

# THE JOURNAL

A Shepherdess International Resource for Ministry Spouses

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## GOOD SOIL STORYTELLING

# THE JOURNAL

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**A**re you trying to figure out what your ministry is? Do you want to witness and reach people for Jesus? But do you sometimes struggle with the “how”? Mark 5 and 6 give us the best answer.

Do you remember the story about the demoniac in Mark 5? Jesus gets out of the boat and is walking up the hill when a demon-possessed man comes rushing toward Him. The disciples take off running but suddenly realize Jesus is not with them. They turn around to find that Jesus is casting the demons out of the man.

You know the story. The demons go into the pigs, the pigs run over the cliff into the lake, and the people want Jesus to leave!

As Jesus steps back into the boat to leave, the now-healed man begs to go with Him. If you had just been healed and had your life transformed, wouldn't you want to go with Jesus? I would! But Jesus would not let the man go with Him. Look at Mark 5:19: “However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you’” (NKJV).

Then Mark 5:20 says, “And he [the healed demon-possessed man] departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.”

The most amazing part of the story is what happened when Jesus returned to the same area some time later. Mark 6:53-55 says, “When they had crossed over they came to the land of Gennesaret (Decapolis) and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was.” Amazing!

In *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White comments, “When Jesus returned to Decapolis, the people flocked about Him, and for three days, not merely the inhabitants of one town, but thousands from all the surrounding region, heard the message of salvation.

**I believe that is what God is asking of you and me: to simply share our story of what God has done for us.**

Even the power of demons is under the control of our Saviour, and the working of evil is overruled for good” (p. 340).

Just through sharing his story, his testimony of what God had done for him, thousands came to Jesus!

I believe that is what God is asking of you and me: to simply share our story of what God has done for us.

Now you may be saying, “I don't have a story.” But you can have one! All you need to do is spend quality time with Jesus every day—reading the Bible, praying, getting to know your God, and obeying what He tells you to do. I promise, if you do this every day (or at least almost everyday) you *will* have a story—and you will see people coming to Jesus because of your testimony.

God will even gift you for the ministry He wants you doing. That's what has happened to me. God has taken me all over the world to share what He's done in my life. By God's grace, I have seen many people converted by the Holy Spirit. I'm not boasting; I just want you to know what can happen when a shy, hesitant person like me decides to spend time with Jesus! If God can use me, He can use anybody.

Jesus wants to use you just as powerfully as He did the former demoniac. If you're not already spending quality time daily with God, why not begin again today? You will find your own life, and the lives of those around you, transformed by the incredible testimony God will give you.

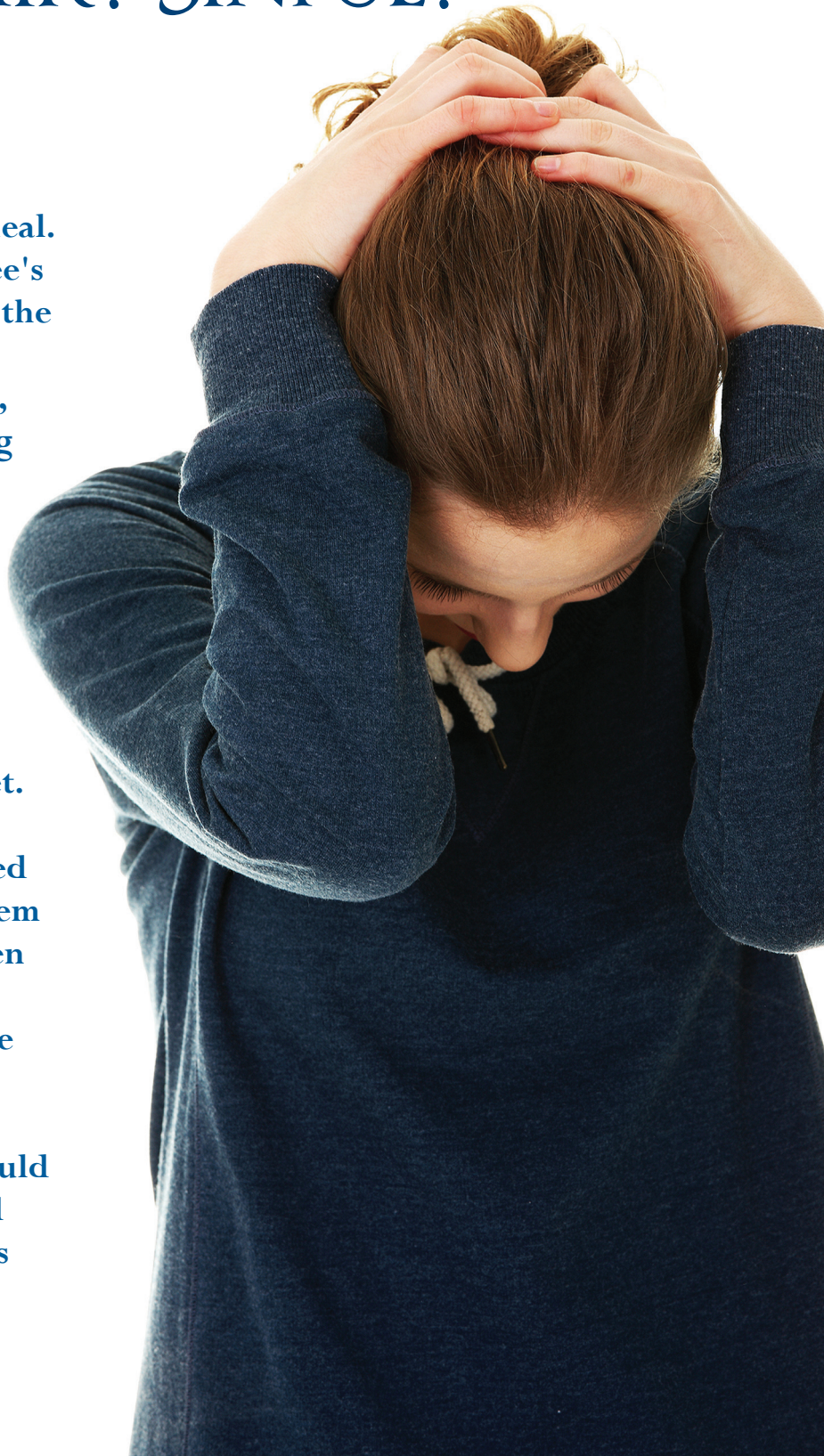


Janet Page  
Associate Ministerial Secretary for Prayer,  
Pastoral Spouses, and Families

# HOPELESS? IN DESPAIR? SINFUL?

One of the Pharisees asked him over for a meal. He went to the Pharisee's house and sat down at the dinner table. Just then a woman of the village, the town harlot, having learned that Jesus was a guest in the home of the Pharisee, came with a bottle of very expensive perfume and stood at his feet, weeping, raining tears on his feet. Letting down her hair, she dried his feet, kissed them, and anointed them with the perfume. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man was the prophet I thought he was, he would have known what kind of woman this is who is falling all over him."

Luke 7:36-39, *The Message*



Mary had been looked upon as a great sinner, but Christ knew the circumstances that had shaped her life. He might have extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin. Seven times she had heard His rebuke of the demons that controlled her heart and mind. She had heard His strong cries to the Father in her behalf. She knew how offensive is sin to His unsullied purity, and in His strength she had overcome.

When to human eyes her case appeared hopeless, Christ saw in Mary capabilities for good. He saw the better traits of her character. The plan of redemption has invested humanity with great possibilities, and in Mary these possibilities were to be realized. Through His grace she became a partaker of the divine nature. The one who had fallen, and whose mind had been a habitation of demons, was brought very near to the Saviour in fellowship and ministry. It was Mary who sat at His feet and learned of Him. It was Mary who poured upon His head the precious anointing oil, and bathed His feet with her tears. Mary stood beside the cross, and followed Him to the sepulcher. Mary was first at the tomb after His resurrection. It was Mary who first proclaimed a risen Saviour.

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.

Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of His wrath on our world, to destroy those who are filled with hatred of God. He might wipe this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help.

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Romans 8:33, 34.

by Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 568

# SURVIVAL TIPS

FOR THE PASTOR'S SPOUSE

**Cultivate the art of being warm and friendly to all, while still keeping family information private.**

Being friendly and approachable doesn't mean you have to spill your guts.

Remember that everyone else has another best friend, and learn to share only what you're comfortable being public knowledge.

This doesn't mean you're being secretive, just practicing discretion. If you take a few months to get to know people first, you'll be more free to accept ministry roles that you are passionate about and gifted in.

*Got a survival tip that someone shared with you once upon a time, or that you have learned along the way?*

Send it in to share here at:  
[development.gc.ministerial@gmail.com](mailto:development.gc.ministerial@gmail.com).

