

# The Journal



A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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*Before the mountains were created, before you made  
the earth and the world, you are God,  
without beginning or end.*

*Psalm 90:2 (New Living Translation)*

# The Journal

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## Editor's Musings

"... I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10.

Most of us are weary. We have taken care of everyone in our lives except ourselves. But in our tiredness there are two simple words—simple to say, simple to remember, yet sometimes rarely directed to us. The complexity of their worth to us is infinite. They are "Thank you!" As the pastor's wife, you do so much for so many people. Most of the time all we can expect to hear is a simple—"Thank you!" Our families, our co-workers, and especially our church members sometimes forget these simple words and take us for granted. But, did you know, precious lady, that your Heavenly Father appreciates you for all you do and all you are. You are fulfilling His purpose for your life everyday. You are being the royal daughter He created you to be. He anointed you for this special work and He appreciates you! He is upholding you with His right hand!

Between the covers of this issue are several tributes to ministry wives. They are specific "Thank you's" but they are also directed to you, too.

Here in America we will be celebrating Thanksgiving soon. This is the special holiday we have set aside to specifically remember our blessings. And, on my long list of items for which I am thankful, you are listed. Pastors wives give more hours of volunteer service to the church than any other group and I just want to say, "THANK YOU!"

God bless each one of you.

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# A Tribute To a Pastor's Wife

Gerald J. Christo

**B**irrol celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on March 8 and we together celebrated our wedding anniversary on March 28 in the same church we were married in fifty years ago. To make this sentimental journey possible we travelled thirty hours on three different trains for two nights and three days, then an hours flight and a four-hour car ride 65 miles up a winding road to Shillong, the capital of India's northeastern border states of Meghalaya—the abode of the clouds.

Our son Gordon, his wife Rose, with their two teenage children also journeyed from Spicer Memorial College to be with us and to celebrate their 22<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary. Gordon and Rose had met at Philippine Union College. He wanted to show his family his mother's birthplace. We arrived two days before our anniversary and memories flooded our mind as we visited parks and lakes where we had talked and had planned our future lives together. They are familiar but different to what they had been when seen through young lovers' eyes. The old wooden home aptly named "Seven Sisters Cottage" was sold when Birol's mother made her home with us. A mammoth concrete three-storied structure now stands in the yard where the girls played and where their wedding receptions were held.

On Sabbath I was invited to speak to an overflowing congregation. Several of those who had witnessed our wedding were present. Excitement filled my being as I remembered Birol walking down the aisle on her father's arm to the strains of the wedding march played through a record player amplifier. There was no organist. She carried a bouquet of aram lilies and looked more lovely than everything I had seen before. But the next day she looked even more lovely than she had fifty years ago. Strange how beauty is enhanced by gracious living and is in the eye of the beholder.

The minister who spoke that evening reminded Birol that she was one of the few girls who carried the brass water pots from the stream and placed them in the cone-shaped baskets strapped to her forehead rather than have him haul the pot up himself as most of the other girls did. A small gesture from school days that had not gone unnoticed! Yet in that gesture he saw a plant which had produced a bountiful harvest of good deeds through the years.

What keeps a man and women together for fifty long years? Most are bound by custom and social pressure. Many are bound by fear. Then there are those who stay together for the children's sake and some for economic reasons. Finally there are those who

Gerald retired in 1990 from being a church administrator after 47 years of service. He lives in Hosur, India with his wife Birol. They have 5 children and 10 grandchildren. He enjoys preaching, writing, reading, singing and cultivating friendships.



find happiness and fulfillment in just being together. Very few enjoy this relationship of togetherness naturally. There has to be adjustments. I can imagine the first few years of marriage must have been difficult for Birol. I was the only son, youngest of five siblings. Birol is timid, tender and sensitive with a warm sense of humour. These traits stood her in good stead as she gently and lovingly cared for her family.

I have often wondered what makes her an outstanding homemaker. She credits her Heavenly Father for what she calls the gift of four "Ses"—the speed of a gazelle, the strength of an ox, the stamina of a long distance runner and the skill of a craftsman. She can clean up a mess, prepare a meal, tend the garden, and adorn herself in a jiffy. Blessed with these four "Ses" the mundane chores of daily living need only moments of her time, but the more important and influencing tasks of parenting, being a companion and a church leader cannot be accomplished in a hurry. They require long hours of study, prayer and discipline.

She declines a church office or speaking appointment unless she knows she can be "a workman that need not be ashamed" and has time to do justice to the appointment through careful preparation. Her dependence upon God is complete and aptly summed up in her experience as told to the assembled ladies at the 1980 General Conference Session. Reporting on that event, the editor of the article wrote: "Desperate, finally—with all efforts seemingly of no avail, she implored God to change her feelings. She agonized with Him to make her effective, and God gave her special help. She knew that it was from Him and perhaps only in that way would she have ever learned she could fully count on Him. Looking back on that experience, Birol who had bared her soul before us, calls it blessed and wonderful. God had shown Himself to her as the key, not just for the job, but for life itself."—*Adventist Review*, May 1, 1980. GC bulletin 9.

What a woman. Inspiration describes her in Proverbs 31:10-31! ❀



## Christmas Blessings

Paul received an automobile from his brother as a Christmas present. On Christmas Eve when Paul came out of his office, a street urchin was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it.

"Is this your car, Mister?" he asked.

Paul nodded. "My brother gave it to me for Christmas." The boy was astounded. "You mean your brother gave it to you and it didn't cost you nothing? Boy, I wish..." He hesitated. Of course Paul knew what he was going to wish for. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Paul all the way down to his heels.

"I wish," the boy went on, "that I could be a brother like that."

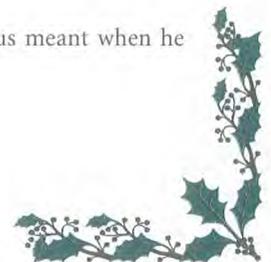
Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively he added, "Would you like to take a ride in my automobile?"

"Oh yes, I'd love that."

After a short ride, the boy turned and with his eyes aglow, said, "Mister, would you mind driving in front of my house?" Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbors that he could ride home in a big automobile. But Paul was wrong again.

"Will you stop where those two steps are?" the boy asked. He ran up the steps. Then in a little while Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up against him and pointed to the car. "There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas and it didn't cost him a cent. And some day I'm gonna give you one just like it...then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the Christmas windows that I've been trying to tell you about." Paul got out and lifted the lad to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride.

That Christmas Eve, Paul learned what Jesus meant when he had said: "It is more blessed to give..."



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# My Joy, My Love, My Wife

Charles S. Cooper

Let me tell you about the girl who became my wife in 1942—58 years ago. I was preparing for the ministry and it was important that I find the right kind of girl to become a preacher's wife.

When I first saw Virginia, I must admit that I took more than one look. She was in her late teens and was she ever pretty! However, I did realize that selecting the right girl to be a preacher's wife included much more than her facial features.

