

Shepherdess

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*A minister is a man
who works
16-hour days;
a minister's wife
is a woman
who knows
that if she questions this practice
she will probably
be turned into
a pillar of salt.*



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Between the Covers

New years mean new beginnings.

Between the covers of this first issue of 1997 you will read articles about transfers, moving and change in the ministry family. Our pastoral wife authors share how they found the positive aspects of transitions, which are never easy. I hope their insights will be useful to you if this new year finds you in unfamiliar surroundings.

The stories of miracles, the tongue-in-cheek humor, and nurturing our youth into service are some of my favorites.

We also pay tribute to pastors' wives who are no longer struggling with us in this evil world. They peacefully sleep waiting for Jesus to call them, along with us, to our permanent homes. The impact they made upon the lives of those who knew them is eternal.

Happy New Year!



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Someone Else's Roses

Pat Fretton



Pat Fretton is a pastor's wife living in Australia.

*N*ot another move" I sighed, as John replaced the telephone receiver.

How I longed for a place of our own. Somewhere we could really put down some roots and eat the fruits of our labor. Usually we had to move on just before we raised enough cauliflowers and brussel spouts to supply half the town.

Over the years we have lived in some unusual places. I recall the rocky, windswept island where everything including the local inhabitants leaned with the prevailing wind. Wild parsley sprouted from every crack and crevice in the garden; however, there were numerous enthusiastic tail brandishing scorpions inside the house.

Thinking back there have been quite a variety of houses. Some had gardens ranging all the way from the "two by four" green painted, concrete monstrosity featuring a shrub in a tub (well past it's "use by" date) to the veritable Kew Gardens, boasting hip-deep herbaceous borders. At one location, the shrubbery was so thick with tongue twisting, unpronounceable Latin names that it required a native guide wielding a machete to simply locate the wash line.

Slipping down the years, I recall our experience before we moved into our next "new" home. We made several anticipatory passes in the car to kind of size up the place. "Yes," I thought gratefully, "the beige, full length lace curtains will definitely fit most of them." I felt grateful that I would be able to replace the sad looking grey remnants hanging in ghostly shrouds between the dingy grey rubber backs.

After several circuits around the block, my husband began to rapidly reach the end of a very short fuse. He had forgotten what "Slowly dear, slowly..." meant. I looked with dismay at the neglected state of the garden—typical of rental accommodations. But I was heartened to see small but easily identifiable Gardenia blooms squinting out from along the tangled overgrowth. Their fragrance was obvious even with the car windows up.

On either side of the house were roses gasping because they were jammed beneath masses of previously voraciously growing Camellias. These basin-size flowers had sucked the last vestige of moisture from the crusty, unwatered ground.

A day or so later I ventured outside to escape the flotilla of

boxes still waiting to be unpacked. In the midst of the neglected wilderness, I tried to imagine the pleasure with some enthusiastic, far-seeing soul had experienced as they planned and planted this delightful rose garden. I wondered if they had ever succeeded in enjoying the fragrant velvety blooms that were now merely existing shriveled and dried among such a thorny, cracking morass.

Cautiously approaching the roses while clutching my trusty rinky-dink, I felt like a criminal realizing the havoc I could wreak. My knowledge of rose pruning was sketchy to say the least and was more on a par with my understanding of the mating habits of the snapping turtles of South America—or was it Africa?

During my early morning walks around the new neighborhood I paid particular attention to the other gardens. The little stems of the deftly dotted rose bushes were all neatly pruned; it seemed to the point of no return.

And then I remembered, "You can't over-prune roses. They love it." Someone's helpful advice drifted back from the foggy mists of time.

After twenty minutes snipping nervously at fifteen years of unbridled growth, I felt I had made very little impression. I almost considered using a few bursts of Napal gas to achieve any appreciable difference, but I pressed on determinedly.

In my mind's eye I tried to compare this overgrown mass with the artist's impression of rose pruning in my well-thumbed *Complete Garden Guide*. This volume clearly illustrated the before and after cute little "short back and sides" numbers. But

then, I reasoned, they had only possessed three "no nonsense" stems in the first place.

"One for juice-a, one for fruit-a." I remembered Franko, my Italian neighbor reciting. Unfortunately he had been referring to his "obediently" trained grape vines which he religiously trimmed back to nub ends. A similar principle must surely apply to rose bushes. I counted the number of notches remaining on the trailing meter long stems and continued to snip with abandon.

"By the way," my husband asked later that night, "whatever did you do to the roses?"

It was an amazing question coming from a man like John who usually couldn't recognize a fruit-bearing apple tree at three paces!

I lay wide awake that night overwhelmed with guilt like a criminal found defacing "Whistler's Mother" after running amok in the Louvre with a Stanley knife. Watching the hours slide by, I admitted that I had rather leaned towards the "you can't kill 'em theory" leaving the roses shorn as if by some enthusiastic person on work experience with the "jaws of life." Having succeeded in pushing the thorny problem to the furthestmost part of my mind, I drifted off to sleep.

Time passed quickly once we had settled in our new parsonage. Soon it was time for our much-needed vacation. I refused to even think of anything featuring a rose. I kept my eyes firmly diverted even when passing the greeting card stands.

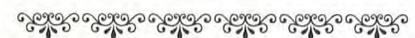
A month later we returned late at night from our vacation. A friend called in with our mail and messages. "Wow!" she greeted me enthusiastically. "How did you manage to grow roses like that?"

At first light my joy and amazement was indescribable. Magnificent long stemmed, dew bathed, velvet petalled roses greeted me. Such fragrant blooms. They ranged from richest of reds right through every shade of yellow to the most delicate apricot imaginable—all surrounded by an abundance of healthy green foliage.

I can see a parallel with our own lives. Can't you? ❁



*An
optimist is
one who makes
the best of it
when she gets
the worst
of it.*



Think, What a Privilege!

Elizabeth de Pacheco



Besides being a pastor's wife, Elizabeth de Pacheco, is an Administrative Printing Technician. She has spent three years in ministry in the La Paz Cesar District, Valledupar, Colombia, South America.

As I think of how God has led us, I thank Him for where He has placed us. We are His creatures and in His marvelous love, He equips us with new hearts and gives us the ability to serve Him . . . until the moment when we will not be separated.

I fondly recall what took place a few weeks ago. It was a Friday morning, and I wasn't feeling very well. A fever raged like a battle in my body. I took some medicine but my throat still needed attention. I decided to quickly finish the rest of the Sabbath preparations so I could rest.

My husband was in another city conducting a Week of Prayer, and he was not returning until Sunday. The day of rest arrived and I awoke very early. I opened my Bible to James 5:7. What a beautiful passage with a special message. I thanked God for His word, thought on that passage for some time, and soon I felt better. I decided to go to church after all, even though I wasn't totally well. Nothing was stopping me from listening to God's voice at church on that holy day. I took my little son, Jonathan David, with me. When I arrived at church, I felt much better. At Sabbath School, the children gathered around me

and wanted me to accompany them to their children's class. They were so adorable I couldn't refuse their request.