# NOT JUST LITTLE THINGS

by Karen Holford



I was running late, rushing around the house, picking up last minute things. Finally I had everything I needed. I closed the door and quickly turned my key in the lock. As I did, the key broke in two, and there I was, “imprisoned” outside my own home. My husband and youngest son had the other two keys. My husband was away for a few days, and my son wouldn’t be home from school until early evening. I needed to work on my computer. I had deadlines. But I was on the wrong side of the door. A little thing, a tiny crack in a key, but it made a massive difference to my life! Fortunately, a local locksmith cut me a new key from the broken pieces in just a few moments.

We’re surrounded by small things that make a big difference. Jesus noticed them too—a seed grows into a mustard bush; a small crumb of yeast works through a whole batch of bread dough; and a tiny teaspoon of faith moves a mountain. A man sells everything he has to buy a small but precious pearl because of the difference it will make to his life.

Little things make a big difference in our marriages too, much more than we realize.

I often assign homework for the troubled couples I see as a family therapist. Each partner is to do one loving thing for the other person every day, just something small and simple, without attracting any attention to it or making any comment. Each person is to keep one diary of the loving things they have

done for their partner and a separate diary of the loving things they notice their partner doing for them. This is where we start, helping them to show loving care in the little details of their lives. They may not feel like doing loving things. They may blame their spouse for all the pain in their relationship. They may feel too tired or too hurt to think of something kind to do. But this is an important task. Each of them needs to know their partner cares enough to try. If they don’t see signs of love, they may withdraw and give up working on the relationship.

When they do this homework two things happen—each person spends time thinking of loving things to do for their partner, and each person has to look out for evidence that their partner is being loving toward them. These two things can change their perspective on their marriage and help to build some of the love back into their relationship. Unless someone feels loved, accepted, hopeful, and safe, they’re unlikely

**Unless someone feels loved, accepted, hopeful, and safe, they’re unlikely to risk talking about what’s really bothering their relationship.**

**“Love cannot long exist without expression. Let not the heart of one connected with you starve for the want of kindness and sympathy.”**

to risk talking about what’s really bothering their relationship. They may also be less likely to work on projects together, be supportive or helpful, encourage each other toward their goals, or be generous with each other—all vital ingredients of a successful and happy marriage.

John Gottman is famous for his research into what makes a successful marriage. In

his book *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*,<sup>1</sup> he describes the things couples do and say that help him to predict the long-term well-being of their relationship. He’s discovered that it’s the very little things that matter, like responding warmly and thoughtfully to the most insignificant comment the other person makes:

“Oh look, it’s raining again!”

“Oh dear, that means you’ll get wet walking to work. Let me drive you.”

Successful couples turn to each other like sunflowers turning toward the sun. They seek each other out for companionship, comfort, and connection in the smallest aspects of their lives. These snippets of relationship may seem unimportant and mundane, but they are like tiny threads. Twist lots of those threads together, and you’ll have a strong rope. Carelessly let some fray, and the rope that binds you will weaken.

We see Jesus doing many little things to build connections with those He meets. We see Him turning toward those who need His love and forgiveness, not away from them. Like inviting himself to Zacchaeus’ house for supper, asking a woman at a well for a drink of water, or touching a leper. His thoughtful kindness opens their hearts to His love.

Our marriages are like bank accounts. The more we invest in our relationships—a penny of thoughtfulness here and a dime of helpfulness there—the more love, generosity, and goodwill we’ll have in our banks. Then we can draw on these valuable resources when we face challenges together.

But what if your partner isn’t investing in the relationship? What if it feels like your relational bank account is already hugely overdrawn? Just as one person doing little bits of damage can quickly destroy a happy relationship, one person doing little bits of love can transform a marriage into a place of

## Simple things that can make a **big difference** to your marriage:

- Ask if you can pick up something from the store on the way home.
- Send a short text, note, or e-mail with a loving message.
- Work together on a household chore.
- Offer to make your spouse’s favorite drink.
- Speak kindly with a gentle voice.
- Smile warmly.

love, peace, and joy. It’s still an experiment worth trying because it’s how God treats us.

Ellen White expressed this beautifully: “Love cannot long exist without expression. Let not the heart of one connected with you starve for the want of kindness and sympathy. . . . Determine to be all that it is possible to be to each other. Continue the early attentions. . . . Study to advance the happiness of each other. Let there be mutual love, mutual forbearance. Then marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be as it were the very beginning of love. The warmth of true friendship, the love that binds heart to heart, is a foretaste of the joys of heaven” (*Ministry of Healing*, p. 360).

*Dear Loving Father in Heaven, Thank You for showing Your love to us in a million different ways each day, even though we’re not aware of them all. Please take away our selfishness and give us the desire, inspiration, and courage to invest our best love and thoughtfulness in the marriage You have given us. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> John Gottman and Nan Silver, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* (New York: Orion Books, 1999).



**KAREN HOLFORD** writes from Scotland, where she is a freelance writer and family therapist. Her husband, Bernie, is president of the Scottish Mission and pastor of the Crieff SDA Church. Every evening they sit and share one tiny piece of organic, fair-trade chocolate and chat about their day.

# FORGOT ANYTHING?

by Rae Lee Cooper, RN



Are you planning a trip? Will you be going far? Is it a local or international trip? Is it for business or for a special event such as a convention? Perhaps it's a dream-come-true, wonderful vacation or maybe an exciting, exotic adventure. Maybe it's an opportunity to visit family and friends who live in another part of the world. Could you be planning to go on a mission trip or maybe hoping to study abroad?

Whatever the reasons, according to the World Tourism Organization, global rates of international travel have sky-rocketed over the past few years. Not only are people traveling more, but many are more eager to seek out areas which were previously rarely visited. Making travel arrangements to anywhere is so convenient and easy now. All you need to do is go to the Internet to pick a location, arrange transportation, find accommodations, and even book special tours. Then, just pack some clothes, say good-bye to friends and family, and take off. Right?

It's tempting for those who have very little or no experience in travel to regard international excursions as very similar to visiting different areas within their home country. Seasoned travelers realize, however—often through experience—that when it comes to visiting other countries of the world, there

are many significant differences. Without taking some important steps in research and preparation beforehand, an international trip has the potential for unpleasant surprises, potentially expensive delays, problems, and even disasters. For instance, it would only take one nasty parasite, one poorly prepared meal, or one careless accident to devastate a great trip.

**Dig a well *before* you are thirsty.**

Chinese Proverb

This proverb applies very well to the concept of preparing carefully before an important journey to be ready for as many situations as possible. Here are some travel tips to consider as you get ready for the big trip:

1. **Passport, Visas, etc.:** Make sure you have a valid passport and a proper entry visa for any and all countries where you plan to stop. Without a passport (and, in most countries, an entry visa too), you will be denied entry. Carry your passport on your person everywhere you go when you travel abroad. When you pass through immigration in the host



country, you will fill out an entry card. Keep this card carefully, since you will have to give it back when you exit the country. Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data, and visas with family or friends, so you can be contacted in case of an emergency.

**2. Vaccinations, Immunizations, and Health Issues:** Websites can inform you about potential disease risks and any vaccinations needed for the countries you plan to visit. One of these is [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com). Just enter the name of the country and request vaccination information. It is much better to be sure you are protected than to become ill on your trip and run into problems trying to find adequate medical care or endure a medical evacuation in the event of a severe disease crisis. Don't rely too heavily on advice given to you from friends or relatives within the country you may be visiting. Often local residents build up immunity to the local diseases that you, coming from outside that environment, will not have. Be especially vigilant when visiting a malaria-infected area. Take along anti-malaria medication and wear insect repellent. A mosquito net may be good for added protection at night. Educate yourself about other potential health hazards such as swimming in local lakes or hiking through the brush. It may also be helpful to take along some first-aid supplies such as Band-aids, antibiotic ointment, pain or fever medication, throat and cough lozenges, etc.

**3. Prescription Medications:** Do you take medications daily? Be sure to take a good supply of your prescription medications with you. Medications can vary significantly in foreign countries, and your particular prescription may not be available.

**4. Insurance:** Medical treatment and hospital care abroad can be expensive. Medical evacuation



can cost more than \$50,000. You may need to purchase a short-term medical policy if your current insurance policy does not cover you abroad. Most travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover healthcare expenses while traveling abroad.

**5. Language, Customs, and Laws:**

- a. While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. Countries can vary significantly in what is considered legal and illegal, even on what can and cannot be brought in through ports of entry. Being at least a little bit familiar with the laws of the land can help you avoid problems.
- b. Familiarize yourself somewhat with the language. It isn't necessary to take a complete course, but knowing a few basic words may go a long way in assisting you, such as in ordering food, asking for help, or getting directions. A pocket dictionary can be helpful as well.
- c. Being familiar with some of the local customs may prevent offending someone and causing embarrassment, or worse.