The first major thing I discovered about Virginia was that she had spent the first 15 years of her life in India where her parents had been missionaries. This interested me very much for I had done considerable dreaming about being a missionary. When I realized that she already knew a lot about a missionary's life, my interest in her increased.

At the time I met her, Virginia was employed as the housekeeper for a wealthy lady. She was an expert at that job. This was definitely a point in her favor since I liked a neatly kept home. When I found out that she was also an excellent cook, I was even more attracted to Virginia. When I learned that she made most of her clothes, I realized that this skill would make it much easier to live on a preacher's salary.

It didn't take long before we were frequently dating. We soon developed the plan of a regular weekly date on Wednesday evenings. Do you wonder how we spent those evenings? You are right—we attended prayer meeting together. It soon became obvious to me that Virginia was not only a pretty, young lady, she was also a dedicated Seventh-day Adventist and loved to serve Jesus! been my joy, my love, and my wife. Our ministry has included pastoring churches and conducting evangelistic meetings. We have worked together in preaching the gospel truth in six different countries.

This hasn't always been easy. In the Orient, we lost all of our possessions, except the contents of four small suitcases. On more than one occasion, we faced rifles and bayonets. At one time, our work included hiking through bandit-infested mountains. One night, thieves broke into our bedroom while we were asleep and stole much of our clothing. Amazingly, Virginia was convinced that we were doing the work God wanted us to do. The result? She fearlessly faced all kinds of dangers and losses.

Virginia has always taken an active part in my ministry. This has included accompanying me in pastoral visiting, giving Bible studies, conducting vegetarian cooking classes and entertain-

Pastor and Mrs. Charles and Virginia Cooper



ing guests in our home. I remember when we bought our first food freezer. Virginia decided to keep enough prepared food in the freezer to entertain up to twenty unexpected guests at any time. The church folks loved her and she spent many an hour chatting on the phone with lonely seniors.

When I think about all the things Virginia has done for the churches we served, I remember it this way—every church we served received two pastors for the price of one.

I never succeeded in getting Virginia to preach a sermon. However, many of the best ideas I had for my sermons came from her as we drove our car from one home visit to the next. And she was always at prayer meeting with me. This was true even when our children were small. Our oldest daughter would sit close to Mother and our youngest would sit on Mother's lap. At the Sabbath worship service, the first thing I did when it was my turn to present the sermon was to scan the congregation to make sure I knew where Virginia was sitting. Why? Because I knew that she would be praying for me.

Virginia took an active part in the 35 evangelistic campaigns we conducted. One of the first things we plan to do when we get to Heaven will be, hand-in-hand, to walk the streets of the city looking for the people we worked together to bring to Jesus. And I'm sure that at least half of the stars the conference records indicate are mine will be in Virginia's crown.

Of course, there were many church duties I could take care of by myself. Virginia developed her own plan to bid me farewell when I left the house on those occasions. She would leave whatever she was doing and go to the front window. There she watched me back our car out of the driveway. Then, as I turned onto the street, she would wave good-bye to me. This always said that, even if I made some dumb mistake in what I was going to do, she would always welcome me back

home with love. And believe me, I needed this assurance more than once.

Virginia's ministry included doing special things for the little folks in our flock. One day she had baked a batch of cookies and asked me to leave them at a home where there were two small

children. Usually, we went together to that house, but this time I was by myself. When I rang the doorbell, a seven-year-old lad opened the door. Suddenly, a puzzled look came over his face and with a questioning tone in his voice, he asked, "Where is the other Pastor Cooper?"

Well, that just about says it all, doesn't it? ❁



### The Bible and the TV Guide

On the table, side by side  
The Holy Bible and the TV Guide.  
One is well worn but cherished with pride  
No, not the Bible, but the TV Guide.

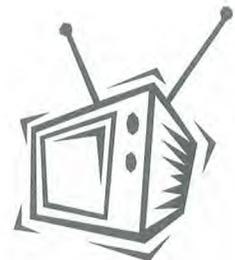
One is used daily to help folks decide  
No, it isn't the Bible, it's the TV Guide.  
As the pages are turned, what shall they see?  
Oh, what does it matter—turn on the TV.

Then confusion reigns; they can't all agree  
On what they shall watch on the old TV.  
So they open the book in which they confide  
No, not the Bible, the TV Guide.

The Word of God is seldom read  
Oh, maybe a verse as they fall into bed.  
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be  
Not from reading the Bible, but from watching TV.

So then back to the table, side by side  
Is the Holy Bible and the TV Guide.  
No time for prayer, no time for the Word  
The plan of salvation is seldom heard.

Forgiveness of sin, so full and free  
Is found in the Bible, not on TV.



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# Putting the Joy Back Into Christmas



Mary Barrett

I am not like Ebenezer Scrooge, truly I am not! However, I must admit I am rather glad when Christmas is over. It is always with a sense of relief that I stuff the Christmas tree back into its box, gently lay the Christmas baubles into their hibernation home and hurriedly whip rows of Christmas cards off our hall wall.

I love the Christmas story with its message of a selfless God who cascaded into our sin-darkened world bringing dazzling light. I love the snapshots of the nativity scene which tell of a God who valued a relationship with us so much that He gave Himself that first Christmas. Wouldn't it be wonderful to reflect that same concern for developing relationships at Christmas?

What can we do then to deepen our friendships with families, friends and others we may come in contact with during the holiday season? What can we do to put the "joy" back into Christmas? What can we do as pastoral families to reduce the amount of stress that descends upon our homes during the Christmas period?

## 1. Give a Promise

One way of making Christmas contact more personal is to offer to pray for the person you are sending a Christmas card to. Ask the individual to contact you and let you know of any

specific requests they may have. If you are creative, you could always design your own card with a Christmas message on one side and the promise of prayer on the other. It is probably the most precious gift you can give.

Suzie asked Carrie and others to pray for her to lose weight as extra pounds piled on due to steroids. The following Christmas, Suzie was thrilled at wearing a smaller dress size for the festive season knowing that many had prayed for her.

## 2. Regular Notes of Encouragement

Instead of discarding your Christmas cards, keep them on hand and pray for the sender of one of the cards during your devotional time. You can do this several times throughout the year. Afterwards write a note of encouragement to the individual. Keep a basket of notelets with your devotional material and in five minutes your note will be written. Doing this will enhance your relationships with others rather than following the usual routine of only making contact once a year. Friendships are too valuable not to be maintained.

## 3. Make Use of the Sales

I always buy and wrap my Christmas presents for the following

Mary is a pastor's wife who lives in England and author of the book, *When God Comes to Visit*. She plays an active part in her husband's ministry, and writes for a variety of magazines. For relaxation Mary loves to be with friends and family, adores walking and enjoys making various crafts.



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year in the January sales. Not only does it allow me to buy things at half the cost, I am able to buy things that I feel family and friends would like. It is one way of alleviating the Christmas stress and it frees me to enjoy the season, allowing me to spend more time with others than my cheque book!

