

Shepherdess

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*No testing has overtaken
you that is not
common to everyone.*

*God is faithful,
and He will not let you be
tested beyond your strength,
but with the testing
He will also provide the
way out so that you may be
able to endure it."*

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NRSV)

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Between the Covers

It is hard to believe that 1996 is here already. In this first issue for the new year, two ministry wives, Olga Murga and Soledad Nieto De Los Rios, inspire us with miracle stories of God's protection and abundant blessings. How fortunate we are that a loving God continues to provide for His daughters.

Cynthia Burrill, a pastor's wife and instructor at the North American Division Evangelism Institute, writes an excellent essay entitled, "Precious Kids, Can They Be Normal?" Our pastoral children are very special to us and to God. Cynthia addresses the important issues of members' expectations, parents spending quality time, and the trauma and opportunities involved in moves.

It is much easier to face the trials of life in the parsonage if we can add a dash of humor. Marlene Krause's article, "Parish the Thought" and Laura McKenzie's article, "The Secret Life of a Pastor's Wife," give reality a smile.

May the Lord be with each one of you in a special way so that you feel His presence in your life.

Happy reading.



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A Miracle of God's Protection

Olga Murga



Olga Murga is the Shepherdess Coordinator for the Euro-Asia Division. She translates and publishes the Shepherdess International Journal in Russia each quarter.

Many years ago, in 1974, there lived a young pastor and his family in a small town in Siberia. Their little house was located near the bank of the Ob River. Their street's name was Priobskaya, which means "close to Ob."

Though the pastor had 160 members in his fold, the local officials refused to recognize the fact that there was an active Seventh-day Adventist church in the town. From time to time, the members of the church would prepare a special document listing twenty members of the church in order to register the church and make all its activities legal.

In Moscow, Ukraine, Tula, and some other places many churches had been officially registered. To be registered a church had to have at least twenty members, and permission from the official in charge of religion. Once officially registered, and even though there were some regulations and strict control, a church could then operate legally.

The believers of this city did not want to break any laws, so they asked the officials to register their church. Perhaps because their children did not go to school on Saturday, or perhaps because the officials wanted to keep Siberia

atheistic, the requests were ignored.

But life went on. The work in the church was organized through small groups. Church services took place in private homes, sometimes in little apartments. Every Sabbath there were church services in eight different locations. There were eight group-leaders. They were young men and women, sincere and brave. They did not call themselves "deacons," but each of them did the work that was usually done by an experienced deacon. They organized church services, preached sermons, and prayed for new members for the church.

Because the church was not registered, meetings had to be kept secret. This presented a problem because group times and places had to be constantly changed in order to prevent the officials from discovering when and where the church members met.

Employment also presented a problem. Every citizen had to officially hold a job. If they did not, they could be taken to court and sent to jail. Church employees had to find other "official" jobs to prevent being sent to court. These employees looked for part-time jobs so they could have time to devote to their church jobs. The part-time jobs were for low-paying positions such as janitors and yard workers. Most

people considered these jobs to be demeaning and felt only "good-for-nothing" folks would lower themselves to do such menial tasks. When the community members saw the intelligence, dignity and good manners of the Christians at those jobs, they were surprised and asked, "How can you stand a job as low as this one?"

The believers were willing to sacrifice everything to keep the church community alive. They constantly attempted to add new members and each year every group prepared for five to six new baptisms. Thirty to 35 people were baptized annually; a number that was considered very impressive in 1974. The Moscow churches annually baptized about 15 people while the churches in Tula had an annual baptismal rate of three to five people. Clearly the Lord was working in that small village in Siberia.

The pastor and his family, including his two little children, always asked God to keep their little gatherings secret for they knew that if they were caught, a case could be started against the pastor and he could be arrested. The enemies of God worked hard to catch the pastor in such an activity. Though there were spies and some dishonest people in the church, the officials never could find church members holding a church service. God protected the pastor and his family.

One early Sabbath morning the pastor and his wife prepared to go to church. Fortunately the wife looked out a window before opening the door. Through the window of the house across the street, she saw a man furiously pointing at their house and banging the table. She called her husband. "Well," he said, "looks like they are going

to try to catch us today. Let's leave the kids at home with their grandmother."



*They started walking faster.
As they entered the station . . . they
saw the train leaving. . . .
God gave them the strength to catch
up with the last car
and hop in.*

The pastor and his wife decided to change their travel plans. Instead of going to the bus stop, they decided to go to the train station. As they left the house, they heard the sound of the neighbor's door opening. They started walking faster. A young man with a blue bag followed them. As they entered the train station, they saw the train leaving. The couple ran to catch the train. God gave them the strength to catch up with the last car and hop in. As the doors closed behind them, they looked to see the young man standing in the station with a look of anger and disappointment on his face. The young couple bowed their heads in quiet prayer to thank God.

Because they wanted to protect the security of the church, the couple decided not to go to the church service. They got off at the next stop and went walking in the woods. They knew their church was safe, but they wondered what was happening at home.

When the spies realized they had failed in their attempt to find the church service, they turned their anger toward those at the

pastor's home. The men broke the front door and rushed into the house. The pastor's mother-in-law was there, holding the hands of the two little grandchildren. Angrily the spies asked her, "Where is your son-in-law?"

"Give us his passport!" The grandmother tried to keep calm. She gathered all the strength she had and said, "It was not necessary to break the door. It is cold and I have two children in the house. I don't know where my son-in-law is and I don't have his passport." The persecutors knew that it was true that often those who stayed at home did not know where the church services took place. The men left the house, cursing. Fortunately they did not feel like fighting with an old woman and two helpless children.

Later that night the pastor and his wife came home. They fixed the door and thanked God that their family was unharmed.

The following Sunday was Election Day. The pastor's wife ran into the neighbor. He was a little drunk, and he said to her, "There were motorcycles at every street corner yesterday to look for you. Where did you and your husband disappear? Everyone is amazed that you could not be found!" The young pastor and his wife were astonished to find out that the officials had been trying to catch them every Sabbath! For seven years they had held church services every Sabbath, and not once had they been caught. It was then that they realized how fully God had protected them. They had lived through seven years of intense and dangerous times without ever being caught. Clearly their churches were truly "under God's wings." ❀

Parish the Thought

Marlene Krause

A sense of humor can be fun. I'm not sure whether my ability to usually see the humorous side of things is a blessing or a curse. I do know that it has sometimes landed me in embarrassing situations and gotten me into trouble.

