

The Journal



A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

Volume 20

Fourth Quarter 2003

Number 3

A Christmas Message

Author Unknown

*I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book
And every year at Christmas time, I go and take a look.
And that is when I realize that these names are part,
Not of the book they're written in, but of my very heart.
For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime,
And in that meeting, they've become the rhythm of the rhyme.
And while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim,
I truly feel I am composed of each remembered name.
While you may not be aware of any special link,
Just meeting you has shaped my life more than you can think.
For once you've met somebody, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.
So, never think my Christmas card is just a mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list forgotten in between.
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you,
It's because you're on the list of folks that I'm indebted to.
For you're part of the total of the many folks I've met,
And you happen to be one of those I'd rather not forget.
And whether I have known you for many years or few,
In some way, you had a part in shaping things I do.
And every year, when Christmas comes, I realize anew,
That the biggest gift that life can give, is meeting folks like you.*

The Journal

- 3 A Christmas Letter
- 4 In Search of the Perfect Christmas
- 5 Mother's Christmas Miracle
- 7 The Star of Bethlehem
- 9 My "Nice Guy" Christmas
- 10 The Cost of Christmas
- 12 A Christmas Blessing
- 14 Remembering a Pastor's Wife
- 15 Honoring Pastors
- 17 The Lost Art of Listening
- 18 Happy Thanksgiving
- 19 Shepherdess International News

Bible Credits:

Text credited to NIV are from *the Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

All articles are printed with permission.

Editor's Musings

Someone once described a friend as someone with whom you can "waste" time. Could this be why so many clergy spouses have so few friends? After all, we have so little time to "waste." We greet each other with "How are you?" "Busy. And you?" "I'm incredibly busy, too." Having participated in that litany, we immediately get down to more busyness, which some of us enjoy wearing like a holy mantle.

A philosopher commented that atheism in the modern world is characterized by this affirmation: "If I don't do it, it won't happen." Occasionally, as pastors' wives we get a chastening reminder that God is so great that He can be at work even when we are not! How humbling that He does not need you or me to supervise and direct every activity!

One of the burdens of being financially poor is that all our money must be spent on necessities, with not much left for anything else. Some of us have made ourselves "time poor" and live with a similar burden—all our time is spent on "necessary" things, and we are left with no time for anything else, including important (and necessary!) things, like friendships.

It takes courage to sit on a park bench, to lazily read a book, to linger at the window and watch the drama of the rain or the beauty of a rainbow. It takes courage to sit and do nothing.

My challenge for you and me this day is to set aside time to "waste." In the frenzy and wickedness of this world we surely need the respite. Jesus created you and me with a need for emotional rest. Let's follow His example and leave things in the hands of our Father.

God bless us every one!



The Journal A SHEPHERDESS

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR

MINISTRY SPOUSES is a quarterly publication produced by Shepherdess International, an entity of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association.

Editorial Office: 12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Phone: (301) 680-6513 Fax: (301) 680-6502

e-mail: lowes@gc.adventist.org

web page: www.ministerialassociation.com/shepherd/shepindex.html

Printed in the U.S.A.

Coordinator: Sharon Cress

Editor: Sharon Cress

Editorial Assistant: Shelly Lowe

Layout and Design: Ann Taylor

Ministry to Clergy Spouses

Division Coordinators:

East Central Africa—to be appointed

Euro-Africa—Maeva Maurer

Euro-Asia—Galina Stele

Inter-American—Evelyn Omana

North American—Marti Schneider

Northern Asia-Pacific—Nam Young Ja

South American—Evelyn Nagel and Raquel Arrais

South Pacific—Debora Kent

Southern Asia—Hepzibah Kore

Southern Asia-Pacific—Ellen Missah

Southern Africa-Indian Ocean—Nonceba Mathema

Western Africa—Elizabeth Ewoo

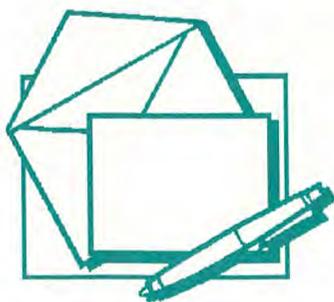
A Christmas Letter



Gloria Neidigh

Most Americans look forward to the holiday season between Thanksgiving and the New Year. The time is filled with family and friends. There's shopping to be done, food to be fixed, parties to attend. Just thinking of all that has to be done can be exhausting.

Recently I was talking with a friend and said, "I long for January. I am counting the days until all is quiet and restful once again." Later I was thinking of my comment. I realized that our lives are often like



Gloria is a clergy spouse who lives in Tillamook, Oregon. She enjoys birdwatching and long walks along the bay.

those holiday weeks—so full, we simply can't stop and cherish the important things in life.

So, for a moment, stop the hustle and bustle. Go to your favorite place, the place where you meet with the God of the Universe. Put on your cozy slippers, wrap up in your favorite blanket, turn off all the electronic sounds of the modern world and gently take in your hands one of God's gifts to you—your Bible. Look at 1 Corinthians 13:12, 13.

We don't see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing Him directly just as He knows us! But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God (faith), hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is *love*..

The rain and mist of your life experiences may be pressing on you. Life may have left you "squinting" with tears as you face unanswered questions and events. A loved one may have died, a promising job lost. Perhaps you've developed a

devastating health problem or your children are choosing a life without Jesus. Such trials can ravage a person's well-being.

Like the holiday rush that causes you to miss the real reason behind the holiday season, so a life without a relationship with Jesus can cause you to miss out on opportunities to give the gift of love. Though Christmas Day is not Jesus' actual birthday, for about five weeks, behind the glitter and tinsel, through the music and spirit of the season, Jesus can be seen. Gift-giving, baking, going to parties—these busy activities bring us some joy and fill our time, but what about time spent sharing God's love? The more we love and worship Jesus, the more we are empowered to share with others Immanuel, our God.

So, seize the season and anticipate how God might use you fully for His glory. **Trust** steadily in God, **hope** unswervingly, and **love** extravagantly. Experience these gifts and share them with others. Make the sharing a lifelong process, not one that lasts only during the holiday season.

With warmth, acceptance, and love, I wish you and your family a happy holiday season and a quiet, restful January.



In Search of the Perfect Christmas



Dave Meurer

With candles glowing softly in the living room, snow floating quietly into our front yard and the Bible opened to that familiar “shepherds abiding” story in the gospel of Luke, it was a picture-perfect Christmas Eve until the coffee table erupted in flames.

As part of my German heritage, our family has always opened at least one present on the night before Christmas. Somehow, a piece of wrapping paper got too close to a candle. It did not merely ignite; it exploded.

Instinctively, I began stomping on the paper in an effort to smother the flames. This is an effective way to stop a small fire unless you happen to be wearing brand-new furry “lion’s head” slippers, which immediately flame to life like some kind of mythological beast roused from its thousand-year slumber.

In less time than it takes to sing “presents roasting on an open fire,” our quiet holiday evening was transformed into a modern-day

version of Dante’s *Inferno*, only stupider and less poetic.