#### 4. *Create a Tradition*

Christmas eve is probably the best part of our Christmas season. In our pastoral home Christmas is usually a time of frenzied activity. Christmas eve is a stop-gap for us. We buy a Chinese meal to be eaten at home, huddle up near an open fire, open one present and just enjoy being with one another. Jonathan and I make time to spend with our children, entering into their excitement of the day to come. I treasure the memories of these times together.

#### 5. *Buy One Present*

Instead of family members buying one another presents perhaps one family can purchase one gift for another family. The money saved by not buying individual gifts can be given to someone in need. There are many causes that need help particularly during the Christmas period. Deciding on a cause and getting involved practically or financially can enhance our relationships with each other as a project is worked upon.

I read of one family who placed red envelopes on their Christmas tree, containing a donation each person had made to a particular cause. Christmas is a great time to reach out to those in need.

#### 6. *Don't Spend a Dime*

Instead of giving gifts why don't you give of yourself? During the Christmas season, James and his nephew Donald helped an elderly relative build a patio. Working alongside one another was great. The elderly relatives who were desperate for

the patio to be built, valued the gift of time and skill a great deal.

This can be carried through the rest of the year. For Pam's birthday her family plans to spend the day with Pam carrying out general house repairs and working on her garden which causes her much stress. It is much easier to give a gift, but it will strengthen relationships more when we give of ourselves.



#### 7. *Getting to Know Others*

Christmas is a great opportunity to deepen relationships with neighbors, your children's friends and their parents or colleagues at work. Why not have "Open House" and invite your acquaintances into your home. You need only serve simple snacks and relaxing conversation. You may end up with a friend.

#### 8. *Make a Memory*

This past Christmas was a really busy one for us. We travelled. We entertained. We met the needs of our extended family. However, the highlight for us was spending the night in an old-fashioned guest house en route to visiting relatives. We slept in a family room, talked and giggled as we tried to get to sleep. We had no one's needs to meet but that of ourselves. The whole experience was cozy, comfortable, and satisfying. In the

midst of all the busyness of Christmas, spend time alone with your family. Make that time pleasant. They will remember that long after the presents you buy them.

#### 9. *Don't Forget Your Present to God*

God's present to us on that first Christmas was His Son. Jesus Christ was born on this earth to give each one of us the opportunity to know God intimately as we were created to.

In response we can give God the chance to make His gift meaningful in our lives by consistently spending time with Him. Why don't you use the Christmas season to examine your relationship with God and see if God's gift is still important in your life?

Relax, you may now enjoy Christmas knowing that you are doing the most important thing of the season by reaching out and deepening your relationship with others. After all, isn't that what Christmas is all about? ✿

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# An Unexpected Gift

*Lillian Chalale*

**A**n elderly lady we hardly knew came one morning to borrow two and six pence (26p). That was so many years ago I can't even recall what she needed the money for. At that time we had not been long in the ministry and were rather on the poor side. Nevertheless, we gave her the money, and that was that. We would sometimes remember the two and six pence she had borrowed from us, but even if we had seen her we would not have dared to ask about it.

In those days, with that amount of money we could have bought a bottle of cooking oil, or a loaf of bread and perhaps a pint of milk. Yet we dared not ask for that money from an elderly person who was perhaps even a widow. We did not really know her. In fact, we did not even know where she lived. We had only occasionally seen her in the vicinity.

Several months went by, then one day she brought us some tomato seedlings. We took them and thanked her for the gift.

We wondered if those seedlings would survive. Water was very scarce, and already I had to get our water from the street tap. Each day I had to stand in the queue to get water for the house and for the washing. How would I also keep tomatoes alive?

Besides, the soil was very poor. It looked as if it had been years since that ground had grown anything. To make matters still worse, our house was on a street corner with lots of cars and pedestrians passing by. Could these tomatoes possibly make it to maturity?

We kept watering the seedlings anyway, and as the weeks rolled on, the

tomatoes plants did amazingly well. Large, healthy-looking tomatoes began to form.

Then, to our surprise, my husband was given the opportunity to go for the two-year ministerial course at Bethel College. A few weeks later we had to move to Bethel. By then, however, the tomatoes had begun to ripen. They were just the type for a good tomato salad.

And what a lot of them! We picked and picked—enough tomatoes to fill two wooden boxes. There were still some very green ones, but we did not have room for them anyway. We invited some neighbors and church friends to help themselves to the remainder of those lovely tomatoes—our repayment from an elderly, hardly-known lady.

It was during the experience of those tomatoes that I first heard my husband quote the verse, "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again." (Eccl. 11:1, NIV)

Though it seemed to us that she had forgotten about the borrowed money, she decided in her own time to repay us in her own way. We surely found our bread multiplied many, many times over. Bless her heart, she gave us much more than the two and six pence we had given her.

If we plant the word of God, we may not get the results we would like to see as quickly as we would like to see them. Yet in His own time—maybe even after we are gone—the Lord will bring the results. Therefore, let us take heart. ❀

*Lillian is a pastor's wife in South Africa.*

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# Reflections From An Outgoing President of Shepherdess

*Shirlee Neisner*

Rather than being a women's social club—one more activity in which to be involved in our already crowded schedule—Shepherdess is a dynamic interaction of wives who share a unique, difficult, and stressful role. Shepherdess provides the rare opportunity to share our burdens with those who understand and walk in similar shoes. That understanding and acceptance offer tremendous support that gets us through the hard times. We can look back to our warm memories together and look forward to our next ones and know that we are praying for each other.

Shepherdess is dynamic because it responds to our needs at any given time. As peers we reach out to each other in times of special need. We pray for each other. We address a variety of topics and issues at our retreats that the committee chooses after much discussion and prayer. We allow our individual gifts to be expressed, from the decorating to the organizing to the greeting, in a non-threatening atmosphere.

When we are together, we soon realize we are not alone in our experiences as pastors' wives. We find

that others have been where we are and can lift us up. We find that some are where we have been and we can be there for them.

We also realize how different we are as individuals and appreciate the unique talents we have. We learn from each other, we compliment each other, and thus we value each other. The result of this dynamic interaction is that our hearts are united in love and concern and adoration for each other and also our Lord, our Shepherd. God's Spirit binds us together, and our prayer in song that someone sees Jesus in us is realized. We experience unity in diversity at its best.

It has been my prayer and goal as past president to promote this oneness and to value our differences. We need each other. We will be the stronger for it. We each have special gifts to offer. Together we give a more whole picture of God. ❀

*Shirlee lives in Hong Kong. She is currently homeschooling her three children and also works as a nurse in Obstetrics, Labor & Delivery and Nursery. Her hobbies include studying Cantonese. She is the leader in the junior division at her church. Mainly she just loves being with people.*



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# *Anonymous Tribute to a Minister's Wife*

She slipped so quietly into my kindergarten room that Sabbath morning, yet it seemed another light had been turned on. I felt so pleased when at the close she remarked that she and her little son had enjoyed the Sabbath School. Later I realized how generous was her praise when I saw her in action in the primary department.

