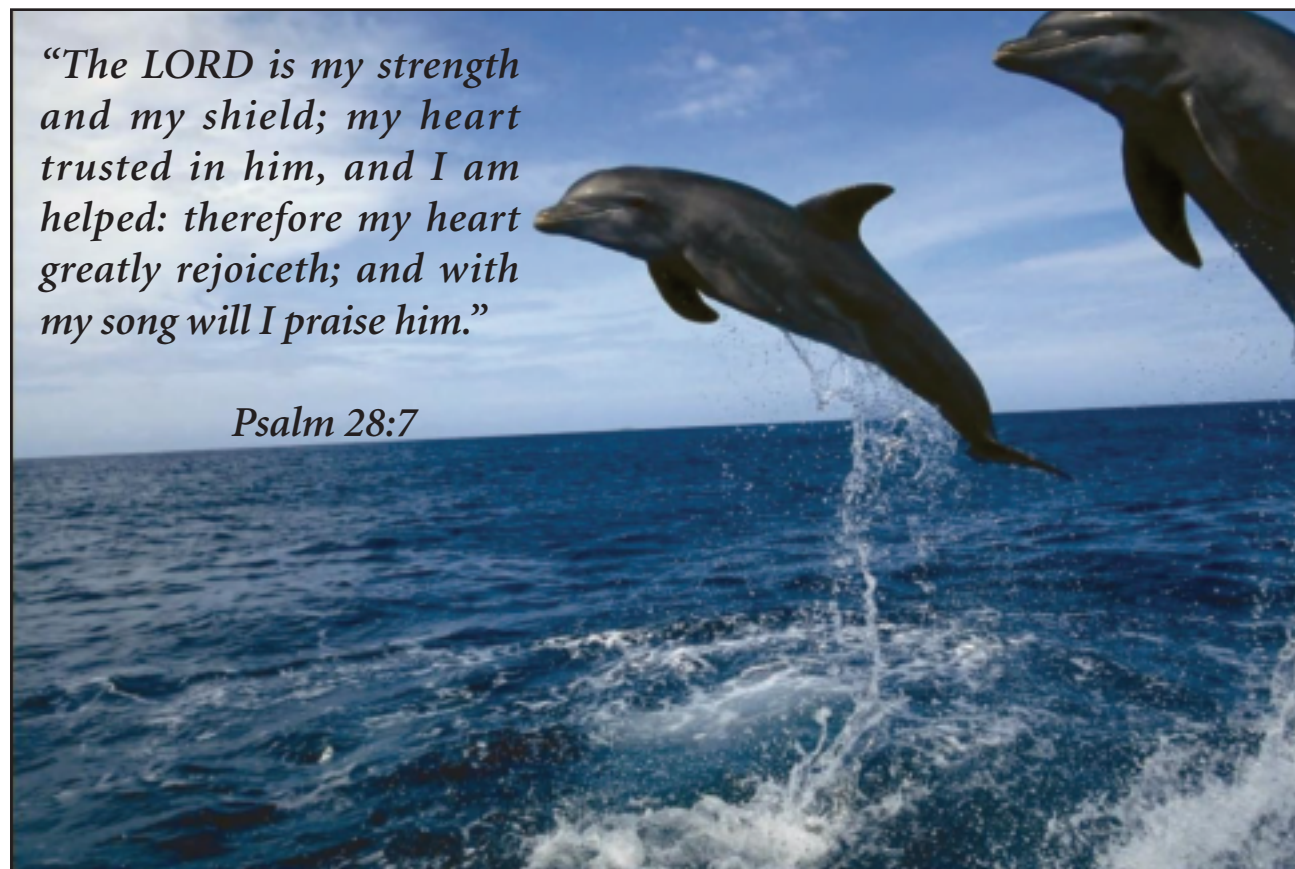
1. It will take a commitment to recover and will require investing a lot of energy. Recovery is not easy.
2. You will probably need psychological therapy and possibly some medication. Find a good Christian counselor with a knowledge of spiritual abuse from an organization such as Meier Clinic (888-725-4642).

3. You will need to wean yourself from the compulsive need to understand your parent’s behavior. Evaluate information and discard what is wrong.
4. You must also learn to evaluate your reactions to other people to see if they are magnified by the injuries you suffered as a child.
5. It is important for you to discover your own interests rather than simply carrying on in the old patterns.
6. You will need to mourn the childhood that you will never have.
7. Healing yourself is often facilitated by finding love to share.
8. Strength will develop as you learn to cope with the difficulties of your past.
9. When you are ready, look ahead and ask God for assistance, even if all you can say is, “Help!”

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*“The LORD is my strength
and my shield; my heart
trusted in him, and I am
helped: therefore my heart
greatly rejoiceth; and with
my song will I praise him.”*

Psalm 28:7

PKs: Staying in the Church



Carole Brousson Anderson

Carole Brousson Anderson is a Christian counselor and psychologist; she works in a university counseling center for students with personal and career concerns. Her husband, Don, is the associate pastor of the Vancouver Central Seventh-day Church in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. They are raising their own PK.

When pastors' kids (PKs) choose not to remain in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, it is a heartbreaking experience for their parents, who have dedicated their lives to building up and nurturing the church. Why do these kids choose not to be part of the church?