“Grab that thingy!” I yelled to my son Mark as I performed an impromptu version of “River Dance” (albeit with more smoke).

“The hose?” he yelled back.

“The red thingy that sprays stuff,” I barked.

But my wife, Dale, had already grabbed the fire extinguisher and began blasting away. In a roar of white mist the flames died out, and the room filled with gently falling ashes.

We all stared quietly at the mess.

My lion slippers sported melted whiskers, the coffee table bore scorch marks and white powder residue from the extinguisher covered the floor. We opened the doors and windows to clear the air and spent the evening cleaning things up. I don’t think we ever got back to the shepherds abiding peacefully in their fields. And I finally gave up my quest for the perfect Christmas.

For many years, I had embarked on a futile attempt to achieve that elusive ideal—the romanticized holiday captured in magazines and 30-second TV commercials. The ingredients seemed so simple: a warm fire glowing in the hearth, hot cider brewing in the kitchen, the glow of the tree and my family snuggled together on the sofa as we

recounted the touching story of Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus.

But something always went wrong. The fireplace belched smoke back into the room, a drink got spilled or one of the kids asked if he could play a video game right when the angels were about to bring tidings of great joy.

As each year passed without me realizing my dream of a perfect Christmas, I became progressively more uptight, obsessive and ridiculous.

“All I want is one perfect holiday! Just one,” I complained to Dale.

“Dave, we have kids! It will *never* be perfect,” Dale replied. “Can you just let it be *good*? Can you just enjoy what actually *is* instead of what you think it should be?”

As is so often the case, my wife was right. Irritating at the time, but right nevertheless.

The perfect Christmas is a myth. After all, the first Christmas was hardly perfect. It was glorious and difficult, miraculous and earthy, sublime and sweaty, tender and yet so harsh. Angel songs were mixed with animal smells. The hopes and fears of all the years were jumbled together as heaven invaded a stable.

Nothing has really changed since then. Hopes and fears still meet. Christmas may not be perfect. But it can be good.



Dave Meurer still wears his melted lion slippers in Redding, California. Besides being a writer, Dave is also a dedicated husband and the father of two boys, and it’s from these experiences—and some of the humorous situations that arise—that Dave mines the comic gold of *Stark Raving Dad*, *Boyhood Daze*, *Daze of Our Wives*, and *Out on a Whim*. See his website for more information: www.davemeurer.com.

Mother's Christmas Miracle



Sharon Dyer

Sharon Dyer has been married to her husband, Ray, for 30 years. They have three grown children: Jennifer, Kelly and Dan and a grandson, Kaleb. Sharon works three days a week as a piano teacher at Marshall Music in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She enjoys writing music and poetry and has had over 200 poems published in 35 different Christian and secular periodicals.



Calls received at 5:30 in the morning usually aren't good news, and this one was no exception.

"Mom's had a bad heart attack," my brother Russell said on the other end of the phone. "She's on a respirator. Pam and I are leaving right away. You need to come as soon as you can."

It was a week and a half before Christmas of 1997 and Traverse City was almost four hours away from Grand Rapids. Questions began swirling in my mind—Would she be alive when I got there? Would she have some kind of permanent brain damage because of the massive heart attack? Would we be able to mend our strained relationship as mother and daughter?

A close friend of mine who lives near me and also has a home near Traverse City said, "Let's go" when I told her the news. My husband stayed home with our two teenagers.

Since I had not been raised by my mother from the age of seven, we weren't as close as we could have been. She and my father had not married and that was something that was always between us—a closed part of her life and a blank part of mine.

My grandmother's sister raised me and although I saw my mother periodically as I was growing up, she

was busy with six other children.

Later, when I married and had children of my own, my mother and stepfather moved to the northern part of Michigan. Because they didn't have a phone, cards and letters were our only means of communication. Even as her life was becoming freer with all of her children grown and married, mine was becoming busier with three children five and under.

"Please don't let her die, Lord," was my constant prayer during the long drive. "Please let us have another chance to love each other."

The weather was windy and brisk as we exited the car in the parking lot of Munson Medical Center. Christmas decorations filled the hallways of the hospital. It was not a good time to think of losing a parent.

The hallways to Intensive Care were full of family—my brothers and their wives, my young sister Gloria, nieces and nephews. "What happened?" I asked Gloria as we embraced.

"We called the paramedics and they had her airlifted here. She was dead but they took the paddles and resuscitated her."

I greeted some more of my family and made my way to Mother's room.

Mother was alive and off the respirator. She was sitting propped up on pillows in a large lounge chair

next to her hospital bed. She was breathing with only the help of oxygen. All of a sudden I realized how old and frail my mother was.

"Hi, Sharon," she said with a faint smile. I kissed her and put a picture of my first grandchild on her hospital stand.

"He looks like you, Sharon," she said. And he did. Kaleb has dark hair, dark brown eyes and is a little on the chubby side.

I spent four days in Traverse City staying with my friend at her home in the country, making daily trips to Munson Medical Center.

During my stay, my mother told me that this was her best Christmas ever and that I was the best Christmas present she could receive. My youngest brother, Mark, who had been at the hospital day and night, looked up with a smile and said, "What about me?" Mark knew that a restoration was taking place between the two of us.

The doctor told my sister Gloria, who lived next to Mother, that she had only a brief time to live. One year at the most he told Gloria. They had also discovered that my mother had cancer of the bladder and they could only do minimal treatment because of her weakened heart. God graciously gave my mother three more years before the cancer became more aggressive.

In January of 2001, my mother had a large growth on her ankle and needed a biopsy. I came to spend a week with her. After I returned home, Gloria told me that Mother had non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a cancer that attacks the entire body, and had six months to live at the most.

Mother lived three months from that diagnosis. She died in April, two days before my birthday, in her modest mobile home with five of her seven children at her side. I was privileged to be one of them.

Her funeral was an incredibly warm and glorious spring day. I played the organ for her service, and with my sister and brothers, watched six grandsons carry her silver casket up the hill in a small country cemetery.

It had been three and a half years since the December heart attack. Even as I wept tears of sorrow at her grave, I thanked the Lord for the extra time He gave us and for Mother's Christmas Miracle. 

The Weathered Old Barn

Author Unknown

A stranger came by the other day with an offer that set me to thinking. He wanted to buy the old barn that sits out by the highway. I told him right off he was crazy. He was a city type, you could tell by his clothes, his car, his hands, and the way he talked. He said he was driving by and saw that beautiful barn sitting out in the tall grass and wanted to know if it was for sale. I told him he had a funny idea of beauty.

Sure, it was a handsome building in its day. But then, a lot of winters have passed with their snow and ice and howling wind. The summer sun has beat down on that old barn till all the paint is gone, and the wood has turned silver gray. Now the old building leans a good deal, looking kind of tired.

Yet that fellow called it beautiful.

That set me to thinking. I walked out to the field and just stood there, gazing at that old barn. The stranger said he planned to use the lumber to line the walls of his den in a new country home he's building down the road. He said you couldn't get paint that beautiful. Only years of standing in the weather, bearing the storms and scorching sun, only that can produce beautiful barn wood.