As a young girl my dream was to marry a minister. Through the years I studied the virtues of ministers' wives to prepare for that coveted position, should it be my privilege. Some of our pastors' wives were more outstanding than others, but I loved them all.

Then one day, ten years after I married my minister (a medical evangelist), I met the minister's wife who seemed to possess all the lovely traits I admired and wished to emulate. The new minister brought something very special to our church. How we loved him for his high ideals and clear messages. Secretly I often wondered, outstanding as he is, would he be the same if his wife were different and less helpful?

As I think back over the years since we met, I see how easy it was for people to be drawn to his wife. How often I have heard her say, "I understand," and I knew she really did. We experienced the ultimate of her love and thoughtfulness the day she kept our seven children while we packed and moved.

Other fond memories of our association include singing with her in the In-gathering and Sunshine bands. Somehow these experiences opened avenues for reaching hearts of sick and lonely people I might not have found alone. In cases of emergency her ever-present willingness to fit in and fill in wherever she was needed won our admiration.

Often when making even small de-



isions we ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do if He were in my place?" It is easier for the women of the church to know better what He would do if we see the minister's wife doing it. I believe she tries to do what Jesus would have her do.

Although I can't remember the cut or color of any dress except one which she wore, I think of her as a perfect example in dress. That particular dress was blue—and our daughter, admiring both the wearer and the dress, chose a similar pattern for one of her own

school dresses.

I was always happy she had a boy—a regular boy, with a capital B. I too had a live wire and our joys and problems gave us much in common. I watched her patient, consistent methods in training her children.

Of all the happy church services conducted by Elder \_\_\_\_\_, the three I best remember were the baptisms of two of our daughters, and the dedication of the little one. Behind those beautiful services were work and careful planning that only a minister's wife could do.

We were sorry when she left our church. We will miss her, but her life will touch hundreds of other lives. I knew this was in God's plan. When she thinks of us she can remember one little flickering light in our church, that is beaming brighter than it would have, had it not touched hers. ❀

*Written by a church member who appreciated the work of her pastor's wife and admired her sweet Christian character.*

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# Creative Hugging

*Evelyn Glass*

*Evelyn is the wife of Darrell, a mother and a grandmother. When time permits you may find her doing folk painting, needlework, knitting, refinishing furniture, entertaining, or reading. Also, she enjoys writing for various publications, speaking and giving seminars. Evelyn has been active in her community serving on boards and committees. She serves as Women's Ministries Director for the Mid-America Union and is active in her local church as elder, church clerk, and teacher in the primary department.*



Trish grew up in a home where religion was practiced spasmodically. When she was high-school age, the academy principal visited her home and persuaded her parents that Trish should come to the academy.

Looking back, Trish reminisced on those days, "This was a blessing for me. Living in a burned-out trailer in the middle of the desert was no place for a teenage girl. Going to the academy was wonderful! I enjoyed being there and entering into the activities of the school. But the girls dean was so cold. She didn't realize that I wasn't a naughty girl; I only needed a hug."

As I listened to Trish and saw her now as a beautiful young wife and mother, who no longer attended church, I reflected on her words and thought, "If only love was practiced, how many more happy lives there would be."

As women of the church, how do we minister to one another and give that "hug?"

Like Trish, many women have told me they feel the need for women counselors—not necessarily professional counselors, but a friend who will listen and keep their confidences. They need someone who will sympathize and offer a word of encouragement in

love. Ministering to one another is not necessarily giving advice and telling others what would be best for them but rather taking time to share and to listen.

I live in a rural area where neighbors are separated by miles. But we have close emotional ties and take time for each other. Our day may be planned from beginning to end, but if a neighbor calls and needs a ride to the doctor, the answer is "yes." If there is a death in a family, food is prepared and taken to the home with love and a "hug." A young mother may need a baby-sitter on short notice and time is made to help her by caring for the children. Loneliness and discouragement are often dealt with by a phone call to one another—laughter and conversation are wonderful antidotes. We care for each other and make time to be a good neighbor. Our daily schedule may be completely revised but we feel we have given and received a hug.

Women who work together on church projects, in the office, at school or other areas are in an ideal place to give that extra hug. How easy it is to say, "You were especially kind to your student," "I like the way you did the decorations," "Your presentation was thoughtfully prepared and clearly presented," "The meeting was well

arranged,” “You did a good job!” Forget competitiveness and envy. You receive back as much love as you give.

When ministering to other women, don't forget the “little” women—daughters, granddaughters, and young women in the church or neighborhood. Speak kindly, positively and with encouragement to them whenever possible. Write notes to let them know you appreciated or enjoyed something they did at church or elsewhere. Compliment them on their new glasses, hair, poise, clothes, or scholastic achievements.

Invite them to your home and do something special for different ones individually. When visiting with them—and do visit with them—

respect their opinions, listen to their comments. You will learn something and maybe you will get a hug while giving one.

Also, remember those who are single. Value their contributions to the church, the community, and your family. Share your home and a meal with them and include them in special plans and activities. Don't think of single women as a threat or as someone whose main goal in life is to find a spouse. Many single individuals have chosen that lifestyle and would like others to accept that they are happy with their choice and with their involvement in their careers.

Women who are living alone in the later years of life also need the attentions we are able to give. An invitation to lunch, a ride to the shopping center, or a visit on the telephone all help to make their days more pleasant. Sending a letter or card in the mail will also give them a lift. And too, the wisdom they have gained through their years of life will often make our lives easier if we will seek it. As we spend time with these women, we not only give a hug but most certainly receive one.

As Jesus ministered to people, He was sensitive to their needs and hugged people in many ways. Don't be afraid to give a hug. You may feel that some don't need

it and will be put off at your attempt to give one. But I believe you will be surprised at how many are waiting for that caring attention. Even the most confident, well-adjusted woman needs a hug.

Life includes numerous responsibilities, and can be very complex at times, but try accepting the challenge of caring and sharing a hug with those who come to you in their need. And don't forget to reach for and accept the love that other women of your church are so willing and ready to give you. Everyone must be willing to receive a hug as well as to give one. ❀

*As Jesus ministered to people, he was sensitive to their needs and hugged people in many ways.*



*Live so that if people get to know you, they will get to know Christ better.*

*Croft M. Pentz*



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# Mother of a Prodigal Daughter

*Andrea Zöller*

**W**e went up the hill side on a small path. It was a beautiful, sunny day. Clasped to my hand was the small hand of my four year old, a slim, sunburned, blond little girl with bright, blue eyes. At that time we lived in a small town on the edge of a forest. It was perfect surroundings to rear children. When we reached the edge of the woods we sat down on a bench. It was warmed by the sunshine and the place offered a beautiful view of the valley below. We listened together to the birds' songs in the trees and watched bees, bugs and ants at our feet. We talked about how beautifully God had made all the things around us. She asked a thousand questions and it was fun talking to her. When we went back home, I decided that this was one of those memorable events in life, and that surely children were a gift of God.