This was the question I set out to answer with a survey sent to over 900 adult PKs. Nearly 600 responded. I analyzed each questionnaire, looking for themes in those PKs who did not call themselves Seventh-day Adventists (many still called themselves Christians and attended churches of other denominations) and those who were still Seventh-day Adventists and felt very positive toward the church.

A picture did emerge from these two groups of pastors' children. Interestingly, the themes had more to do with the PKs' perception of their parents and their child-rearing practices than with the church as a whole. However, while these themes illustrate trends between the two groups, they do not account for unique variances. Despite parents' best efforts, children still have freedom of choice.

Children from the best homes can make religious choices that differ from those of their parents.

When asked what had most influenced their religious choices, PKs frequently mentioned their parents' love and support. One PK mentioned that although she and her mother seldom saw eye-to-eye, she was important enough that her mother kept working on their relationship even when her daughter was too stubborn or too inexperienced to return the favor. She describes how her mother won the battle, and they are now closer than ever. If her mother wouldn't give up, she says, then God wouldn't either.

Parents' love and support is expressed in many ways, one of them being time spent together. One father made it a priority to be home in the mornings to play with his preschool children. Another made breakfast a special family time; the family always ate it together. Still others had special family vacations.

These parents also did not force their own opinions or ideas on their children. Their children explained that they had the freedom to be themselves, make choices,



PK: Robyn Webster Engelbrecht and her husband, Loren

and develop their own personal relationships with Jesus Christ. One PK said that his parents “were wonderful and *consistent* role models. They allowed me to make my own choices while providing strong guidance. Their approach was firm but gentle. I never felt the need to rebel because their beliefs were not forced on me. I have been able to develop my own relationship with God and recognize the value in the way I was raised.”

Another PK appreciated how her parents had the ability to stand back and let her make her own choices when the time was right. She felt they believed that love comes first.

PKs who felt positive toward the church also expressed similar thoughts and feelings about their parents: “They were not perfect, but I always felt I was more important than churches or members. They were great!” Another said his father never “made us feel that church work was more important. He spent time with us. It gave us a good picture of our Heavenly Father (and I love both!).” These parents were somehow able to say No, when necessary, to church demands and focus instead on their children. Boundaries between work and home were not blurred.

These parents also modeled a genuine, vibrant, and growing relationship with God. Their children sensed that their parents’ religion was genuine and recognized that their parents practiced what they preached and were not hypocritical. What other people saw at church and in public was not a facade—it was real. These parents lived what they preached and taught. Even though they and the church weren’t perfect, they acknowledged their humanity and encouraged their children to focus on Christ.

For example, one father finally found the gospel when his PK was 16. This was a life-transforming experience as this PK watched his father change and grow in a grace relationship with God. For most of his growing-up years, this PK did not see the gospel modeled in his father, but

his father’s openness to change and growth was overall a positive experience.

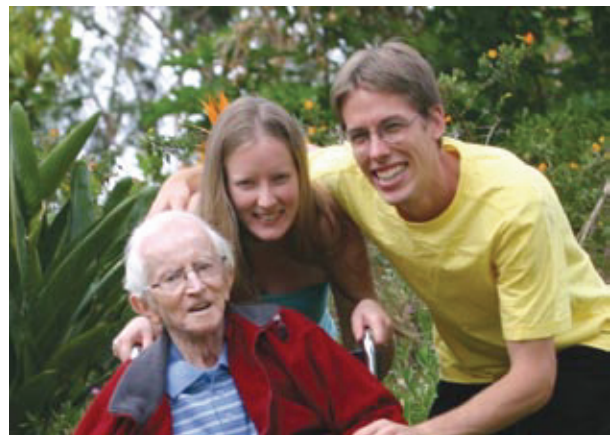
Another PK was thankful for her father’s prayers and her mother’s consistency. Her dad spent hours praying for her; when she was tempted to do wrong, she says she often couldn’t follow through because she knew her father was praying for her. She loves him for his prayers. These parents demonstrated a genuine, real, and working religion.

Open communication was encouraged in these homes. Children were free to express themselves. One PK said his family did a lot of talking, especially during meal times. Another PK, in describing what made her home positive, said that “my father was one I could talk to and was not too busy to be concerned about me. I later found out he had turned down some calls because of us in the family.” Not only did this father communicate with his children, he also had their best interests at heart, not the advancement of his own career.

The extra expectations placed on the pastoral home can be difficult, especially for children; however, parents in this group found a positive way to handle the extra expectations. One family told their children that extra expectations would be placed upon them but expressed how they would always support and be there for them. Motivation to behave in a certain way was not because of what other people would think but because it was the right thing. This PK said of his parents, “I honestly feel they did a *great* job. They *always* loved us, *never* expected perfection, and *always* let us be ourselves—*always*.”

But not all homes were like those described above. The extra expectations placed on PKs were often mentioned by children who chose not to remain Seventh-day Adventists. This was usually coupled with an overly strict home where religion felt forced and where there was very little freedom. Overall, there was an emphasis on behavior.