I can remember the first day in a new church. An elderly gentleman with a limited knowledge of English told the mission story. He was doing well, when suddenly I had to put my hand over my mouth to keep from laughing. The gentleman was telling a story about a man who had to visit a 'frizz-z'cariest'. My mind did a back-flip wondering what on earth he meant. Then as the story progressed, I realized he meant psychiatrist!

Oh what problems my humor causes me; my husband Ernie often tries hard to look as though he doesn't know me! Though I sometimes find it difficult to keep my chuckles under control, I have

Marlene Krause is a ministry wife who writes from Australia.

learned to be able to laugh inside and keep some semblance of seriousness on the outside. Most of the time anyway.

Once a minister came into the conference office and spoke to my good friend Val Shirley. She was working in the office opposite mine so I was able to overhear the conversation. "Wasn't it terrible about the forest ranger who was found 'decaffeinated'?" the man said.

I couldn't believe my ears. "What did you say happened?" I sang out. "He was found decaffeinated," the man repeated. I just about dissolved, putting my poor friend in a terrible position. Fortunately I kept the sound of my laughter confined to the privacy of my office. A good friendship nearly ended after that.

Others have shared stories regarding humorous incidents in their lives. One minister told me of an episode that happened during a Week of Prayer. Each church member read a paragraph. It came to Brother X's turn when, without warning, he said, "I'm not sure if I can read as I've just started wearing these 'bisexual glasses'." Needless to say, the minister didn't hear much more of the reading.

I recall a church member who had a practical joke sense of

humor. One night I sat up in bed reading while Ernie was saying his prayers. Suddenly there was a blackout. I got out of bed, looked out the window and realized that our house was the only one in darkness. Surprised, I went out to the back porch where the meter box was. As I did so, our dear friend jumped up and yelled "surprise." After I shrieked with fright, our friend roared with laughter. It wasn't long before I did the same to some other unsuspecting person.

My habit of screaming at sudden frights made me the target of some of the more practical jokers in our church. One rainy night I was walking down the church corridor with my umbrella in my hand. Suddenly a man jumped out of one of the side rooms, obviously with the intent of hearing my deathly scream.

Not only did I scream, but I let go with my umbrella and hit him solidly on the head. It was amazing how quickly this type of joke on the pastor's wife ceased.

I'm glad for humor. How dull life would be without it. It's good to be able to laugh at yourself which I have to do often. A good hearty laugh is surely medicine (Proverbs 17:22). ❀

A Great Miracle

*Soledad Nieto
De Los Rios*



Soledad Nieto De Los Rios has been the wife of a pastor in the Inter-American Division since 1987. She enjoys working with children in the church and reading. She says her greatest blessing is a happy family.

This article was translated by Elia Becerra.

I was distraught and totally depressed. I had just had a second miscarriage and my physician informed me that a third pregnancy could endanger my life. At age 41 I had already lost one child, and though the specialists I had visited could not find a cause for my miscarriages, my doctor felt a third miscarriage could be fatal. Though my husband and I desperately wanted our own baby, after much prayer, we decided not to have children.

Except for the sadness over my miscarriage, I felt God had richly blessed me. I never blamed God for my inability to bring a pregnancy to term; rather I thanked him for my wonderful husband and happy marriage. My husband and I never felt desperate or anguished over our situation for we felt God was watching over us and our mission in life was to spread God's message to all those around us.

As a ministerial intern's wife, I felt content with my life. However, life constantly changes, and my husband was transferred to another location where he would take charge of a district. It was a hectic time in our lives; we were constantly running up and down stairs to finish our packing, hurrying to complete last minutes errands, and checking to make sure all the necessary tasks were done before our journey began. Little did I know I was pregnant at that time.

I had been told that if I ever did get pregnant again, I would have to remain in bed during the entire nine

months. Since pregnancy never entered my mind, I was happily and busily getting ready for the move. After a long seven-hour drive in a truck, we reached our new destination in Cimitarra.

Though I had my period right before the move, I had not had one the previous month. I thought perhaps I was going through the beginning stages of menopause. Once we settled in, I found a doctor and went for a check-up. To my amazement, I was told I was pregnant. My new physician looked me in the eye and said, "Lady, according to your medical history, your pregnancy is not just a high risk, it is a VERY high risk. You are confined to bed until your child is born."

My husband and I were filled with various emotions. We were happy and fearful, excited and scared, exuberant and cautious. I remained in bed for the next several months. Though it was not an easy pregnancy, with each passing month, I felt more joyous as my baby continued to grow. Then, at one of my monthly check-ups, my doctor told me he was becoming more concerned about my pregnancy and felt a sonogram was needed to determine what was causing some of the difficulties I was having. Unfortunately his office was not equipped with a sonogram machine. The procedure had to be done in another city that was six or seven hours away. My husband and I were in a dilemma. Such a trip could be fatal to my baby, but

without the sonogram, we had no way of knowing what was causing me to have so many problems. After much prayer and thousands of precautions, we traveled to Bucaramanga.

Once we arrived, I had to wait three days before I was admitted into the hospital. Then I had to wait an additional three days before I got the results of the sonogram. The news was bad, I had two tumors (fibromas). One was 9 cm. in diameter and the other was 7.5 cm.

My next appointment was on January 2, 1992. The purpose of this appointment was to determine if I had to be operated on or if the pregnancy should continue. My constant prayer was, "Lord, we did not ask you for this child, but you permitted it to happen. My husband and I did not insist, but happily accepted your will. The doctors advised us that this pregnancy would be fatal, so we are now in your hands and I trust in you to decide what is best for your children." With much anxiety and after many, many tears, I went for my appointment.

Upon my arrival, I was surprised to learn that the physician who had previously taken care of me had completed his assignment with the Social Security Hospital and left. No one would give me advice on what I should do. Time was running out and my fears were quickly escalating. I requested an appointment with another doctor. After an examination, he said, "I am going to order a new sonogram because I cannot detect the baby."

Thankfully my sister was with me. She comforted me as I cried continuously about my plight. She made an appointment for another sonogram. Unfortunately, she was told I would have to wait another 20 days because the waiting list was so long. When she gave me the news

I was filled with despair. I thought that if the baby was not dead by then it would surely die from my anguish and uncertainty.

During this time, my husband was able to visit me once a month. Thankfully the administrators of his district paid his travelling expenses. Unfortunately, the sonogram I needed cost \$10,000 to \$11,000 (pesos), and I had only \$5,000 (pesos). We called a number of Health Centers but our dilemma was still unsolved. Finally we were advised to call the Red Cross. Our prayers were answered. We were told that the cost would be \$5,000 (pesos) and the results would be given the day after the sonogram was taken.