When she was thirteen years old, on the way back home from a retreat, our daughter told us she wanted to be baptized. However, when school began, she never said anything about it anymore, and when I asked her about it she let me know that this was her very own decision and that I should leave her alone. In the meantime, we once again had to move and at her new school she had a difficult time finding friends. She finally found some who were smoking, and that seemed to be

the only link between them. She began smoking and lying about it, and being a sensible girl, she concluded that she could not get baptized under such circumstances.

We sent her to an Adventist school, not knowing her problem. We just wanted her to be among Adventist young people. There she got baptized but told me later that she had "tried hard to believe but couldn't." She did not get along well with some of the teachers. There was wrong on both sides but being young she only saw that she was wronged and she connected her experience with the church as a whole.

We then sent her to another Adventist school although we would have preferred to keep her at home but it was not possible because of the curriculum. While the first school was very conservative, the other one was extremely liberal. Here she met many other Adventists who did not live an Adventist life, and that was her alibi for living like that herself. Finally, she went too far and had to leave the school. Now she is at a public school. She gets along very well there. The teachers like her since she is a very polite person and does well in her school work. Her Christian upbringing is evident. Besides that, she gets along wonderfully with her classmates. She does not go to church anymore, has a weekend job in

*Andrea is a pastor's wife in Germany, the mother of three girls, and an English teacher. Sometimes she translates books for the German Adventist Publishing House.*

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a bar and enjoys a life of many worldly parties. Lately she has declared that she does not believe in God anymore, and that the Bible is just a story and history book for her.

As a minister's wife, I have often had talks with parents whose children have turned away from the church. I've always tried to comfort them. When people told me stories about parents whose children went wayward I tried not to find fault. I used to tell them that I did not dare judge, since my own children were not grown. I could not predict how they would turn out. No one can believe or make decisions for someone else. The only thing parents can do was to try to do their best and put their hope in God.

These are wonderful theories as long as you are not involved yourself. Even though I always thought that something like that might happen, I was absolutely dumbfounded and struck with horror when it happened to me. Theory and Bible texts are one thing, emotions are another. For a while all the good advice I had always held for others did not help me one bit. From a first hand basis I offer this advice:

**Theory #1:** *Stay friendly in spite of the trying circumstances.*

The children should know that you love them anyway. The problem was, though, that at the first shock, I was hardly able to talk to her without crying. Besides that, I just did not know what to say. This is something that often happens when people mourn, and you have to accept that this is a type of mourning. As a Christian who believes that there is a better life to come, it must be one of your foremost aims in life to have your whole family with you when Jesus returns. Losing someone for that life (and that is what it looks like at first sight) is like having someone lost for eternity. I had to do a lot of talking with my husband and I talked to a friend who has teenage children herself and also happened to be a counselor. After that I could talk

normally with my daughter again. Not everybody has a counselor for a friend, but it would be good to seek counseling with someone you can trust.

**Theory #2:** *You have not done anything wrong, so it is not your fault.*

The question all parents ask themselves under such circumstances is: "What have we done wrong?" And even though there will be many friendly people who will try to tell you that you did not do anything wrong, that you actually did a good job educating your children, you will know in your heart that you have made many mistakes and that you have not always been a good example. Satan probably rejoices reminding you of all the wrongs you have ever done concerning your children. So the best thing is to admit that you are not perfect and then go to God and ask Him to forgive. This does not mean that you really have done a bad job. But when sinful people have to raise sinful children in a sinful world it is impossible to do a perfect job. Admitting the wrong things you can remember, and bringing them to God makes you free of them. It even is possible to talk with the child about it. This could be important because children tend to find someone to blame since they actually don't feel comfortable in a situation like this either.

**Theory #3:** *It does not matter what other people think.*

This is certainly right but it is still a theory because it always causes sensation to see the minister's daughter smoking some place in town. Sometimes people won't judge, but they still begin thinking what went wrong. In our case there are some who think that we might have been too narrow. I have learned to admit my grief and now there are some people praying for us and really caring. There always is the question of having to be an example for the church members, and once again you have to make clear the fact that preachers' children are just like other

people's children. The thing is, though, that never before did it hurt so much.

**Theory #4:** *Job regularly brought an offering to God, lest his children had done something wrong. What you can do is pray.*

This certainly is true. This is what you can do, should do and surely will do. But it was a big problem for me which probably not everybody has. I am not a very patient person, and therefore, in the past I always expected quick answers. I had experienced quick answers to my prayers. And since my daughter was leaving home within six months to study at the other end of the country at a state college I set myself a limit. I thought I had to work hard, praying as often as possible, because this half a year was all the time I had. Not hard to see how wrong this approach was! You can't set God a limit. Now that my heart has become a little quieter, I can pray without being in panic.

**Theory #5:** *Try not to show how hurt you are.*

I once met a mother who cried almost constantly, did not talk to her daughter anymore or when she did talk it was always on the same subject: *Why are you leaving your faith?* This might not be the right approach but the other way around, not showing how hurt you are, is not the right way either. A lot of talking is probably useless but I think children must know you are hurt because you deeply believe in an everlasting life. When I was not able to talk, I wrote her a letter and I got an answer. There is another problem I noticed with parents in this situation: Strangely enough they give up their own positions, some which they had held all their lives. Even if my daughter does not care a bit about the Sabbath right now, I asked her to respect our Sabbath life as long as she lives in our home. A young minister once told me that it was most important to him that his parents did not compromise their beliefs in any way when he distanced

himself from the church. They were friendly but faithful.

**Theory #6:** *Preachers kids are especially endangered to leave the church because they see too many negative things and maybe are reared too strickly.*

The first thing is, the statistics are against it. Statistically compared, there are more preachers children who stay in church than children of church members and some of them become ministers themselves.

On the other hand, we have tried hard to have our children grow up normally, and as far as it was not possible to keep church problems away from them, we talked about them and always explained the difference between human action and God's will.

Anyway, I think that excusing a worldly way of life with the action of other humans is just an alibi. Let's face it—it's not easy to be a young person in our times. There are many more temptations than there used to be. Our

children actually grow up in a heathen world. When I was a child I was surrounded with Catholic children who were my friends. They believed in God and they knew lying was a sin. Nowadays children have to defend their faith in kindergarten and nobody wants to be lied to but almost everybody lies. This is just one example of how times have changed. I believe that the main reason our children leave the church is because they are fatigued with the church way of life. Like the prodigal son they want their inheritance now. They want to live their life now. They don't want to wait for all the "good things" life that the world seems to offer them. This is a sociological slogan suggested everywhere.