At the end of Sabbath School, the deacon in charge came to me and said, "The preacher hasn't arrived. Won't you have the sermon this morning?" That really surprised me. I wanted to find the church elder to solve the problem in this emergency; however, he had left suddenly to attend to an urgent matter, and there was no one available to do the job.

I prayed and waited five minutes, hoping the preacher would arrive at the last moment. It wasn't to be. The brethren asked me again and the church members were waiting. "All right," I said, "In the name of Jesus, I will do it." I prayed silently while the platform participants assembled. I opened my Bible to the text I had been reading that morning, James 5:7. I believed this was the topic God wanted me to present. I began recalling illustrations and thoughts on the theme. My mind was very clear, as if I had completely prepared for the occasion. Soon I had an outline in my mind. I never thought I could do something like this. The Holy Spirit

was directing everything. Even though my voice wasn't very sonorous, I felt better and I left my discourse in His hands. I felt God was with us and this sermon would be for His glory. It made me very happy to have the privilege of serving my Heavenly King that morning.

It is important to be prepared for events such as this. Perhaps if we were more prepared, we would be able to go where God wants us to go.

I wanted to share this experience with you because there are many ways we can serve as pastors' wives. Even though this was an unusual occurrence, I am sure that you too have had beautiful experiences of unexpected ways in which the Lord was glorified and taught you too.

A few days later, I learned that the preacher was taken ill just as he was leaving his house that Sabbath. If I had decided to stay home, I would not be able to share this experience with you now. I know God would not have left His church without spiritual food, and someone would have done the job, but I would have lost the privilege to receive a great blessing.

Sometimes we don't consider little things as being important. Perhaps we have lost sight of the little things which make up our lives. When you, my sister, think something is not important, be alert, think. Our mission counts for everything. The Heavenly King is satisfied to let us care for those He loves the most, His sheep and lambs.

Our pastors have a great responsibility, but with them, we may serve too. Our hearts fill with joy and love when we realize what a privilege it is to be working for the Heavenly King! ❀

If I Really Cared . . .

Ruth Senter

If I really cared

I'd look you in the eyes when you talk to me;
I'd think about what you're saying instead of what I'm
going to say next;
I'd hear your feelings as well as your words.

If I really cared

I'd listen without defending,
I'd hear without deciding whether you are right or
wrong;
I'd ask you why, not just how or when or where.

If I really cared

I'd allow you beside me;
I'd tell you my hopes, my dreams, my fears, my hurts;
I'd tell you where I've blown it and when I've made it.

If I really cared

I'd laugh with you but not at you,
I'd talk with you and not to you,
And I'd know when it's time to do neither.

If I really cared

I wouldn't climb over your walls,
I'd hang around until you let me in the gate;
I wouldn't unlock your secrets;
I'd wait till you handed me the key.

If I really cared

I'd love you anyhow,
But I'd ask for the best that you can give
And gently draw it from you.

If I really cared

I'd put my scripts away,
And leave my solutions at home.
The performances would end.
We'd be ourselves.

*Herline, The Communique for Wives in the Ministry,
Washington Conference, March 18, 1993.*

Criticism in the Church

Veronica
Milward-Crockett



Veronica Milward-Crockett was born in Nairobi, Kenya, where her parents were teachers. She is now a pastor's wife residing in Eugene, Oregon. Her four children are 12-18 years old. She works as a R.W. M.S./ Special Education Teacher, specializing in Early Intervention for the Linn Baton Lincoln Educational Service District. Her hobbies include hiking, bicycling, reading, and most sports.

There is something insidious that is eating at the heart of our church and weakening the courage of those in ministry. Criticism. Some people have refined it into an art that takes most of their time, energy, and resources. Those in ministerial families must learn how to respond appropriately, rather than letting it be a scourge that swallows up their time, energy, resources, and courage.

In our own experience we have noticed that only a very small percent of the church is involved in destructive criticism. But even the small numbers do not enable the problem to be ignored, nor can we pretend it does not hurt or weaken us.

I have come up with two plans for dealing with this issue, perhaps one would be helpful to you.

Pleasing Everyone

The first plan involves pleasing everyone. This is the most challenging of the two. Yet many are willing to sacrifice their happiness (and that of their family), in trying to attain this lofty goal. In order to please everyone, especially the small number of those bent on finding things to criticize, I would like to offer some advice.

* *How you look.*

You as a minister cannot be too good looking or too homely. If you are either, you must do something about it soon. Your dress is closely related to this. Black suits and white shirts are very appropriate. But lest you alienate the more relaxed aspect of your church, add Birkenstock sandals and a few tasteful leather accessories.

Your wife, it goes without saying, cannot be too "heavy." This indicates disdain for the health message. Too thin on the other hand, shows a dangerous leaning toward being a health nut.

* *How you act, who you are.*

If you are single, some are bound to wonder why, so this must be resolved

Strive to be outgoing and friendly to all, yet keep a professional demeanor and distance. If you hug every third church member, odds are most will approve. If you hug the wrong one, you will know.

* *How you preach.*

Be certain to stand behind the pulpit with hands out of pockets (my husband learned this the hard way). Yet you do not want to appear too formal to those who

prefer a more accessible pastor. Alternate periods of rapid movement in the aisles with sedate periods behind the pulpit. The content of your message must be loving, of course, but include exhortation and rebuke. Keep track that you don't use too many Bible texts, or too few. If you choose to use "outside sources" (i.e. E. G. White), you must come up with a code to let those who want to hear from these sources know this is who you are quoting from, perhaps a discrete hand signal.

✱ *How to deal with church members.*

It is recommended that you don't get too close to any church members; otherwise, you will have to deal with having them into your home. This will create a whole new set of challenges. If you drive and give a lift to a visitor, keep the radio tuner on scan. Do not let recognition be visible in your face, at the fragments of any particular song, lest it not be in a style acceptable to them.

Meals merit attention. You could be in trouble if you choose to serve dairy products and chocolate cake. The only worse thing you might do is make it plain that you abstain from dairy products and chocolate cake. Stick with medium brown bread and water: a sprig of parsley might prevent you from appearing austere.

✱ *How your children act.*

If you try to train your children to please the entire congregation, you will undoubtedly fail, and they will probably become psychotic in the process. It would be easier to disguise them as pets.

Alternate Plan

My husband and I have felt unable to attain this first method

of dealing with criticism, so I do have our personal alternate plan.

✱ *Dealing with legitimate criticism.*

Depending on the circumstances, try to humbly discern if there is something in the criticism that requires an apology or needs to be made right. We both have had make our share of apologies.

✱ *Let God solve the problem.*

After apologies or changes have been made, take the person and the problem to God.