It occurred to me then. We're a lot like that, you and I.

Only with us the beauty grows on the inside. Sure, we turn silver gray too . . . and lean a bit more than we did when we were young and full of sap. But the Good Lord knows what He's doing. And as the years pass, He's busy using the hard weather of our lives, the dry spells and the stormy seasons, to do a job of beautifying in our souls that nothing else can produce. And to think how often folks holler because they want life easy!

They took the old barn down today and hauled it away to beautify a rich man's house. And I reckon someday you and I will be hauled off to Heaven to take on whatever chores the Good Lord has for us on the Great Sky Ranch. And I suspect we'll be more beautiful then for the seasons we've been through here . . . and maybe even add a bit of beauty to our Father's house.

The storms of our life prove the strength of our anchor.

The Star of Bethlehem



Sally Lam-Phoon

It took many months to locate just the right star to adorn the top of our Christmas tree. The star was golden, had the right length and breadth to it, and above all fit my limited budget. I tied it to the little pointed branch at the crown of our six-foot tree. To secure the star to this topmost branch, I wound twine 'round and 'round until the branch was hidden. The tree was now perfect, a most beautiful sight, a symbol of the season of giving and goodwill.

Christmas trees, be they fir or spruce, are always pointed at the top, and without an ornament right at the pinnacle, the tree looks incomplete. But why are Christmas trees pointed? I guess God made them that way.

In the forests where Christmas trees abound, each tree has to reach for the sky and strive to keep its topmost branches in the sunlight, its source of life. Therefore, at the end of winter and the beginning of spring, a new shoot forms at the top of each tree. This shoot holds the potential for a tree's growth and survival. Each new shoot is made up of five points, with the middle point assuming its leadership position as "king." This position brings with it the responsibility of drawing nutrients from its roots deep in the ground, as well as reaching for the

life-giving properties of the sun. This leader has only one focus: to ensure that the whole tree survives. So long as the king pointer is alive, it silently and unassumingly carries out a solemn duty. It concentrates on its commitment, doing daily what the Creator intended for it to do.

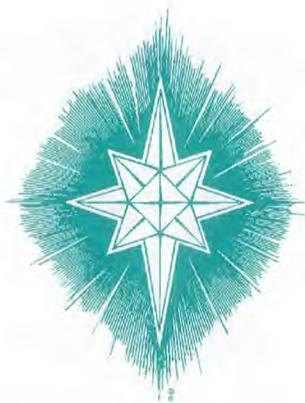
What a vital lesson in Christian leadership! In all its simplicity, this function of the king pointer reminds Christian leaders of the significance of digging deep into the study of the Word of God and reaching daily for the Sun of Righteousness, knowing full well that we draw life and light for our souls through Him.

And when its work is done and life is over, the king pointer quietly fades away. God designed these trees so that one of the other pointers will move into position and assume the role as king—and the tree is assured of its continual survival. There is no scrambling, elbowing, and fighting for control; the changing of the guard is uneventful and seamless.

When leadership is viewed as responsibility—responsibility for carrying out the will of God—it does not matter who is leader. Often in human relationships and expectations, leadership is equated with power and self-glory. The concept of how Christ emptied Himself is foreign to the citizens of Planet Earth. When we catch a glimpse of how we can empty

Sally Lam-Phoon is the Shepherdess, education and women's ministries director for the Southeast Union Mission in Singapore.





ourselves and allow God to work through us by His Spirit, “peace on earth” will be within our reach. The unity the apostle Paul talked about can be achieved when Christians begin to see that leadership is not a position, but a duty.

It is not something we should spend our time and energy lobbying for. If it comes our way, then joyfully carry that responsibility; if it doesn’t, uphold and bolster the courage of the leader as Christ would if He were on earth. Then we can truly “grow up into him . . . From him the whole body joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:15, 16).

For me, that pointer at the top came in useful as an anchor for my tree-topper—my shining star. It held the star in place. The king pointer, almost completely hidden from sight amid the twine, gave all its glory to that star. Likewise, as Christian leaders, all that we do is “to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:14).

It is not position that calls us to do God’s work. It is not for our own self-realization or self-fulfillment. It is a call to do His bidding and to show forth His glory. What a privilege that the Star of Bethlehem has chosen us as His vessels from which He can shine, eclipsing our own feeble efforts as a channel of His love and grace. 

The Shepherdess’ Prayer

Jualoma Miles



Kind and thoughtful, generous and sweet,
Helpful and cheerful, faithful and neat,
Good wife and good mother, good neighbor,
good friend,

Good worker, good mixer—oh, where will it
end?

Thy people, O Lord, expect all this of me.
A paragon of virtue they feel I should be.
I know, O my Father, it’s known only above
That inside I’m oft fearful and lacking in love.
That doubt and rebellion, cross words and such
Struggle for mastery—trouble me much.

Each morning Thou givest me strength for
the day,

Each evening my failures before Thee I lay.
Dear Father, I must have Thee ever with me
That I may faithfully represent Thee.

May I “hold up the hands” of my husband,
dear Lord,

That he may devotedly give forth Thy word.
Amen.

My "Nice Guy" Christmas

J. Grant Swank, Jr.

I was in a hurry, driving into the mall's parking lot, hardly looking to right and left. "Slow down!" my right side of the brain instructed the left side. It was somewhere in that mid-conscious level that thoughts were targeting one another for reason. How many errands were buzzing in my tired head. Somewhere in my peripheral vision there was a young girl pushing a load of shopping carts toward the grocery store. There must have been twenty to thirty of those huge metal carriers locked into one another. I had space enough. There was no danger. I could swing around that slow moving train of silver gleam headed for the lineup outside the food mart. So it was that I meandered my car to the right of those carriages, then spied an empty space near the drug store where I could park, dash in for a quick purchase, and then dash back to the steering wheel. As I flung open the car door, I looked up to see that young girl. She was peering straight at me. How could she have gotten to that part of the parking lot so quickly after having pushed all those heavy carts? Anyhow, there she was, a hurt look on her face. "When are you going to learn to drive with sense?" she called out to me, not very happy with my presence. With a sad glance down to

the pavement, she turned around, having accomplished what her sense of justice had prodded. Before I realized what had happened, she had disappeared among the cars lined up as toy soldiers. I went into the drug store, bought my trinket, and felt troubled 'way down deep inside. All of a sudden the Christmas cheer had disappeared from my heart. No amount of painted reindeer on poles outside could erase the picture of that girl's look. "What have I done?" I asked my inner wilted self. What I had done was to drive thoughtlessly, carelessly. I had also brought pain to a young person at the most holy season of the year. It simply was not right. But what could I do about it? She was gone, meshed in with the hub-bub outside. She'd be forgotten in the day's upset. However, when I walked toward my car again, there she was. But this time she was not bothering to scold me. She was simply gathering another heap of carriages, tugging at their arms and legs to get them in line for another trip back to the stone wall. I saw her face again. It was not happy. She was cold, tired and wanting to go home after a long day. And then I had added hurt to it all. I lifted the door latch to get inside where it was warm. But I couldn't lift my legs into the car. I had to shut the door and walk

