

THE JOURNAL

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

Vol. 30 | Fourth Quarter 2013



*Happy 25th
Anniversary*

SERVING MINISTRY SPOUSES AND FAMILIES
FOR A QUARTER CENTURY



ON THE COVER

Twenty-five years ago, our world church realized that ministry spouses and families needed a unique kind of support, and we've been seeking to better meet your needs ever since.



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{ IN HONOR OF SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY, I HAVE INVITED SHARON CRESS TO WRITE OUR EDITORIAL THIS ISSUE. HAVING LED SHEPHERDESS FOR 18 OF ITS 25 YEARS, SHE HAS A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE ON GOD'S LEADING THAT I AM SURE WILL BLESS YOU.—JANET PAGE



Happy Anniversary

TO MINISTRY SPOUSES!

MINISTRY TO CLERGY SPOUSES is celebrating 25 years of supporting some of the most dedicated and deserving servants in the Adventist Church. It is my privilege to pay tribute to both the ministry and to the women who have given of their lives to grow it.

In the 1980s, Marie Spangler and Ellen Bresee had a vision for women who were married to pastors. They tenaciously brought the needs of this group before the General Conference administration, and Shepherdess International was born. These two were women on a mission, and they were blessed to see their dream come true.

In the 1990s, Shepherdess International matured into the Ministry to Clergy Families, and every division appointed an official regional leader for the ministry. On September 30, 1998, the position of General Conference director for this ministry was elevated to that of an associate secretary in the Ministerial Association.

Some women stand above the crowd when it comes to service, and I had the great joy of walking alongside them as they nurtured their division-wide departments into the strong ministries they are today.

Until He comes personally to take us to our heavenly homes, where there will be nothing but joy and light, happiness and laughter, it is my prayer that this anniversary brings each one of you the assurance that Jesus is ever there for you.

The first I would like to honor is *Denise Ratsara*, who tirelessly served in two divisions: Africa-Indian Ocean and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean. No one else has her extensive record in such diverse demographics. Denise also helped launch the nursing scholarship program that has given medical aid in remote areas of Africa. Second, *Hepzibah Kore* from Southern Asia Division has nurtured her beautiful women, leading them into villages with projects that have given the gift of literacy to countless numbers. These two women have recently suffered tremendous pain, and yet their faith in God has not wavered. They are strong, godly women, and the results of their tireless labor will likely never be realized on this earth.

I must also mention *Galina Stele* from Euro-Asia, *Ellen Missah* from Southern Asia-Pacific, *Vasti Vianna* and *Evelyn Nagel* from South America, and *Helen Gulfan*, who now serves in Southern Asia-Pacific. These women have planned major division-wide conventions and numerous educational and seminar events. They encouraged their women to form local organizations, providing spiritual and emotional support for women and children. They've traveled extensively to remote areas to make sure the farthest regions of their territories felt valued.



Evelyn Omana also comes to mind. Her contagious enthusiasm in the Inter-American Division has inspired her women and elevated pastors' children to a valued status with their own events. Even after nearly dying from malaria, she kept on serving. *Gloria Trotman* continued Evelyn's good work and added her own counseling experience.

Mrs. Nam began the ministry in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division with her most gracious personality and elegant manner. *Sally Phoon*, with her strong educational background, has served in two divisions and continues to teach, encourage, and motivate with her contagious smile.

I would also like to pay tribute to two women who have served at the General Conference: *Shelly Lowe* has worked tirelessly to ensure the office at headquarters was organized and well-managed and that deadlines were promptly met. Her Christian ways shine through in everything she does.

Rae Lee Cooper was always available for instruction in health-related items and her famous exercise sessions. She has inspired so many of us to take better care of ourselves.

It is always a bit dangerous to list names because surely someone will not

be mentioned and feel slighted. If that happens here, please know that your name is written down in a much more important place than *The Journal*—it is written in God's hand.

Until He comes personally to take us to our heavenly homes, where there will be nothing but joy and light, happiness and laughter, it is my prayer that this anniversary brings each one of you the assurance that Jesus is ever there for you. He loves you more than any human can imagine and craves your love and attention to Him. He will never leave or forsake you, no matter what any other person says or does. He placed you in His ministry, and He cares for you.

So, dear ones, indulge yourself a bit. Celebrate these 25 years with a favorite dessert and a chat with a friend. Celebrate the fact that we are a unique sisterhood who support each other. Celebrate the fact that we have a hope to share. Celebrate the life God has given you to serve.

I am going to celebrate the 18 of these 25 years that God gave me with you!

Love and hugs to you all,

Sharon



Sharon Cress has worked in ministry for nearly 40 years. She is currently the associate ministerial secretary of the Potomac Conference and nurtures their Women's Ministries program. She served as associate ministerial secretary in the General Conference for 18 years as the coordinator of the Ministry to Clergy Spouses. Sharon will forever cherish the extraordinary gifts and talents freely given to the Seventh-day Adventist Church by the special individuals married to its pastors whom she was blessed to serve.

Thus Far the Lord Has Helped Us

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF MINISTRY
TO PASTORAL SPOUSES

In forty-plus years of ministry, I have witnessed an evolution in the ministry to clergy spouses in my area of the “vineyard.” In the early days, there were no meetings for the devoted wives who tagged along at ministerial meetings. Their only recourse was to compare notes about ministry, the milestones of their children, and dollar-stretching strategies. I thank God that the picture has changed in my era.

I remember the advent of well-organized clubs with elected officers, scheduled meetings, and defined projects. The younger wives actively engaged and enjoyed meetings on spiritual, professional, and academic themes, as well as presentations on domestic duties. We developed quarterly newsletters and gradually ventured into the community with projects that showed how much we cared for all of God’s children.

Ministry to Clergy Spouses was on the move. Chapters increased. As we became more definite and intentional about our aspirations, we gained denominational recognition. There were conference-sponsored retreats for pastors’ wives.