Listen to this PK’s evaluation of his father: “My dad was too rigid—we couldn’t even visit another SDA church in the area with our friends unless it was a school requirement. He was also too strict—we were ‘the example.’ He made all our choices for us, stifling my own growth toward independence and confidence.” Another PK wished



PK: Lyndelle Webster Dye and her husband, Jared, with her Pop

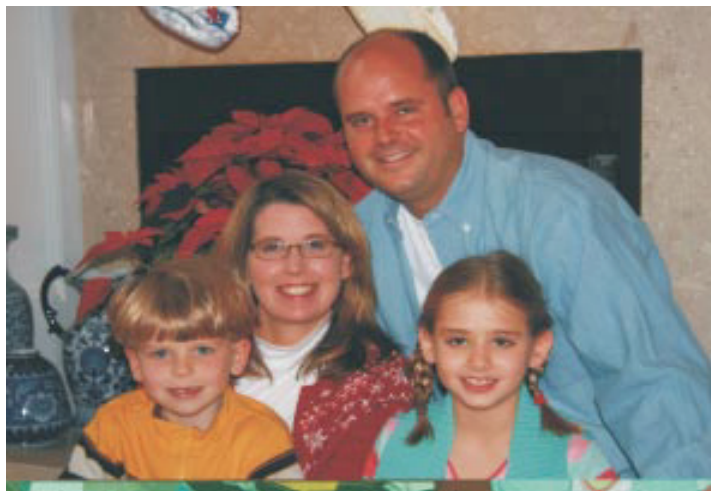
her parents had “eased up on me. I was a straight-A student who never got in trouble, but they leaned on me so hard whenever I did something they didn’t approve of. I also wish I had been given a chance to discover God, rather than having it force-fed to me till I couldn’t tell the difference between acting and belief.” Another PK commented that he felt that everyone was more concerned with the uniform than with the game.

The extra expectations

and perfection required of these PKs made them feel that God wouldn’t accept, love, or save them if their behavior didn’t measure up. Listen to this PK discuss her situation: “The lack of choice concerning church and meeting attendance; the harsh, dictatorial manner in which every ‘right’ was enforced and every perceived ‘wrong’ punished—I have just started to internalize the fact that God isn’t a dictator trying to catch you in the wrong.” Or this PK: “The authoritarianism I grew up with—the horrendous black cloud that hung over me every second. Each moment was to count for eternity—feelings were wrong, so I couldn’t express myself and ended up being that perfect, sweet PK because that’s where I got strokes. My view of God was that He would only accept me when I behaved in a specific way.”

Not only did these homes emphasize behavior; they often had little family time. This made the children feel that church came first. One PK talked of how he hardly ever saw his dad and when his dad did finally come home, he punished his son for what he had done several hours before. He continued to say, “I wish my father would have placed our family on an equal basis with the church. I never knew my father and still don’t; he didn’t have time.”

The PKs in these homes also perceived their parents’ religion to be hypocritical and inauthentic. One PK felt that when his father was in front of church members or potential church members, he was the model Christian—kind and



PK: Carissa Carr with her husband Craig and their PK children, Christian and Cassie

loving. However, when he dealt with his wife and sons, he was impatient, unforgiving, and, in this PK’s words, vicious and cruel.

And, finally, a few of these PKs chose not to remain Adventists because of extremely negative events: sexual abuse by their fathers or mental or physical abuse. Some had had especially disappointing experiences with church members or church leaders.

The stories of these PKs seem rather bitter and bleak, even extreme; however, their experiences can be helpful for the pastor considering raising a family in the pastorate. Although PKs cannot be shielded from all the pressures and negative experiences inherent in pastoring, these can be minimized and the positive aspects enhanced. According to many PKs, developing a strong relationship with them and letting them know that their parents will make time and ultimately place them in first place shields them from many negative perceptions and experiences.

In addition, parents making their expectations and the reasons for them very clear without church, father’s job, reputation, or God’s love attached to good behavior will also lessen the impact of extra expectations placed upon PKs because their father is “the pastor.” Combine this with a home open to discussing and exploring ideas or beliefs, giving children the freedom to learn about themselves and make age-appropriate choices, and, according to the PKs in this research, the chances are increased that their religious choices will be similar to parents’ choices.

On the other hand, pastors who devote time primarily to the salvation of the masses, focus on the health and well-being of their parishioners, try to enhance their reputation by the behavior of the family, are very strict and authoritarian, and in general have poor boundaries between the church and home, risk losing the salvation of the most important people in their lives—their children.



PK: Whitney Hucks



PK: Kendall Hucks



Prayer Note



Mineko Tsuruta

Mineko Tsuruta is a pastor's wife in Japan. Her husband, Pastor Shinji Tsuruta, has been in mission work for 13 years. They have a son and a daughter.

I started to make a prayer note 15 years ago. At that time my husband was working for an electronics manufacturer and attending church as a lay member. My daughter was in fifth grade and my son was in fourth grade. We were thinking about what to do about my daughter's junior high school education. She had been in a large public elementary school with seven classes in each grade, and the public junior high school she was planning to attend was even larger, with 11 classes. There were some unfavorable rumors about the new school as well. I wondered if my daughter would be able to survive in this school. Would she be able to keep the Sabbath? Concern weighed heavily on my heart. I wanted to send my daughter to an Adventist church school. But I had to face the reality that with my mortgage, it was financially impossible to send my daughter to private school. That was when my "prayer note" started. The prayer read, "Dear Lord, please let my daughter be able to receive San-Iku (SDA Church School) education in junior high."