**6. Currency and Credit Cards:** Understand the currency and exchange rate in your host country. Some hotels, restaurants, shops, or vendors will gladly accept various currencies. Others will not. Understanding the exchange rate will reduce your risk of being ripped off. Credit cards can be useful in other countries. You don't have to worry about the exchange rate, but there may be a significant service charge. Check with your credit card company about their foreign service policy. It's also good to inform your credit card company of your plans to travel abroad if you plan to use the credit card on your trip. Most foreign countries do have ATM access, which may be a cheaper way to obtain local currency. Only take the credit cards you plan to use.





7. **Electrical appliances:** Will you be taking a curling iron? Hair dryer? Hot rollers? An iron? Know what voltage will be available in the host country, as well as the style of electrical outlet.

8. **Weather:** Will it be hot or cold where you're going? Humid? Rainy? Dry? Is the altitude elevated or sea level? Knowing these answers will help with your clothing selection and inform your choice of comfort aids.

9. **Food and Drink:** Research traditional foods that are part of the host country's daily diet. If you have food allergies or sensitivities, make sure you understand the local ingredients. Remember to carry an anti-diarrheal with you, even on day trips. Different localities have different types of bacteria which the gastrointestinal tract may have difficulty processing. The result? Travelers' diarrhea. On the opposite extreme, you may have difficulty with constipation because you are off your normal routine due to long airline flights (which are dehydrating) as well as a change in diet. A stool softener or gentle laxative may be a good addition to your medication kit. Remember to drink only bottled water, brush your teeth with bottled water, and refuse to have ice added to your drinks in restaurants.

10. **Calling Card:** To keep in touch with family or friends, take along an international calling card. Or if you are traveling with a computer or iPad, you may be able to access the Internet in your hotel or in airports and make phone calls online or chat through apps like Skype. Plan for the unexpected. Take along some extra funds just in case.

11. **Be Safe:** Use extra caution in tourist sites, market places, elevators, crowded subways, train stations, and festivals. Be constantly attentive to your surroundings and wary of strangers who engage you in conversation or touch you even if it appears accidental. Avoid being conspicuous in your clothing and never flash excessive amounts of money. Wear your handbag across your chest to prevent it from being snatched. If you are confronted, give up your valuables. Money and passports can be replaced; your life cannot. Keep your hotel door locked at all times, and keep valuables in a safe in your room or hotel. Country-specific information, travel warnings, and travel alerts are updated regularly and are accessible through the Internet. For U.S. citizens, the information website is <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

12. **Be Kind to Yourself:** Factor in time to adjust to jet lag. Additional physical activity and long plane or road trips can be quite strenuous and tiring. Changes in diet and climate can have serious health consequences for the unprepared traveler. Beware of over-programming. Allow yourself some leisure time.

There is much more which could be discussed regarding travel preparation. Pre-trip research to ensure a good travel experience is truly time well spent.

#### Four steps to achievement:

- Plan purposefully.
- Prepare prayerfully.
- Proceed positively.
- Pursue persistently.

—William Arthur Ward

#### INFORMATION SOURCES:

- [www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html)
- [www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com)
- *CDC Health Information for International Travel 2012*, Oxford University Press, Chapter 2



**RAE LEE COOPER** is a registered nurse. She and her husband, Lowell, have two adult married children and three adorable grandchildren. She spent most of her childhood in the Far East and then worked as a missionary with her husband in India for 16 years. She enjoys music, creative arts, cooking, and reading.

# TEN DAYS OF PRAYER

## A CALL TO PRAY

**God** poured out His Spirit in Pentecost power after His church spent ten days together, pleading for His promised blessing. He is ready to do it again today! All around the world, Adventist churches are experiencing the renewal of the Holy Spirit by following the disciples' example and participating in Ten Days of Prayer.

The Ten Days of Prayer initiative (formerly called Operation Global Rain) was adopted by the world church in 2010. Churches in over a hundred countries have received rich blessings through Ten Days of Prayer. Reports from 2012 are most encouraging!

"God is faithful! The Ten Days experience can't be quantified. Hearts were surrendered, souls were convicted, and requests for prayer were answered. To God be the glory!"—Veta, Nigeria

"We prayed for members who left to return. The week of Global Rain we challenged every active member to sign up to pray for three or four members in our church. This past Sabbath, we had seven members return to church."—Lisa, New Mexico, USA

"We have never experienced so much spiritual growth and so many answers to prayer in any past event. The daily leader and participant instructions have been WONDERFUL guides to experiencing a revival. The drops of rain are beginning to fall."—Bill, Rhode Island, USA

"On the 10th day one young person who had not been to church for years walked in and testified that they wanted to give their life to Jesus. And he has been coming to church every week since."—Arnold

"The Ten Days of Prayer revived the mid-week and Friday prayer meetings, which no longer existed in my church. This 10-day session taught us that the power rests in prayer and brought unity amongst church members and a zeal to work for the Lord."—Luvuyo, South Africa

"We concluded the Ten Days of Prayer with a foot washing and the Lord's Supper on the second Sabbath. We fasted and went out for visitation after divine service. As a result, three non-Adventists who came to the meeting have started taking Bible studies. The Ten Days of Prayer has changed the lives of the church members, and I believe that it will have an impact in their families and church."—Kelera, Fiji

Church elders, pastors, and lay leaders have led prayer groups of all sizes in homes, schools, churches, online forums, and teleconferences. Groups unable to meet during the designated days have chosen an alternate ten days and been just as blessed. Will you lead your church to join us in Ten Days of Prayer 2013? The dates voted for 2013 are January 9-19 (Wednesday evening through Sabbath evening).

Join us in  
**10**  
**days**  
of **PRAYER**

Praying for  
**GLOBAL RAIN**

*Jan. 9-19, 2013*

 [www.RevivalAndReformation.org](http://www.RevivalAndReformation.org) 

# STRANGE WATERS

by Risè Rafferty



For centuries, people have believed that effervescent water possesses healing power. Naturally carbonated water was thought to cure ailments from gout and nervous diseases to constipation.

When ground water comes in contact with a source of carbon dioxide, like limestone, and is subjected to hard pressure, carbon dioxide mixes with the water and produces carbonation. In New York City in 1832, John Matthews combined marble dust with sulfuric acid to get the same results. Marble chips left over from building St. Patrick's Cathedral were used to produce an estimated 25 million gallons of soda water. The world of beverages would never be the same.

Before long, pharmacies throughout the country opened soda fountains. Initially, pharmacists mixed various medicines and antidotes with soda water as a cure for a variety of ills. Shortly thereafter, flavorings were developed, and soda fountains became social gathering places. From soda fountain, to vending machine, to the original 6.5-ounce contour Coca-Cola glass, to aluminum cans, to 16-ounce plastic bottles, to 64-ounce double Big Gulps, pop has gone through several ingredient and packaging makeovers.

Soda has exploded into an integral part of the American diet. The average American drinks about 555 cans of soda per year, or about one gallon a week! The United States is the highest per-capita

soda consumer in the world. But rather than being the healthy elixir we once thought, doctors, dentists, nutritionists, and statisticians now link this soda fetish with multiple health concerns. Take the Western obesity epidemic, for example. There is a proven connection between drinking soda and gaining weight.

"In their landmark study: *Bubbling Over: Soda Consumption and Its Link to Obesity in California*, researchers from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research (CHPR) and the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) discovered a strong correlation between soda consumption and weight. Based upon data from more than 40,000 interviews conducted by the California Health Interview Surveys (CHIS), researchers found that adults who drink a soda or more per day are 27 percent more likely to be overweight than those who do not drink sodas, regardless of income or ethnicity. The science is clear and conclusive: soda is fueling California's \$41 billion a year obesity epidemic," says CCPHA executive director Dr. Harold Goldstein, an author of the research brief. "We drink soda like water. But unlike water, soda serves up a whopping 17 teaspoons of sugar in every 20-ounce serving."

Americans drank four times more milk than soda in the 1950s. Today the ratio is almost reversed—coinciding directly with a dramatic rise in obesity. In the past 30 years, teenage obesity has more than tripled. Research conducted with 548 children in

Massachusetts found that their odds of obesity increased 60 percent for every additional sweet drink consumed per day. “‘Soda pop is a quintessential junk food,’ said Michael Jacobson, who heads the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which lobbies for government restrictions on foods it considers unhealthy. ‘It’s just pure calories, and no nutrients. It’s like a bomb in our diet.’”<sup>2</sup> When you consider that one of every five calories in the American diet is liquid, you can see why!