The spouses reached out to PKs through camps, parties, outings, and guidance for community outreach.

I remember where we came from. I celebrate with praise and thankfulness where we are now. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us” (1 Sam. 7:12, KJV).

*Gloria Trotman, Texas
Former Shepherdess Coordinator,
Inter-American Division*

Congratulations to Shepherdess International (SI) for serving pastoral spouses and families for 25 years! I am thankful for SI’s work in empowering pastoral spouses to be all that God means them to be, and for the inspiration and help *The Journal* offers clergy spouses. *The Journal* has played a great part in relieving the fears and developing the confidence of both young and old pastoral spouses.

All of our pastoral spouses from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division join voices in expressing our gratitude to those who have contributed for the past 25 years. Happy Silver Anniversary to *The Journal*! Kudos to the GC Shepherdess directors and editors who have published this magazine over the past 25 years. Keep up the good work!

*Helen B. Gulfan, SI Coordinator,
Southern Asia-Pacific Division,
Philippines*

25
YEARS

1988-2013

MINISTERING TO THE PASTOR'S SPOUSE





“The kaleidoscope of color which is my life shows the interesting choices I’ve made along the way.”

Antie Koekie

IF YOU WERE TO GO FOR A WALK in the forest with four-year-old Ava, you’d be in for an experience. She doesn’t care about reaching a destination or walking for exercise. She’s never in a hurry to return home. She is immersed in all the delights of her surroundings: a colorful pebble, different leaf designs, sticks of unusual shapes—and oh, watching a bug can entertain her for a long time. In spite of efforts by others, there is absolutely no hurrying or distracting Ava when she is on a walk. She wanders along singing a little song to herself in total bliss.

If you are accompanying Ava, you better take along a bucket for her to fill with wildflowers, twigs, stones, and other nature treasures, or you will end up carrying it all in your arms, hands, and pockets. Ava has opened the eyes of our family to much more than we usually experience on a family walk. Who knew there were such treasures right underfoot?

WHAT ELSE ARE WE MISSING?

Perhaps you’ve read quotations written, no doubt, by elderly folks who look back over their lives and

wish they had lived differently. Things they would do if offered the opportunity to go back in time: “relaxing more, taking fewer things seriously, laughing more, eating more ice cream and fewer beans, walking barefoot in the grass, riding more merry-go-rounds, enjoying more sunsets, climbing more mountains and swimming more rivers, going to more places not previously visited, playing more with children.”¹ In other words, embracing more of the *joys* of life.



Time seems to move at a faster pace the older we get. In spite of the technological advantages designed to *save* us time, we find our daily schedules fast-paced and hectic. Our lives leave little or no time to play, to explore, to experience, to feed our spirits. Everyone in our circles is as focused, driven, and involved as we are. As a result, stress, anxiety, exhaustion, discouragement, and even depression are often our close companions. Do you ever want to escape to a less complicated existence?

HOW CAN I TELL IF I'M TOO BUSY?

Sometimes we don't even realize how busy we are. Answering the following questions may provide some clues:



1. Have I been skipping my quiet time with God, intending to catch up later?
2. Do I rush through meals? Or perhaps multi-task while eating? Do I sometimes even forget to pray before eating?
3. Do I become impatient while sitting at a red traffic light or while stuck behind a slow driver?
4. Am I losing touch with loved ones and friends?
5. Do I constantly feel tired, even after a good night's sleep?
6. Have I been skipping church in order to get some extra rest?
7. Do I often feel overwhelmed with work, home, and church duties?
8. Can I remember when I last took the time to read a book just for enjoyment?
9. Am I constantly checking my Blackberry, smart phone, or laptop computer for important messages?
10. Do I find myself easily irritated, short on patience, or frustrated?

LESSONS AVA CAN TEACH US

It's true that we should be responsible, accountable, and productive adults. Those are all admirable qualities. At the same time, guarding our joy in living is equally important and has a profound effect on our satisfaction with life. So let's see what principles we can learn from four-year-old Ava:

1. **Slow down.** Instead of rushing about from one thing to another, choose to do less. Do each task with mindfulness. Take time to look for the obvious and not-so-obvious uniqueness in everything.

2. **Be in the moment.** Truly focus on whatever it is you are doing.
- a. When at work, concentrate on work. When you leave work, leave work!
 - b. When outside, listen to the birds, feel the breeze, marvel at the clouds, smell the flowers—and, yes, hum or whistle a little song of thankfulness.



- c. When talking with friends, family, and colleagues, give them 100 percent of your attention. Look them in the eyes, listen with your ears and with your heart. You will be surprised at what you learn.
3. **Disconnect.** Let there be times when you are free of technology, free of electronic interruptions, and free of constant demands for attention from others.
4. **Embrace new experiences.** Go places and do things which are not ordinary. Visit a secondhand bookstore just to see what treasure you can find. Go on a picnic. Put a bouquet of freshly picked flowers on the kitchen table. Play catch with the neighbor's child. Go star-gazing. Bake something and share it with someone special. Contact an old friend. Start a new hobby. Make a list of goals and then enjoy accomplishing them. Volunteer. The possibilities are endless!
5. **Care for yourself.** Besides feeding your spirit and senses with engaging, positive experiences, take care of your mental and physical health too.
- a. Eat more slowly, being mindful of each bite and appreciating flavors and textures.

- b. Engage in exercise to keep all systems functioning well—but do so in an enjoyable variety of ways.
- c. Schedule enough rest and relaxation to recharge your energy.
- d. Feed your soul with inspiration. Find restoration in peaceful reflection, worship, inspirational reading, and heartfelt conversations with your Heavenly Father.

Life can be full of challenges. But when we make *simple choices* along the way to add variety, zest, and joy to the spirit, then our journey has the potential to become more balanced, interesting, and pleasurable—with, perhaps, fewer regrets in the end.