Grant Swank is pastor of the New Hope Church in Windham, Maine.



over to that girl's side. As I approached her, I thought that she might become scared, thinking I was going to curse her out. So I put out my hand toward hers, starting to talk even before I was that close to her. "I am so sorry," I started. "I want you to know that I am really sorry," I repeated, just in case she did not pick up my first words. "I want to apologize to you for what I had done. You see, I was driving and not thinking about where I was going. I saw you, but I did not see you. I saw those carriages you were pushing, but I guess it just did not register all that precisely in my head what was going on. Have you ever had that happen to you?" She looked up at me, wondering what was going on. Was I into some game-playing or was I truly sincere? "You see, I am really a nice guy. I don't enjoy being rude to people. But I was impolite to you today. I hurt you. And that hurt me. So I just want you to know that I did not mean what I did. And I ask for your forgiveness." She broke into the broadest smile, then reached out her hand to shake mine. A sigh came from her lips, relieved to know that I was not going to add insult to injury. I really was trying to make things right, she reasoned. "Yes, I do know what you are talking about. I have had days like that, too," she laughed, as one human understanding another. "You know, you really are a nice guy. Thanks a lot. Thanks. Thanks an awful lot." I turned and walked back to the car, opened the door, climbed inside, and drove away. As I passed by her and the carriages, she lifted a hand to wave good-bye. I waved back, glad that I had retrieved the nice guy inside. In doing that, I had made two people happy. I had also brought back the cheer of reindeer painted on poles all around me. It was that good feeling that comes especially at Christmastime. "... on earth peace, goodwill toward men" (Luke 2:14). ❧

The Cost of Christmas

Leslie N. Pollard



Leslie N. Pollard serves as vice president for diversity at Loma Linda University Adventist Health Services Center in California.



Millions and millions of dollars will be spent in the United States during this year's Christmas shopping season. One financial consultant said that the shopping sprees indulged during the one month leading up to Christmas will require many to struggle the following 12 months of the year to pay for.

And while merchants may do 25 to 30 percent of their annual sales during the month of December, Christians around the world will utilize the Christmas season for missionary service and to preach and teach about Christ. Plays, concerts, caroling, skits, and a host of other activities will provide Christian believers both vehicles and opportunities to explain the mission of "Mary's baby boy."

Have you ever wondered what the original Christmas cost? Seventh-day Adventists know that Jesus was not born on December 25. "Seventh-day Adventists have ignored Christmas as a church festival because of the absence of any divine command to observe the day. Furthermore, Christ's birth date is unknown, and December 25 was chosen by the Roman churches late in the fourth century, to coincide with the 'birthday of the sun,' the pagan solstice festival. On the other hand, we have utilized the spirit of the Christmas season to direct people

to the biblical teachings concerning Christ's birth and have encouraged the giving of liberal offerings to missionary purposes" (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, p. 351).

However, Christmas presents a grand opportunity to reflect on the first advent of Christ. The older I get, and the longer I'm a Christian, the more I want to hear songs and sermons about Jesus. Recently I read the following observations by an unknown author regarding Christ's first advent called "The Cost of Christ":

"It cost Mary and Joseph the comforts of home during a long period of exile in Egypt to protect the little babe.

"It cost mothers in and around Bethlehem the massacre of their babies by the cruel order of Herod.

"It cost the shepherds the complacency of their shepherd's life, with the call to the manger to tell the good news.

"It cost the wise men a long journey, expensive gifts, and changed lives.

"It cost the early apostles and the early church persecution and sometimes death.

"It cost missionaries of Christ untold suffering and privation to spread the good news.

"It cost Christian martyrs in all ages their lives for Christ's sake.

"More than all this, it cost God the Father His own Son—He sent Him to the earth to save men.

"It cost Jesus a life of sacrifice and service, a death cruel and unmatched in history."

The center and circumference of the gospel that Christmas only hints at is the truth that Jesus Christ, by being born human, undertook an unbelievable exchange. He exchanged His righteousness for our unrighteousness. He exchanged His robust faith for our enfeebled faith. He exchanged His flawless obedience for our fitful obedience.

Ellen White expressed the wonderful truth of Jesus' vicarious ministry in the timeless words: "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death that was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With his stripes we are healed' " (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25).

Hanging on the wall near the main

entrance to the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, is a portrait with the following inscription: "James Butler Bonham—no picture of him exists. This portrait is of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom."

During this Christmas season, let's pray that men and women can say, "We have never seen Jesus, but we know some people [you and me?] who we think resemble Him." 

Power of Prayer

Virginia Manthey, Dunmore, Pennsylvania

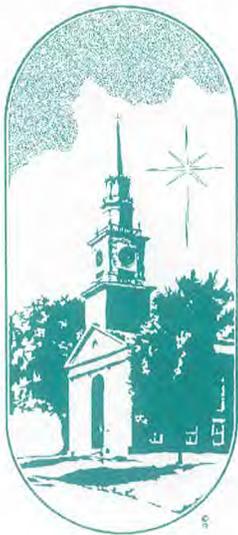
Just before a party I was giving, I eased into one of the chairs at the dinner table for a moment. The silver gleamed, the crystal sparkled, fresh flowers made a colorful centerpiece. I looked at the place card in front of me. "Margaret," it said. From out of my past came a memory of a story I once heard about a minister's wife who, during the week, would enter the empty church and move from pew to pew, praying for the person who usually sat in that spot. What if I sat in each chair around the table and prayed for each name? I wondered.

And that's what I did until I came to the last place card. Once that person had hurt me, I thought I'd forgiven her but now, as I mentally knelt before the Lord, I was still bitter. I didn't want to ask God to bless her.

It was difficult but, finally, I imagined myself kneeling beside her as Jesus put a hand on each of our heads. The hard knot of bitterness inside me began to dissolve.

There was a lot more than good food at the table that night. Among other things, there was a carefree, happy hostess!

This article originally appeared in Guideposts.



A Christmas Blessing

Carolyn Willis

I love Christmas music. As the cold dreary days of November roll in, I'm eagerly digging through my collection of Christmas CDs. It's not just the music I love, but the whole spirit that Christmas brings. The homey side of myself responds to the feeling of goodwill, goodness, friendship, and family. And I confess that the temporal side of me enjoys that expectant excitement and impatient anticipation that permeates the festive season.

One Christmas season a few years ago, I purchased tickets to a concert at the People's Church in Toronto. This is a program that is produced yearly, and I had heard glowing reviews from friends who had attended previous shows. That year's presentation was called "The Living Christmas Tree." So, one snowy Saturday evening in December, Byron and I drove into Toronto along with a group with similar intent.

Arriving a bit early, we drove to a nearby strip mall for drinks. Quickly grabbing a few bottles of juice from the cooler, I hurried through the purchase and, with hands full, left the store. Rushing to the car, I shivered in the cold. Opening the car

door, a welcome blast of warm air from the car's heater encouraged me to slam the door shut against the frigid December air. This was not a night to linger outside. As Byron maneuvered through the banks of snow piled high in the parking lot, a quick glance at my watch told me that the 6 p.m. show would now be over.