Selected Messages described my feelings at that time: "We do not know of our future, so let us put our hand in Christ's, and trust Him. This is the only safe passage in life."

If you really think about it, it was an impossible request, especially without any plan. But a miracle happened five months later, and my prayer was answered.

One day my husband said to me, "I think I want to become a minister. What do you think?" He claimed he heard a voice saying, "Become a minister." At first I thought it was an illusion or maybe I was tired, but I also began to hear the voice on many occasions. When I heard that, it brought chills to my body. I loathed the word "minister." I told my husband that I was not up to the challenge and that there was no way that I would be able to become a minister's wife. I also told him that I was comfortable being the wife of a company worker and lay member. Most of all, what were we going to do about our daughter's school and tuition?

My husband is the type who is adamant about his decisions. He asked me day after day, "Have you made a decision?" and put pressure on me. He would tell me that "God is asking us to serve, and if we do not, it is the same as denying God." I understood, but I was filled with worry and needed assurance from God. Every day after my husband and kids had left for the day, I prayed, "Dear

Lord, show me the way. Is it your will for my husband to become a minister?" A week later, I began to hear God's voice saying, "I will bless you, and this is for you." I also felt the warm hand of God moving me forward. I realized that there was nothing to worry about—I was free! And I could follow my husband to fulfill God's will. The Bible tells us "to rely on the power of God. If we do so, there will be peace in our heart."

Now the preparation for seminary began. My husband passed the entrance examination, although he barely made the application deadline. Then we moved to San-Iku College, and life on campus began.

I wrote many "prayer notes" during this preparation period. "Please help my husband to resign from his company without any trouble. Please help my non-Christian parents to understand our decision. Please help us sell our condominium quickly and at a high price to help our budget." Everything worked out with God's blessing.

My husband started seminary at the age of 35. My children were able to attend an Adventist school. As I look back 15 years later, I am filled with thanks and happiness. My children have been able to receive San-Iku education through all levels of their education. We have been able to come up with money and to pay the tuition without delay throughout the academic year. Now I can truly understand what the minister used to tell me: "Mineko, a minister's family seems poor, but we are blessed and wealthy with Christ." I also remember God telling me that it was for me, when my husband became a minister.

My prayer notes have addressed many issues: personal requests, the church, my children's education, college choices, marriage and so on. I used to write everything in one notebook, but I decided to separate my prayers into four notebooks. They were titled "For Myself and My Husband," "For My Church and Its Members," "For My Daughter," and "For My Son." It is easier to look back now since my lists have been organized.

My prayer notebooks contain many simple requests about family, church, and whatever else comes to mind. I have been writing to Christ, talking to Him just like a little girl who wants to tell her mother everything. Small prayer or big prayer, I tell Him everything. As I do, I can feel my heart is lighter. And when my prayer was answered, I use a red pen to write down details of how the prayer was

answered. My prayer note books are filled with prayers and answers, and I can relive the moments later on.

My prayers are like little dirty pebbles in the sand, but Christ polishes the pebbles one by one and returns them to my hand. That is why these notes are our family treasures. These notebooks show me why we should take everything to Christ; they strengthen my faith in God. They remind me to follow Christ in every situation.

Here are some lessons I have learned from my prayer notes:

- Writing in the notebook is a prayer in itself and helps me concentrate more than if the prayer was spoken.
- It helps me to remember what and how I prayed.
- I can look back and see how my prayers were answered.
 - I can see how I have grown in Christ.
 - It makes praying fun and strengthens my relationship with Christ.

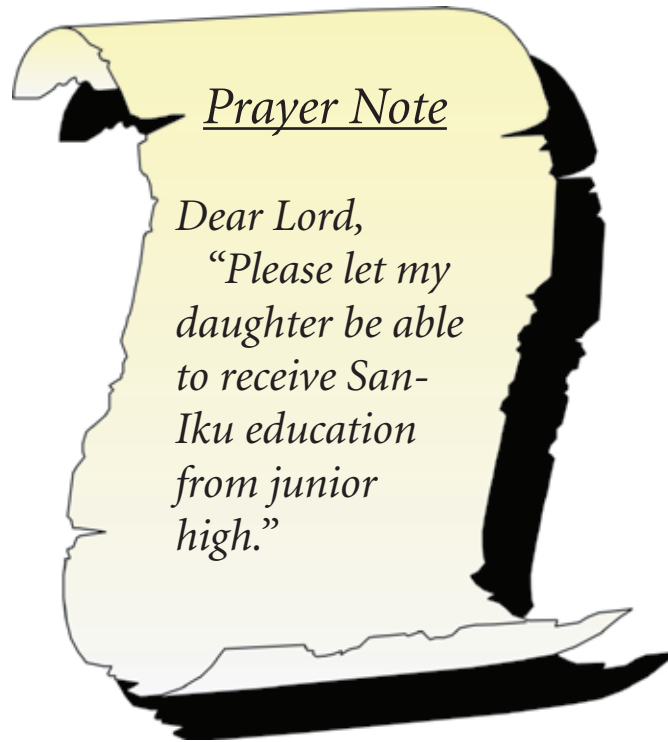
In the beginning, my prayers were demanding, selfish prayers, but I can see that God answered even these prayers. I believe that God is happy with my method and blesses my prayer and my notebooks. I know now that God is waiting for my prayer. I have learned the steps of prayer. I start with demand and move on to repentance, asking for His will to be done, and then include a prayer of thanks. I am learning the prayer that God wants us to pray.