We both are happy we work for God. He loves us the way we are, even though I am reserved and my husband is sanguine. We don't have to be a certain way for Him to love and use us. We also know that if the worst scenario happens (i.e. the criticism leads to revolt and we lose our ministry), than this would have been allowed by God (there are a lot of easier ways to make a living) and we can trust Him with our future.

We pray together each morning. If there is a person or problem we are currently dealing with, we tell God: "Here is our problem, how should we handle this?"

✱ *Don't try to explain everything.*

It is not always wise to cancel your Bible studies, prayer meeting, taping for the radio, to run around explaining to every church member why you were seen on July 3 visiting a member dressed in shorts (modest, attractive ones—I did not make this up).

The hard part for me is to wait and allow the Lord to convict me if I need to address the problem or leave it with Him. There are times Jesus explained himself and many times He did not. Ezra and Nehemiah are good examples of men who at times did not interrupt the work to "put out

fires." Wisdom is needed to know the difference. If the Lord convicts us that we have done what we can to address the issue, we leave the problem with Him. We try to not insult Him by continually borrowing the problem back (as if He can't handle it).

✱ *Talk positive of others.*

Carry on God's work and focus, especially in front of our children, on all the wonderfully supportive, loving people we know.

Criticism has wrecked churches, families, and ministries. The enemy uses this to destroy and slow the work. While I don't know all the answers, God does. Let us pray that He will give us the wisdom to deal with the problem and carry on faithfully and joyfully to the end. ❀



A missionary's wife had a little orphan living with her. She taught him about Jesus. One night, when the orphan was six years old, she said to him: "Now pray a little prayer of your own."

After a moment's thought, the child prayed: "Dear Jesus, make me like you were when you were six years old."

—Selected



Far View

Muriel Larson



Muriel Larson is a pastor's wife who has authored 17 Christian books, numerous articles, and 22 songs. She enjoys reading, gardening, camping, and traveling.

My husband was considering the pastorate of a country church. The couple with whom we were staying overnight took us to the parsonage. I couldn't believe my eyes! It was an old, partly-whitewashed, pieced-together shack with a tin roof. It was about the most disreputable-looking place I had ever seen!

"It doesn't look like much on the outside," said the lady apologetically, "but it's not too bad on the inside."

"And it does have hot and cold running water and an indoor bathroom," added the man. At the time I didn't realize that was more than some of the parishioners had!

Then the lady tapped me on the shoulder. "Turn around," she said, "and look." She waved her arm in a sweeping motion. "Isn't that the most gorgeous view you have ever seen?"

We looked out from the high ridge upon miles and miles of fields, trees, and valleys. "You can even see the next state from here," declared the lady. "And look off in that other direction!"

We did as she suggested. That view almost took our breath away, it was so majestic.

My husband was called by that

church and accepted the pastorate. His salary was very low, but farm products such as meat and vegetables would be given to us by the people. A wood-burning stove in the living room heated the four rooms of the "parsonage." We had resident black spiders about as big as a quarter, and the area was well known as rattlesnake country.

But oh, the far view! How it thrilled and rested my soul to look out at it any and all seasons! During the winter, the dark outline of trees stood out starkly from the sparkling white snow, with an intensely blue sky overhead. During the spring, wherever one looked, one could see the white and pink blossoms of apple and cherry trees, the lime-green of freshly-budded foliage, and new shoots of corn coming up in the fields. In the summer the corn grew tall, the blackberries down in the valley ripened, and cows grazed contentedly. In the fall, the maples were a riot of color as were the sunsets. Yes, the far view was beautiful.

Far view for us

What is the special far view for pastors' wives? I have found various facets through my own experience.

1. Winning souls to Christ

In every church my husband pastored, I found fertile fields of souls to harvest for Jesus. In that country church, my husband and I cooperated with a couple in our church who headed the youth work. Periodically they would host a social at their farm for children or teenagers. My husband and I would go far and wide picking up children.

One evening the social included a hay ride under a harvest moon followed by delicious refreshments prepared by the wife. I brought a devotional talk. Present was a 13-year-old wheelchair-bound boy with muscular dystrophy. Although he had never been to church, our women's missionary group had brought him a box of gifts and goodies. I had tucked in a Gospel of John.

Daniel listened attentively to my message, which included the story of Jesus and His great salvation. When I said that anyone could come to Jesus and receive Him as their Savior, Daniel interrupted—"Please, Mrs. Larson, can I receive Him right now?"

I never stand on ceremony. I stopped right there, spoke further to Daniel, and then led him in a prayer to receive Jesus. When he lifted his head, his face was radiant.

A month later Daniel went to sleep in His Savior—and his parents and six sisters started attending our church.

In other churches the Lord gave me opportunities to help many children come to Christ, especially through Vacation Bible School. And of course, I was able to help women come to Him and discipled them through Bible studies.

2. Serving in many ways

In that country church I also served as a teacher and started a

library. My husband and I also cleaned the church (keeps you humble!). Through leading the 4-H choir (we won second place in the annual competition), I was able to reach out into the community, which added some new members.

In other churches I served as unpaid organist, pianist, choir director, church secretary, director of Vacation Bible School, visitor, counselor, devotional bringer, and filled in wherever necessary.

Serving my Lord Jesus with my life has been wonderful to me; but life is not particularly easy for a minister's wife. Along with the beautiful far view we enjoy, we may suffer bumps and bruises, criticisms and disappointments, depressing circumstances. But our Lord never promised His servants easy lives!

Cheer up—keep looking to Jesus and the ultimate far view! Second Corinthians 4:17-18 says: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (KJV).

If we live for this life only, we may enjoy temporal conveniences and pleasures. But if we keep our eyes on the far view—Jesus, eternity, and what the impact of our lives and services might have on many precious souls—we'll enjoy peace, joy, and satisfaction that few in this world know!

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:2-4, NIV). ❀


"Don't fuss
about what's on
the table at
mealtimes or if
the clothes in
your closet are in
fashion. There is
far more to your
inner life than
the food you put
in your stomach,
more to your
outer appearance
than the clothes
you hang on
your body.
Look at the
ravens, free and
unfettered, not
tied down to a
job description,
carefree in the
care of God.
And you count
far more!"

(Luke 12:22-24—*The Message*, The NT in Contemporary English, p. 179, 180)



Let Me Lead You

Ana Ranjelovi

The events happening this summer remind me of a time when God saved my brother and later my family and me.



Ana Ranjelovi likes to write poetry and paint. But most of all, she enjoys using her spare time to spend with her daughters: Ruth and Sarah. Being together and going with their dog, Toole, to the forests of the nearby hills is what they enjoy most.

Translated by Marija Trajkovska.