Whether it is diet, decaffeinated, or regular, soda is also associated with bone loss. Katherine Tucker of Tufts University tested the effect of soda on bone density in more than 2,500 individuals younger than 60. Along with fellow researchers, she found that in women, “consumption of carbonated cola beverages was associated with lower bone mineral density at all three hip measurement sites. The results took into consideration the women’s age, calcium and vitamin D intake, menopausal status, and use of cigarettes or alcohol. ‘The more cola that women drank, the lower their bone mineral density was,’ the authors wrote. The researchers did not find an association between non-cola carbonated drinks and bone loss, which they attribute to the fact that colas contain phosphoric acid, which is not found in non-cola drinks. Diets low in calcium and high in

**Whether  
it is diet,  
decaffeinated,  
or regular,  
soda is also  
associated  
with bone loss.**

phosphorus can promote bone mineral loss, the researchers wrote.”<sup>3</sup>

Soda was originally labeled a “soft drink” in contrast with alcoholic beverages, which are called hard drinks. But soda is far from soft in terms of how it affects the body. With a pH of 2.5 and often made with phosphoric acid, soda has been linked not only to lower bone density but to the erosion of tooth enamel as well. Marion Nestle, professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University, says, “Adolescents who consume soft drinks display a risk of bone fractures three to four-fold higher than those who do not.”<sup>4</sup>

Soda intake also impairs the immune system. In his book *A Physician’s Guide to Natural Health Products that Work*, James Howenstine, M.D., states, “In an interesting experiment the sugar from one soft drink was able to damage the white blood cells’ ability to ingest and kill gonococcal bacteria for seven hours.”<sup>5</sup>

Thirst is usually the signal that motivates us to drink. Thirst indicates our need. Unfortunately, soda doesn’t satisfy this need. We have “drunk strange waters” in our attempt to satisfy our thirst (2 Kings 19:24, KJV). But the body is thirsty still. Wisdom says, “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country” (Proverbs 25:25, KJV). From a far country God’s voice is crying out to us, “let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17, NKJV).



<sup>1</sup> “Bubbling over: New research shows direct link between soda and obesity.” *UCLA CHPR*. 9/17/09. <http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/NewsReleaseDetails.aspx?id=35>. 5/11.

<sup>2</sup> Hellerman, Caleb. “Nutritionists: Soda making Americans drink themselves fat.” *CNN Health*. 9/18/07. [http://articles.cnn.com/2007-09-18/health/kd.liquid.calories\\_1\\_nondiet-drinks-hfcs-soda?s=PM:HEALTH](http://articles.cnn.com/2007-09-18/health/kd.liquid.calories_1_nondiet-drinks-hfcs-soda?s=PM:HEALTH). 5/11.

<sup>3</sup> “Soft Drinks and Bones.” *E-News Tufts University*. 9/25/03. <http://enews.tufts.edu/stories/802/2003/09/25/Tucker>. 5/11.

<sup>4</sup> Nestle, Marion. *Food Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> “The Health Hazards of Drinking Coca-Cola and other Soft Drinks.” *Organic Consumers*. 2/16/05. <http://www.organicconsumers.org/school/cocacola021605.cfm>. 5/11.



**RISË RAFFERTY** works for Light Bearers Ministry writing monthly articles pertaining to health education. James and Risë have been married for 23 years and have two children. Their son, Jeiel, is 19 years old and their daughter, Kierra, is 14 years old. Risë really enjoys encouraging and inspiring others to live healthfully, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

# HOLDING THE FORT

THE PERSONAL JOURNEY  
OF A WIFE WHOSE HUSBAND  
TRAVELS IN MINISTRY

by Heather Krick



**“The Lord is served as much, yes, more, by the faithful home worker than by the one who preaches the Word.”**

“Is your husband away?” a friend asks sympathetically.  
“Yes, he’ll be back on Friday,” I reply with a radiant smile. I send up a silent prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for the journey on which You’ve brought me, so that I’m okay with my husband being gone in the line of duty—to You.*

My husband travels a fair amount for his job in literature ministries at our conference. As a young wife it took me a while to realize that ministry is not the 8-to-5 job with supper together and quiet evenings at home that I had envisioned. The devil tempted me to think, “This isn’t what I signed up for.”

But was that true? Absolutely not. This unusual, God-ordained, incredible life is *exactly* what I signed up for. After all, what did I think I was choosing when I moved permanently across the ocean and married someone whose life was devoted to ministry? Wasn’t it to minister together and support him, for better or for worse?

In our four married years B.C. (before children), we rarely spent a night apart. I became familiar with all the ins and outs of the ministry and loved the adventure of going to new areas and churches together and helping make things happen for God. If I ever felt “put upon” in all of this, I would meditate on quotes such as this: “When the wife of the minister accompanies her husband in his mission to save souls, it is a great sin for her to hinder him in his work by manifesting unhappy discontent. . . . If things around them are not as agreeable as she could wish (as they will not always be), she should not indulge homesick feelings, or by lack of cheerfulness and by spoken complaints harass the husband and make his task harder. . . .” (Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, p. 210). As ministry spouses, we are half the team! We have the ability to make or break our husband’s ministry by our attitudes. What an opportunity!

After our first daughter arrived, I could still get around quite a bit without throwing her schedule off

too much, but I had to pull back from our ministry a little. However, when daughter #2 arrived, it was a whole different story. Now I had two little ones' schedules to coordinate, and suddenly I found myself at home much more while my husband was out ministering and evangelizing.

Despite the steep learning curve, God is gracious, and step-by-step I began to embrace my changed role. I was thankful for my husband's active enthusiasm and support of my ministry at home. Also, quotes such as this encouraged me: "If married men go into the work, leaving their wives to care for the children at home, the wife and mother is doing fully as great and important a work as the husband and father" (White, *Adventist Home*, p. 235). "The Lord is served as much, yes, more, by the faithful home worker than by the one who preaches the Word" (White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 5, 1899).

I became thankful I could focus my ministry on my husband and children—challenging as parenting is to every new parent. I kept busy with my girls and still went on as many trips with my husband as I

could possibly manage. Although my husband travels throughout the year, the ten weeks of the summer are the most intensive because of his student literature evangelism (Magabook) program. During this time my husband is responsible for 60-80 student literature evangelists and is usually away 4-5 days of the week. As someone who loves to make plans and orchestrate them, I thought the best way to combat loneliness would be to schedule every moment of my summer—trips to the zoo, play dates with friends, and of course day trips to visit the summer program groups.

Strangely, after a summer or two like that, I realized I didn't necessarily need all that activity. I could live one day at a time and God would carry me. He wanted me to wait on Him, and He would plan my summer for me—I didn't need bells and whistles. I needed to adjust and trust. As our girls moved past the toddler stage, being "alone" at home has somehow become easier.

I have found it helpful to praise God for what I *do* have: a husband, who *does* love God supremely and *is* in full-time ministry supporting the family. Many women would love to have such a husband! Also, I found I can have a special closeness with God when my husband is away because I must then hold onto Him. I am grateful for a chance to still be involved with my husband's young workers when possible—I love this ministry. I thank God for the opportunity to get on my knees and surrender when the going gets rough.

A quote from Ruth Graham, the late wife of her traveling husband, Billy Graham, has helped me keep a thankful attitude. She remarked one day, "I'd rather have a little of Bill than a lot of any other man." I feel the same about my husband (whose name also happens to be Bill!).

At times I think of the Adventist pioneer women whose husbands would be away for long periods preaching—and there were no cellphones back then, or any phones at all!—or the wives whose husbands are gone for many months in the military. They remind me that I have nothing to complain about.

So, with children ages seven and nine—and 14 or more summers being married to the literature ministries director to reflect on—I no longer dread summer's coming or try to overfill it with action. I actually look forward to the next summer and to seeing how God will beautifully sustain us as a family this time. He *always* does.

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**HEATHER KRICK**, originally from South Africa, lives in California, USA, where she is wife to her husband in ministry and homeschool mom to their girls, Savannah and Heidi. She enjoys traveling, teaching, music, and home arts.



# A TRANSFORMING MINISTRY:

LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE

by Gina Wahlen

THE JOURNAL  
16  
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*Pastor Bert and Sandra Nab at their home in Dordrecht, Netherlands.*



*The Nab Children (l to r): Patrick, 22, is now in managerial training; Mark, 20, recently completed high school and plans to be an actor; Claudia, 24, lives on her own and works at an elderly assistance home.*

In 1995, the city of Utrecht, Netherlands, was the focal point of the world church as delegates, guests, and visitors gathered together in the giant Jaarbeurs complex for the 56th session of the General Conference.

Three decades before the world church would meet in this beautiful Dutch city, Sandra Nab was born here in the home of her grandparents, on May 31, 1963. Sandra grew up with her parents in the southern cities of Dordrecht and Eindhoven, where she attended primary and secondary school. She then trained to be a secretary and worked in various organizations.

While working as a receptionist at the Netherlands Union office in Bosch en Duin, she enrolled in an English language class at Oud Zandbergen, the Seventh-day Adventist theological school in the Netherlands. In addition to learning English, Sandra met a ministerial student in the class, Bert Nab. The two began a relationship on November 22, 1984, and were married on July 3, 1986. Their wedding reception was held in the beautiful building of Oud Zandbergen, where they first met (see picture).