Upon hearing the news, I cried with excitement, "I am ready, I am on my way." I arrived that evening at 5:00 p.m., and by 6:00 p.m. the sonogram had been completed. The next day, the doctor told me, "It's a boy." Though I had asked the Lord for a boy, the doctor's words did not move me. Noticing my indifference, the physician repeated louder, "Lady, it's a boy." I simply looked at him and murmured, "Thank the Lord, but is he alive?" "Yes," said the doctor, "Can't you see how he is jumping?" I looked at the screen, but I could not distinguish anything but a dim picture. However, the doctor had answered my question and tears sprung to my eyes. Now I had something beautiful to tell my husband.

After four and a half months, the head gynecologist took over my case. I could not help but wonder why he had not taken my case earlier. Perhaps he could have prevented some of my difficulties. It was only after I overheard him speaking to a nurse about my case that I realized how fortunate I was not to have had him as my physician. As he was looking at my

chart, he told a nurse, "What a mistake. If I had taken care of this patient from the first time she came, I would not have permitted her pregnancy to continue. Now almost five weeks later I can do nothing else. Let it be what is to be." Even now, when I think about his comments, chills run through my body. How differently my life would have been had that head physician taken over my care.

About one month before the baby was due, the doctor told me I would have to have a cesarean section. Because of my health, my husband and I had decided not to have any more children, so I requested to have a hysterectomy done at the same time. My doctor refused because he said the operation was too delicate and I needed to have my husband's consent. I assured him my husband and I were in agreement, but the physician needed proof of my husband's decision. I called my husband by phone and asked him to come to town so he and I could meet with the doctor together.

At my last medical appointment, both my husband and I assured the doctor of our decision not to have more children. The physician responded by saying that the insurance covered only the delivery and the cesarean. We would be responsible for paying the cost of any further medical needs. However, the doctor was sympathetic to our case and at the end of the conversation he said, "I cannot promise you anything. To perform the two operations at the same time is very dangerous and risky, and I am not sure the mother can survive it. I will only know after I have delivered the baby."

At 2:00 p.m., May 22, 1992, I entered the maternity ward. It was then that I was told the doctor would perform both the cesarean

delivery and the hysterectomy. What an emotional time! Physically exhausted and emotionally drained, I drew strength from my husband. His love for me gave me the courage to face the operation ahead. At 3:10 p.m., as I was being anesthetized, I heard the nurse ask, "Doctor, will more blood be needed?" He answered, "I don't believe so." Those were the last words I heard until I woke up at 8:00 p.m.

As I was being wheeled from the operating room to my room, I saw

my husband and sister. They were as anxious as I was to see the baby, that precious miracle from God. My husband was able to see him first. He checked him over from head to toe and joyously pronounced he was complete and normal, everything we had asked God for, a healthy baby boy.

God responded to my prayers and needs. He showed His infinite love to me, His daughter, by giving me a miracle. Angel Ricardo is now two years and seven months old

with parents who do not cease to repeat what the doctors said about his birth, "It is a miracle." Along with the baby, the doctors removed my uterus, which was filled with eight fibroid tumors. This uterus had miraculously nurtured my son for nearly nine months.

I believe with all my heart that my husband and I are the happiest parents in the world. We thank our God of love who cares for and never forgets any of His children. He is a worker of miracles. ❀

On Being a Shepherdess

*Karuna Deva
Dass, Injety*

*T*he *Shepherdess International Bulletin* brings me great delight. I look forward to the spiritual messages of other shepherdesses. Each time I go through the bulletin I gain personal strength and I thank my Lord for this.

Next June I will be completing 40 years of happy married life. I have spent my married life assisting my husband in the Gospel ministry as he served God in different capacities. The Lord gave us success throughout our ministry, and we praise and thank Him from the bottom of our hearts.

When the Lord placed a special responsibility on me as shepherdess of Central India Union, I began to

recognize my need for God. Frequently I expressed to Him my insufficiencies. My husband looked to me for inspiration, patience, unselfishness, loyalty and for many other good qualities. In this, as a wife, I needed God's assistance.

No woman ever attains the goal of success and happiness as a desirable wife unless her efforts are supplemented with God's help. She who builds without God builds in vain. Therefore, it is God that is behind every success. God is responsible for what I am today and I praise Him.

Being a graduate nurse, I made use of opportunities to reach needy people and help them with their health and personal problems. When I prayed with them, the Lord answered our prayers so they had confidence in me. When I began to present Jesus, there was a good response from them. A shepherdess should look for ways to reach others. I participated in Dorcas work and conducted health classes for women in the church. The members brought other women to these special

classes. I taught them how to prepare good meals using simple methods; I shared my knowledge of good nutrition with them. When relationships are built, intimacy develops and then it is easy to bring others into our fold. After foundations of friendship and trust are built, these candidates can be entrusted to our husbands for deeper studies in God's Word.

As pastors' wives we can start a Ladies' Club with only five to ten ladies. The attendance will increase if the instruction is beneficial. This club will eventually become a visiting or working team, exploring the possibilities for Gospel work. When women labor in the Gospel ministry, they can accomplish great things.

The greatest human motivational force and inspiration to the pastor is none other than his own wife, the shepherdess who is a part of God's ministry. We need to recognize our calling to the ministry, and we should do our part with God's grace. ❀



Karuna Deva Dass, Injety is a pastoral wife from India who has worked as a nurse, teacher, school supervisor, and principal. She has four children. Her hobbies are tailoring, cooking, teaching, story telling, and gardening.

Have You Lost It With Your Kids Lately?

Norman Wright
and Gary Oliver

If you find yourself flying off the handle, here's how to stop overreacting and start taking control of your emotions

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Do any of the following statements sound familiar to you?

* "How many times have I told you not to interrupt me when I'm on the phone?"

* "You're in real trouble now. Just wait until your dad gets home!"

* "If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times. Don't take things out of this drawer without asking!"

* "I'm sick and tired of you leaving a mess around the house. You make this place look like a pig sty! If you don't clean it up, you're really going to get it!"

If you're a parent, you've probably experienced the frustration these comments reflect. While our children can be our greatest source of joy, they also can be our greatest source of pain, frustration, and feelings of failure. At times, it seems as though our children are the problem—but in reality, it's not so much them as the emotions they bring out in us.