Arriving at the church, we found our seats and sat down to wait for the program to begin. My excitement mounted when I caught sight of the orchestra seated almost directly in front of where we sat. Contentment flowed through me—it didn't get much better than this. People milled about the lobby and up and down the aisles, but I settled into my seat, transfixed at the sight of the vast evergreen tree that dominated the stage, obviously the main prop of the program. I was ready to experience a very special evening—how special, I was about to find out.

Shortly before the program was to begin, I noticed someone go by with a CD in his hand, which prompted the thought that if I wanted to purchase music, I should do it now. When the program was finished, I had no desire to bear the crush of the crowds in the lobby. Picking up

Carolyn Willis lives in Courtice, Ontario and is editor of the Canadian Adventist Messenger.



my purse snugly tucked beside me, I casually opened it to get some money from my wallet. The purse was not overly large and it didn't take but a moment to see that my wallet was not there. Unbelieving, but quietly so as not to create a stir, I rummaged through my purse again—and again. I knew that I had it at the store a short while before.

It seems that losing a wallet should not be a devastating experience, but this was a particular time in my life when I felt unable to cope with “one more thing.” I knew that I was going to have to explain the situation to my husband. Dreading to spoil this evening, I leaned over and explained that I was going to have to go back to the mall to see if my wallet was still there somewhere—knowing that it couldn't be. After asking all the obvious questions, Byron said that he was coming with me, so we got up to leave, Byron barely able to keep up with my hurried stride.

Breathing a prayer with every step to the car, I felt the sting of a flurry of snow swirling around the parking lot in the cold winter wind. My stomach tensed as I sensed my husband's unspoken “How could you have left your wallet?” My words were frozen inside me as we silently drove the short distance to the store we had left a half hour before. Pulling into the lot with the words “I don't know why we came back; if you dropped it here, someone will have picked it up long ago.” Byron parked the car. Jumping out of the vehicle and starting toward the brightly lit store, I blinked in disbelief. In plain sight for any passerby to see was my wallet. Someone had indeed found it and carefully placed it on a snowy ledge on one of the curb posts. Sure that it must be empty, I opened it with trembling fingers. Everything was as I had left it, nothing was missing, including the cash. My heart nearly burst with

relief and gratitude. With a smile as wide as my face I raced to the car to show my disbelieving husband and exult in the impossibility of it all.

We didn't have to go back to the program to gain a blessing that evening, but we did. I wanted to run to the front of the church and shout my joy, but this timid self halted short of such public exuberance. Instead, we again found our seats. Outwardly, we probably looked the same as before, except that perhaps people wondered why I had what must have been a glowing smile on my face throughout the entire

program. But when one's heart is so full of joy and gratitude, it has to be expressed somehow. Looking over at Byron, I noticed that his smile lines were showing too. It's a good day when you receive such an assurance of God's care and love—it's even better when you can share it.

May you experience the love, peace, and joy of this special season, and may you not forget, through all the tinsel and toys that may surround you, the precious gift of Jesus our Saviour, who never stops giving all the good and enduring things in our lives. 



*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt,
call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people
from their sins.*

—Matthew 1:21

Remembering a Pastor's Wife

*M*rs. Kamola Rani Roy, wife of Pastor N. D. Roy, expired on May 14, 2003 at 8:00 pm in her residence at Bisarkandi District, Barishal, Bangladesh. She was buried on May 15, 2003, beside her husband in the family graveyard in Bsharkandhi.

Her husband, Pastor N. D. Roy, was an eminent teacher, preacher and administrator in the Bangladesh Union Mission (BAUM). He worked for the SDA church in East Pakistan and Bangladesh for 36 years and died November 16, 2002. He was 74.

Pastor Roy had been suffering for some time in chronic illness and expired as a result of a constant degrading of his health. But Mrs. Roy's expired message is a shock to every known person. She was physically strong and had no severe illness. Just about two weeks before her death, she was in Dhaka visiting children and grandchildren. She was walking on the BAUM campus a few days before. But she is no more with us today. It is unbelievable!

Mrs. Kamola Rani Roy never served our church as a paid worker, but her contribution as a pastor's spouse in the evangelism and church development in BAUM was great. She was a cheerful and loving lady. Since she was married to Pastor N. D. Roy, she had been totally dedicated and supportive to her husband's ministry. Though she did not have privilege to have much academic training in theology, psychology, or education, but she was self-trained and educated to be a model mother and pastor's wife.

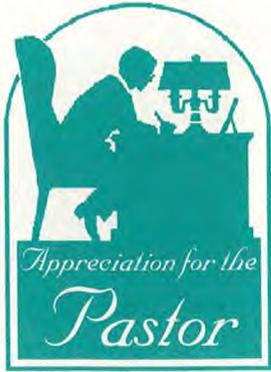
She was mother of 7 children (3 sons and 4 daughters) and all the children are well educated and saved in the Lord. None of them are lost in the darkness of the world. The

elder son Dr. Douglas Dilip Roy, is an ordained minister. In March he completed his Doctor of Ministry from AIIAS, Philippines and at present he is serving as head of the religion department at Bangladesh Adventist Seminary and College. The youngest son, Timothy Roy, is the principal of Seventh-Day Adventist Marantha Seminary. Two daughters are pastors and the eldest son-in-law is BAUM treasurer.

She had been a successful mother to train her children on the right path. She was a beloved grandmother too! Beside her great role of motherhood she had been an ideal pastor's wife. She was fully dedicated to and supportive of her husband's ministry. When Pastor N. D. Roy conducted evangelistic camp and preaching, she was there with him helping in home visiting and Bible studies. She was an inspiration to her husband. When Pastor Roy was in the hospital in Dhaka, I visited him several times, and she was tirelessly nursing her husband. Mrs. Roy was a loving wife. Maybe her loneliness without her husband was so desperate and that's why she couldn't live very long without him!



This news release from the Bangladesh Union Mission is a tribute to a dedicated Shepherdess. Mrs. Roy was the mother of Dorothy Biswas, BAUM Shepherdess Coordinator.



Honoring Pastors

James A. Cress

When Pastor Tercio Sarli, president of the mega-size Central Brazil Union, writes me twice about the same issue, the matter is clearly important.

When this twice-scribed topic is expressing appreciation for pastors, the matter is clearly important to each of us and its significance provokes us to publish this article simultaneously in *Ministry*, *Elder's Digest*, and the *Shepherdess Journal*, along with my personal request that every reader copy and distribute to all church officers.

Why express appreciation to pastors?

Note the Bible command: "Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, NIV). "Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7, NIV).

Today's increased societal suspicion of all leaders has combined with

clergy scandals, occasional mediocre performance by some pastors, and unrealistic expectations from some members to reduce the levels of high esteem with which professional ministers have traditionally been viewed.