I once met a mother who had six children and only one of them was in church. In her bitterness, she told me if she could start over again, she would not have any children at all. I know now how it hurts to have prodigal

children but if this would be a theory, it surely would be a bad one. I have had wonderful times with my children. Educating them was educating myself. I would not want to have missed that part of life. Letting children go and live their own life always hurts. Letting them go to live a worldly life hurts even worse. But they have to make their own decisions and as I wrote in a letter to my daughter: "*Now I know how the father in the Bible object lesson felt. Now I know how God feels about the millions of people who don't believe in Him. They are all still His children. All I can do is wait just like the father in Christ's example waited.*" I used to pray that God might give my children a good life here, if they won't inherit everlasting life. This was not a good theory either. Now I pray that God will lead them back, and I only hope their journey will not be as lowly as the way of the prodigal. ❀

## *Some Things to Remember at Thanksgiving*

A great deal has been written about the virtue of forgetting old grudges, prejudices, unpleasant experiences, and heartaches. We also need to be reminded of some of the blessings of remembering. Remembering can be good spiritual exercise. At Thanksgiving we need to:

- \* Remember our sins that we might confess them to God.
- \* Remember our weaknesses that we may receive strength.
- \* Remember our humanity that we might stop trying to be God.
- \* Remember God's mercies that we might be merciful to others.
- \* Remember our joys that we might be joyful.
- \* Remember God's greatness that we might be humble.
- \* Remember our poverty that we might share our prosperity.
- \* Remember God's forgiveness that we might forgive others.
- \* Remember our needs that we might serve the needs of others.
- \* Remember Jesus Christ that we might grow to be more like Him.

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# The Mannequin Pastor's Wife

Ingrid Lawrenz, MStW

Faith Christianson has been a pastor's wife for the past twelve years. She's always smiling, always sympathetic, always willing to be a hostess or Sunday School teacher, and always busy. She has that too-good-to-be-true appearance. Always so sweet and so kind, she seems constantly to be talking to people, yet somehow seems lonely. People come to her—she reaches out to no one. She carts her kids everywhere, involved with them at school and all their various activities, because Dad's usually too busy to help.

Faith is flexible and accommodating, fitting in wherever there is a need. She smiles and accepts the stern advice or correction of the elder lady. She's loved by all but known by no one.

On cold, dark, quiet evenings, when all the kids are asleep, when her husband is still out at the elder's meeting and the clock has gone past the polite calling hours, she enters her room alone. There are no mirrors, no pictures, no windows reflecting back any images. It is then that she takes off her smile and lays it on the bed. Her face is sore and relieved to lose that weight. She sets aside her glasses that create the illusion of a lift and twinkle, revealing empty sad eyes. Next she takes off the makeup of perfection and lets it run down the drain. Finally, she throws

down her clothes—the insignia of her role. There she stands—naked, vulnerable, frightened, unknown to herself and unknown to God. She is confused and she knows there is something wrong, so she starts to blame her husband. Then all the critical voices of past authorities start rushing into her head. She feels uncovered and ashamed.

Suddenly, she hears the garage door start to open. She hurries to put her mannequin persona back on, stuffing her smile in her pocket for tomorrow, lest he think she is interested in “anything” tonight.

You see, Faith Christianson has confused a role with an identity. She knows her Bible thoroughly; she was an ace at Bible quizzes as a teenager. Yet, she doesn't find time to gain nourishment from it anymore. It is only a textbook for completing teaching tasks. Talking to God personally doesn't come up anymore. He seems so impersonal and tied up in a committee meeting somewhere. She's lost touch with her gifts, talents and interests out of duty to perform the necessary.

She's trying to mold and perfect herself for the approval of the congregation, but Faith is tired due to the sometimes contradictory expectations. Feeling like a failure, Faith tries to please the ladies who scrutinize her, leaving her with no idea anymore of

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*This article appeared in Just Between Us, Summer 1995.*



what God wants her to be. She knows she is not supposed to be selfish, so she has no idea who her 'self' is.

She's become an automaton, with ugly inner reactions that she ignores and pushes down. She blames her husband for not being more interested in her emotionally and for not trying to connect. However, when he does try to connect, no one is home. Faith has no idea what her real feelings are, so she is unable to share them or work through them. Sometimes she's numb, at other times there is a hole filled with bitterness.

I've met too many Faith Christiansons. I recognize them by their honey-dripping smile and their far-away eyes. They need to be loved, accepted and introduced to a heavenly Father who is holy and righteous as well as intimate, personal, and accepting. She needs to find Abba.

Women like this need to bask in His love so they can come out from hiding and discover the self He made them to be. He wants to be connected with that true self, allowing her to be a vessel filled with Himself and used for His glory, even if this does not fit the classic pastor's wife role or please the *ladies*. God wants her to face her inner feelings (Ps. 51:6) and work through them so she doesn't have to blame anyone for her unhappiness, but be responsible before God for the truth about her identity in Him. Then she can stand openly before Him—out of hiding, vulnerable, unashamed and no longer alone. ❀



# A Shepherdess In Action

*Hepzibah G. Kore*

*M*rs. Arputhamani Ponnusami is a pastoral wife in Sawyerpuram, a small town in South Tamil Section of South India Union.

She visits a nearby village called Pandaravilai twice a week. As a result of her regular visits she has been able to organize a Bible study group for twelve ladies and two men. On Tuesdays the Bible study participants fast and begin their program at noon. Their Bible study ends at 3 p.m.

The Church of South India is located in the center of Pandaravilai. Before the church was built there was much opposition to its location. The Pandaravilai community did not want their village to be overtaken by Seventh-day Adventists. The villagers made fun of this person who kept the Sabbath and so fervently shared the Gospel of the Lord. The adults of the village thought it was a big mistake to let her enter their community; they were agitated because many of the villagers began going to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

By God's grace and through her untiring labor, three people were baptized into the church. One of them is Annalhai, a blind young lady. She was tortured the day she was baptized. For ten days she was not given food. She bravely told her father and other family members that even if she had to die, she would not depart from the truth she had accepted. Due to her steadfastness and good behavior, her

father and sister also accepted Jesus as their Savior. They will be baptized soon. Praise the Lord. He never forsakes those who trust Him. This family needs our prayers.

Arputhamani and four ladies from the church had an all-night prayer meeting in one of the homes of the church members. The prayer session started at 10 p.m. At 12 midnight, one of the ladies began to choke as she prayed; soon she could not speak. Sensing this was the work of the devil, Arputhamani started praying. She rebuked the evil spirit in Christ's name and prayed earnestly for about thirty minutes. The evil spirit said, "I cannot stay here any longer" and left. What a miracle!

Arputhamani says God is leading her in His ministry. She requests each reader of this article to remember her and her ministry in their prayers. ❀

*Hepzibah is the Shepherdess Coordinator for Southern Asia Division.*



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# An Inn For Christmas

J. Grant Swank, Jr.

That year all of us came to understand what it means to have been put out of an inn, only to be sheltered by the hearts of those who care enough to share.

"I will bring you another blanket."

With that, I left the church and went to my parsonage nearby. One more blanket should do it.

"Greg, when you leave in the morning," I told him, "make sure you turn out the lights. I have been finding them on when I come over here in the morning. I'm trying to save on electricity. The church folk are not rich, you know."