That's why one of the most challenging aspects of parenting is to learn that there's an enormous difference between reacting and responding to our children. When we *respond* to a situation that causes us frustration or

anger, we're more apt to say or do things that contribute to a solution. But when we *react* with explosive anger, sarcasm, or escalating threats, we undermine the very lessons about emotions we want to model for our children—and end up feeling guilty, discouraged, and defeated.

Parents who haven't learned how to deal with their emotions also are at increased risk of becoming verbally—and even physically—abusive. They don't start out that way, but over a period of several years, they numb that inner voice of warning only to awaken to the reality of being out-of-control.

Keeping your calm

As counselors, we've talked to hundreds of parents who love their children and want God's best for them, but struggle with a low level of frustration. One such parent was Karen, a committed Christian woman who was happily married and the mother of two. Her greatest desire was to be a great mom, but Karen was short-tempered with her kids. When she became frustrated, Karen would become sarcastic and make threats. Initially, her kids responded, but she rarely followed through

on her threats, and it didn't take long for her children to learn they didn't have to worry about what Mom said.

Because they didn't take her anger seriously. Karen found herself gradually increasing the volume of her voice. She also had to raise the seriousness of the consequences to get a response.

"Can I really change the way I respond to my children?" Countless parents have asked us that question over the years. Fortunately, the answer is *yes*. Here are six steps to help you begin.

Own up to your problem.

The first—and most important—element of change is to acknowledge to yourself, God, then to one or two others that you have trouble disciplining your kids without overreacting. When you acknowledge the problem before God, you're admitting it's something you can't handle alone. Look up Bible promises such as Romans 8:28, Philippians 4:13 and 4:19. You'll be surprised how encouraging and energizing it is to look at your concerns in light of who God is and what He promises to His children.

After you acknowledge there is a problem, accept responsibility for it. One of the first things Adam and Eve did after eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden was to place the responsibility for their actions on someone else. Eve blamed the serpent and Adam blamed Eve, then he blamed God for making her. Since, then, our fallen nature looks for someone else to blame.

In one of my conversations with Karen, she said, "If Jordan would just pick up after himself, I wouldn't get so angry." In some ways, that's true. But when Karen said that, she was placing

responsibility for her emotions on her seven-year-old son.

Identify the triggers.

Most children say or do things that anger their parents. But some behaviors particularly seem to kick off over reactions in parents with a short fuse. Here are some of the most common:

- * Whining or complaining
- * Talking, yelling, or interrupting when you're on the phone
- * Not doing something they said they'd do
- * Fighting
- * Name-calling
- * Borrowing things without asking
- * Not putting things away after they've borrowed them
- * Tardiness
- * Talking back or showing disrespect

The easiest way to identify your "triggers" is to make a list of the behaviors that cause you to lose your temper with your kids. Karen listed Jordan's whining, complaining, and talking back as the actions that triggered her blow-outs with her son.

Figure out what makes you vulnerable.

Karen began to see it wasn't just Jordan's behavior that triggered her anger. There were other factors in her life that made her more vulnerable to respond to Jordan with screaming, threats, and sarcasm. The easier way to determine these factors is to recall three or four of the most recent times you've blown it with your kids. Then ask yourself the following questions about the preceding 24 to 48 hours:

- * Were you busier than usual?
 - * Did any crises take place?
 - * Did you have less sleep or exercise than usual?
 - * Did you lose it at a certain time of the day or week or month?
- I've worked with mothers who discovered they're more apt to lose their temper in the middle of the week when they feel overwhelmed; others identify the weekend as their most vulnerable time. Many parents find they're at their greatest risk during the hours before the evening meal or right before bedtime. What is *your* danger zone?

Analyze your past response.

Several years ago, I heard someone say, "It's crazy to find out what doesn't work, then keep doing it." My first response was to laugh—but behind my laughter was the realization that there was some craziness in *my* life. Some of my approaches toward conflict and communication with my wife and kids weren't working, but I still hadn't changed them.

Many parents suffer from this kind of craziness. We've spent years perfecting responses, that ultimately are ineffective. Karen's yelling, threatening, over generalizing, labeling, and being sarcastic never produced any positive change in her kids—yet those behaviors comprised 90 percent of her responses to Jordan.

Yet once we're aware of our patterns, we can discover new ways to deal with old problems. What haven't you tried yet? What have other parents tried that seems to work? What kinds of responses are more consistent with what you want to model for your children?

Karen read several books on parenting and talked with some of her friends as well as her

children's school teachers. She was able to develop a two-page list of suggestions. She prayed about them, prioritized them, and prepared to put them into action.

Develop a realistic plan.

One part of Karen's plan was to develop more realistic expectations. For years, she'd worked on being the perfect mother, but that pursuit of perfection only led to increased pressure and unrealistic expectations. Karen committed to exchange her pursuit of perfection to one of growth. Karen also decided to clarify realistic expectations for her children, taking into account their personality- or age-related differences.

But one of the most important goals Karen set was to retrain herself to pause before losing it with Jordan. According to Proverbs, the person who is "slow to anger has great understanding" (14:29, RSV), "and is better than the mighty" (16:32). It is also "to his glory to overlook an offense" (19:11). Karen decided to take a brief time-out before she reacted. This time-out gave her the chance to ponder and pray about her responses.

Karen also discovered that when she was in the middle of a potentially explosive situation—when she allowed her emotions to blur her ability to think clearly—she invariably slipped back into her old patterns. So she decided that the best time to deal with a problem was before it became a problem. Karen brainstormed new approaches to frustrating situations, narrowed them down to three, then put each one on a 3 x 5-inch card. Every morning, as part of her prayer time, she asked God for His strength to help her get out of

her behavioral rut. Her husband helped her role play some problem situations so she had an opportunity to hear herself respond to new ways.

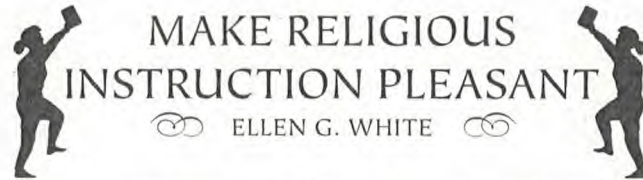
Assess your results and set new goals.

When you do, look for the small signs of growth—a decrease in the frequency of blow-ups, a decrease in their intensity, and/or a decrease in their duration. Keep in mind that you'll rarely, if ever, see changes in all three of these areas at the same time.

Karen's plan was simple, prac-

tical, and measurable. Her plan went beyond good intentions to specifics. The best news of all is that, over a four-month period, Karen's plan worked. She learned how to control her emotional reactions to her kids and become a more effective mother.