We lived in Ni, a town in the south of Serbia. One day we traveled the 20-hour trip to Rijeka, my birthplace, a nice Croatian port on the Northern Adriatic Coast. We arrived a little before the war broke out. My two brothers had been mobilized. Every evening we had a prayer meeting and earnestly prayed for their safety. Our only peace was in God.

A month later, my older brother called that he would come to see us. We felt full of joy that he could spend some time with us. The next afternoon he arrived at our house—we were surprised he could come so quickly as he lives in Zadar, some 500 kilometers away. He said he had a three-day pass, but barely three hours passed before his wife arrived. She carried a military order that he must return to his military base that evening. They immediately left but arrived a little too late. The bus had already left that would take him to the battlefield. His commanding officers were furious. As punishment, he would be on duty the whole night. Later that evening, word came through that the bus ran into an ambush and a minefield.

This news saddened us—all of his buddies died. We praised God

that he was not among them. Now we understood why he had felt a sudden urge to visit his family, even though he was exhausted from night duty, the explosions, and shootings.

My brother's constant prayer had been that he would not be forced to shoot at the enemies, and that they would not shoot him. God answered his prayers.

Now I will share how God saved us four years ago:

We lived in the small Croatian town of Gospi, about 300 kilometers from Rijeka. We enjoyed the clear rivers, huge forests, and fresh air. The district was a large one, 300 kilometers in circumference. Since there were only a few Gospel servants there, we considered it our mission field.

One elderly couple in our neighborhood treated us with hostility. But God opened the way. Their curiosity arose and they asked me about God's word. I suggested that we have Bible studies and our friendship grew.

During that pre-war year, it was impossible to do any public work. We had to change our strategy. We gave Bible studies in people's homes during the day. Night time brought dangers and it wasn't even wise to go out of the city. It was a hard time for us.

The Lord blessed our earnest

efforts and soon I had ten women taking Bible studies. Getting to their homes proved a challenge. Every 20 kilometers barricades blocked the way. The military guards or paramilitary formations demanded documents, the destination the traveler was going, and then there was a search of the person. Also, the guards checked the car for weapons. My husband and children would go with me on these trips. Our oldest was five at the time, and the youngest was about three years of age. God always helped us go through the barricades and gave us courage and peace of mind. As soon as we received clearance, we hurried on to share the good news with those souls eager to receive it.

At the end of that summer, we agreed to take a group of young people mountain climbing to the Triglav Mountain in the Republic of Slovenia. Taking our mountain climbing equipment, we left for Rijeka, planning to leave our children with my parents. The next morning we had to meet the group of young people at the foot of mountain. However, that night we received a call from the church office in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, that we must postpone the trip as they were calling an urgent meeting for the pastors, and my husband must attend. The signs around us showed that war would break out soon.

The children and I stayed in Rijeka, while my husband went to Zagreb. Three days later he returned. We planned to go back to Gospi on Thursday morning, but something was wrong with our car. When it was fixed, it was late afternoon and twilight would soon be upon us. We did not dare leave—night traveling would be too dangerous. We spent the night with my parents.

In the morning we began packing the car. My dad came out, bleary eyed and abruptly asked, "Where do you think you are going? Didn't you hear? Gospi was shelled last night!"

We stood there speechless. Then he told us that he had spent a sleepless night listening to the radio and he recounted the news to us. We tried to call the church members but without success. The lines had been cut. A few days later, we learned the church members were able to escape; some suffered slight injuries. The town had been destroyed. When we all were able to meet again, we felt like Jesus' disciples when they met Him in the Upper Room.

The war conflict grew more intense. We had to move. However, all the roads from Rijeka were blocked. A special license would allow us out, and thanks to my husband's nationality, he was able to obtain it. The next hurdle would be getting through the check points. The afternoon we left, all the streets were empty. We passed through all the barricades. At the last one, two policemen stood with their backs toward us. We sped up and when they finally noticed us, it was too late to stop us. This is the miraculous way God allowed us to escape Croatia and enter Slovenia.

In Ljubjana, the Slovenian capital, we found some of our church members from Gospi. Only then did we realize how great had been our deliverance. They told us that Gospi had been bombed with more than 700 shells a day. The paramilitary formations searched the town, entering shelters and hiding places looking for Serbs. They took Serbian men and women away under the pretense that

they had some jobs and needed workers. No one ever heard from those people again. In the small town of Gospi, everybody knew that the Seventh-day Adventist pastor was a Serb from Belgrade. Oh, how happy I am that God helped us escape that terrible ordeal.

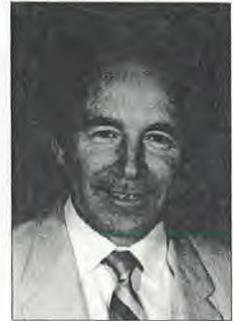
We lost all our earthly treasures, except what we had with us: our mountain climbing equipment, some clothes for the children, and our car. During the first cold days of autumn, we had only light-weight summer clothing. We were poor, but our hearts were full. We sang songs of happiness. And God didn't let us down. A wonderful Christian couple took us to their home and gave us food and clothing. Now we have a secure earthly shelter.

How many times we try to go our way striving to achieve something with our own efforts, regardless of possible danger. Finally God says, "Stop, and see how I will deliver you." Could we, then, stay indifferent to all the revelations of His love and grace? Aren't they reasons enough to sing glory to Him and praise Him for His wise, faithful guidance?

This crucial experience became a turning point in my life. I decided to let Jesus lead me and use me the way I am. As a pastor's wife, I was burdened down trying to live up to everyone's expectations of what a pastor's wife should be like. Each person had a different picture and demanded something of me. However, I realized that Jesus did not have expectations of me, rather He simply accepted me the way I was. He wanted me to let Him lead. It makes me so happy that I want to sing every day because His way is so nice and easy. ❀

Tribute to a Minister's Wife

David Currie



Recently I visited Estonia and attended a funeral for Natalja Stepanova, which was in the town of Elva. I had a brief part in the service giving a talk which honored this true shepherdess, a real "mother of Israel."

Natalja Stepanova was born in Russia in 1924. At the age of 14, her mother and three aunties were thrown into prison for keeping the Sabbath and sharing the truth of God with others. Natalja had two younger sisters and a baby brother who was still in arms. The children were all placed into an orphanage, but Natalja, at the young age of 14, got them out and cared for them herself for ten years.

At age 24, Natalja married a young minister, Ilja Stepanova. They ministered for 16 or 17 years in Uzbekistan. There were only 11 members in the entire providence when the Stepanovas arrived but by the time they moved to another state in the former USSR, there were well over 100 members. The Stepanovas lived and shared their faith.

They started the Adventist church in Turkestan. Later they moved back to Estonia for Ilja was Estonian. Their last home, which they built with their own hands, was in the town of Elva.