*“For the joy of
ear and eye,
For the heart and
mind’s delight,
For the mystic
harmony,
Linking sense to
sound and sight;
Lord of all, to
thee we raise
This our hymn of
grateful praise.”*

Folliat S. Pierpoint

¹ Adapted from the poem “If I Could Live My Life Again,” author unknown.

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.

Dear Abigail,

As a pastor's wife, I am invited to every birthday party, baby shower, and wedding shower. I LOVE to attend, but we can't afford to buy presents for each one. I feel bad coming empty-handed. Do you have ideas for gift suggestions that are both meaningful and budget-friendly?

Broke but Eager to Give

Got a question for Abigail? Write her at dear.abigail.letters@gmail.com



Dear Broke,

It's tough to have a slim budget when you love people and enjoy giving gifts!

When a gift is expected, try shopping at places where you can find tasteful and attractive gifts at low cost (such as TJ Maxx or Ross if you're in the USA). Some pastoral families may choose to set aside a percentage of their offering as a gift-giving budget, since they consider it a part of their ministry.

If you are artistic (and have the time), you might give something handcrafted, such as a knitted scarf or a bookmark with a Bible verse in calligraphy. Or you could give the gift of your time by bringing food and helping to decorate.

Another option is to decide that your family policy is never to give gifts at all (except to family members or extremely close friends). Instead, your tradition could be to give a lovely card with a handwritten message of blessing and a special scripture verse at every occasion.

Whatever you choose, keep your policy consistent so people don't get offended. Most will understand that the pastor can't afford to give fancy presents at everyone's party. What they want most is the support of your presence and acknowledgement.

Abigail



Releasing Resentment

“LINDY, MRS. THOMPSON’S SICK, and she can’t do the food for the youth social tonight. So I told her you’d be happy to do it instead.”

“But you know I need to focus on my presentation for work tomorrow! My department’s funding depends on it!”

“I know, darling, but surely this is more important. It may be the turning point in these teens’ lives. It’s God’s work. You know I can’t do this without your help! And I’ll pray that your presentation will go well tomorrow.”

However dedicated we are to our spouse’s ministry, and no

matter how supportive we wish to be, living in a ministry family involves all kinds of conflicting expectations. We’re expected to attend church events, conferences, and camp meetings, no matter how inconvenient it is for our family. We have to absorb the impact and stress of the pastor’s heavy workload, last-minute emergencies, and other people’s lack of planning. We may have to drop our own plans and needs—however important—to rescue a ministry situation. And there’s an unspoken expectation that we can always do this cheerfully . . . because it’s all for God.

THE COMPLEXITY OF RESENTMENT

Resentment isn’t a simple response. The effect of small resentments can build up over time. The pressure to put your own needs aside for the sake of the ministry can



It's hard to talk about these feelings, or even admit them to ourselves, because it feels selfish to prioritize our own needs or those of our family over God's work.

lead to sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment, hopelessness, and an internal message that "I'm not important" or "I can never be as important as my spouse's ministry and the needs of other church members."

It's hard to talk about these feelings, or even admit them to ourselves, because it feels selfish to prioritize our own needs or those of our family over God's work. If we fuss about being taken for granted, we feel that we're ultimately complaining about God. We feel frustrated when we say "yes" to requests we'd rather say "no" to, and we can even feel angry about giving up our plans to help with a church emergency.

Pastors can also feel resentful if their spouse isn't willing and able to provide hospitality when expected and to be 100 percent supportive in every situation. Sometimes there is an unspoken sense that the pastor has a greater "right" to their spouse's help and understanding, whenever needed, because they are doing God's work.

HARD TO ADMIT

Resentment begins when one person feels that a relationship is

out of balance. They're giving up their time, hopes, goals, dreams, and energy to support the other person, but they aren't receiving the same amount of support in return.

It can be hard to admit resentment: we're afraid of sounding petty and selfish. But it can destroy our happiness and our marriages if we don't address feelings openly, in an atmosphere of love and understanding.

REFLECTING ON RESENTMENT

- Is there an unspoken message in our family that ministry always takes the top priority?
- Do I offer to help my spouse with their workload and responsibilities as much as I ask them to help me with mine? How can we share our workload more evenly?
- Am I asking my partner to do this primarily because I didn't plan ahead?
- Could someone else in the church do this? Why aren't I asking them instead?
- If my spouse regularly asked me to help them do their job, how would I feel? How would I respond?
- Have I just *assumed* my partner can help? Have I taken away their freedom to make the choice for themselves?
- What effect is my resentment having on:
 - My relationship with God?
 - My feelings towards ministry?
 - My own calling as a spiritually-gifted Christian?
 - Our marriage and family life?
 - My well-being?
- How do I respond when my partner is obviously stressed or unhappy about being asked to help? Do I make them feel guilty, or do I accept their "no" with compassion?

PRAYING ABOUT RESENTMENT

Read: 1 Peter 5:7

- Pray that you'll recognize the effect that resentment is having in your life and on your relationships.
- Ask God to help you heal the pain of resentment in your relationship by listening openly to each other's pain, comforting each other, and forgiving each other.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you discern when and how to draw loving boundaries in your relationship.
- Focus on the blessings of ministry life. Thank God for them.

Releasing Resentment

HEALING RESENTMENT

Read: Romans 12:15; 14:13; 1 John 4:18

- Recognize the hurt that resentments are bringing to your relationship.
- Be respectful and tender about each person's pain.
- Accept each other's hurts without judging or criticizing.
- Talk respectfully and openly about your feelings: "When this happens, in this situation, I feel resentful because. . . . It would help me if you could do this instead. . . ."
- Talk about assumptions and expectations as soon as you are aware of them. Don't let resentments build up. Take the time to debrief after ministry emergencies have hurt your relationship. Commit to being more considerate in the future.
- When you get stuck, work through the four places of forgiveness. (See "The Gift of Forgiveness," *The Journal*, 3rd qtr. 2012, p. 15; available in online *Journal* archive: www.ministerialassociation.org/spouses/.)