Many people want to change—but few want to go through the *process* for change. That process can be frustrating and discouraging, and involves failure. But don't give up! Over time, with God's help and a clear commitment on your part, you *can* change into the mom you want to be. ❁



"Religious instruction should be given to children from their earliest years. It should be given, not in a condemnatory spirit, but in a cheerful, happy spirit. Mothers need to be on the watch constantly, lest temptation shall come to the children in such a form as not to be recognized by them. The parents are to guard their children with wise, pleasant instruction. As the very best friends of these inexperienced ones, they should help them in the work of overcoming, for it means everything to them to be victorious. They should consider that their own dear children who are seeking to do right are younger members of the Lord's family, and they should feel an intense interest in helping them to make straight paths in the King's highway of obedience. With loving interest they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. This must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch, watch and pray, and make your children your companions."—*Child Guidance*, p. 496

Whatever, Lord!

Delores Elaine Bius



One recent morning I was clearing the snow off my car when I discovered that one window was utterly free of snow. In fact, the window itself was gone and there was snow and broken glass on the seat inside, but nothing was missing. "Oh no," I sighed, "the car thieves have struck again." This was the second time in three years that this had happened.

By the end of the day, the window glass was replaced. My son had pried out of the ignition the piece of key or screwdriver that the thief had used to try to start the car.

Fortunately, I saw some humor in the situation this time: I had tried to clear snow off a window pane that wasn't there. It has not always been so in other situations. But after a series of such minor mishaps, I am learning not to say "Why me, Lord?" but "Whatever, Lord!"

Delores E. Bius, mother of five sons, is a freelance writer from Chicago, Illinois.

When my granddaughter had a similar incident happen to her, the only item missing was her Bible, with an expensive cover that I had given her for her birthday. Her stereo and tape deck were intact, so the theft made the newspapers under the heading, "Bible Thief Strikes." Oddly enough, I had often left one of my Bibles in my car, thinking, *Who would steal a Bible?* I doubt that the person who took my granddaughter's Bible was a Bible student. The cover resembled a purse or small briefcase, which they probably thought contained money.

Earlier my sons were so sure that I would get shook-up over every little thing that they would preface every announcement of bad news with, "I have good news and I have bad news." Then they would tell me the good news first!

This time I told them, "I have both good news and bad news. The bad news is that the car thieves tried to steal my car again, but the good news is they didn't get away with it. The bad news is that I have a \$100 deductible on my car insurance, but the good news is that I did not listen to the person who advised me to take a \$500 deductible instead! Thus I am out only \$100, not \$500.

Why is it that we humans allow ourselves to get bent out of shape at little inconveniences when the Lord forewarned us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Interestingly enough, the morning the car thieves struck I had come across in my devotions some interesting words of Solomon: "Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. 1:33). I noticed that he did not say that we would be immune to evil things happening to us, but that we should not fear them.

When little inconveniences or expenses or such happen to us, it helps if we remember that none of us have had as many bad things happen to us as happened to King David. Yet we read, "David was greatly distressed . . . but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (1 Sam. 30:6).

Satan is lurking around every corner, trying to rob us of our joy in the Lord. Be on guard always. As our Lord cautioned us, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

When someone would complain with, "I have a problem," our former pastor would reply, "You don't have a problem; you have an opportunity." How true that is. Any problem is really an opportunity for us to encourage ourselves in the Lord.

It has taken me quite a number of years and many near catastrophes, but at last I have learned to say, "Whatever, Lord!" But not with resignation alone, but with joy in Him! How about you? ❀

The Secret Life of A Pastor's Wife

Laura
McKenzie

**A partner in
ministry insists
on being the
wonderful,
normal person
she is.**



Laura McKenzie, a pastor's wife at Harbor Christian Fellowship in Costa Mesa, California, loves to read, write and walk on the beach with her family.

This article appeared in *Virtue*, January/February 1994. Used with permission.

Many Christian women are haunted by the mythical Perfect Woman. You know her. She always does the right thing, consistently reflects Jesus' love and finds new ways to do good works. More often than not, she's dressed in someone else's expectations or trying to fill a previous role model's shoes.

Ministry wives, missionaries, Sunday school teachers, mothers and singles participating in a panorama of church roles know her especially well. As Jill Briscoe, a pastor's wife and women's ministry leader for more than 20 years, says in her book *Renewal on the Run* (1992, Harold Shaw Publishers), the ghostly Perfect Woman or "Mrs. Bionic Christian" can make us feel desperately inadequate and very worried. But you can lovingly break the stereotype, Jill says, by insisting on being the normal, wonderful person you are.

Here, a pastor's wife tells her story.

"I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free."

I wonder where we should go to lunch? The kids are dressed pretty nice today. Maybe we should try IHOP—but is this a week we have money? Should we drive through

Taco Bell?

"His eye is on the sparrow."

Rats. I forgot to introduce myself to that new young couple near the front. I hope I can get way from the piano fast enough to say hello before they disappear . . .

"And I know He's watching me."

Ryan needs a haircut. I'd better take him myself so his dad won't let them give him a flat top again. That was horrible.

"His eye is on the sparrow."

Boy, am I starved already. I should have eaten something for breakfast. I hope I can make it through the sermon.

"And I know He's watching me."

I'm a pastor's wife. The man I married is senior pastor of a little church in Southern California. We love the Lord very much and desire to serve Him. But somewhere along the line, I joined the ranks of women who wear their hair just so, low-heeled shoes, and dresses, always, dresses.

Being a pastor's wife more than 10 years now, I am confused. The dilemma I face is one of personal identify. I play the piano, lead singing, solo for specials, greet people and smile, smile, smile. I do what is expected . . . most of the time. OK, some of the time.

But I feel different from all the other pastors' wives.

I love to wear jeans and T-shirts, love to play baseball and hike, wear my hair long, loathe making crafts, like to watch TV and (most despicable, I know) hate to cook. In fact, I look for every opportunity to get out of it.

Somewhere I got the idea that because of my husband's job, I was supposed to be perfect, perpetually neat so people can drop by my house at a moment's notice. Highly organized, but flexible. Never late. Efficiently managing every task on time. Accommodating anyone who swings by for dinner.

The pastor's wife must be a matchless mother with superior children, I learned, usually 2.5 of them: a shiny-scrubbed young man and an angel-girl with hair in ponytail. (No tomboys, please.) If there is a baby, he must be cute, never noisy and, naturally, breast fed. But no one must ever actually see this event. The pastor's wife must play the piano and sing, love crafts and sewing; be a gourmet cook, creative, good at working with young children, supportive of her husband (keeping him first at all times), passionate in her love for God; never-complaining, selfless and always willing to eat the bony piece of chicken. She must clip coupons, be outgoing, always happy . . . and, oh, make it all look easy.