David Currie is the president of the Trans-Australian Union

The funeral was well attended. Over 100 people came to pay their respects. Though icy snow covered the ground, people wanted to honor this wonderful lady. Her husband was the last to speak in that little cemetery chapel. He moved over to the open coffin where Natalja looked so serene and then spoke to his wife about some wonderful memories. I can remember many of his words. "Natalja, I want to get close to you but there are too many flowers." (Some of the flowers were then removed so he could stand right by the open coffin. He then put his hand over her folded hands, so that only a sheet separated them.)

"Natalja, you and I have lived in unity for 45 years. You raised your own sisters and brothers at an early age, and you have also raised our three children." (Their daughter is a minister's wife in Lithuania; one son is a minister in Estonia, who lives in his own house next to his parent's home; and the other son is a layman in Germany).

"You worked with me in Russia, but you were more successful than me. You were kinder and you helped more people than I did. We went through difficult times together." (When they had meetings in their house, the KGB would follow

the people, stop them and warn them not to have any more meetings. The people would then go to another member's house and have their Sabbath meetings. They were never put in prison but were continually harassed. They expected to be put into prison at any time.)

"You were always patient, kind and courteous, and you stood beside me all these years and helped me greatly in my work. You have gone to sleep now, Natalja, for just a short time. Soon we will be together again, and I will hold your hands again and we will never be parted, never again!"

While the English custom at funerals is to have a closed coffin, here I could witness, asleep in an open coffin, the sweet serenity of this shepherdess, a wonderful soul winner who started a new group of Adventists in Elva during her retirement years. I felt it an honor to be there in her sleeping presence.

On behalf of our world church, I spoke a few words of thanks for the work that she had shared with her husband. Hers was an abundantly fruitful life, a life of courage and joy as well as sacrifice and hardship. What would we ministers do without our committed wives? ❀

Seventy Times Seven

Luka T. Daniel



Luka T. Daniel, president of the Africa-Indian Ocean Division, tells the story of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor's wife.
Spectrum, June 1996.

When the crisis began, a Hutu member of one of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in Rwanda killed his pastor and thought he had also killed the pastor's wife. The children ran for their lives. After the killers had left, the couple's 20-year-old son came back to see if the parents were still alive. He found his father dead. His mother also looked dead, but when he came to lift her, he could feel that she was still warm. He immediately called for help and rushed her to the hospital. Suffering from a deep gash in her forehead, for two weeks the pastor's wife remained in a coma. It took her months to fully recover.

Finally able to function, the pastor's wife went to the village market. There, she looked up and found herself eye-to-eye with the fellow Adventist who thought he had killed her. The man fell down, began rolling on the ground, and went into convulsions. Since it was in the middle of the marketplace, a crowd quickly gathered.

The pastor's wife knew that if she showed the scar on her forehead and accused the man, the crowd would kill him immediately. So, she told everyone, "Please don't touch him; don't touch him. He saw me, and since he thought I was dead [she didn't tell a lie!], he couldn't believe it. He must have gone into some kind of shock."

So the crowd helped the man to his feet, and took him to the

woman's house. The man had torn his clothes, rolling around on the ground, and the pastor's wife gave him water to bathe himself. After he bathed, she took the shirt of her 20-year-old son, who had rescued her, and gave it to the man.

She told him, "I know you killed my husband and you attempted to kill me. God saved me. I will not be the one who will turn you in. I will not be the one who will call people to kill you. I just plead with you to make yourself right with your God. My husband is gone, and by the special grace of God I am alive. Now go away. I don't want anyone to hear that my husband's killer is in my house. They will come and kill you, and maybe kill me."

She also told the man, who had stopped going to church, "If I were you, I would make things right with my God. I have forgiven you for killing my husband. You had better go and make things right with your God, and begin going to church again. Where you run to, go to church. Go and fellowship with the brethren."

I have seen this courageous, forgiving woman. The scar is still there. So is her voice, in the Shepherdess singing group. This, too, is Rwanda. ❀

Editor's note: We are happy to report that the murderer was rebaptized after this encounter with a pastor's wife who knew the true meaning of forgiveness. Praise the Lord for such a woman.

Sincere Praise in Balance

Zuila V. N.
Rodrigues



Zuila V. N. Rodrigues was born in Pernambuco, NW of Brazil. She served as a teacher for 25 years in the Adventist schools there and also in São Paulo.

As a pastor's wife, she has dedicated her life to Children's Ministries and Vacation Bible Schools. She says, "I love nature and enjoy swimming. My special hobby is to care for my little treasure, Melissa, my granddaughter, who is three years old."

Here he sits, loathsome and sickening living the most sordid life possible. A paralytic, he blames his condition on being the son of sinner parents. His mind is corrupted by the anguish of his daily life. Miserable, despised, unworthy, he depends upon those who pass by each day as they make their way to the magnificent temple in Jerusalem to worship God.

He prefers to sit by the Beautiful Gate because there he can collect enough to survive. Each day he repeats the same refrain in a timid voice that is accompanied by incessant tears.

"Alms please."

"Be merciful to a poor paralytic."

"One coin, if you please . . ."

Each day is the same. Each day is filled with despair and anguish.

Then one day, everything changes. A fisherman with gray hair and callused hands walks by. With him is a young man with long flowing hair and a trusting smile.

"Look at us" they say, "we have no gold or silver."

The man's eyes fill with tears at the disappointing news.

But the men continue to speak. "We are servants of the most high God and He gave us something superior to gold or silver."

Hope revives in the beggar man.

The words "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazarene—WALK!" are spoken. The man is taken by the right hand and lifted.

Those hardened muscles, those insensible toes and nerves receive a blast of power, warmth, and energy that only Jesus can give. The man stands and walks. His voice can be heard praising the Lord. He, who had for so many years been discriminated against by the scribes, priests and pharisees, now walks into the Temple, rejoicing in what the Lord has done for him.

His joy knows no bounds. He jumps to make it evident that he is healed. His voice sings out in praise. He is jubilant in his gratitude to the Lord.

How many of us today live a life like the beggar? How many of us are sitting outside the temple, begging for the swine's food the worldly society offers? How many of us are entering the church in body only, leaving our minds and hearts outside the temple?

When a child is unruly in church, the parents or deacons may take him outside until he is calmed down. Unfortunately, many adults stay outside, conversing with others and socializing long after

the child has calmed down. If cultivated, this is a habit that is difficult to destroy. Better to soothe the child and take him back into church as soon as possible, explaining to the child that God's house is a place of worship and praise, silence and reverence.

What joy God feels when we praise Him with our whole bodies and minds. Though some talk, shout, and clap their hands so

loudly they cannot even hear the voice of God because of the tremendous amount of noise they make, others sit indifferently in silence, their apathetic eyes on the preacher and their minds on worldly issues. Paralyzed by spiritual numbness, they do not even sing with their lips, much less their hearts.