"demand," or "expectation" so that helpful conversations are not silenced.

- Create a shared agreement about the boundaries and expectations in your ministry marriage.
- Agree to manage your own workload and responsibilities as well as you can.
- Discuss your calendars in advance. Notice the times when each of you may need extra support.
- Plan ahead and delegate responsibilities to other people rather than to each other.
- When asked for more help than you can provide, set clear boundaries: "I can't cater for the whole meal, but I can make soup / set up the room, etc."
- Choose to give your help as a gift, not as an obligation.
- It's better to cancel an event than harm your relationship.
- Offer support in return for support, so there's a sense of balance.
- Appreciate your partner generously when they help you.

PREVENTING RESENTMENT

Read: Galatians 6:2

- Make it "OK" to talk about your negative feelings related to a ministry "need,"

Karen Holford writes from Scotland, where she still (sometimes) struggles with ministry resentment and how to manage it.



QUESTION AND ANSWER

HAVE YOU EVER STRUGGLED WITH ANXIETY DURING TIMES OF STRESS OR DISAPPOINTMENT IN MINISTRY LIFE? WHAT HELPED YOU THROUGH? WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED THAT MIGHT HELP A FELLOW MINISTRY SPOUSE WHO IS STRUGGLING WITH ANXIETY RIGHT NOW?

We like to hear your answers to questions like this. To participate, join our Facebook group online at www.facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses/. Your answer could be featured in an upcoming issue of The Journal. Responses may be edited to fit the space.

CRYSTAL TIMURI

I have had some very stressful moments, and I am very blessed to have a supportive husband who listens and supports me. With much prayer and trust in God, I was able to get past them. I once tried to confide in a member I thought I could trust, but they made it their duty to let other members know, and before I knew it I was more stressed and upset.

What I have learned: the Lord has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, of love, and a sound mind. Pray to the Lord for peace and a sound mind. Pray for wisdom to overcome. Confide in your husband (hoping your situation has nothing to do with him), and when he is unable to help, speak to a very close and confidential family member. Talking always helps, but it has to be to the right person who wants to build you up. If the need is even stronger, seek a reputable Christian counselor (I have seen one before, it can be very helpful).

SAMANTHA NELSON

Getting out in nature helps me, especially going to the mountains or to a clear stream or lake. Sitting there and praying, soaking up the beauty of God's creation—this helps so much. It's just too bad we're not living near any mountains right now, because I could use that peace at this time!

TOBI FEGAN PAWSON

We are in a place where I find so much relief of anxiety with the beauty of nature. No wonder seminary was so rough—there was no place to hide! No, seriously, I find that the best way to relieve my stress is to completely vent with my husband . . . and let it all out. We can then see the issue or problem clearly, and then we pray together. If a church member is causing me stress or anxiety, I share it with my husband so that we can talk and pray it through.




And This is Love . . .

THAT WE CARRY EACH OTHER TO JESUS

IT WAS JUST THIS PAST SPRING. The blooms on the trees were many, and green shoots were just peeking through the grass. One such day I decided to have my kids “dress up” and do an impromptu photo shoot. I do this every now and then—when feeling overwhelmed with how fast my two are growing. It was a day to slow down and just *be*.

I led my kids to our apple orchard and had them snuggle up, cheek to cheek, to talk and tell jokes and play with the grass. Next, I led them to a beautiful cherry tree in full bloom. They laughed,



smiled, and made funny faces as they climbed around limbs and peered back at me. *Their faces are so precious to me, I thought. I love it when they just let me enjoy clicking away with the camera.*

Next I asked my son to carry my daughter around the back of our land, carpeted in mossy green. I watched as he picked her up—he is still becoming a strong man, so he was somewhat clumsy. But he did it and carried her toward a hayfield just starting to grow. They talked while he carried and she held on tight. I watched as his tender feet found placement on the rough ground, for it hurt him to step in the wrong spot—a small sacrifice in carrying her. They both hung on to each other to do this thing I had asked them to do. Time stood still as I watched and savored and clicked away. They grew tired but pressed on at my bidding, finding the strength. In their youthful way they encouraged each other not to let go and not to give up.

As I watched my children, I knew I was also watching something more. This was a picture of my kids, but also a picture of family and friends who carry each other in happy times and hard times. Often they sacrifice to do so.

As pastors' wives, we reflect the same picture by lifting each other up with prayer and encouragement. It may be a simple call, a card, a text, or time spent together sharing the lives to which God has called us. Together we press in, lifting each other up on a sacred journey where we don't always feel so sacred.

Though each of us is unique in our ministry as a pastoral spouse, we have a common bond that few others share or

understand. "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13, NASB).

We hear the call to carry each other as we read the New Testament story of four friends who took a lame man to Jesus and lowered him through the roof to Jesus' feet. The Bible tells us to "encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak" (1 Thess. 5:14, ESV). We also read, "let us not grow weary of doing good" (Gal. 6:9, ESV). Although I sometimes grow tired in "carrying" others, an incredible Strength surges through me as I "hang on" to the ones I love. Even more—as I discovered while watching my children—our service to others paints a living picture of Jesus as He carries us to the Heavenly Father.

Take a moment to search your memory for pictures of those you have carried, and those who have carried you. I pray that we continue to lift and carry one another to the throne of grace. Service is such a precious picture of Jesus to give others. Let us hang on tight to each other! J

Latonia Schmidt is a pastor's wife to Roger Schmidt and mom of two great kids, Samuel and Madison, currently living in Portland, TN. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and RN. She also is her conference Shepherdess president. She loves spending time with her family, photography, traveling, being outdoors, antiques, and enjoying friendships. Lifting others up and building strong families for the kingdom of heaven is her passion and heart's desire.