Here are some hints on how to write prayer notes:

- Put dates before your prayers.
- Include details, but write freely and ask for an answer that you can understand.
- Leave some space on the bottom of your prayer so you can note how your prayer was answered.
- When your prayer is answered, use a red pen to write the details. Then write a word of thanks and praise to God.

Our hearts will always be filled with worries and sorrows. Take everything to Christ. God is always there to listen to you and your prayers.

Proverbs 16:9 says, "The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps." I pray that you will prosper through prayer and become closer to Christ.



Angels Cared for the Children

Martha Guevara de Fandiño

Martha took secretarial studies at the Colombia Adventist University. In 1990, she married Jesús Alberto Fandiño. They have two children, Gamaliel de Jesús and Natalie. She enjoys working in the church for Dorcas and Women's Ministries. Her hobbies are knitting and embroidery.

God has blessed our home with two beautiful babies. Gamaliel (three years old) and Natalie (two years old) are the joy of our home. Sometimes they are with us; other times they are with the person who takes care of them.

There are times when the human eye doesn't see them and they are "alone" with God's angels who, of course, are their best companions. The angels' guarding care over Jesus' little lambs seems limitless. Children are constantly active and often have accidents. Many times I think, "Where would children—and all human beings—be without these heavenly agents?" Only in heaven will we understand the great work they do for us. In many instances, I have seen God's hand through these invisible servants.

When Gamaliel was 18 months old, a very responsible teenage girl cared for him while I worked around



Gamaliel and Natalie de Fandiño

the house. Often we took her out with us to watch him. One day we visited our pastor friend in his home. When his wife realized she didn't have enough cheese for breakfast, she asked my helper to run to the nearby store and buy some for her. The girl went out of the house, unlocked the padlocked gate to the street, and walked toward the store. She did not notice that Gamaliel was standing nearby as she went out without closing the gate.

Spying the open gate, Gamaliel ran as fast as his little legs could carry him toward the avenue where cars usually sped by. Inside the house, I somehow sensed danger. Looking out the window, I took it all in and dashed out after him. By then, Gamaliel had already crossed the street. Catching him at last, I realized he had not been hurt. Strangely, the street was

empty. I am sure the angels of God held back traffic to save my son.

Tired Mommy

When Natalie was just four months old, she awoke frequently to eat or to have her diaper changed. With two little ones, I was frequently awakened at night, and I was exhausted. One morning I lay down with Natalie, thinking that I would continue with my housework once she had fallen asleep. I put my arm under her head and sang to lull her to sleep. It soothed me, too, and soon I fell into a deep sleep. Suddenly I awoke to Natalie's wails, but she wasn't with me. I jumped up and found her lying on the floor.

Fearing the worst, I wondered, "What have I done to her?"

Apparently she had crawled off the bed and landed on her head! I carefully picked her up, checking for cuts or bruises, but there was nothing—not even a scratch. It seemed as though she had rolled off the bed with a hand cradling her head and lowering her to the floor. I don't believe she could do that by herself. I am sure that God's angels watched over her and cared for her while I slept.


Restless PK

Some church members say that "pastors' kids are the most restless." Well, our son was no exception. Gamaliel was three years old when we recently attended a pastoral family meeting outside our district. When the service finished, we went to the central church where we were to greet some people in the church atrium. Meanwhile, Gamaliel went for a walk with his friends. Sensing something amiss, I looked around and spotted him climbing a six-foot wall. I ran to try to prevent him from falling, but I was too late. He fell and landed on his face. I imagined that he had broken everything, yet when I picked him up, there was only a small cut on his lip.

He cried. "Mama, if Jesus was with me, why did I fall?"

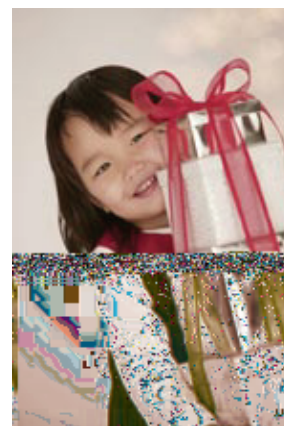
"Baby," I responded, "Jesus *was* with you, but you disobeyed Mommy and Daddy." Later I told him about the angels that take care of him. "Your angels work for you," I said, "but sometimes you make them work overtime."

Our children are even more precious to the Savior than they are to us. That is why He said that we should not cause them to fall, as their angels always see the face of the Father, who is in heaven (Matt. 18:10).

As Christian mothers and fathers, we should not doubt that the angels of God will work for our children if we daily entrust them to God. "Come in humility, with a heart full of tenderness, and with a sense of the temptations and dangers before yourselves and your children; by faith bind them upon the altar, entreating for them the care of the Lord. Ministering angels will guard children who are thus dedicated to God" (*Child Guidance*, p. 519). 