God wants to receive our sincere praise. He desires for us to be balanced human beings who

praise Him for His blessings. We need not go around jumping in the church as did the healed paralytic, but nothing hinders us from accompanying prayers and saying "Amen" at the right time.

The Lord has been merciful to us. Let us give Him thanks-giving with understanding and balance. Let us praise Him with sincere hearts for the marvels He has done. ❁

Prayers from Our Parsonages

Jacquie Z. Randall

The Red Sea
Stabs me with fear.
Why does it have to be there,
Lord?
every time I turn around;

I speak of faith
complete faith in You--
yet
I hate these red seas.

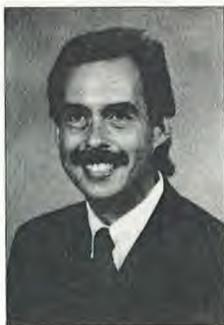
Dear Lord,
more than all
I long to sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb—
that swelling chorus of the faithful
"Hallelujah to my Mighty God
Hosannah and Hosannah
forevermore."

Oh, let me see Your victory, Lord.
Let me see those giant, surely waters
roll back.
Let me see Your cause triumphant
every time I turn around.

Jacquie Randall, M.S., M.F.C.C., is a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor. She specializes in individual psychotherapy, marriage and relationship counseling and clergy/spouse issues. She is also a pastoral wife in the Southern California Conference.

When God Calls, Will Our Children Answer?

Greg Asimakoupoulos



Greg Asimakoupoulos is senior pastor of The Evangelical Covenant Church in Naperville, Illinois. He and his wife, Wendy, have three daughters.

Just Between Us, Winter 1994.

Once upon a time there was a boy by the name of Todd. He attended a church I once pastored. Although he came from a severely dysfunctional family, Todd showed signs of being more than just a survivor. His tender young face projected a gentle spirit which witnessed to the Spirit of Christ within him.

Todd was a Christian. He had invited Jesus into his heart in Children's Church. His compliant manner and interest in spiritual things was most uncommon. As I watched him grow it was as if the Lord was giving me eyes to see Todd in the ministry. "He'd make a great pastor," I thought.

I didn't keep my secret sightings to myself. I shared them with Todd from time to time. "Do you think God may want you to be a pastor someday?" I'd probe. "You have the makings of a great one. You have a heart for the Lord and a sensitivity toward people." "Do you really think so, Pastor Greg?" he smiled knowingly.

I also seeded the idea with Todd's mother with whom he came to church. Although she brought him to worship, Kaye was not what you would call a growing Christian. She had a love for alcohol and relationships with men (other than her husband).

Kaye didn't take my observation seriously.

"You can't be serious pastor?" she would chide. "My son, a pastor? Ha! I think Toddy wants to be a truck driver like his dad."

Because of the influences at home I guess it shouldn't have surprised me that Todd and his mother quit coming to church about the time he entered high school. Todd became infatuated with a girl at school who was not a Christian. The values he observed at home began to take a toll over a bridge that would not lead to the future I believed God had for Todd. I began to grieve for what never would be. My dreams for Todd were dead.

I didn't see Todd for several years. Occasionally I would wonder about his whereabouts. But my ministry took me to new places and new faces. Then last week Todd surprised me with a visit. His eyes lacked the gleam they once had flashed. His face seemed as hard toward life as his heart was toward the things of God. My joy in seeing Todd was overshadowed by regrets and why's. My mind raced to a quote I'd encountered in Barlett's "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these . . . 'it might have been'."

So who will be the pastors of tomorrow? Have you ever wondered that? And if you have, have you ever wondered how those God is calling into full-time Christian ministry will be encouraged to respond to His call? I have. And not just because of the Todds God continues to bring into my church. After all, I am one of those youngsters who heard God's call and responded. As I reflected on why I am in the ministry today, the following surfaced as significant factors:

1. I was loved and accepted by the people in my life that modeled Christian ministry before my eyes. The value that these Christians placed on *doing God's work* made an impact on me because of the value they placed on me. I felt significant when I was around these people. As a result, when they affirmed my spiritual gifts I took their comments seriously. My ears were already angled in their direction.

2. The leaders of the church in which I grew up let me hang around while they did their work. I was invited to accompany them on hospital calls and nursing home visits as well as watch while the bulletins were run off on the noisy, greasy mimeograph machine (what's that?).

3. I attended a church that was fun. Going to church was a "get-to," not a "have-to." The music was alive. The Sunday School teachers cared for the kids and expressed their love beyond an hour's commitment once a week. My pastor called me by name. In addition, there was an electricity of excitement whenever the people of our church gathered together for worship, fellowship, or at a family restaurant after service. Church was a positive experience I didn't want to miss (even if I

thought the sermons boring).

4. I was given opportunities to be involved from an early age. I was allowed to distribute hymnals, pass out bulletins, play my saxophone, sing a solo, give announcements, usher, sing in the choir, (and by the time I was in high school) preach my first sermon. I had plenty of chances to test my abilities and interests in what I construed to be the life of the pastor.

5. The church I grew up in always challenged its young people with the possibility that God might be calling them individually to serve Him in a full-time ministry. Be it our own pastor or a guest preacher, there were regular invitations from the pulpit to consecrate our lives for service as pastors or missionaries if God would so chose. The reason I knew God was calling me was based on what I had been taught. I knew God calls people into the ministry and hence was listening.

6. There was never any pressure applied whenever I verbalized my interest in wanting to become a pastor. Yes, there was a lot of affirmation and validation of my abilities. Yes, people would often say I'd be a great minister. My pastor and key people within the church were always willing to answer questions that I had about the ministry. They encouraged me to seek the Lord's will and pray about my future. They would even pray with me. But they never used strong-arm tactics or laid a guilt trip on me. I always knew that what I would eventually do with my life was a decision left up to the Lord and me.

I can't help but wonder to what degree the absence of one or more of these factors accounted for Todd's response (or lack of one). Although my heart is heavy

whenever I think of Todd, it is eternally grateful whenever I think of those the Lord used in my young life to help me hear His call.

Perhaps God desires to use you to create an environment in your church where tomorrow's pastors and missionaries will emerge. If so, what little life will you look at a wee bit differently next Sunday morning? And how will that new perspective affect what you do or what you say? ❁



How Great Thou Art!

Gladlyn Williams

*He spread the heavens
Laid out the fields
Painted the rainbow
in its radiant tree
He made the waters
vast and small
Filled with creatures of
many kinds
He made the birds and
creatures all
And made mankind to
crown them all
Who did?—God
My God—The
Eternal One.*

Gladlyn Williams is the president of the Grenada Shepherdess Chapter.



How Does He Love Me?

Kathleen Edel

A wife appreciates the everyday ways her husband expresses his love.



Kathleen A. Edel, Elk Grove, California, a former psychiatric social worker, is now a freelance writer.