Hindsight:

LOOKING BACK ON MY JOURNEY THROUGH PRENATAL DEPRESSION



I'D ALWAYS BEEN A HAPPY PERSON. Positive and generally upbeat. Always looking for the sunshine in any cloudy situation.

Then I got pregnant. For some reason, pregnancy hated me. My hormones and emotions went crazy, and I felt completely out of control. I'm not talking about normal pregnancy mood swings. I'm talking about deep, dark depression. Blackness that pulled me down so low that I wondered if life was still worth it.

For months while expecting our first child, I teetered on the edge of an emotional abyss. Growing up, I'd always wanted kids. At least four, all born before I turned 30, so I could be a young and energetic mother. I never really imagined life including anything other than mission service, marriage, and motherhood. Then I went to college and realized God had given me other gifts too, like writing, storytelling, and project management.

My husband and I got married two days after graduating from university. A few weeks later, we moved across the country to attend seminary. He encouraged me to continue my education while he was still in school, so I did. Then God brought a job beyond my wildest dreams: working for the global church, traveling, leading teams of young people, and creating evangelistic resources.

I was fulfilled. I was happy. I wanted nothing more. Sharing life and complementary ministries with my husband, working side by side to share the gospel—I didn't want anything to change. For almost seven years, this was our reality.

And then on one international work trip, I simply couldn't get over the jet lag. Every three hours I was starving, and no amount of sleep was enough. One morning at 5:00 a.m. I took a pregnancy test. Two little blue lines stared back at me. For three days I told no one. Thoughts, questions, anxieties swirled over me. I felt numb.

Part of my challenge was that I had a very rigid and narrowly defined idea of what a good Adventist mother does. Good mothers don't work outside the home, even for ministry. They don't travel the world or leave baby in daycare. They abandon *all* their own interests. Good Adventist mothers pour every waking thought and dream and shred of energy into forming the character of their children. Right?

I felt like my identity was a rug being yanked out from under my feet. Without the ministry in which I'd invested the past several years, I didn't know who I was or who I could become.

As my pregnancy progressed, I didn't realize that much of my depression was also chemical. I'd never encountered an emotional obstacle that I couldn't conquer with "mind over matter" before. It didn't help that I had hyperemesis (where you have all-day, all-night nausea and vomiting) that lasted for the entire pregnancy. It also didn't help that I suffered severe insomnia and went for weeks with less than an hour of rest every 24 hours. I learned firsthand that lack of sleep can seriously mess with your mind!

I didn't like or trust my obstetrician, so I never told him how I was struggling. My family worried about the baby's health because I seemed so uncharacteristically negative, but they had no idea what a mess I was inside. I didn't have the courage to tell my husband either—and every night I would lie awake, listening to him sleep, with the vicious cycle of negative mental talk pulling me deeper into despair:

"I'll never be a good enough mother because my heart is in ministry."
"I'll never be able to minister again because now I will be a mother."
"I don't want to become a mother."
"I hate myself for not being thrilled about this precious gift of life."
"What kind of Christian woman doesn't want to be a mother?"
"I'm a pastor's wife, so how can I have these shameful feelings?"
"If I tell anyone the thoughts that go through my mind, they will think I'm a terrible person."
"If I'm honest with my husband about this, will he still love me?"

No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't "snap out of it." The depression was chemical, and the guilt was drowning me alive. I felt all these emotions, and

then felt shame for feeling them in the first place. The cycle of guilt and negativity and helplessness drove me deeper and deeper downward.

Six weeks before our son was born, I finally opened up to my husband. The anger, desperation, and discouragement poured out—and he listened beautifully. He reassured me that we would get through this together and asked why I'd carried this weight alone for so long.

Oddly, my depression completely disappeared within 48 hours after our son's birth. The next year, when I was expecting our daughter, I talked to my doctor (a new one) when the prenatal depression tormented me again. This time, I wasn't too ashamed to get the help I needed.

It has taken a few years to become brave enough to share this story. It isn't easy to delve into those memories and relive the darkness. The good thing? I've learned that our God is powerful enough to lift us out of bleakness and that time can change our perspective on things that seem unbearable in the moment.

Depression is one of the ways that Satan attacks the pastoral home, and I'm so glad God proved Himself to be bigger than my discouragement. As I look at my two amazing and beautiful children, I can't imagine life without their charm and zest. Despite all my fears, God has brought new forms of ministry into my life that were never an option before. He has worked out ways to juggle family and service that I'd never considered.

If you or someone in your family is battling discouragement that won't go away, please don't be too afraid to seek help. Prayer, medical assistance, and loyal friendships can all go a long way on the journey toward healing and wholeness. Don't insist on suffering alone.

The good thing about being on the other side is that now I can see where God was leading, though I was blind to it then. Sometimes, hindsight makes all the difference!

Sarah K. Asaftei is a mother of two and is married to Marius, senior pastor of the East Pasco Church near Tampa, Florida. Her marketing and film production company, skaMEDIA productions, provides development and social media support for the GC Ministerial and Revival & Reformation initiatives. Raised a missionary kid, Sarah loves international travel, languages, and photography.



DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE VERY PRECIOUS TO GOD? HE LOVES YOU SO MUCH, AND HE IS SAD WHEN PEOPLE HURT CHILDREN OR MAKE THEM FEEL AFRAID. HERE ARE SOME FAMILY WORSHIP ACTIVITIES AND THINGS TO DO AND TALK ABOUT THAT WILL HELP YOU LEARN ABOUT GOD'S PROTECTION. DISCOVER WHAT YOU CAN DO WHEN YOU FEEL SCARED, AFRAID, OR HURT.

PROTECTION HUNT

- Go on a hunt around your house to find ten different items that help protect something else. A pillow protects your head when you sleep; an egg carton protects eggs; shoes protect your feet. Can you think of more?
- Read Psalm 91 together.
- Look at the objects you found on your hunt. Tell how each item helps you understand something special about God's protection for you.
- Pray together, praising God and thanking Him for all the ways He has protected you and your family in the past.