That fall the couple went to Newbold College in England, where they lived and studied from September 1986 to December 1989. Then they returned to the Netherlands, and Bert began his pastoral ministry in the northern cities of Leeuwarden and Meppel. Since that time the Nabs have ministered in a number of churches throughout the Netherlands. They have just recently moved to the Eindhoven region.

Over the years, Sandra has carved out her own niche in ministry. When their three children—Claudia, Patrick, and Mark—were young, Sandra was active in the children’s Sabbath School, ranging from preschool through junior age. While her husband pastored the North Rotterdam church, Sandra edited the church’s newsletter for several years. She has also served as a deaconess, and is currently on the Health and Family Ministry committee, which organizes Bible study groups and family and children’s programs and activities.

For several years Sandra also headed up the pastoral family ministry (Shepherdess) program. During that time she produced a newsletter, made phone



calls and visits to pastoral families, and sent birthday cards. She sometimes visited pastoral homes with the Netherlands Union president when couples had a special wedding anniversary or birthday. Along with other pastoral spouses, she enjoyed organizing a special activity day each year for all pastoral spouses in the union.

### FINDING A SUPPORTIVE ROLE

When her husband first began working as a pastor, Sandra was not sure what her role would be. “It was very difficult for me to feel comfortable with the expectations of the church members,” she admits. “I didn’t know what they would expect from me. It took some time before I decided that my family was my first priority.”

Sandra also finds it difficult to say goodbye to people in the congregations when leaving for a new church, though she says, “It is also interesting to meet new people and cultures in other congregations—but it takes time.”

### TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCE INTO MINISTRY

After having taken further education, Sandra now has her own practice as a family therapist, helping people with relationship issues with their spouses, children, colleagues, friends, and others. Sandra’s interest in this work came out of her own painful experiences of the past.

“I am the type of person who wants to do everything perfectly,” she admits. “That means that I also wanted to arrange things for my husband and children. I wanted to have control over everything. That made me very anxious, not only about my own performance, but I became afraid because I couldn’t always protect my family. I was afraid that someone might do something bad to them.”



*Sandra and Bert Nab in front of the Oud Zandbergen (Seventh-day Adventist Theological School in the Netherlands) on their wedding day—July 3, 1986.*



*Pastoral wives in the Netherlands enjoy working on Dutch crafts.*

Sandra’s fear and anxiety grew until she was no longer able to leave her house after daylight hours. She was always at home and did not feel safe in her own house. After a time, she asked for psychological help, and things began to improve. “But it was not before I turned to God again that I learned to let go of the anxiety,” she says. “In small steps I gave my life to God and overcame most of the boundaries of fear. Since that time James 4:8 has been one of my favorite Bible texts: ‘Come near to God and he will come near to you’” (NIV).

God also used other people to help Sandra, sometimes even without their knowing it. One evening Sandra needed to attend an evening meeting some distance from her home. Not wanting to make the dark drive alone, Sandra was relieved when another person offered to ride with her. However, the person later shared that they had another appointment so would not be able to ride back, leaving Sandra alone to make the drive home after 11 p.m. However, “God gave me trust that He was with me and He still does,” says Sandra. “Since then I am not afraid to travel during the evening hours.”

“There are still some boundaries to overcome,” she says, “but I am very happy that I’ve come this far. It helps me to focus on God and His strength, wisdom, and protection. It has really deepened my faith and has made me more open to other people and their problems. This is why I am working as a counselor.”



**GINA WAHLEN** enjoys meeting people from around the world and has lived in many wonderful places, such as Russia, England, the Philippines, California, and Nebraska. She currently lives in Maryland, where she writes about people, adventures, and God. She and her husband, Clinton, have one son, Daniel, and one daughter, Heather.

# CHRISTMAS HOMECOMING

by Aleta Bainbridge

One of the saddest things a friend ever shared with me was from Al, a man in his mid-50s. “I don’t think I’ve ever arrived home,” he mused softly. What tore at my heart was the wistful longing in his eyes as he uttered those words.

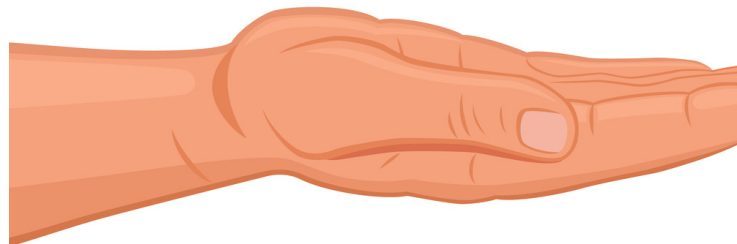
I’ve often thought of his words, especially since I left my homeland of South Africa and set up home in Australia when I married Garth four years ago. Now I know, when I visit South Africa, it is no longer my home, technically speaking. But settling into a new country takes time. So there are moments when I feel that I’m “neither here nor there.” This has given me an inkling of what the throngs of “homeless” people, including Al, must feel most of the time.

Why is the loss of “home” such a painful thing? Or, put another way, why does “home” seem to be so important to our psyche?

I believe humans are born with a “homing instinct,” a deep-seated longing perfectly expressed by Pat Conroy’s words: “I could not quiet that pearly ache in my heart that I diagnosed as the cry for home.”

We all long for a place that is much more than just a roof over our heads; a place that births our most vital relationships and fosters them; a place where our entire personality should come to rest and feel safe, protected, and validated; a place where each and every person should be able to develop in beauty and fruitfulness. A place called “home.”

The words of the old Negro spiritual expressed



sad acceptance that the slaves’ only hope of finding “home” would be in the hereafter:

This world is not my home, I’m just  
a-passing through,  
My treasures are laid up somewhere  
beyond the blue;  
The angels beckon me from heaven’s  
open door,  
And I can’t feel at home in this world  
anymore.

Part of me argued with the first phrase of the song. This world *is* our home. Our Creator designed and made it especially for us, the earth-creatures He molded from the soil of this planet with His own hands. Unfortunately, enemy forces invaded our world and brought war to our very doorsteps. We

live with the tragedy of war all around us. We feel like refugees in our own country, strangers living in enemy territory. The words of another song comfort us somewhat: “Though exiled from home, yet still I may sing: ‘All glory to God, I’m a child of the King!’”

Children of the King! How this amazing fact became a reality for us is told in the most incredible homecoming story of eternal ages. At this time of year the focus of the world is drawn to the story behind Christmas. Whether we agree with the date or not, whether people believe it or not, it cannot be entirely avoided. It’s a story that is too marvelous for words, really, but the very wonder of it forces those of us who believe it to

try, at least. In *An Endless Falling in Love*, Ty Gibson tells it well. Here is a snatch of the story in his words:

One moment He was there, and had always been there for all eternal ages past. Father, Son and Holy Spirit were together, as they had ever been. The next moment He was gone, and the very shape of God’s reality was forever and radically changed. An aching chasm of separation now lay between them. The Godhead itself would never again be the same.

Where was the Son, the Word, Heaven’s divine Communicator, when He suddenly “went missing” from His place in the Godhead, when He disappeared from heavenly sight and touch? He had given up the eternal dimensions of His heavenly home and entered into the confines of a teenage girl’s womb. Gibson continues:

There, as an embryo, cell by cell, God the Son was reconstructed of our flesh and bone and blood. . . . The Creator became the created (pp. 81, 84).

God gave up all that had been “home” to Him. He left behind all His family and friends. He even gave up the personal attributes that had been His as God.

No longer was He all-powerful, all-knowing, or able to be everywhere present. All He kept was the LOVE! After nine months he was born as a helpless scrap of human flesh with all its limitations. Jesus, God’s beloved Son, made His home among us and became a refugee with us in this land of our mutual enemy.

He lived through every stage of human development; saw the very worst and created the very best during His life’s journey. And in the end, it seemed that the enemy triumphed. But we know better. The manger led to the cross, but it was there that God triumphed over the enemy. It was there that the war was won on our behalf. Jesus made atonement for our sins so that we can be forever “at home” with the Lord.

The battle is fierce. “Home,” and all it stands for, is under attack. Perhaps you are walking through the valley of dark shadows; you find yourself or a family member in hand-to-hand combat with illness or temptation. Your marriage is on the rocks. You have lost the dearest on earth to you, and your sense of desolation knows no bounds. It could be ongoing financial stress, or perhaps you need a job. Maybe it is sheer burnout. Or perhaps one of your kids has lost the way, or is gripped by addiction. Whatever it is . . .

May you feel, right now, the everlasting arms lifting your burdens and taking you into His embrace. That’s home—home at its best! A place where . . .

- our entire personality can come to rest.
- we can share everything that is too deep for human help or understanding, knowing **He understands and cares.**
- we will be nurtured and nourished and enabled to develop in beauty and fruitfulness in spite of enemy attack.