From Home Life, September 1993. (c) Copyright 1993, The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

DO YOU LOVE ME?" I asked my husband recently. He was in the kitchen at the sink, washing his hands. He was a mess because he'd been working in the yard all morning.

His look was one of surprise. "Of course I do," he said.

While I had been searching for a more flowery pronouncement of his love, Stephen had indeed shown me he cared. After all, the yard *was* beautiful.

Had I missed other demonstrations of his love, things I'd taken for granted during our 16 years of marriage?

I decided to list the everyday duties Stephen often did, simple tasks that said, "I love you."

He changes the tires on my car. While that isn't exactly a romantic gesture, it does show he is concerned for my safety. Too often, men (and women, too) perform chores out of obligation, and everyone involved forgets that love is the foundation for these actions.

I made a mental note to appreciate Stephen changing the tires of my car and checking the brakes and oil. His actions remind me he cares for me and for our family.

He cleans the fish. Often what seems like a minor task to a

husband may well seem like a major task to a wife. For me, cleaning fish is a smelly, messy, grotesque chore.

Fortunately, this task has never bothered Stephen, and he often smiles as he happily scrapes away, while I sit at the other end of the campsite—until he's finished.

Believe me, I appreciate that. He also jokes that he's the one to clean the fish, while I am usually the one to catch them, which is often true. To me, that's loving behavior.

He mows the lawn. Not much romance about this weekly obligation. But because Stephen dutifully mows the lawn each week, without anyone's insistence, he shows he has pride in our house and cares for his family.

Sometimes husbands just plod ahead, faithfully performing their obligations, but frequently feeling misunderstood, unappreciated, and taken for granted. A wife can let her husband know how much she cherishes the daily chores he performs.

Too often we get caught up in the negative. In a workshop I attended for teachers, we were encouraged to take note of positive behaviors, even if that meant noticing a few obvious facts.

When I tried this in a third grade class with one particularly stubborn student, I was amazed at the results. After noting that Jonathan was sitting in his seat, had a pencil in his hand, I dutifully ignored that he hadn't yet started on his classwork. After all, the workshop leader had suggested that we make only positive observations.

After a few moments, I returned to Jonathan's desk, expecting the worst. Instead, Jonathan was engrossed in his schoolwork.

In my marriage, I'm still tempted to point out the negative to my husband instead of appreciating the positive things he does.

"You never send me roses," I used to gripe. I hadn't paid attention to the things he *had* done. It wasn't my husband's behavior that was at fault—it was my rotten perspective.

He doesn't complain when the laundry threatens to overtake the house. Sometimes when I'm caught up in a project, it's necessary to let the laundry go. Instead of griping about the huge pile of dirty clothes, Stephen just pops a load into the washer.

The laundry isn't mine or his, it's a task that needs to be done, and we both feel responsible for it.

He brings in the bulk of the bacon. He earns the larger paycheck, and I'm thankful for that. I know it's not easy rising early to head off for work, but he doesn't demand that I earn more money. Instead he's supportive that I work at home and substitute teach occasionally.

He is my biggest fan. When I recently received a modest check for my writing, Stephen practically twirled me around the kitchen. "That's wonderful," he exclaimed, while I glanced at him sheepishly.

"But, it's such a small check," I said.

"You're realizing your dream," he insisted. "If I had earned the same amount for a golfing tournament, you'd be proud of me."

In the past, I might have brushed off his words as insignificant. Instead, I decided to accept his support.

He brings me tea and toast in bed on Saturdays. When Stephen brings me a cup of tea on the weekend, I feel cherished and loved. It's a small way he shows me he cares, and I love feeling special and pampered.

He warms my heart—and my feet. Stephen doesn't complain that my feet are usually ice cold when I snuggle up next to him in bed. He just cuddles me and warms my feet with his own, which are always warm.

He makes dinner when I'm caught up in a project. Occasionally when I'm working on a deadline and have lost track of time, Stephen quietly will come into my office, ask what I'd like for dinner, then slips out as I continue typing.

By the time I'm finished, dinner's ready and we enjoy the delicious meal he's made. Then we both do the dishes so we can have the evening together.

He chops firewood. After I made my list, instead of asking Stephen if he loved me, I decided to tell him one of the ways he'd shown his love for me that day. He'd been out chopping wood most of the morning, and he'd come into the kitchen for a short break.

I poured him a cup of coffee, then sat across from him at the table. "You must love me very much," I told him.

"Why, yes," he said. "I do."

"You know how much I love a cozy fire on a cold, rainy night," I added. "You've worked all

morning, chopping and stacking firewood. You must really love me a lot," I said.

The look on his face startled me as I noticed tears in his eyes. It was as if I'd told him something he'd know long ago, but in the busyness of daily chores, he'd forgotten.

"Sometimes I work too hard," he told me, "but the reason is because I *do* love you. I'd have preferred to spend the morning with you, but I wanted to make sure there was firewood for the winter."

Later that afternoon, we went out for an early supper, and as we held hands across the small table for two, I felt a beautiful peace, knowing how much my husband cares for me.

Sometimes he does more romantic things, gestures that most women would appreciate. He brings me flowers or candy; but since I've made my list, I've come to cherish the small tasks that Stephen does on a daily basis.

I guess in some ways, it seems as if Stephen has changed, but I know, in reality, that I have, because I'm able to see his love for me more and more each day.

Cleaning fish, chopping firewood, or changing the tires on the car may not be romantic gestures to some women, but I've come to appreciate them for what they represent: my husband's love and devotion for me. ❀



Shepherdess International News

Africa-Indian Ocean Division

Margarida Sarli, from the General Conference Ministerial Association, spoke at several workers' meetings in the Africa-Indian Ocean Division during her itinerary there.



Reunion Conference pastors' wives meet with Margarida Sarli, sixth from left.



Mauritius Conference pastors' wives during their seminars with Margarida Sarli.



Madagascar pastors' wives during the ministers' and sponsors' meetings with Margarida Sarli.

Asia-Pacific Division

Ellen V. Roque, Shepherdess Coordinator for the Central Luzon Conference, reports that the pastors' wives there have been busy conducting marriage enrichment seminars and vegetarian cooking schools in their local districts. In September, they held their second continuing education event on the topic of clergy family relationships. Their Shepherdess membership has now climbed to almost 120.

Naomi Hendriks, Shepherdess Coordinator for the West Indonesia Union Mission, reports on evangelistic activities conducted by pastors' wives.



Pastors' wives from the East Visayan Mission pose after a surprise party they planned for their husbands at a prestigious restaurant.



Central Luzon Conference pastors' wives at the meeting where new officers were elected for 1996-1999. Ellen V. Roque was re-elected to serve as president.



West Java Mission pastors' wives receive certificates from the Adventist University in Bandung which certifies them Bible workers.



Conference Shepherdess Coordinators meet with Naomi Hendriks to plan activities and educational events for the West Indonesia Union Mission pastors' wives.