Too often it seems easier to criticize than to affirm and express appreciation for the outstanding service that pastors give. For example, one member recently wrote to complain that his pastor does not spend sufficient time preparing sermons while someone from a different church, griped that all their pastor does is study to prepare sermons. One complains that pastors never visit while another opines that the pastor only goes from house to house. Why can't we get more letters like the elder who recently said, "I have no other reason to write except to tell you how wonderful our pastor serves in our congregation." Believe me, I answered that letter and sent a copy to the pastor and the conference president.

What the denomination can do

Pastor Sarli encourages the entire church to adopt an annual Pastor's Day in which we affirm the role of

James A. Cress is the Ministerial Secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.





*General Conference
Ministerial Association
requests that
every reader duplicate
and distribute this article
to your
local church board.*



ministry in general and express appreciation for our local pastors, particularly. And he puts his energies and money alongside his opinion. Recently he sent every pastor a letter of commendation with a special gift of appreciation. All pastoral families in his union are regularly affirmed in special conventions designed for their spiritual growth and continuing education.

Various denominations have emphasized one weekend in October. My own congregation commemorates the anniversary of the date when our pastor first came to serve our church. While it may be impossible to select the same day throughout the world, surely every field can schedule a Pastor's and Ministerial Vocations day upon which currently-serving pastors are honored and young people are invited to prayerfully consider whether God is calling them to ministry.

What unions or conferences can do

Uplift the role of ministry, value pastors, and ask each local congregation to plan something special which will honor their pastor. Perhaps designate a specific date for your territory and request that each

church plan accordingly. Follow Pastor Sarli's example by writing each minister to express your personal appreciation for the valuable contribution they bring to God's work.

Charles Heskey, Ministerial Secretary of the North Caribbean Conference sent a bookmark to every church member in the conference. Titled, "Pray for Your Pastor," it listed specific prayer objectives for the minister's personal life and family needs (you can view a sample at www.ministerialassociation.com).

What the local church can do

Host a special Sabbath that celebrates the blessings your congregation receives from the pastor. Even weak performers might respond to you affirming higher expectations. Plan a fellowship meal, provide flowers or a cake, and present your pastor with a plaque, a new Bible, or a useful book (better yet a gift certificate so they can select their own). Volunteer for a specific task that will lighten your pastor's work load; offer to visit or give Bible studies with your pastor; establish a pastoral resource fund from which your pastor can purchase useful ministry tools. Invite your pastoral family to lunch, or send them to dinner and baby sit their youngsters. Rather than criticizing, try "grand-parenting" their teens. Express concerns quietly and only to the pastor. Above all, express your appreciation verbally and write a letter of praise to conference leadership.

What pastors can do

Serve your churches in a manner worthy of being praised. Give your best to ministry and your example leadership of the power of God's Spirit in your life will rally others to eagerly follow and honor your leadership. 

Something to Remember

Some time ago, a friend of mine punished his 3-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of gold wrapping paper. Money was tight, and he became infuriated when the child tried to decorate a box to put under the tree. Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift to her father the next morning and said, "This is for you, Daddy." He was embarrassed by his earlier over-reaction, but his anger flared again when he found that the box was empty.

He yelled at her, "Don't you know that when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside of it?" The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, Daddy, it's not empty. I blew kisses into the box. All for you, Daddy."

The father was crushed. He put his arms around his little girl, and he begged her forgiveness. My friend told me that he kept that gold box by his bed for years. Whenever he was discouraged, he would take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us has been given a gold container filled with unconditional love and kisses. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.

The Lost Art of Listening



Delores E. Buis

After a recent visit with a friend, I was amazed when she remarked, "I so enjoyed our conversation. You were such a help to me."

Reflecting on her comment, I was mystified at first. During our hour-long visit, I had mainly been a good listener. My friend had done most of

the talking, pouring out her problems. It was obvious she had been looking for someone who would be a sounding board. Rather than advice, she needed a friend who would affirm her worth.

As a mentor to younger women, I endeavor to be nonjudgmental and to encourage and build them up. Only when I am asked outright do I offer advice. Usually I say, "Let's look in the Word of God to see what it says about this." Then I pray with them.

Our English word "friend" comes from the same root as the word freedom. A genuine friend sets us free to be who and what we are. A friend allows us to ventilate our doubts and fears without being ridiculed.

Such a friend also builds us up and does not tear us down. During her reign, Queen Victoria of England commented on the prime ministers who served her. She said of William Gladstone, "When I am with him, I feel I am with one of the most important leaders in the world." However, of Benjamin Disraeli, she said, "He makes me feel as if I am one of the most important leaders of the world" (*Our Daily Bread* devotional, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 10/2/00).

This should be the aim of our relationship with a friend—building her up, not our self. We should accept her as she is, warts and all, and help her be better, not pull her down.

The Bible tells us much about our role as friends. In Proverbs, it says, "A friend loves at all times" (17:17) and "sticks closer than a brother" (18:24).

Most of us have experienced being around someone who monopolizes a conversation, punctuating every sentence with "I, me, mine" constantly. Such people soon find others avoiding them.

However, it is important to allow people to confide in us when they have problems, and that is when it is truly a ministry to be a good listener. As Shakespeare had King Henry IV proclaim, "It is the disease of not listening that I am troubled with." This is a "disease" many of us suffer from.

One writer gave an insightful definition of the mark of a true friend. Thodor Benrey wrote, "A real friend is as it were another self, to whom we impart our most secret thoughts, who partakes of our joy and comforts us in our affliction" (*Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*).

What about you? Are you a good listener? Are you a good friend? 🐾

Delores is the author of more than 2,000 articles and stories (both originals and reprints) that have been published during her 29-year writing career. She writes both freelance and on assignment.

An instructor for American Christian Writers, she teaches courses through the mail. She also speaks at Mother-Daughter banquets and retreats and gives seminars on writing at writers' conferences.

When she is not writing, Delores enjoys listening to classical music. She is an avid reader of history, biography, humor and the classics.

Happy Thanksgiving

Esmé Ross



Esmé Ross is the Shepherdess president for the Iowa-Missouri Conference.



One of the wonderful traditions I have learned in the United States is that of *Thanksgiving*. It gives me an opportunity for making a *high day*, not only for myself, but also for my family. Well, what does this time mean for me? What does this time mean for you? Taking pen and paper, I began to take stock.

I live in a land of tornadoes and storms. Having a home to protect me brings me much comfort. My family, a wonderful husband, precious children, and beautiful grandchildren, fills my heart with joy and pride. I am blessed with the best in-laws. My son-in-law cherishes and cares so abundantly for my daughter. My daughter-in-law, Ruth, has taken me into her heart and is willing to share my dreams. My blessings include the support of wonderful friends, great prayer partners, and a blessed church family.

But wait, something doesn't feel right here! The scale seems to be tipping heavily on one side!

He wrote some of the most beautiful music in the history of humanity. Yet his life could not be called beautiful; it was full of tragedy. By the age of ten, both parents had died. He was raised begrudgingly by an older brother who resented another mouth to feed. Even as an adult, his life was difficult. His first wife died after 13 years of marriage. Of twenty children from two

marriages, ten died in infancy, one died in his twenties, and one was mentally retarded. Eventually he went blind, and then was paralyzed from a stroke. Yet he wrote great music—music of profound praise, thunderous thanksgiving, and awe-filling adoration.