With Jesus as our Saviour, *home* is here and now! We are not aliens, homeless war-orphan. We’re children of the King, who is our “Eternal Home.” No wonder the heavenly choirs proclaimed at the moment of His birth, “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men!”



**ALETA BAINBRIDGE** is Partners in Ministry Coordinator for Greater Sydney Conference, working closely with her husband, Garth, who is the ministerial secretary. Born on a mission station in the Transkei, South Africa, and a graduate of Helderberg College, she moved to Australia in December 2007 when she married Garth. She is the mother of four and grandmother of eight. Her book, *God Who? A Search for Identity, Mine and God’s*, was a cry of her heart for spiritual meaning.

# SWEET. SIMPLE. GOOD NEWS

by Sarah K. Asaftei

A few weeks ago, a friend asked me to define piety and holiness, without using negatives about what it isn't and without resorting to obvious behavioral descriptions such as dress, drugs, music, etc. The conversation that followed was quite interesting. Several of us tried to oblige him, finding it much more difficult than we'd anticipated.

That got me thinking about how we express the gospel. To people around us. To new believers. To our children. To members in our church.

Blame it on our humanity, but we often fail miserably at describing God and His desires for us. Too often we depend on the details of what God isn't and what He wants us *not* to be, instead of focusing on the incredible beauty and power of what He *is* and what He wants us to *become*. Just like people of any faith, we tend to embrace a religious vocabulary that is almost (if not completely) divorced from the way we speak in "real life." We rely on big phrases and fancy words, tossing around jargon that loses its meaning in the retelling.

Language students have a word for this tendency. *Euphemism*: Substituting an inoffensive word or phrase for one that would be harsh or embarrassing.<sup>1</sup> In English, it means that you might say "he passed

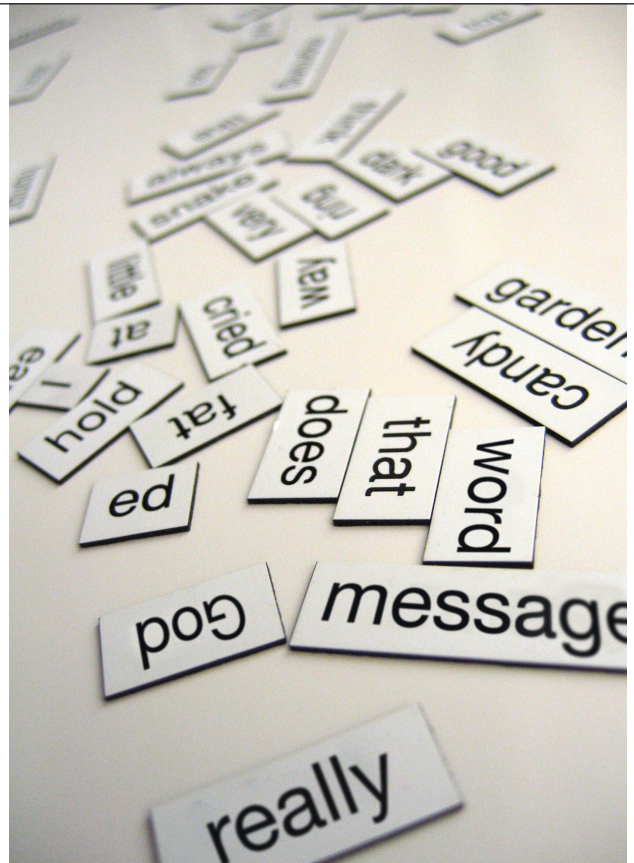
away" instead of clearly saying "he's dead." While in literature there may be good reasons for these types of phrases, I'm convinced that in faith, we may actually be hurting the gospel.

The thing is, we distance ourselves from the realness of faith and belief when we talk in religious jargon. It can be a way to sound holy while keeping God at arm's length from ourselves. But faith is real. God is real. And when we talk about belief and Scripture and doctrine and Jesus in pat phrases, we are doing ourselves and our children a disservice.

As a pastor's wife, I hear so many people talk about their relationship with God this way: "When I came into the message. . . ." "When I accepted the truth. . . ." But what do they really mean?

*When I met Jesus.* That's what they mean. *When I got to know Christ and He totally changed my life.* So why don't we say what we mean? Why do we cover it over with metaphors?

**The thing is,  
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## Real gospel words bring us down from our ivory towers of intellectualized faith; they jolt us back to the present instead of letting us live in past spiritual highs.

my autistic son in a way that he can understand? Non-literal phrases like ‘Jesus in my heart’ terrify him because he visualizes them as being *real!*”

I’ve often wondered the same thing when having worship with my two toddlers. *How do I teach them about Jesus in ways that they can understand? How can I help them grasp the incredible gospel truths so that their little lives are transformed? How do I help them fall in love with Jesus, rather than just going through the motions?*

Back to euphemisms. We use pretty phrases to cover over something from which we don’t want to feel the full power. It’s so much harsher and more final to say that someone is dead than to say that they have “passed.” So we make things a little less uncomfortable, and we keep ourselves emotionally safe, when we replace the real words with something palatable.

We do the same thing, whether we realize it or not, when we trade religious jargon for everyday expressions. There’s something deep and visceral about making ourselves talk about Jesus and salvation in simple, raw, honest words. We can’t hide from their power anymore. We can’t distance ourselves and pretend piety if we’re speaking in realities.

Real gospel words bring us down from our ivory towers of intellectualized faith; they jolt us back to the present instead of letting us live in past spiritual highs. They crash us back into the world we live in, preventing us from faking our Christian journey. Real words strip the facade from our faith, leaving us nothing to hide behind. Either we are genuine, or we’re not.

Sweet, simple gospel—it’s scary. Powerful. Raw. Emotional. Biblical. It leaves no room for us to

Why do we distance ourselves from the power of the gospel in the words we use? What are we afraid of? Could it be that our choice of words tells something about our fear of surrender? What is so scary about just saying what we mean? Simple. True. Naked. Profound in its genuine power.

A friend of mine works as the director of children’s ministry in his conference. A mother asked him once, “How do I teach the Bible to

project ourselves in front of Jesus. Because it’s all about Christ. Not about me. Not about how great I am. Not about who taught me what. Not even about how pious I sound.

When Jesus came to live here with us, he stripped away the pretentiousness that had become commonplace among the Pharisees. Jesus told stories. He made conversation. He put God’s truths into plain language that even little kids could comprehend.

That’s the kind of gospel we need to share. Forget about the insider vocabulary that is incomprehensible to someone who doesn’t know Jesus. Let’s take time to listen to ourselves when we talk and then try to restate our points in straightforward clarity.

That’s also the kind of gospel we need to hear for ourselves. So powerful in its simplicity that we can’t escape. Where there’s no wiggle room for us to create comfortable distance through pretty phrases.

Because the story of Jesus isn’t meant to be comfortable. It’s meant to turn us inside out and make us different. It’s that simple. It’s that sweet.

It’s good news.

<sup>1</sup> <http://westlake.k12.oh.us/whs/english/EnglishLiterary-Terms/Index.asp>



**SARAH K. ASAFTEI** is a pastor’s wife and mother of two, currently serving in Tampa, Florida. She works as development specialist for the General Conference Ministerial Association and has a marketing and film production company, skaMEDIA productions. Sarah grew up a missionary kid and loves international travel, languages, and photography.

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# MINISTRY IN MOTION

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANTHONY KENT AND DEREK MORRIS, CO-HOSTS

**Janet Page (JP): Tell us about the exciting program called MINISTRYinMOTION.**

Anthony Kent (AK): MINISTRYinMOTION is new! It launched this summer on the Hope Channel. It's a program where we explore best practices for ministry in the twenty-first century. This program will be of special interest to pastors' spouses and families since we are discussing issues that are very relevant for families in ministry. The program will also be of special interest to the families of local church elders and leaders within congregations.

**JP: What is the format of this new program?**

Derek Morris (DM): MINISTRYinMOTION is a 30-minute interview with one or two guests who have special expertise in a particular area of ministry. The programs are fresh and practical. Anthony and I have been blessed as we have met with our special guests. One of the really exciting aspects of the program is that it is not a monologue but more like a journey of discovery. In each program, we explore with gifted practitioners critical issues like the "how" of ministry and "making a difference" in ministry.

**JP: How can readers of our JOURNAL access these exciting programs?**

AK: MINISTRYinMOTION is broadcast four times per week in North America on DIRECTV 368 (Hope Channel):

Monday 8:30 AM Eastern Time

Monday 11:30 AM Eastern Time

Tuesday 2:00 PM Eastern Time

Friday 2:00 PM Eastern Time

You are also able to watch programs at any time and without charge on our website. Our web address is [www.MINISTRYinMOTION.TV](http://www.MINISTRYinMOTION.TV).