Left: Mrs. J. O. Manullang preaching at her evangelistic meetings.

Below: As a result of Mrs. Manullang's evangelistic meetings, 21 people were baptized.



On June 14-22, 1996, Naomi Hendriks, Jane Manafe, and the team from the Bandung Adventist Hospital conducted a health expo, charity clinic, cooking classes, and public effort in Cilacap. As a result of these activities, 60 souls were baptized.



Euro-Africa Division



Shepherdesses and sponsors from the Franco-Belgium Union Conference at their annual retreat.

Inter-American Division

Administrative wives from all over the world attended the Administrative and Delegate Spouses' Meetings held in San Jose, Costa Rica, during the Annual Council session. Seminar speakers included Karen Flowers, from the Family Life Department at the General Conference; Evelyn Omana, Inter-American Division SIEMA (Shepherdess) Coordinator; and Mary Maxson, from the *Adventist Review*. Rae Lee Cooper, from the General Conference Ministerial Association, presented a health and exercise feature each day.



Administrative wives at their meetings in Costa Rica.

North American Division

Frances McClure, Division Shepherdess Coordinator, hosted three days of seminars and fellowship for the North American Division administrators' wives during the year-end meeting held in Washington, DC. Guest speakers included Dr. Rheeta M. Stecker from Arkansas and Dorothy Watts, well-known author and speaker from the General Conference.



Dorothy Watts and Frances McClure.

The Iowa-Missouri Conference ministry wives attended a Shepherdess retreat in August. Dennis Barts was the guest speaker for two sessions entitled "Exercise and Physical Fitness" and "Investment Planning."

South American Division

Bolivia Union Mission, which is one of the newest unions in the division, held their first continuing education meeting for AFAM (Shepherdess). The four-day event consisted of ten classes. They received their first gifts of recognition for being pastors' wives from Vasti Viana, the

Division's AFAM Coordinator.

The South Lima Mission hosted a one-day meeting for all the pastors and wives. Alicia Arn, the AFAM Coordinator of the Peru Union, presented a seminar on devotional life. Vasti Viana, from the Division, gave a seminar on being a part of the church's mission.

The East Peru Mission held a convocation for all of the pastors' wives in Tarapoto, a jungle town. The mission had to send all of the pastors' wives by airplane because it is dangerous to travel through the jungle by car or bus. Alicia Arn and Vasti Viana officiated at the meeting.

Two meetings were held for the theology students' spouses: in Peru, at the Inca Union University and at the Theological Seminary in IAENE in Brazil. Both meetings included seminars on the importance of continuing education.



Pastors and wives meet together for a seminar in Manaus, Brazil, commemorating the "Day of the Pastor." The conference provided flowers and gifts for all and dinner at a fine restaurant.

Austral Union Conference, South Brazil Union Conference, and Central Brazil Union Conference all held meetings with their Shepherdess leaders to plan for 1997.

Pastors' wives from Uruguay met in Montevideo for a one-day meeting and luncheon.

Southern Asia Division

Mrs. Julia James who teaches the Bible Workers Course for the pastors' wives gives us the following report:

Along with my husband, I have the privilege of training the pastors' wives in the Southern Asia Division who are not employed by the organization. The Southern Asia Division made a plan to train the pastors' wives to be Bible women, so that they could work along with their husbands to witness for the Master.

Thus far we have trained 277 pastors' wives to be Bible women

and granted them stipends. The pastors' wives studied Bible Doctrines; Personal Evangelism; Adventist Lifestyle; Role of the Pastor's Wife in the Home, in the Church, and Among the People. After examinations on both knowledge and performance, they were graduated and received certificates to be Bible women.

After the graduations, they all were hired to witness for the Lord.

I want to relate to you the experience of one pastor's wife. Girupai John Mayavelu is from the North Tamil Conference. She took her notes and filled with hope that God would lead her, she stood in front of a Pentecostal congregation, mostly women, and preached about the Sabbath truth. Do you know what happened? With the help of the Holy Spirit, 36 people believed the Sabbath truth and were baptized in the name of Jesus into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

My dear friends and shepherdesses, when we submit ourselves into the hands of the Almighty and say, "Lord, here I am available but not able to do Your work. Take me and accept my humbleness and do wonders to save people who are in darkness," God will bless our work with miracles. Praise God for Sister Girupai's services.

A "shepherdess" is a very special person. She works along with her pastor-husband and joins with church members in visiting the sick and praying for them. God intends for ministry to be a privilege and pleasure, not a curse or burden we have to bear.

When we are willing to do God's work, He will use us for His glory. It is a noble work to witness for the Master. Please remember our precious Bible women from the Southern Asia Division in your prayers.

In Memory Johanna Allers 1960-1995

On Sunday evening, October 27, 1996, in the town of Pietersburg (300 km. north of Johannesburg), Pastor Gertjie Allers and his wife, Johanna (fondly known to everybody as Hanneltjie), were busy locking up their church after a Sunday night evangelistic meeting, planning to walk next door to their parsonage. Three armed robbers appeared and started shooting at both of them. They killed Johanna almost immediately and seriously wounded her husband, leaving him for dead.

Hanneltjie was born on December 29, 1960. She was reared by her grandmother in the coastal town of Vredendal in the Western Cape. She attended the University of Stellenbosh, studying art but eventually transferred to Helderberg College, equipping herself to be a teacher. She met Gertjie there, and they were married on December 12, 1982.

Hanneltjie and Gertjie served twice in the West Rand District of Johannesburg and in Potchefstroom. They came to Pietersburg at the beginning of 1996. Hanneltjie's work was evident wherever they lived. She was very artistic and loved nature and animals. They had hardly moved in at Pietersburg when she designed and built a beautiful pond containing a collection of Koi fish. Camp meeting at Sedaven was a standing appointment for her and Gertjie. She had been responsible for the Senior Youth theme paintings and emblems since 1984.

Hanneltjie exemplified a life of unselfish service for her master and His church. With her husband, the whole church mourns the passing of this beautiful woman. We all take courage in the hope of seeing her again when Jesus will resurrect those who sleep in the dust. Maranatha!

*What is the funniest
or most embarrassing thing
that has happened to you?*

NEW SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL PROJECT

Shepherdess International is in the process of compiling the funniest and most embarrassing things that have happened to clergy wives. Through the years, women have shared with me their most delightful and humorous stories, and we want yours included in this compilation. *You may or may not choose to have your name printed with the incident!*

Please send your story to:

Sharon Cress
Shepherdess International
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 U.S.A.

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We need a catchy title for this collection of parsonage humor. Along with your story, please send your suggestion/s for a title. Suggest as many as you like. The winner (who must be a minister's wife) will receive US\$100.00!

*The proceeds from the sale of this book
will fund pastors' wives' projects
to share the good news of Jesus Christ.*