Who is this victim of so much tragedy? John Sebastian Bach, a Lutheran and perhaps the world's greatest composer of church music. Perhaps it was because Bach knew the depths of tragedy that he also knew the heights of faith and praise.

Am I to give thanks for the hard times, the difficulties, and the frustrations in my life as easily as I give thanks for that which feels good and is comfortable and tangible? If the balances are to be true and correct, I need to recognize the value of the clouds and shadows of this past year, as well as the rain and sunshine that has fallen in my life.

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). And give thanks at all times!

Charles Dickens said that Americans are somewhat mixed up. He told an audience that instead of having one Thanksgiving Day each year, we should have 364. *"Use that one day just for complaining and griping,"* he said. *"Use the other 364 days to thank God each day for the many blessings He has showered upon you."*

Happy Thanksgiving!





Shepherdess International News

East-Central Africa Division

✿ The Kenya Lake Field Ministerial Director, Pastor Hesbon Omune, organized a one of its kind retreat January 30 to February 2, 2003. Taking the word of Jesus "Let us come apart and rest a while," all the employees of the Kenya Lake Field attended the retreat at Kisumu Museum View Hotel. The retreat was objectively organized to bring together the pastors and their spouses for fellowship and a professional growth seminar. There was time for relaxation and a tour within the town.



Shepherdess Retreat at Kisumu

Euro-Africa Division



Pastors' wives from Hansa Conference of the North German Union at their annual retreat



A seminar on color coordination at Hansa Conference



Taking a walk in nature at the Hansa Conference annual retreat

✿ Maeve Maurer, Shepherdess Coordinator for the Euro-Africa Division, held the Division Advisory in beautiful, sunny Portugal. Coordinators from Unions and Conferences reported on their local activities and shared ideas and experiences in their services to local ministry wives. Maeve planned an extraordinary program with a variety of reports, exchanges, sightseeing, seminars, and a memorable Sabbath day.



Euro-Africa Division Shepherdess Coordinators

Euro-Asia Division

✿ Galina Stele, Euro-Asia Division Shepherdess Coordinator, held her advisory at Zaoksky Seminary. Exciting reports from the regions accented the blessings of God granted to the local

pastors' wives despite difficult circumstances. Glenda Prime was a special guest. Sharon Cress presented seminars.



Galina leads the coordinators in discussion



Euro-Asia Division Shepherdess Coordinators

✿ Ministry wives from the Moscow area hosted a tea on a Sabbath afternoon. Lovely tables of delicacies set the mood for a delightful afternoon of fellowship. Sharon Cress was the speaker.



Fellowship at the tea



Beautiful decorations at the Moscow tea

Inter-America Division

✿ Led by Patricia Allen, Jamaica Shepherdess Coordinators met to report and plan for the future. Meetings were held on the college campus in conjunction with the Ministerial Advisory. Shepherdess business and constitution were discussed, and a special time of recognition and affirmation closed the meetings on a spiritual emphasis.



Jamaica Shepherdess Coordinators



Patricia Allen, Jamaica Shepherdess Coordinator

North American Division

✿ Retired workers celebrated the glorious panoramas of Pine Springs Ranch at their California gathering. John Rhodes planned and hosted the event. Carol Derry

Bretch provided delightful music, and fun and good food was enjoyed by everybody.



Retirees at Pine Springs Ranch



Lowell Bock, retired VP from the General Conference, and his wife, Merlo



John Rhodes welcomes the group to Pine Springs



Newly-weds!!

✿ *Minnesota Conference* Shepherdess enjoyed the beautiful country scenery of a Christian retreat center for their annual event. Karen Mayberry planned the casual atmosphere, which provided a haven of rest and relaxation for the women. Ann Carlson, Union Shepherdess Coordinator, was a special guest. Sharon Cress from the General Conference was the speaker.



Karen Mayberry, Minnesota Conference Coordinator, welcomes the ministry wives



Minnesota pastors wives in discussion

✿ *Texico Conference* (West Texas and New Mexico area) held their second pastoral wives' retreat, February 15-17, at the Hilton Garden (Airport) Inn in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Guest speaker Mary Maxson (NAD Women's Ministries Director) blessed the ladies with humor and practicality each day as their devotional speaker. Hope Bushness, pastor's wife from Central California, shared a plethora of ideas and demonstrations to enhance the ministry of each wife based on the theme "Hospitality on a Shoestring." A special highlight for each lady

included making her own devotional basket emphasizing her personal relationship with Jesus, as well as demonstrating how much fun it is to make gift baskets. Thanks to many contributions, the baskets were filled to overflowing. A Victorian Tea in Old Town Albuquerque and time for developing friendships has increased the bond of this special group of ladies. Each one is looking forward to sharing what she learned.



Texico pastors' wives



Mary Maxson, guest speaker



Rita Stevens and coordinators

South Pacific Division

✿ *Samoan PIM Retreat:* Sandra Roberts, Partners In Ministry for Trans-Pacific Union, reports: Picture Paradise! Blue-green ocean, white sand, palm trees, a

picturesque little Samoan resort at Vavau on the island of Upolu—this was the location of our Samoan PIM Retreat held from 28-31 March 2003. About 20 ladies from Western Samoa and American Samoa gathered together “At His Table” (the theme chosen by the Samoan ladies for the retreat) to enjoy fellowship and spiritual refreshing to support their ongoing journeys as pastors’ wives. Pastor Sam Afamasaga (President of Samoa Mission) and his wife Emma have organized these retreats over the past few years, and I happily accepted their invitation to share this one with them.

The devotional times were special, ending with a sincere prayer session for each other and the families. Mrs. Puaga Solofa (Emma’s assistant) gave us a novel object lesson each day as we sewed a new stitch onto our “prayer cloths,” each stitch signifying something different. The blind hemming stitch helped us to remember to be blind to the faults of others, cross stitch reminding us of the cross of Christ and blanket stitch teaching us to stand together and support each other. At the end of the weekend each lady took home a beautifully embroidered cloth to remember the lessons of the retreat.

We were encouraged by talks on God’s Providence and Leading, Difficulties and Joys of Team Ministry, Leadership, Our Value to God and Finding Our Personal Roles in Team Ministry. Some of the PIMs shared their wisdom, experiences, joys, and hardships from their many (or few) years of ministry. One could not help but notice the respect shown by the younger PIMs to the more senior ladies, and also the caring and understanding that the older ladies showed to their younger sisters.

Each meal, of course, was a feast of Samoan fruit, vegetables, and delicacies. The interesting part was that the ministers had reversed roles with their wives and did the entire food preparation for each meal. “How humiliating!” one minister was heard to joke (or was he joking?).

The balanced program included craft activities, a well-received temperament test that helped the ladies see where their

particular strengths were, volley ball, swimming and other recreational pursuits which left us with sore sides from laughing and a great feeling of knowing and appreciating each other better.