Greg smiled, understanding that he did have a habit of forgetting to turn out lights in his one-room shelter. He also had a habit of leaving dirty dishes in the sink in the church kitchen downstairs. Furthermore, he usually forgot to turn down the thermostat when going off to work each morning.

*I guess that's part of being in your early twenties,* I mused as I left this fellow.

*How could parents put their child out at Christmas?* That was one question that was eating away at my heart ever since he came to me, his pastor, and had knocked on my parsonage door.

The next day I twisted my master key into the lock, opened the door into

his room, and found that he had done just as I had asked—lights off, heat turned down. But those crusty dishes were still in the sink.

*I had better clean up this mess before the women of the church come in here to complain.*

Then I scolded myself for putting my irritation onto the women. They knew his plight. I knew down deep that there would be no complaining. They, too, had sons.

"How is it that they told you to leave?" I had asked him when he wandered into my living room that desperately cold night.

"They said that they had it with me being a Christian. At first I thought they were taking to this new life of mine. But then, flip. It had turned the other way." He looked down at the carpet, hardly able to take it in that his own mother and father had sent him packing. Where else could he go? There were no relatives nearby. Then he thought of the church. He would go there. And so here he was on my front doorstep—his suitcase pressed against his side.

"You can use the restrooms—shave, bathe. You can use the church kitchen to make your meals. Sometimes we will invite you over for supper. How's that? And there is your own thermostat. It heats up just the room off the sanctuary," I pointed out

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all the “conveniences” of being turned out into the cold at Christmas.

“Of course, the sanctuary is a good place for you to go in quiet, getting your thoughts together,” I suggested. Greg was a student of the Word. Since becoming a believer, he could not get enough of the Scriptures.

“Some of my personal study books are on the shelves around the corner,” I told him. “Take your pick. Enjoy!” I tried to be cheery, though it was not all that easy talking to a young man who was bunking out in a side room of the church. Yes, it was the house of God. But on cold, wintry nights it was also a lonely place to walk into all yourself. Creaks sounded in the night. Radiators croaked—some at odd hours.

“Just don’t get caught in the restroom taking a sponge bath when someone with a key decides to case the place,” I said, chuckling.

He was game. What else was left? He had finished college and come back home to make some money so he could pay off some bills. And now this.

“How can my parents turn their own son out like this?” he asked me one especially empty evening.

“It is hard to answer that one,” I shrugged, not wanting to appear too serious. I figured that if we moved on to another subject, the pain might not linger.

On Sunday the congregation was told gently of Greg’s plight.

When the worship service ended, people needed no prodding in getting their heads and hearts together. In short order, whisperings on behalf of goodwill toward the young man were filling the halls. It was coming up to the Sunday just before the Big Day. We were going to enjoy our fellowship meal after the morning service.

“Has the box been decorated?” someone asked. I assured this lady that Marie had everything in place, and that it was hidden from Greg’s view.

“Where do we put the presents?”

“Over there, behind the table. I’ll get them later and put them in the box so that everything will be put together.”

What fun it was to poke about, doing things in secret when it all added up to ways in which we could warm this young man’s heart.

“Good morning, Greg,” I called out to him as he left his one-room abode to join the rest of us for Bible class.

*My family  
are all those  
wonderful  
people who  
come to this  
church.*

“Good morning to you, Pastor,” he replied, cheerily.

Greg had been invited to his parents’ for Christmas Day. Would he go? He had said he would go. Why? “To show them that I love them in spite of what they have done to me.” Fine. Then go. I wondered what they would wrap and put under the tree for their son-put-out-of-their-home-because-of-his-faith. But today, the celebration was with the Lord’s people at the church. It was time to eat dinner.

The meal was eaten with relish. Such delicious, tasty dishes!

“Now?” Sally asked as she tugged at my coat.

“Now,” I whispered back. A huge box was brought to the center of the fellowship hall.

“Greg!”

It was not easy to get Greg’s attention when he was eating!

“Greg! We have something special for you today. Here are some presents

we have wrapped and brought here just for you. May this be a blessed Christmas after all.”

The young man—not all that tall—rose to extra height with happiness as he eagerly moved toward the pile of gifts, each one tagged with his name. One by one he lifted them, felt their shapes, and gently shook them while holding them up to his ear. He looked around at each of us with wonder and thanksgiving.

“How can I say what is in my heart?” he asked, hardly able to say much more.

“You don’t have to say anything, just being with us this Christmas has made this season very special for our church family,” I said.

Christmas Day came and went.

“Greg!” I called as I knocked on his door late that Christmas night. Loud music was blaring from inside his room. *What if someone from the church had come into the building to hear that mash called “music”?* I thought.

“Greg!” I knocked again. Presently he came to the door.

“What are you listening to?” I asked whimsically, as if not caring all that much, just making conversation.

Greg turned down the volume, then sat on the sofa made into a bed.

“I guess I was just trying to drown out my thoughts . . . and feelings . . . with that noise,” Greg said haltingly.

“That bad, was it?” I ventured.

“That bad!”

“And what did your parents give you for Christmas?” I asked.

“Nothing.”

“Nothing? Nothing at all? Nothing? Just plain nothing?”

Greg nodded. At the other side of the room were all the gifts that had been given by the church folk. They were all unwrapped and neatly stacked in one corner.

“My parents are not very happy people,” he said. “I feel sorry for them. I am beginning to understand that they need a lot of help.”

I nodded in a gesture of understanding.

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“The fact that they didn’t give me anything was really getting through to me tonight. I turned up the radio trying to drown out some of the hurt inside. I figured that no one would be here on Christmas night this late. So I thought it wouldn’t harm anything—the loud music and all.”

“No problem, Greg. No one would have stopped by. I just came because I wanted to see how you were doing, and that’s why I decided to walk over and check things out,” I told him.

“Yet, Pastor, through this whole mess. I have come to realize that I have

one very precious gift—a gift that stands out more than anything else.”

“What is that?”

“It is that I *do* have a family, and it’s more than I’ve known in my whole life. My family are all those wonderful people who come to this church. They care about me. They love me. They gave me all those great gifts over there.”

I left him and walked back home.

“How’s he doing?” my wife asked as I walked through the door.

“Not too well. But not too badly either. I mean, I think that this Christmas is one of the most precious

Christmases that Greg will ever know. For some very important reasons, this season will no doubt stand out in his memory as one of the most meaningful times in his life.

That was a year when all of us came to understand what it’s like to be rejected by one’s own people and what it means to be put out of an inn, only to be sheltered by the hearts of others who care enough to love. ❁

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## Out of the Mouth of Babes

When a mother saw a thunderstorm forming in mid-afternoon, she worried about her seven-year-old daughter who would be walking the three blocks from school to home. Deciding to meet her, the mother saw her walking nonchalantly along, stopping to smile whenever lightning flashed.



Glimpsing her mother, the little girl ran to her, explaining enthusiastically, “All the way home, God’s been taking my picture!”

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A nurse on the pediatric ward, before listening to the little ones’ chests would plug the stethoscope into their ears and let them listen to their own hearts. Their eyes would always light up with awe.