**JP: What are some topics of interest to our readers that you are discussing with special guests on MINISTRYinMOTION?**

DM: We have programs by Willie and Elaine Oliver on how to protect your marriage and how to build healthy relationships with your children. Bill Knott, editor of the *Adventist Review*, leads an excellent discussion on pastoral integrity. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra share some important insights about domestic abuse. The list goes on and on. All of these programs are freely available on our website.

**JP: Can our readers make suggestions for upcoming programs on MINISTRYinMOTION?**

AK: Absolutely! We want to deal with issues that are relevant to pastors and their families. Participants can send us suggestions at [feedback@MINISTRYinMOTION.TV](mailto:feedback@MINISTRYinMOTION.TV). One extra and important thing: We are also seeking prayer support for MINISTRYinMOTION. Derek and I are both very aware that we are dependent upon God, and we are perpetually seeking God's direction for this exciting initiative. People praying that this program will be significantly helpful to pastors, elders, and leaders within congregations and their families is really essential and appreciated.

**JP: Thanks for sharing with our readers. I'm certain that God will bless pastoral families through this new media initiative.**



**MINISTRY**<sup>®</sup>  
*International Journal for Pastors*

IS ADDING A NEW DIMENSION

**MINISTRY**<sup>®</sup>  
*in motion*

*MINISTRYinMOTION* is a weekly podcast and television program where we explore the best practices for your ministry in the twenty-first century. Wherever you serve on planet Earth, God wants you to be a great Christian leader. Whether

you're a full-time pastor or a lay leader in your Christian fellowship, God wants to use you to impact your world. The hosts

for the program, Anthony Kent and Derek Morris, bring broad experiences in ministry, both as local pastors and pastoral leaders.

As we design future programs for *MINISTRYinMOTION*, we want to hear from you. What are some of the best practices you are discovering and contextualizing in your pastoral ministry? What are the areas of your greatest need for training and equipping?

Share your thoughts with us at **feedback@MINISTRYinMOTION.TV**



Great resources for pastoral families. God wants to bless your family and ministry for Him.

# GOOD SOIL STORYTELLING

by David Edgren



One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.” Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16, NLT



**W**hat would it have been like to be a child in this story? I'm sure the children wanted to see Jesus as much as their parents. But for a very different reason.

The parents wanted a blessing for their children. They wanted to be able to say, "My child was touched by Jesus!"

But children live in the moment, enjoying life one experience at a time. The children just wanted to be with Jesus. Because He told great stories. Because He cuddled them. Because He laughed when they did. Because His smile was as sincere and kind as His eyes. Children wanted to be with Jesus because *He loved them*—and they could feel it.

In one of His many stories, Jesus suggested that people have four responses to His teaching:

- Some, like a rocky footpath, barely take notice—nothing sinks in.
- Others, like shallow soil, burst into action with new life but fizzle when things heat up.
- A third kind are surrounded by thorns, choked to death before they can mature.
- Finally, there is a fourth listener who, like good soil, is healthy and ready for the Word.

Those who experience this last response become both blessed and a blessing as God's harvest multiplies in them and through them. This is who we, as parents, can be—good soil growing the Word in our lives and in our children.

While He held little ones on His lap, Jesus said,

"The Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Why? What intuitive receptivity or ability does a child have that adults lack? Somehow, kids "get" the kingdom of God. The story gets through. So what attributes of childlikeness must we have to enter the kingdom of God?

In 2007 Oxford University did a study called the "Cognition, Religion, & Theology Project." Their goal was to understand why humans have faith. What is it about humanity that causes every culture to have some belief in a higher power?

Coming from our Christian perspective, these questions may seem strange. But they make perfect sense if you're detachedly studying people as creatures. Where does the reality of God or gods come from and why do humans believe?

In 2010, Oxford University held a convention to reveal their findings, presenting 41 papers on various aspects of human faith and religion. Much of the research focused on children and their faith. It seems that to understand human faith we must first understand a child's faith.

Various findings suggested that in imaginative play all children include a "God" figure—higher power, omniscient being, superpowers—even children who come from non-faith backgrounds. Their invisible friends are more likely to be immortal than not. One paper memorably quipped that invented





playmates tend to be more “godlike than doglike.” Children’s imaginations do not create pets to play with, but instead wander toward God.

Another interesting finding about the faith of children was that kids comprehend God’s *immortality* before they understand human mortality. Eternal life makes more sense than human death. Scientists were amazed by this finding. To Christians, it is perfectly reasonable because we know God’s original plan for life did not include death. Childlike faith understands this intuitively.

**We are to be engaged with the story like a child. Childlike faith—the faith required to get into the kingdom of God—is a faith that gets lost in the story.**

Those who believe most authentically, it would seem, also make-believe most authentically. Jesus calls us toward an experience of faith in which the imagination is fully engaged—like that of a child. Notice what Jesus did not say: He did not say the kingdom of God belongs to children. He did say, “The Kingdom of God belongs to

those who are *like* these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn’t receive the Kingdom of God *like* a child will never enter it.”

A story becomes effective when the listener exercises the “suspension of disbelief.” This is the ability to enter the story-world—to let go of “reality” while enjoying the story. You have undoubtedly experienced this during a movie or while reading a book when your mind stops saying “this is just a story” and starts allowing the story to come to life in your imagination—allowing it to, in effect, be true.

Most children are able to suspend disbelief as quickly as you can say “once upon a time.” Adults take a bit longer. This ability to fully enter a story and forget the cares of the world, for a time, is part of what it is to be human. It exists in all cultures when stories are told.

One year I acted as King Herod in a walk-through Christmas pageant. It was my job to exude a selfish arrogance. Once the audience had moved to the next scene, I would leave the stage. But, in one group, a little boy did not stand and leave. He stayed there on the grass, staring at me as I sat on my throne. His sister came back to get him and the boy jolted back to reality. In a startled voice, he told her, “He’s not the real—” then his head snapped back to me, “You’re not the real Herod!”

**Let your imagination come back to life—become good soil once again.**

This is the suspension of disbelief as only a child knows it. He was so lost in the story that it took a shake and a shout from his sister to bring him back to reality. Those who believe most authentically, make-believe most authentically. And this is the childlike reality that we are called to imitate. We

are to be engaged with the story like a child. Childlike faith—the faith required to get into the kingdom of God—is a faith that gets lost in the story.

If God truly wants us to get lost in the story of His presence, power, and provision then we should be able to go somewhere to engage in the story. And we can—the Bible is full of stories. Eighty percent of the Bible is story! Why so many? Because God knows we need stories on which to hang our faith. He designed us as creatures of story.

So, how can we engage with the Bible in a way that intentionally disciples our children and others around us? Perhaps the easiest way is to ask your children to tell the stories with you. They will need paper, pens, paths, paint, seeds, songs, waves, sunshine, noise, trees, rain, pictures, fruit, fields, and time—lots of time. Because kids really get God’s kingdom and the process of telling kingdom stories takes time. As adults we get too easily caught in the trap of explaining and proving. Children, on the other hand, get lost in exploring and playing.

Make-believe your way through the Bible with your children. In every family and at every stage of childhood, this retelling and reenacting of the story will look, feel, and truly *be* different. That is OK. In fact, that is important. The story of God’s kingdom is one that builds layer by layer with each telling.

Let your imagination come back to life—become good soil once again. Enjoy the Bible as God’s storybook of the ages. Let it speak to you and through you in a way that is beyond belief.

Tell the Story of Jesus. Tell it with your life and with your lips. Tell the Story well.

And it will make belief.

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**DAVID EDGREN** is Director of Children’s Ministry and Sabbath School for the Victoria Conference in Australia. He has written seven books for children and families, all of which you can find at your Adventist Book Center.

Jesus’ primary method of sharing the gospel was not preaching but storytelling. He used stories to powerfully illustrate principles of godliness and biblical living in ways that people could easily understand.

Not everyone is a naturally gifted storyteller, but we can all learn to be a bit better. Storytelling is as much an art as a science, and anyone can increase evangelistic skills by cultivating the ability to tell stories well.

Stories are a proven evangelistic method no matter the audience—everyone loves a story! To help you share gospel concepts through story, the Center for Secular & Postmodern Studies at the Adventist Mission office has created STORY=POWER, a video workshop on storytelling, featuring Pastor David Edgren from Australia.

Six episodes will help you improve your storytelling in a variety of contexts, including small groups, personal witnessing, preaching, and children’s ministries. Each episode has two 10-minute segments—a story illustrating key elements of telling stories to a particular audience, followed by a teaching session with simple but highly effective applications you can practice in your own social interactions.

STORY=POWER is a resource created for the world church, available online at no charge. You can watch, embed, and share these valuable resources in your home, church, or school. Go to [www.youtube.com/livearealexperience/](http://www.youtube.com/livearealexperience/) to find the STORY=POWER playlist.

## NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

TAIWAN: This year David and Lynn Ripley (NSD ministerial secretary and Shepherdess coordinator) held an evangelistic series in the Banciaco Church in Taipei, Taiwan. Lynn preached each morning, and David preached at the evening meetings. One gentleman joined on profession of faith, and two ladies were baptized. There are about 12 more people studying in preparation for baptism. What a wonderful experience. Please pray for these dear people.



Baptism in Taipei, Taiwan.



Individuals attending meeting with David and Lynn Ripley in Taipei, Taiwan.

MONGOLIA: In March, Mongolia Mission Field Shepherdesses hosted a health seminar for 150 kindergarten-age children. MMMF Shepherdess coordinator, Uyanga Bayrasaihan, taught the children how to wash their hands. Pastor Nyamdavaa's wife, Enkhnarant, showed them how to brush their teeth. Pastor Tulga's wife, Batchimeg, shared a spiritual lesson by teaching the children songs about Jesus. It was a very positive experience for the little ones and their teachers.



Training children about health took place in a community daycare center in Mongolia.



Children learning about health in Mongolia.



Teaching children in Mongolia about making healthy choices.

# WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION

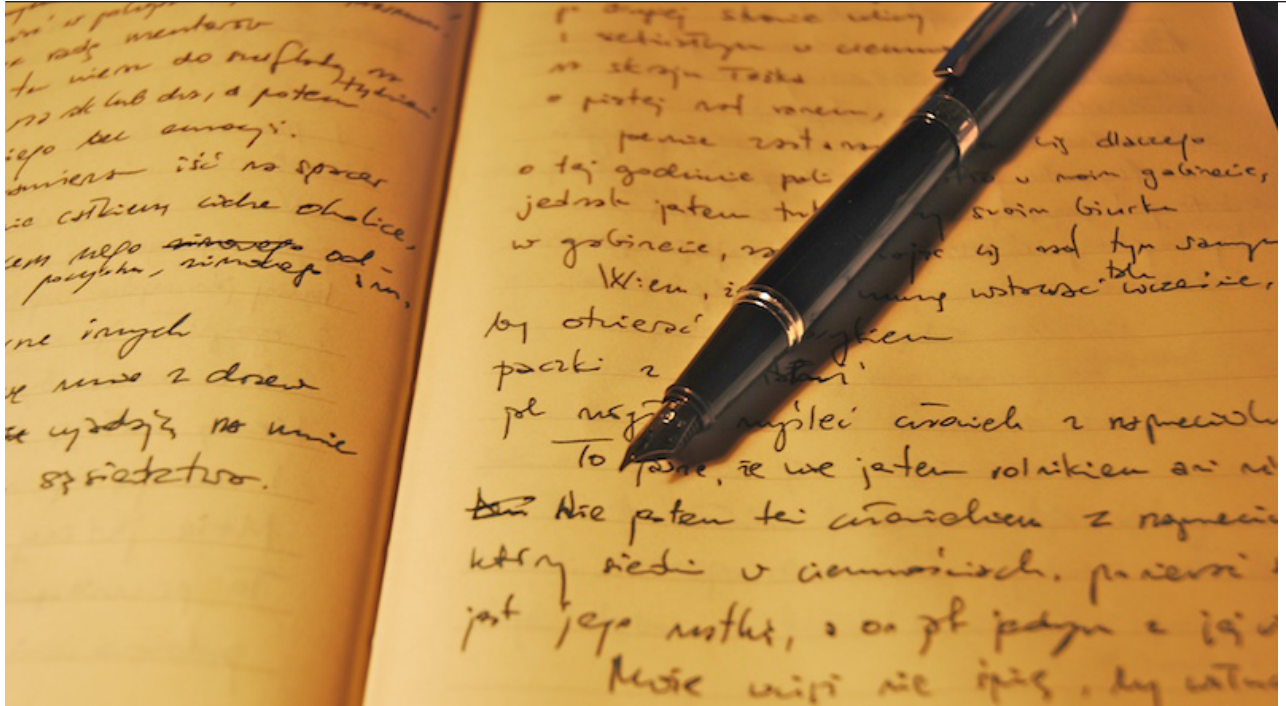
In March 2012 West-Central Africa Division held an advisory in Cote d'Ivoire. Several representatives from the Ministerial Association met with ministerial secretaries and Shepherdess coordinators throughout the division. There were many seminars, seasons of prayer, and fellowship.



*Ministerial secretaries and Shepherdess coordinators with representatives from the GC Ministerial team in Cote d'Ivoire.*



*Shepherdess coordinators with Josephine Wari, WAD Shepherdess coordinator, and Janet Page, GC Shepherdess coordinator.*



## Dear Abigail,

*I love to talk to people in our church, but often it seems they think that I need to know every detail about everyone else. People complain about the last pastoral family or tell me all about other members' trials or scandals.*

*I'm uncomfortable listening to gossip, but I don't want to be rude. I'd like to know how I can let people know that it's not OK to tell me gossip, without making them feel like I don't want to chat.*

*It's really important to me to be trustworthy with the information I'm given. How can I put a stop to all the gossipers without damaging my relationships?*

*~Desiring To Be Discreet*

## Dear Discreet,

Gossip isn't new to our generation. King Solomon wrote, "A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy [wo]man keeps a secret" (Prov. 11:13, NIV).

Paul wrote about people who know God but choose to keep on being evil—and yes, he calls gossip *evil*. He lumps gossip in with envy, murder, and deceit (see Rom. 1:29-32). The Apostle John made it a point to deal with gossip straight on, in 3 John 1:9-11.

Try creating a standard answer that you can always fall back on when conversation turns into gossip. It might sound something like this:

*"Have you talked to \_\_\_\_\_ (the person in question) about this? Because I'm really not the person to help you with the situation. It would be better to just talk to so-and-so about it."*

OR SAY:

*"You know, I've been really trying to make sure that I don't talk about anyone who isn't here to defend themselves, so if it's all right with you, can we change the subject?"*

OR SAY:

*"I don't want to judge, but this sounds like gossip to me. It isn't my place to hear this, but maybe you should talk to them directly about how you feel."*

Whatever you choose to say, be kind yet firm. If they keep right on gossiping, it's okay to politely excuse yourself from the conversation and walk away. If they didn't mean to be gossiping, your statement will be a gentle rebuke, and they should be happy to change the topic. And if they get mad at you even though you've been kind, that's okay too—it just shows their heart.

If someone continues gossiping relentlessly, perhaps it needs to be a matter for the pastor to deal with. He might make a personal visit, or take them to lunch, and help them see the damage they are causing.

Some great scripture texts about gossip include: Proverbs 16:28, 18:8, 20:19, 26:20, and 26:22; 2 Corinthians 12:20; and 1 Timothy 5:13.

DEAR ABIGAIL is an advice column where pastors' wives can ask for biblical wisdom about their situations, challenges, and difficulties.

In the Bible, ABIGAIL was known for her generosity, intuition, industry, discernment, hospitality, loyalty, strength, and wisdom. Write to DEAR ABIGAIL at [dear.abigail.letters@gmail.com](mailto:dear.abigail.letters@gmail.com).

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Tell them of the way of salvation; how "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. Let the sweet story of Bethlehem be repeated. Present before the children Jesus, as a child obedient to His parents, as a youth faithful and industrious, helping to support the family.

Thus you can teach them that the Saviour knows the trials, perplexities, and temptations, the hopes and joys, of the young, and that He can give them sympathy and help. From time to time read with them the interesting stories in Bible history. Question as to what they have learned in the Sabbath school, and study with them the next Sabbath's lesson.

*Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 358*

Parents should seek to comprehend the fact that they are to train their children for the courts of God. When they are intrusted with children, it is the same as though Christ placed them in their arms and said, "Train these children for me, that they may shine in the courts of God." One of the first sounds that should attract their attention is the name of Jesus, and in their earliest years they should be led to the footstool of prayer. Their minds should be filled with stories of the life of the Lord, and their imagination encouraged in picturing the glories of the world to come. Christian parents, you are charged with the responsibility of presenting to the world the power and excellence of home religion. Let those who have erred in training their little ones, who have failed to represent Christ in their home life, now repent of their mistakes before it is everlastingly too late. Let Christian parents resolve that they will be loyal to God, and let them gather their children into their homes with them, and strike the door-post with blood, representing Christ as the only one who can shield and save, that the destroying angel may pass over the cherished circle of the household. Let the world see that a more than human influence is at work in the home. Let parents maintain a vital connection with God, set themselves on Christ's side, and show by his grace what great good may be accomplished through parental agency.

*Review and Herald, February 19, 1895*

Jesus taught by illustrations and parables drawn from nature and from the familiar events of everyday life.... In this way He associated natural things with spiritual, linking the things of nature and the life experience of His hearers with the sublime truths of the written word. And whenever afterward their eyes rested on the objects with which He has associated eternal truth, His lessons were repeated.

*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, p. 140*

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