*"If you, then,
though you are
evil, know how
to give good gifts
to your children,
how much more
will your Father
in heaven give
good gifts to those
who ask him!"*

Matthew 7:11



Witnessing for Christ From a Shepherdess Perspective



Savie Maphosa

Savie Maphosa is an accountant at Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, and her husband, Pastor Solomon Maphosa, is the executive secretary for the division. They have two daughters, one son, and two grandchildren.

As a pastor's wife, I always felt challenged when my husband returned home after an evangelistic crusade with a report of many baptisms and decisions for Christ. I would feel the same challenge when I saw people coming forward to accept Christ as my husband preached. I wanted to win souls for my Lord, but I knew that this was impossible for me. I am not a public speaker, and the worst thing that can happen to me is to stand before a crowd!

I decided to pray for a soul-winning ministry that would accommodate my personality. The Lord showed me the Voice of Prophecy (VOP) approach, and I determined in my heart to try it.

At the time, I was working as the financial director of a furniture manufacturing firm in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. After much prayer I gathered up enough courage to enroll a few people in the VOP program. After a week or so, the few had grown into more than 20 with some strong decisions for Christ and baptism.

As the Lord would have it, in less than a month almost all the factory employees had enrolled as VOP

students and had agreed for us to have a preaching service three times a week during our lunch break. We asked the local conference to provide pastors for this assignment.

Forty people completed the first series of lessons and were ready for graduation. I was ecstatic. I could not believe that I too could be used by the Lord to bring 40 people to Christ. We proceeded to organize a graduation Sabbath for them. On graduation day, as I saw them marching into the sanctuary, a voice in my mind asked, "Who are these clothed in black who are marching into the Lord's sanctuary today?" The answer came back, "These are they whose sins have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, and today they walk into the Lord's sanctuary as forgiven sinners, candidates for eternal life."

This was the first of many graduations to follow.

After some time, I moved to another company. After I had enrolled all my new workmates into the program, the Lord gave me a revelation: to go to those companies that provided services to our company and enroll them in the program.

With much fear and trepidation, I prayerfully approached the first company. To my surprise, the Lord had already been there and opened all the doors. The welcome was unbelievable, and many people enrolled, including senior personnel. We did the same with our other service providers, and the work spread like wild fire. We almost experienced a repeat of what happened in the Apostolic Church where the Lord added daily to the number of those being saved.

In this large group that was being prepared for graduation was a marketing manager who also served as a pastor for a Pentecostal Church. He was strongly opposed to Adventists and particularly to the Sabbath. He attacked Adventism and the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath at every opportunity. On many occasions, he made it abundantly clear that the last thing he would be on this earth would be an Adventist. In plain language, he was a self-proclaimed enemy of the Adventists. But despite his stance against Adventists, he agreed to complete the VOP program and go through all the lessons.

As we went through the papers submitted by students in preparation for graduation, it was my pleasant surprise to find a request not only for graduation but for baptism from this marketing manager. As I write this article, he is a baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church!


When my husband was called to serve at the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID) in Harare, Zimbabwe, I quit my job and we moved to Harare. The church offered me a job, which I graciously accepted.

When I started working for the division, the same witnessing opportunities presented themselves, and the only thing for me to do was to go after them with gusto. The target again was the service providers. I started with my hair salon. I enrolled all the ladies and from there went on to companies the SID does business with.

As I write this article, 142 people have graduated from this program. The graduates include people in top management (chief executive officers). Some of these highly placed individuals have requested baptism. Of those who have completed the program, 30 have been baptized, and some are in the baptismal class.

We are currently working with more than 100 students who are at various stages of the program. A big graduation ceremony is being planned by a local church.

Evangelism opportunities continue to appear. The top management of a security company that provides services to the division office have enrolled as students. On one of our visits, they told us that the office now begins the day with prayer. In addition, they invited us to visit their company every Wednesday to study the Bible with their staff.

It is my sincere belief that when we surrender ourselves to the Lord and ask Him to use us in His service, He will shock us by what He is able to do through us. Try it and see for yourself. 

Promise From God

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

—John 14:1-3

Special Report From India

Story Hour



Mrs. Margaret Nathaniel (in blue) and teachers for Story Hour

Mrs. Margaret Nathaniel, shared the following report of their project in India.

Mrs. Flora John, the wife of SUD Executive Secretary, and I were conducting a Branch Sabbath School for an orphanage with more than 70 Christian kids, ages 5-15. These kids knew the Bible stories so well that we decided to start the “Discover Series” Bible lessons. At Christmas we asked our church to buy 40 Bibles for the senior students. We were having two classes each week. Kids were able to open their Bibles and read for themselves. This seemed to agitate the man in charge, and one day he asked us to come once a month instead of every week. We refused. We prayed earnestly for God to open a way for us to start another one, preferably with non-Christian kids. And He did.