My house is usually just clean enough to relax and eat a sandwich in the living room. The beds are quite lumpy. My three children are usually dirty and busy, and would go to sleep with their skates on, if I let them. At church, I am forever chasing them around and whispering threats in their ears to be good: "Heidi, we have a missionary today. Please,

please, please, I can't do it without you, please sit down and keep quiet, just this once." I know many ladies of the church look up to me and try to learn what a Christian woman is by my example. The responsibility is weighty. I want to be a willing servant of Christ and let my light shine. But that's not easy because, often, I don't know exactly who I am.

My dream is to become a successful writer, somehow contribute to the literary world with my heart and spirit, ink and paper. Some people say my poems are "nice" and ask to hear them on the appropriate occasion. But I desire more.

I don't need to publish a best-seller, become famous or make a million dollars. I just want to express myself, open up, explore my innermost thoughts and in the process help others come to terms with their own feelings about this experience we call life.

I graduated from college this year at age 36. It took me eight years to get my degree. I had babies along the way and many church members questioned my wasting time. But my goal was to graduate with high honors and I did earn the award for highest grade point average.

Some of the church could not understand why I had to go to all that bother. They wanted to know why raising children and teaching Sunday school wasn't enough. I didn't know why. I only know nothing was more fulfilling than the moment my name was called and I walked across that platform.

And I do know that in trying to live up to people's expectations, I never could. But when I felt like a miserable failure, facing my shortcomings turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Now I'm in the process of becoming the

woman God created.

I must cross the vast abyss between the way people see me and who I really am. I don't need advice. I need support. I am learning to love myself more and trust myself more. And my love for Him has never wavered.

I am taking off the mask because I plan to go barefoot, sleep in late on Saturday mornings, sing and serve with joy the God who sets me free. ❀

**"I waited patiently
for the Lord;
and he inclined
unto me,
and heard my cry.
He brought me up also
out of
an horrible pit,
out of the miry clay, and
set my feet
upon a rock, and
established my goings.
And he hath put
a new song
in my mouth,
even praise unto
our God:
many shall see it,
and fear,
and shall trust
in the Lord."
*Psalms 40:1-3***

Precious Kids, Can They Be Normal?

Cynthia Burrill



Cynthia Burrill was born to missionary parents in Bolivia, South America. She met her husband Russell at Union College in Nebraska.

The Burrills have ministered in Southern New England, Mountain View, Chesapeake, Kansas-Nebraska and Upper Columbia Conferences. Cynthia assisted in Russell's pastorate and in full-time evangelism. She has also worked as a printer, secretary, and elementary school teacher.

In 1985 they moved to Chicago, Illinois, when Russell became the director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute. Cynthia became Coordinator of Women's Ministries, taught a Pastor's Spouse Class and Seminar Evangelism. The institute recently moved to Michigan where she continues her work.

What concerns you the most as you go out to become a pastor's wife?"

She pondered a little before she answered my question, "I'm worried about my children. I wonder if I will be able to raise them to be good kids. I've seen so many rebellious pastors' children around. Is it possible for them to grow up normal, loving God and being ready for heaven?"

That question touched a soft spot in my heart. I, too, am a PK (pastor's kid), as well as an MK (missionary's kid). I have had to consider . . . do I belong to the country of my birth or the native land of family? Where am I really from? Which culture should I call my own? I had many questions about related issues. I, too, am a fellow minister's wife and have grown children who are having children of their own. One of them is a little PK.

What about my little grandson? What is he going to face? Will he be able to cope with the pressures? Can he grow up normally as a preacher's kid? What are some of the challenges he may encounter?

I will remember the day I greeted my own tiny newborn son. He was so precious, so

innocent. How I longed to help him live a good life. I wondered what he would be like—outgoing or introspective, aggressive or easygoing. Would he love the Lord or would he turn his back on Him?

I promised God I would do everything in my power to raise a child that would reflect all that is positive in a Christian home. What I hadn't counted on was the fact that everyone else around me also had expectations of my precious little person—the teachers in Sabbath School, Grandma and Grandpa on both sides, and all the members in all of our churches. Many expected him to be perfect or at least to be able to act more mature than his age.

I read the Spirit of Prophecy and tried to follow to the best of my ability the instructions in *Child Guidance*, etc. I found wonderful counsel, but I almost despaired because the goals seemed so difficult to reach.

I watched my little man closely to be sure I could correct the wrong tendencies before they made inroads in his life. It seemed like I was saying, "no no," and issuing consequences all day long. All the while I could feel that I was watched. I knew

they (my audience) were waiting to see what my child would do. Would he be the perfect kid, or would he be wild like other proverbial preachers' kids? I could feel the pressure.

I shudder to think how I started out with my son. The trend that I discovered in his life was not what I had envisioned. I was fearful I was raising a rebel, someone who had no love for God. Only other mothers in the same crisis can understand the ache that I experienced. My story does not end like it could have ended. I am so grateful to say that Russell and I found a better way. God helped us as parents to recognize the direction our child was going. He gave us the wisdom to select a superior course and the power to carry it out.

What was that course? We focused less on the negative and looked for the positive things that our child did. We tried to encourage him daily. ("Good for you, you put away your toys in three minutes!" "I noticed that you were kind to your sister today!" "I am proud of how nicely you sat in church today!") Yes, we still expected obedience but strived to be reasonable in our requests.

We realized that we, not the audience, were the parents of that child. While that audience did expect much from him, we could, by our words, acts and attitudes, ease their demands. Although they expected perfection, we could let him make

mistakes and learn from them. We ourselves were not perfect and when we failed we could model confession and forgiveness. And we prayed!

How we prayed—on our own, as a couple and with our little man. Did it work?

I can only thank God that now my little precious person is a very responsible grown man who loves God. He has a lovely wife and an adorable little daughter. (Remember this is Grandma speaking.)

Preachers' kids *can* be normal children and can grow up to be not only average but outstanding adults. But as you may have already noticed they probably will have challenges.

Members' expectations—setting boundaries

I have mentioned one—the members' expectation that PKs be perfect, more mature, role models for other children or, on the other hand, be rebels and unruly. Ministerial children, as well as the wife and minister himself, are put on a pedestal to be admired or ridiculed. It is the glass house where people can gaze inside and throw stones. Wise parents will lovingly, kindly place protective barriers around their children to enable them to truly be children without being watched all the time. Betty J. Coble said this,

"Children are capable of weathering criticism from others if they do not have a steady diet of it in the home" (Coble, 1981, p. 83).