EGG CARTON PRAYER

- Find an egg carton with sections and a lid.
- Cut out one paper egg shape for each space in the box.
- Think about the people you know who need protecting, including yourself.
- Write a sentence prayer for protection on each egg shape.
- Decorate the box with pictures and Bible verses about God's protection.

Keep it in a safe place. Add other prayers for protection whenever you want.



THINK ABOUT IT:

- What are some Bible verses that help you when you feel afraid? Memorize them so they can encourage you.
- What can you do when you feel scared and need someone to protect you?
- Who would you tell if someone made you feel afraid?
- What would you do if someone hit you or hurt you?
- What would you do if someone made you feel afraid or sad and told you not to tell anyone else? (Tell someone anyway!)

I'M SCARED!

- As a child you need special protection. You need to know when people are doing things that are wrong or hurtful to you—and how to get help from safe people.
- It's wrong for anyone to hit you or say unkind things to you.
- It's wrong for people to make you feel afraid, to take away things you need, or to take things that are important to you.
- It's also wrong for people to touch your body in ways that make you feel uncomfortable.

Keep Me Safe!

BRAVE PROTECTORS

God used brave people to protect His friends down through the ages.

- Who did He help these people to protect?
- Match the protector to the person (or people) they helped to keep safe.
- Then write or tell how God helped them protect others.

PROTECTOR	WHO/WHAT THEY PROTECTED	HOW THEY DID IT
Rahab (Joshua 2)	His family	.....
Boaz (Ruth 2)	Joseph	.....
David (2 Samuel 9)	Fishermen in a storm	.....
Reuben (Genesis 37)	Spies	.....
Noah (Genesis 6)	Jesus	.....
Good Samaritan (Luke 10)	Sheep	.....
Esther (Esther 7)	Mephibosheth	.....
Jesus (Mark 4)	Ruth	.....
Joseph and Mary (Matthew 2)	Injured man	.....
The Good Shepherd (John 10)	Jewish nation	.....

BE A PROTECTOR

You can be a protector too!
How can you help protect the following people and keep them safe?

Draw a picture of yourself helping each of these children, or write a list of things you could do to protect and help them.

- A baby brother or sister
- A friend who has fallen over and hurt their knee badly
- A child who is being teased or bullied by other children
- A child from another country who doesn't speak your language very well



HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU:

- Practice yelling “Stop!” and “Help!” so you can say it in an emergency.
- Pray to God for help and protection.
- Run away.
- Find someone safe to tell. Make a list of people who may be safe to tell, such as your parents, grandparents, teacher, doctor, or others.
- Ask the people who love you to help you.
- If someone doesn’t believe you or help you, don’t give up. Keep telling people until someone hears you and helps you.
- Talk with your parents about what to do if someone makes you feel scared, hurt, or sad.

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

Jesus loved being with children! When the disciples tried to chase them away so He could rest, Jesus welcomed them with open arms. They sat on His lap while He told them wonderful stories. He put His hands on their heads and blessed them. He probably said something to each child to make them feel happy and loved.

Imagine that you went to see Jesus in a field or park near you. Draw a picture of yourself sitting on His lap or standing next to Him. What do you think He would say to you today to make you feel special? Write His message to you on your picture.


Remember that Jesus always cares about you and wants you to feel safe, happy, and loved. 7

Karen Holford loves to help children understand how much Jesus loves them.

Discover a safe place to fellowship, share support and explore the journey of ministry life.



Married to a pastor?

 [facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses)

 @ministryspouses

From Heartbeat to Heartache

PART 1

“I will go before you and prepare the way. I will break down the gates of brass and cut through the iron bars. I will give you treasures hidden in darkness and riches stored in secret places. You will know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who has called you by your name.”

Isaiah 45:2-4, The Clear Word

“WE’VE LOST THE HEARTBEAT. Your five-month-old fetus has died; we’ll need to do a D&C.” The words of my obstetrician pierced through my every hope and dream, taking all that I thought was my own.

The surgery was set for the following Friday. The doctor assured my husband, Rod, and me that it was “just an outpatient surgery—you’ll be home by noon.”

The next few days we spent each and every moment together searching

for answers we would not find. We took long walks, pleading with the God we thought we knew, sharing tears, begging for a miracle, grasping the hope of another pregnancy at another time. At the tender age of twenty, we traveled a road that no one dreams about.

Friday came without a miracle.

When the D&C was done, the hemorrhaging did not stop. I continued to fade in and out of consciousness as my body became

ever weaker. I remember Rod holding my hand tightly, with tears flowing down his face. Then I would pass out again, each time leaving me in a dark confusion. Subconsciously, the thought of disappointing my mother haunted me. How would I ever tell her—the woman who gave birth to ten healthy babies, nine boys and me?

Then I would drift into unconsciousness again. Weaker and weaker I became until I could no longer lift my hand and hold onto Rod's. My eyes were too weak to open, but still I saw. In fear I reached out to God, pleading that I, too, like the woman long ago, might touch the hem of His garment and be healed.

God was silent.

Instead of His divine voice, a human voice somewhere in the distance was saying, "Without a hysterectomy we will lose her." How my heart ached; instead of the healing touch of God, my destiny was in the hands of an unfamiliar surgeon standing over me with a scalpel in his hand. My heart cried out, *Where is the God who answers prayer? Where is the One who promised to carry me as a lamb upon His shoulders? Where is the Rock that is higher than I?*

Rod found his way to a small chapel, where he, too, cried out to God. He felt his pleading prayer reach to the ceiling but not beyond.

God was silent.

Back in surgery, my heart stopped twice. Then the choice—hysterectomy or bleed to death. By the end of the day, we had lost not only our baby but the hope of ever having another one.