Finally, goals for the future were set. A cooking demonstration, as well as a longstitch demonstration, together with the customary and moving presentation ceremony, completed our wonderful weekend. Everyone voiced their appreciation of the retreat and the opportunity to share a few days with other ministers’ wives who understand our unique calling and who left with renewed strength for the task.

Southern Asia Division



Nepal Ordination Service

Officiating Ministers: Pastors Gnanaraj Kore and David Thamsang

Candidates: Kumar Adhikari, Rathma Adhikari, Jonathan Tamsang, Laxmi Tamsang, Danny Kujur, Easwari Kujur
Pastor A. M. Puri, officiating minister

✿ Gladys Jones from the *Prakasapuram Church* reported that nearly 70 Adventist and non-Adventist women attended the women’s meeting on December 16, 2002, organized by Mrs. Gladys Jones, the church pastor’s wife. She reported it was a wonderful sight to see all the women in green uniform sarees. The meeting started with a lively song service. Messages were given by Flora John, South India Union WM director, and Huldah Paulasir, South Tamil Conference WM director. After the meeting, all the ladies participated in games that reminded them of their childhood days. Twenty poor women were given groceries and a dinner was served. It was the first meeting of this kind at Prakasapuram. It was a great blessing to all who attended.

✿ Stanley Samuel, President of *North Kerala Section* reports: The tailoring school at Kulamavu came to reality because of the financial assistance extended by Shepherdess International of the General Conference. At present, 12 families have benefitted from this project. Among them three families are Adventists and two more are going to be members soon.

Director Usha Suresh Babu and her team give first preference to God and His word in the program. God's word is being taught every day in the institute, as well as to the interested people around. We want to sincerely thank Mrs. Hepzibah Kore, the Division Director, for helping with Bibles to be distributed to them to study it deeply.

We have given Bibles to 20 ladies connected with this program. Very soon several of them and their families will be accepting the truth. Through their efforts, several other families in the society are receiving light through God's Word.

We are happy to inform you that several families are getting interested in the truth from that place. There is a nearby place called Muthiyamala from where there are people studying in this tailoring school. Pastor Suresh P. Babu and his wife, Usha, are constantly visiting these people and studying the Bible with them.

✿ Huldah Paulasir, Shepherdess Coordinator, *South Tamil Conference*, reports: "Committed to Serve" was the theme of the weekend for the Shepherdess Retreat conducted on February 7 and 8, 2003 for all the Shepherdess of former South Tamil Conference. On Friday evening, the meeting started with a lively song service. Hepzibah Kore, SUD

Shepherdess Coordinator; Flora John, SIU Coordinator; and Huldah Paulasir, STC Shepherdess Coordinator, were the resource personnel. Flora John gave the introductory message. Six Shepherdesses narrated the characters of Bible women. Mrs. Flora John also taught new songs from the newly-printed Tamil songbook, *Song of Zion*. Alice Devadass, a Shepherdess from Chennai, gave a thrilling witness about her successful soul-winning in spite of her full-time teaching job.

The topics presented were One to One Evangelism, Small Group Ministries, Friendship Evangelism, How to Give Bible Studies, and Discipleship.

The consecration service was conducted by the conference officers. All the Shepherdesses rededicated their lives to serve the Lord in spite of the political difficulties. Each delegate was presented with a beautiful bedspread. We acknowledge the generosity of Mr. Paripooranaraj Samuel (NRR) for sponsoring this retreat.

✿ Alice Devadass, a Shepherdess from Chennai, *South India Union*, gave Bible studies for one year. Then she began house



"Sing to the Lord"
Shepherdesses from STC raise their voices in praise



Distribution of gifts and evangelism manuals



Hepzibah Kore addressing the Shepherdesses in South Tamil Conference



Women who helped with "When God Provides" project
third from left is Alice Devadass, fourth from left is Flora Johns



Erukkancherry congregation



Daniel and Revelation Seminar at the Erukkancherry Church



Shanthi, a Hindu, receives a prize for regular attendance in Erukkancherry

visits in Erukkancherry and became friends with many housewives. So she began giving them Bible studies. Seven people were baptized. These new members began gathering at a friend's house on Saturday afternoons. Nine more people were baptized. Soon they became a small gathering. However, soon they lost their building and had to meet under a tree. Last year, an evangelistic meeting was conducted and 28 more members were added to the Erukkancherry Church. Now they are strong in the Lord, and God has abundantly blessed Mrs. Alice Devadass and her work in her community.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division

✿ The Shepherdess Evangelistic Meetings in the *Bangladesh West Mission* at Luxmipur Village were held by Pastor R. K. Biswas, Treasurer of BAUM; Mrs. Dorothy Biswas, Shepherdess Coordinator, BAUM; Mission President, Pastor R. N. Halder; Mrs. Roseline Halder, Mission Shepherdess; Mr. Robin Mondol, Districts pastors, Mrs. Cecilia Kisku, Mrs. Shephali Roy, Mrs. Ritchil and all pastors' wives were also present for the program.

We thank God that He has helped us bring 37 precious souls for His Kingdom.

✿ Ellen Missah, Shepherdess Coordinator for the *Southern Asia-Pacific Division*, has just graduated from her Ph.D. program. Congratulations, Ellen!



Ellen Missah (left) congratulations!



West Bangladesh Missions Shepherdess with Dorothy Biswas



West Bangladesh Missions Shepherdess with baptism candidates

✿
General Conference Session
July 2005
will include
special meetings and seminars
just for you, the Shepherdess.
More details in the next Journal.

✿ Under the leadership of Mrs. Shephali Baroi, Shepherdess Coordinator, Shepherdess evangelistic meeting were held February 1-12, at Madonpur, in the Shatkhira District of the *South Bangladesh Mission*. The regular audience was about 300. The audience was from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian backgrounds.

At the end there were 70 who were baptized and accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The meeting was very peaceful. One Sabbath day there was a call for the

Tithe Day, and people brought rice, coconuts, and vegetables from their farms. God blessed the meeting.

✿ Shepherdess Evangelistic Meetings were conducted in the *North Bangladesh Mission* by Mrs. Dorothy Biswas, BAUM Shepherdess Coordinator; and Mrs. Kanti Ritchil, NBM Shepherdess Coordinator. The meeting was attended by all ordained ministers and their wives, district pastors and their wives, totaling 25 members.

There were about 150 members who attended the meeting.

Two baptisms was held—one at NBM Headquarter in Mymensing totaling 20 souls, and the second one held at Jalchetro totaling 50 souls. So in these Shepherdess meetings, 70 souls were baptized. Pastor R. K. Biswas, the BAUM Treasurer, was the chief guest and baptized the candidates; many of the ordained ministers assisted him in the baptism. We thank the Lord for His blessing for the meetings. 



The South Bangladesh Mission evangelistic meetings attendees eating lunch



Dorothy Biswas speaking at the North Bangladesh Mission meetings



The South Bangladesh Mission meeting attendees



Jalchatra Shepherdess meeting baptisms in the North Bangladesh Mission



Mrs. Shephali Baroi speaking to the people attending the South Bangladesh Mission evangelistic meetings



Mrs. Shephali Baroi of the South Bangladesh Mission with the baptismal group