Sometimes the audience is very

intrusive—literally opening the doors into our homes, watching every detail of our lives. One PK reported that some parishioners inspected the closets in his home (Lee, 1992, p. 33). My daughter, as well as other PKs, experienced teachers who said something like this, "I need your help to be a good example for the other children."

You can imagine how your teenager would feel if she were the recipient of the above quotation. "Who am I to set an example for anybody? Just because daddy's a minister, that doesn't make me anyone special. It's my life and I'll live it the way I want to" (Wood, 1968, p. 105).

Others with good intentions correct children with this admonition: "But your father is a minister! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

These types of expectations, especially when they are verbalized, can really affect your child. I have spent hours helping my child cope with an expectation similar to the one in the above paragraph. If I had more self-confidence and felt that I had sufficient tact, I could have confronted the member directly. Some pastors' wives have been successful in doing so. We did discuss in depth the reasons for proper behavior and values of our family. I tried to emphasize that we were Christians first. We didn't have to live up to expectations of the fickle audience. We only had to live for God who knew our abilities and liabilities and loved us more than any parent possibly could.

The literature on this subject, which, by the way, is not plentiful, did mention the fact that the expectations that are an invasion of privacy do affect PKs. If they do not have supportive parents



that accept their imperfections in spite of the audience, they may rebel during or after their teenage years. These expectations and these invasions of privacy make it more difficult for them to identify who they really are, what values they are planning to adopt, what careers they want to follow (Lee, 1992, p. 51, 86, 103).

We as parents, with the support of members, can help to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries such as:

1) Privacy—physical and psychological, for the child that is uniquely his;

2) Differentiation—being able to identify himself and who he is without being controlled by the thoughts, feelings and emotions of others;

3) Being able to have a balance in his life, to be able to have a private life and unique identity so that occasional invasions of privacy won't particularly affect him (Lee, 1992).

Different cultures will vary in the amount of privacy needed. We as parents can create unwritten rules about how much privacy we need. We can turn on the answering machine so we can play a game together. We can take vacations without coming home for funerals. We can help our children develop their identity apart from us and the church. We can encourage our child to follow a career of his own choosing even though all those in the congregation think and expect him to follow in his father's footsteps.

Quality time

Another challenge is to make time for the child to have quality time with both parents. Mothers, as well as fathers, may be working full time, trying to keep things at

an even keel at home and do their part at church. Church work can be demanding, 50-60 hour weeks for the pastor is not unusual. Pastors are quite often away for the evening while the children are at home. They could almost become strangers to their own sons and daughters. Ellen G. White said this:

"Minister's children are in some cases the most neglected children in the world, for the reason that the father is with them but little, and they are left to choose their own employment and amusement. If a minister has a family of boys, he should not leave them wholly to the care of the mother. This is too heavy a burden for her" (White, E. G., 1915, p. 206).

Does it have to be that way? No it doesn't. There are creative ways to make sure time is spent with your children: dates with kids, appointments made in Dad's or Mom's little book that are honored with just as much or more importance as with any member, regular days and evenings off, time away from the telephone, vacations together which create traditions and memories, and, of course, time to talk when every kid will be accepted, listened to, approved, loved and nurtured. Our children must know they are valuable in our lives, they are important—even more than the members. We can show the children they are important by being present during the significant activities in their lives.

Both parents are needed to raise

a child. It is an incredibly hard job to raise a child alone. Some previous studies have indicated it may not be so important for a child not to have a father around, but recent studies indicate otherwise.

"For three out of four measures of psychological well-being (happiness, life satisfaction, and psychological distress), closeness to fathers yielded significant associations independently of closeness to mother. Regardless of the quality of the mother-child relationship, the closer children were to their fathers, the happier, more satisfied and less distressed they reported being" (Amato, 1994, p. 1039). Being there can make a difference in your home.

So many moves

Moving is a fact of life for most pastoral families, as it also is for many people in the world. I sat down with my husband and listed at least 16 major moves that we have made in our married life, besides the 70+ meetings that we have held in many different places—many times we moved every five weeks. All of this moving is bound to affect the children in some way.

One article in *Marriage and Family Review* mentioned the effect that moves can have on children—depression, thought disorganization, injury hysteria and problems making new friends. It went on to say that for the most part the stresses seem to be temporary but are lengthened in time when the children are



shy (Thomas A Corrille, 1993, p. 281-298).

I have seen this happen in my own family. My outgoing child had a much easier time dealing with the moves than my shy child. Making new friends was at times difficult and leaving old ones was painful. Even outgoing children may sometimes have a hard time being accepted by a closely knit peer group.

Timing made a difference in our moves. We always tried not to move during the school year.

If I had to do it over again, I would have tried to be more sensitive to the feelings of my teenager and included him even more in the decision-making process, especially when it dealt with where he was going to go to academy. Perhaps we could have helped him avoid some pain. Things all worked out for the good in the end.

Reaching your child for Jesus

"The minister's duties lie around him, nigh and afar off; but his first duty is to his children. He should not become so engrossed with his outside duties as to neglect the instruction which his children need" (White, E.G., 1915, p. 204).

We may travel far and near to reach souls for Christ, yet fail to reach our precious child for Jesus. Our child is so near, so involved in the church that we almost feel that he will absorb Christianity by osmosis. Let us model a real, honest Christianity before our children. Let us have wonderful worships.

Our wisest, most earnest energy and talent should be spent working with our children to lead them personally to Jesus. We can model, teach and encourage them to have a deep relationship with

Him. We are fortunate to have more books published in this area than ever before. I long to have my children with me in heaven. This is my greatest desire for them and me.

Accentuate the advantages

Yes, there are challenges for PKs. But none that cannot be dealt with, especially with the help of the Lord. And there are many joys and blessings that only PK's can have. Enthusiastically talk with them of the joys and advantages of being a PK. Perhaps this can lessen the effect the expectations and invasions of privacy will have on your children. After all, how can any other child possibly know the fun of workers' meetings and camp meetings?

PKs can learn first hand how to minister to people around them. They can use their talents and abilities in many ways to bless others. They can have many friends in many places and grow up knowing and loving many people from many lands. Even though they may be far from other friends and family, they will find aunts, uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers in every church. There are people who always care and encourage. What a heritage!