While visiting a friend in the Titan Layout, I noticed several kids cycling and playing in the road. Immediately I thought this would be an ideal place to start a “Story Hour” since there were so many kids. Titan Layout belongs to the Titan Watch Company, which has a very big factory in Hosur. The factory had purchased this area and built 200 homes for its staff. Buses take employees to work, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

One Adventist lady, Dr. Helen John, purchased a house in this Layout since there were few vacant houses for sale. So I asked her if she would be willing to let us use her front porch to conduct a “Story Hour” for the many children there. She willingly agreed. We recruited some ladies and kids to distribute invitations. Most people wanted to know the cost. When we said it was free, they could not believe it since many people in the Layout offer karate classes, painting classes, yoga classes, dancing classes, etc., and charge quite a bit.

In most homes, both parents work in the factory, so kids are at home with their grandparents. The Layout has an English school as well, so the kids know English. The next Sabbath, 10 children came to see what was going on. We asked them to bring their friends, and the attendance grew to 70-80. We could not accommodate all of them. Most were from orthodox Hindu families, and there were a few Muslims too. The first few weeks, some parents and grandparents also attended to see what we were doing, but when they saw that their kids were happy and safe, they let their kids come by themselves. We cautiously began with nature stories, health lessons, and songs, and then we



added object lessons to expose God as Almighty, loving, and wonderful.

After a year we started telling Bible stories, and slowly the attendance dropped. With attendance around 40 each week, we could more easily accommodate the children and pay more attention to them. The kids like the Bible stories best. A friend of mine from Oregon sends me stickers once in a while, and we use these to reward attendance. The children share their prayer requests and tell us what they are thankful for, and then we pray about those things.



We were very eager to meet the children's parents, so we planned a small program and sent out invitations. The program was held on the first Sunday of January 2008, and 20-25 parents and 50 students attended. After the program, several kids who had dropped out came back to class. The parents appreciated hearing their kids sing and repeat verses on temperance, nature, etc. They all expressed their happiness in what we were doing for their kids, and several parents asked us to visit them in their homes. We served refreshments and enjoyed fellowshiping together.


Right now we have five teachers who work regularly with this project. One lady brings her piano accordion to accompany our singing. The church purchased six stools for the staff and six mats for the kids. We have a flannel

board and some illustrations for the songs. The moment the children see us arrive in our van, they run to greet us.

A six-year-old boy lives across from where we conduct our program. His grandparents and father are very interested, but his mother is very conservative. He would never close his eyes when we offered prayer. One day I asked him why, and he said his mother told him not to. Even when we invited the parents to our program, she went to work while her husband attended. But a few weeks ago, she was home with some visitors. The little boy was anxious to play with his cousin, but we heard the mother ask him to attend "Story Hour" before playing with his cousin. So the Holy Spirit is working on her heart.



These kids are smart and learn so fast, even the younger ones. The older children think and ask sensible questions when they don't understand. They also reaffirm by telling an experience or event so we know they have understood what they heard.

Please pray that the seeds we sow today will someday bear fruit. 





Shepherdess International News

North American Division

Indiana Conference: The Shepherdesses held their area luncheon in Kokomo on October 28, 2007.



From left (seated): Jennie Neri, Collene Kelly, and Sandi Case; (standing) Wanda Rosario, Holly Clark, Rosie Yensho, and Judy Yeoman.

Greater New York Conference: A group of pastors' wives enjoyed fellowship along with a delicious brunch when they gathered for the first Shepherdess Ministries meeting sponsored by Bonnie Marker, wife of the Greater New York Conference president. The keynote speaker was Lois King, Shepherdess Ministries Coordinator for the Atlantic Union; the theme of her presentation was "On Being a Pastor's Wife."

The brunch was prepared by Marlene Romeo, a pastor's wife. Music was presented by Helene and Catherine Mattenson, members of a pastor's family. The pastors' wives surrounded Bonnie Marker as Lois King prayed a special prayer of commitment and dedication.

At the end of the meetings, they enjoyed a surprise visit from Donald King, president of the Atlantic Union Conference. (This report first appeared in the January 2008 issue of the *Gleaner*.)



Lois King, Atlantic Union Conference Shepherdess Coordinator

New York Conference: Eighteen ladies met in Syracuse, New York, for meetings. Donna Rouse coordinated this event, and Sharon Cress was the speaker for the weekend.



Pastors' wives in New York had a special weekend in March 2008

Southern Union Conference: Jacqueline Ross, ministerial and evangelism associate for the Southern Union Conference, presented in the March 2008 issue of *Southern Tidings* that a Ministerium Convention was held for the whole family on January 6-9, 2008. Janice Johnson Browne, Ph.D., wife of Benjamin Browne, South Central Conference president, presented the keynote message for the pastors' wives: "Will the Real Pastor's Wife Please Kneel Down?" Browne's admonition was illuminating, spirit-filled, and down-to-earth. She emphasized the importance of praying through every situation and circumstance.

Monica Reed, M.D. and CEO of Florida Hospital's Celebration Health, took the women on a much-needed tour of their physical, spiritual, and mental needs for experiencing fullness in Christ.



Dennis Ross, Gayle Murphy, and Jacqueline Ross



Standing room only at the Southern Union Shepherdess meetings

The final speaker was Carol Johnson, business owner, healthcare professional, and wife of Larry Johnson, Th.D., treasurer of the South Atlantic Conference. Her presentation topic was “Ouch! The First Lady—A Pillar and Crumbling.” Johnson focused on the door of ministry that has been opened to the pastor’s wife, emphasizing that the focus of her ministry is to her husband first.