Gathering up our brokenness, we left the hospital with empty arms. I felt the coldness of lost life as bitterness began its work on my heart.

My line was empty, and the enemy spared no time, for he had much to say to persuade me into his POW camp. I was captive to his lies and powerless to trust the unseen. "Your husband deserves children; if you love him, you will stand aside so he can have a woman who will give him a family."

The days were long, and hours of reflection stole my time. Others said and did all they could, but it was the God of the Universe I was waiting to hear from.

God was silent.

The weekends brought me to my lowest valleys. The emptiness was most real when I sat in church. Church is a place for families, and when you're not one . . . you feel it. Week after week I watched young mothers hold and train their little ones. The pain would become more than I could bear, and tears would shame me over and over again.

I sat close to doors to ensure a fast escape, not wanting my sobbing to degrade me more. At each church service, the battle raged inside me, taking its toll on my frail faith and shattered hopes. The enemy seemed to be winning, as each week became more impossible to face.

God and I talked on occasion, but our relationship had faded and was held together by a thin, frayed thread. I could not leave church for I desperately needed it. I needed to hear others speak of His great mercy, sing of His goodness, and praise His holy name—for out of my own lips such things could not flow. God was not in the emptiness of my heart nor the empty walls that surrounded me each day. In church there was evidence that He was still all I had been taught in my younger years.

As a broken cistern, I felt useless to my church and community, for I could not hold what was given to me, nor did I have anything to give. In my pain, the God of silence was working. He was taking the scales off my eyes, scales that had blinded me to the broken cisterns I had seen in other people, yet never understood.

From Heartbeat to Heartache

Now I was one of the broken ones. Week after week I came to church spiritually starving and hoping that I might eat the morsels from His table.

Broken people often become prodigals. Prodigals are those who leave family, friends, and God because they can no longer bear the shame or deal with their imagined spiritual failure. I pleaded with God to hold onto me and in some way contain the tears of my shame.

We began to arrive at church late, after everyone was seated, so we could sit somewhere with no children, and then we would leave early before anyone could see my stained face. In time the emotional pain would provide a new glimpse of God, but not now, not yet.

As the months passed, close family and friends began to talk with us about adoption. I listened with deaf ears and a numb heart. Rod was eager—coaxing me to do the adoption paperwork, for it could take years once we were on “the list.”

For me, “the list” was cold and foreign. Life was supposed to be a miracle, so how could I settle for a catalog where I would point at a picture and place my order?

I began to talk to God about the list. And a silent God began speaking to me.

“Donna,” He said gently, “there’s an old, old story I want you to hear afresh. Her name was Hannah. Her womb was vacant, her self-worth nonexistent, her destiny uncertain, her line empty.

“One day it all changed as she began to trust Me fully and completely. She trusted me with her self-worth, her marriage, her destiny, and her empty line. And then she let me have full control of her thoughts, her desires, her emotions; once that happened I could re-create her and form her into something more than an empty cistern.”

For the next six years, I stood still with one prayer.

The story of Hannah taught it to me, and it goes like this: “Father, if I am a maidservant worthy of raising a child for Your purpose, then let it be so. I exchange my list today for Your will. I give myself to You to be used or not used according to Your plan, not my own, for my depression cannot hold me where Your grace releases me.”

My humiliating tears began to dry up, not because I knew what my future was but because I knew what it wasn’t. I would not spend my days, nor my life, in search of a child I did not have, nor would I grow bitter toward a God who did not please me.

The way my empty line was to be filled was not a decision for me to make; it was for Him to make. My silent God began to embrace me. Not with words but with peace. Not with answered prayers that I could see but with His arms of grace that I could feel.

As He embraced my brokenness, He was putting me back together, and I knew my life would be complete—with or without children. I traded my will for His will, trusting God to bless me with *treasures hidden in darkness* and riches stored in secret places.

He was the filler of my heart, and He would fill my empty line. 7

Donna Willey (www.donnawilley.com), has co-lay-pastored with her husband for 17 years. This article is adapted from her new book, *Empty: From Despair to Deliverance*, which will be available in December 2013.

TIPS TO SURVIVE

THRIVE

GET A SYSTEM DOWN FOR “UNEXPECTED GUESTS.”

Unlike many people, pastors often have traffic at home because of their ministry. Like it or not, that often means that the pastor’s spouse gets the lucky role of last-second hostess.

A little down-home hospitality can go a long way in making someone feel loved. And isn’t that what ministry is really all about?

If you don’t already have one, consider developing your own little system for making unexpected guests comfortable.

You might have a linen closet that always has a clean set of sheets ready, or a yummy-smelling candle stashed away especially for the guest room, or a special way of laying out fresh towels—or it might be as simple as a set of clean bedding that you spread out on the couch! It’s totally up to you.

However you do it, it doesn’t have to be luxurious. Just authentic and kind. It’s about the spirit of warmth and welcome. And about paying attention to little things that make a guest feel at home.

A warmly welcomed guest won’t ever forget your kindness—guaranteed!

Have 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

Special Quotes

“The Father’s presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. Whatever comes to him comes from the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Nothing can touch him except by the Lord’s permission. All our sufferings and sorrows, all our temptations and trials, all our sadness and griefs, all our persecutions and privations, in short, all things work together for our good. All experiences and circumstances are God’s workmen whereby good is brought to us.”

Ministry of Healing, pp. 488-489

“Could Christians realize how many times the Lord has ordered their way, that the purposes of the enemy concerning them might not be accomplished, they would not stumble along complainingly. Their faith would be stayed on God, and no trial would have power to move them.”

Prophets and Kings, p. 576

“In the future life the mysteries that here have annoyed and disappointed us will be made plain.

We shall see that our seemingly unanswered prayers and disappointed hopes have been among our greatest blessings.”