But she never got a response to equal four year old David’s. Gently he tucked the stethoscope in his ears and placed the disk over his heart.

“Listen,” she said, “What do you suppose that is?”

He drew his eyebrows together in a puzzled line and looked up as if lost in the mystery of the strange tap-tap-tapping deep in his chest. Then his face broke out in a wondrous grin. “Is that Jesus knocking?” he asked.



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A mother was telling her little girl what her own childhood was like: “We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods.” The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this in. At last she said, “I sure wish I’d gotten to know you sooner!”



# Shepherdess International News

## East Africa Division

Angeline Musvosi, Shepherdess Coordinator for the Division reports:

### TANZANIA UNION:

South Mwanza Conference was the setting for 60 Shepherdesses who met together for a workers meeting March 23-27. Mrs. Angeline Musvosvi and Tanzanian Coordinator, Mrs. R. Manento lead out in the presentations with seminars on the topic of "The Ministers' Wife as a Leader." Group discussions included case studies. Church Elders wives joined the shepherdesses on the third day. Together they all celebrated the Lords Supper and made a recommitment to God's work.



TAC Shepherdess Club. Mrs Mutaki (2nd from top left row) is sponsor.

Tanzania Adventist College has a Shepherdess chapter made up mainly of wives of pastors in training. Mrs. Angeline Musvosvi was the guest speaker at a day conference on March 20. Mrs. Mutaki is the local sponsor.

### ZIMBABWE UNION:

The ZUC Shepherdess Chapter was excited to be able to meet in a ministerial retreat held in Gweru with Pastor and Mrs. Joel and Margarida Sarli from the General Conference Ministerial Association and Dr. and Mrs. Joel and Angeline Musvosvi from the Ministerial Association at the Division. Mrs. Margarida Sarli

presented seminars on character development in children. Mrs. Angeline Musvosvi lead in seminars about problems that face the pastors wives.



South Mwanza Conference Shepherdesses.

Central Zimbabwe Conference holds quarterly weekend meetings for the Shepherdesses encouragement and spiritual growth. At the last retreat Pastor M. Z. Lunga presented "Whom can I choose to resemble Me?" a seminar about influential men and women from Bible times. Each month the group holds a Shepherdess Day of Prayer and Fasting.

### UGANDA UNION:

Uganda Union Shepherdess Coordinator, Ruth Aliddeki reports that the Uganda Shepherdesses get together during camp meetings where they learn how to give Bible studies, how to conduct communion services, how to counsell brides-to-be, how to manage finances, and how to pray for and visit

the sick. Since funding for these meetings is so very limited, the Shepherdesses raise their own funds through bee-keeping, operating guest hostels and establishing a food factory.



Bugema Shepherdess Chapter, Uganda Union.

### MALAWI UNION:

E. G. Malopa, Shepherdess Coordinator reports that she met with the Shepherdesses of Dididi, Mzuzu City, Nkhataby, Lakeshore, Mximba and Eninuweni districts. The Shepherdess of Ighembe church is teaching the community how to make soap and giving health lectures. The shepherdess of the Karonga district is conducting Bible studies on the book of Revelation. The shepherdess of Dididi district has quarterly classes for girls with instruction about AIDS and being faithful to God by refraining from sex outside of marriage.

### KENYA UNION:

Maranatha Shepherdess Chapter/CKC reports that Nairobi Shepherdesses



Margarida Sarli (center) meets with Zimbabwe Shepherdesses.

held a Family Life Crusade with 50 people enrolling in the VOP lessons. Nakruru Shepherdess group held a crusade in which 3 were baptized. Meru-Isiolo group held a crusade in which 22 were baptized. Ukambani Shepherdesses conducted three rallies and all were blessed by the Biblical Family Life principles.



CKC Shepherdesses marching during the seminar. Mrs. E. Wangai is the leader.

## Euro-Africa Division

Frauke Gyuroka from Austria Union reports that she has begun giving Bible studies in her district and finds it very exciting and rewarding. The people she is studying with tell her how special it is to have the opportunity to study the Bible with others.

## North American Division

### FLORIDA CONFERENCE:

Florida Conference Shepherdess Coordinator, Cheryl Retzer, reports on the Shepherdess retreats held during April, 1999. One group met in south Florida at the Sheridan Suites in Fort Lauderdale and the other group met at the Adams Mark in Orlando. Marti Schneider, as the guest speaker for both events, focused on deepening the daily walk with Jesus and developing a personal mission statement. Spiritual renewal, fellowship, laughter, music and prayer were highlights of the weekends. One of the many responses from the pastors wives read: "This weekend was designed to make us as pastors wives feel special. I can go home refreshed in spirit and body to care for my family and serve my creator. I have renewed my commitment to spend more time with Jesus everyday, the retreat meant more to me than you will ever know."



Florida Conference ministers wives at their weekend retreat. Marti Schneider speaker (far right) and Cheryl Retzer, Shepherdess Coordinator (3rd from left).

## Southern Asia-Pacific Division

**BANGLADESH UNION MISSION:** Shepherdess coordinator Dorothy Biswas reports that they have a total of 43 shepherdesses and she has met personally with most of them this year. This year the group has focused on spiritually as well as practically preparing for the Lord's Supper.

### WEST INDONESIA UNION:

Sarinah Simanjuntak, Shepherdess coordinator of the South Sumatera Mission reports the shepherdesses of Palembang Chapter visit and serve the elderly people in the nursing home operated by the government in Palembang City, South Sumatera. The condition of these elderly is poor and sad. The old people have to help themselves to get water from the well and wash their own clothes. Their surroundings and rooms are unhealthy and dirty. Every month the Palembang



Dorothy Biswas and Shepherdess at a seminar on the Lord's supper.



Dorothy Biswas teaching Shepherdesses how to conduct the Lord's supper.

Chapter come to serve the old people by giving them nutritious food, cleaning their rooms and yards, bathing them, and cutting their hair. They end their service to these special people with prayer and the elderly do not mind even though most of them are Moslems. At every visitation the pastors wives are welcomed with smiles and happiness. Tears are shed when the women leave and they always say, "Please come again."

The Palembang Chapter Shepherdesses also conduct cooking classes followed by evangelistic crusades. This year they have baptized 141 precious souls. Praise the Lord!



Shepherdesses of South Sumatera and the elderly they serve.

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My ministerial colleague was conducting his first wedding ceremony. Stressed out and nervous because he had conducted his first funeral just a few days before, he began the wedding ceremony, "I would like to welcome this grieving congregation. . ."

And here's another one:

During an anointing service at church, the pastor called for those who wanted prayer and healing to come forward. A woman wearing a wig came to the altar. The pastor pushed up her wig to anoint her head. While he dipped for oil, she pushed it down. He pushed it up again and went for oil. She pushed it down again. Four times they struggled and finally the pastor just anointed the wig because the congregation was laughing so hard they had lost the solemnity of the moment.

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