Emely Figueroa

Cheryl Retzer, Southern Union Shepherdess Coordinator, told the more than 400 women how much they are appreciated and presented a gift card and a Shepherdess bookmark to each woman who attended the banquet.

Southern Asia Division

North East Andhra Region: April 17, 2007, was an unforgettable day for North East Andhra Region. The union-wide Shepherdess Advisory was conducted at the region headquarters. Mrs. Hepzibah Kore, SUD Shepherdess Coordinator; Vinodhini John, union Shepherdess Coordinator; and Madhuramani Wilbert, Associate Director, were present, along with all women’s ministries and Shepherdess coordinators of the union. The meetings were inspiring and beneficial. Mrs. Hepzibah Kore shared valuable lessons and distributed useful material for the shepherdesses.

Following is a pictorial report of this event:



Hepzibah Kore, SUD Shepherdess Coordinator (in green)



North East Andhra Shepherdess Advisory

Orissa: Ramani Kurian, associate director for women’s ministry in the Southern Asia Division, reports that the adult literacy program has 386 women in 15 centers in Orissa. Most of the facilitators are pastors’ wives in special ministries. The students’ families appreciate the efforts of the Adventist Church in making it possible for women to be literate in that part of the country.

Below are a few statements that will show how much the women have benefited from this program:

- Salomi Kandulana testifies that she is now able to read any book in Oriya, the language of the state.
- After attending the program for a year Elish Horo can not only read and write but can also do some functional math. Elish and a few other women from the center have applied for a loan to start a small business.
- Namita, a regular student at the Khariguda Center, purchased some things at a shop that were wrapped in a piece of newspaper. After unwrapping the items, she tested her reading ability and was able to read everything in the paper.
- Haria Gogan was an illiterate man in Dhenkanal and went with his wife to the village. Since they could not read the bus schedule, they missed several buses going to their destination until a shopkeeper finally helped them. With pride, Brother Gogan says he is now able to read and write thanks to the adult literacy classes organized in his village.

The adult literacy program helps illiterate people in the villages of India. Ramani feels God will open ways and means to let these people know about God’s love for them.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division

Vietnam: Mrs. Debbie Saul-Chan, Southeast Asia Union Mission Shepherdess Coordinator, reports that Vietnam held its first Shepherdess meeting on February 25-26, 2008, in Ho Chi Minh City on the premises of the Phu Nhuan Church. About 45 wives had the opportunity to come together with other Shepherdesses to receive training, support, and fellowship. Mrs. Debbie Chan, with the help of Madam Tran Thi Phuong Mai, CM/FM Director of VAM and a pastor's wife herself, organized this meeting.

The ladies attended workshops where real-life situations were discussed among the groups. Mrs. Helen Gulfan gave a workshop on "A Walk with God," a devotional method she wrote and further enhanced with the SOAP (S-cripture, O-bervation, A-pplication and P-rayer) method.

Mrs. Cindy Lieu, a Vietnamese lady now living in the United States, offered a practical workshop on nutrition and a healthy-cooking demo instruction station.

The Shepherdesses were encouraged and appreciated the meetings. Many also expressed that they would like to attend more meetings because the topics were meaningful and useful to their ministry, and they also enjoyed the opportunity to talk with others.



Cooking demo by Cindy Lieu



Prayer bands



Mrs. Debbie Saul-Chan (left), SAUM Shepherdess Coordinator speaking at the meetings with her translator, Tran Thi Phuong Mai (right)



Ladies listening to the presentations

Cambodia: The Shepherdesses in Cambodia gathered on March 17-18, 2008, at the Training Center in Phnom Penh City. For two days, the ladies were blessed by four workshops. There was also time for sharing and interaction among the Shepherdesses.



Shepherdesses from Vietnam Mission in their ethnic costumes



Mrs. Augusta Pheng welcoming the Shepherdesses



Practical workshops on basic floral arrangement and baking banana bread by Mrs. Debbie Chan and Mrs. Augusta Pheng



Shepherdesses from Cambodia Adventist Mission

West-Central Africa Division

Angele Nlo Nlo, WAD Shepherdess Coordinator, held an evangelistic campaign in Cameroon with pastors' wives from December 23, 2007–January 5, 2008. Some pastors' wives gave Bible studies in small groups before the presentation each night, others were involved in prayer groups, and some helped with the song service. The meetings were challenging because of year-end holidays, but the Lord blessed with 27 precious souls being baptized.



Angele Nlo Nlo speaking



Angele Nlo Nlo giving gifts to visitors



A pastor's wife giving Bible Studies



Ladies sharing special music before the sermon on the last Sabbath



Those baptized were surrounded by pastors' wives and the three pastors who assisted with the meetings.

Farewell to Laura Kent

Shepherdess International was saddened to learn of the passing of Mrs. Laura Kent, age 108. Her faithful ministry as a pastor's wife is an example to all of us. Below is the floral arrangement that Kay Winter, retired SPD Shepherdess Coordinator, presented on behalf of Shepherdess International with the following message:

*Shepherdess International, General Conference, Washington, DC
Celebrating the life and loyal service of Laura Kent
Remembered as a true Mother in Israel
Esteemed as a pastor's wife and a faithful partner in ministry*