Ministry of Healing, p. 474

FROM THE FIELD

Euro-Asia Division

In June 2013 over 40 pastors' spouses met for meetings in Kiev, Ukraine. They spent a day enjoying time together and renewing their commitment to God and ministry.

Pastors' spouses in Kiev, Ukraine, with Liliya Krupskaya, ESD Shepherdess coordinator (front center).



Ministerial family retreat held in Lviv, Ukraine.

A prayer congress in Minsk, Belarus, included three unforgettable days filled with unity, spiritual enthusiasm, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Participants united in prayer, shared their requests, and saw prayers answered.

A special Sabbath parade portrayed the fathers and mothers of early church reformers, such as Martin Luther, William Miller, Zwingli, and the Moravian brothers. The program concluded with the mother of Jan Hus, who in her time on her knees conquered the city of Prague and gave the world a great Christian reformer.

Saturday night featured an all-night prayer session, followed by a prayer breakfast. Participants shared prayer concepts they had learned in their own churches and conferences.

Group in Belarus meeting for a prayer conference.



Northern Asia-Pacific Division

In March 2013 Shepherdess leaders of the West Central Korean Conference met at Sahmyook University to continue their work of organizing for mission. The gathering was historic because the pastoral spouses had previously been led by a male conference pastor.

Under the leadership of Yu EunJu, conference Shepherdess coordinator, the team developed an excellent governance document. Vice president Lee KiWha led out as they gathered information



Leaders from West Central Korean Conference met together in March to organize their mission.

from Pastor Lynn Ripley, division Shepherdess coordinator. Their goal was to form a network of small-group prayer and fellowship meetings for the pastors' spouses. They will also publish a newsletter and hold annual retreats for three age groups focused on spiritual and physical renewal. A blog site will share news about birthdays, births, and other helpful information, as well as offering online access to a licensed counselor.

Pastor Lynn Ripley led the group through discipleship principles such as learning to know Jesus every day and mentoring new disciples. Participants shared testimonies about how small groups for pastors' spouses had blessed them and led to an actual physical healing.

Another highlight of the weekend was a Sunday morning prayer meeting on the prayer mountain. Pastor Lynn encouraged attendees to understand that every voice of witness is important: both young and old, both women and men. The group divided for prayer in seven small buildings that represented the churches of Revelation.



Lee KiWha led the group discussion.



Mongolian pastors' spouses.

Leaders in Mongolia held a ministerial and Shepherdess retreat at a resort near Ulaanbaatar in April 2013. The theme was "Heaven: Our Ultimate Goal." Jerry and Janet Page from the General Conference spoke about prayer and its power to move the church forward in mission.

Hearts drew close to the Savior as the pastors and spouses spent time in precious seasons of prayer. David and Lynn Ripley, ministerial and Shepherdess directors for Northern

Asia-Pacific, presented devotional messages. Friday evening featured a moving communion service.

Participants were thrilled when Cleidi Kuhn, Shepherdess coordinator for Mongolia, handed out Mongolian-language copies of Derek Morris' book *Radical Protection*. Families are still receiving spiritual benefits from the retreat, and Cleidi has started a Tuesday-night Shepherdess prayer group in her home.

South Pacific Division

In April 2013 New Zealand held a ministerial couples retreat. They spent the time together in training seminars, fellowship, and prayer.

Pastors' spouses in New Zealand.



Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Regional and world women's ministries leaders are pictured at meetings in South Africa.



NAD Leaders Visit SUD

NAD ministerial spouses leader Donna Jackson visited the Southern Asia Division for year-end meetings in Hosur, India, in November 2012. Local leaders report, "We were very happy to have Donna and her husband back in India after more than 20 years."

Donna gave presentations on the family, home, listening, and forgiveness. Dr. Rani Rao of Bangalore SDA Medical Center also talked to pastoral spouses about lifestyle and nutrition, and a physiotherapist demonstrated exercises for staying fit.



Donna Jackson, NAD ministerial spouses leader, presents seminars in India.

Southern Asia Division

In September 2012 pastors' wives and female teachers gathered for a seminar at a Kolkata church. Rose Christo, SUD Shepherdess coordinator, and Milly Lakra, Northern Union Shepherdess coordinator, were the presenters. Attendees were also blessed by the translation skills of Sumitra Sagar, a local Adventist teacher.



Rose Christo, SUD Shepherdess coordinator, with translator Sumitra Sagar, in Kolkata, India.

Pastors' spouses from South Bengal region meet in Kolkata, India.



Milly Lakra distributing umbrellas to ladies in Kolkata, India.

Also in September 2012 the Shepherdess and Women's Ministries departments of Western India Union organized a three-day meeting with the theme of "Fellow Workers in God's Vineyard." Rose Christo, Shepherdess coordinator, and Premila Masih, Women's Ministries director, were the resource persons. The meetings emphasized the pastor's wife and her family, their relationships, and their church ministry.

Group of ladies with Women's Ministries and Shepherdess leaders in Pune, India.





Miss prayer meeting?

If you missed the 7:00 p.m. prayer meeting in your church, you can still join the virtual prayer chain of believers who are praying at 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., seven days a week, for the Holy Spirit's presence in our families, leaders, churches, and communities. By praying wherever you are, at any hour, on the hour, you will unite with thousands of others who are praying where they are around the world.

"A chain of earnest, praying believers should encircle the world. . . . to pray for the Holy Spirit."

(Review and Herald, January 3, 1907)



JOIN A PRAYER MEETING LIKE NO OTHER!

Please pray for:

- The 630 cities around the world being reached through Mission to the Cities
- The thousands of outreach activities and events that will take place in and around the cities
- The strongholds of Satan to be broken, and relationships with Christ to be established
- The church members and church leaders working in these cities
- The people yet to be reached with the gospel
- The harvest of souls in the cities where seeds have been planted
- The work on this earth to be finished, and for Christ to come

For a list of cities and more information, go to:
www.MissiontotheCities.org and www.RevivalandReformation.org/777