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When You're Afraid of Things that Haven't Happened Yet

Carol Kent

It's easy to imagine "worst-case scenarios," but remember these five simple truths to turn your fears into faith.

Carol Kent is an author and speaker living in Port Huron, Michigan.

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As the mother of an only child, I've been a bit on the over-protective side. Sending our sixteen-year-old son all the way to Colorado for three weeks of camp seemed like a big step. But this Christian leadership training camp offered a unique combination of high adventure and solid teaching, and Jason was excited about going. I tried not to be too emotional at the airport as we said our good-byes.

When our son returned home, he seemed more mature. He began talking about the importance of having a "Christian world-view" in the midst of our changing society.

Guardedly, he said, "Mom, what would you think if I told you I'm interested in a military career?" I could feel a lump forming in my throat. Why would he even think of going in that direction? It could be dangerous?

Jason told me he felt God was leading him toward a leadership role in the military, to help bring our nation back to God. My eyes filled with tears. My little boy had become a man.

My silent prayer was more a desperate plea: *Lord, please, he's my only son. Don't take him away from me. God, the military is full of*

rough language and danger and killing. What if his faith is weakened by peer pressure? What if he has to go to war? What if he gets wounded in battle? Please change the desires of Jason's heart to something safer and closer to home!

Worrying about the "what ifs"

Most of us have an amazing ability to imagine the "worst-case scenario," then convince ourselves it *will* happen to us or to one of our family members or friends. An old Swedish proverb states, "Worry gives a small thing a big shadow." And worry eventually gives way to anxiety.

In her book, *Conquering Fear*, author Karen Randau writes, "While *fear* focuses on an immediate danger, such as an impending car wreck, *anxiety* is constant internal tension over something that may or may not occur in the future."

In the past ten days, I've heard the following comments from women who struggle with this type of anxiety:

◆ What if I lose my job? The company is going to lay off more people, and I just know I'll be one of them.

◆ What if I never get married? I don't have a retirement plan and

the Social Security system seems so shaky. What will I do?

◆ What if I can't get pregnant? I want a child more than anything, and every month my disappointment is deeper.

◆ What if I'm a bad mother? How can I ever be sure I'm raising my children properly?

◆ What if my husband gets interested in another woman? He's so attractive and I'm getting older, and his secretary thinks he's wonderful.

◆ What if I get transferred to another place? My whole world is wrapped up in this community. My family lives here. I have meaningful fellowship in my church. I just *can't* leave.

The list could go on and on.

Take a minute to write down all the anxious thoughts you've had this week involving things that haven't happened yet—and may never happen. For some of us, the fear of something that might happen slowly deepens into the feeling that we're totally unable to handle life, plan for the future, or provide safety and happiness for our children.

If we aren't careful, we can even wind up saying: "I give up. The economic earthquake is coming. I can't do anything to stop it. My future is ruined. Fearful signs are everywhere. I'm going to quit trying!"

Five truths to tame your fears

Whenever I'm tempted to feel hopeless, I find it helpful to remember a few basic truths.

1. Life is full of negative things that might happen. We can't escape bad news. It's on the front

page of the newspaper, on the TV screen, in the conversations of people around us. The Bible states, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time" (Rom. 8:22). Life is hard, and it shouldn't surprise us that a fallen world will provide disappointment, painful losses, unfulfilled expectations, and sadness.

I no longer expect life to be free from things that will make me anxious. As well-known Christian psychologist Larry Crabb says, "We will groan until Jesus comes, or pretend we don't."

Jesus warned us about the trouble we'd find in this world. But He also told us to take heart, because He has overcome the world (John 16:33).

2. As long as I choose a path of personal growth, I will face fearful situations. The first time I was the keynote speaker at a large, out-of-state conference, panic swept over me as I approached the podium. All I could think was, *What if I do such a terrible job that these people tell other groups what a failure I am?*

Somehow, I lived through the experience, and three weeks later the organization sent me tapes of my messages. As I listened to my opening remarks, a loud, unnerving *thump, thump, thump* reverberated over my world. It was very distracting, but finally stopped ten minutes into my talk. I was wondering what the problem had been, when a slip of paper from the package fluttered to the floor. It read: "Dear Mrs. Kent,

When we heard the recording of your first talk, we thought our equipment was terribly defective. But then we realized our sensitive microphone was just

picking up the sound of your beating heart. Obviously, you relaxed after a while!"

It's been more than ten years since that

experience, and as I've accepted other opportunities to speak, I've seen God transform my fear into faith. My anxiety has lessened, and now I actually look forward to speaking engagements!

The day nothing happens to make us feel a bit afraid, we'd better watch out—we may have quit breathing! But if we're making any progress in life at all—if we're trying new things and taking healthy risks—we will have concern about what might happen in the future.

3. Acknowledging my anxieties is a positive first step. As a Christian, I can share my anxieties with the Lord. In the New Testament we are instructed, "Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). We can tell God anything and He won't be angry or surprised.

I've experienced tremendous peace through being honest with God about my fears. When I start worrying about Jason, I'm often reminded of the verse I memorized as a child: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can

It's impossible to be consumed with anxiety and laugh heartily at the same time!

understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your heart quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7, TLB).

It also helps to talk to someone who can give advice in a specific area. Dr. John Norcross, chairman of psychology at the University of Scranton, says, "The first smart response to fear is to face it. . . . Then, measure your fear against the odds of it happening. If you think your job is on the line, for example, ask your company management whether layoffs are likely—and check with personnel about severance packages, just in case. To help put things in perspective, discuss your concerns with someone you can trust."

4. An attitude of optimism will make today more enjoyable. One morning, I flipped on my radio and heard Chuck Swindoll preaching. He quoted comedian Fred Allen: "It isn't good to suppress your laughter because it goes down and spreads your hips."

I can't remember what Chuck's sermon was about, but that one comment helped me forget for a whole day my fears over things that "might" happen. Every time I felt myself fretting over some "what if," I laughed out loud and felt my anxiety fading.

Best-selling author Barbara Johnson wrote, "Doctor and physical fitness experts tell us that laughter is just plain good for your health. . . . I read about a medical doctor who calls laughter "internal jogging." He says that hearty laughter has a beneficial effect on most of your body's major systems—and it's a lot more fun than calisthenics." Barb goes on to say, "The best thing to do when

feeling overwhelmed is to take a 'laugh break.' It can actually rejuvenate you."

Add one humorous thought to your life each day. It's impossible to be consumed with anxiety and laugh heartily at the same time!

5. I can decide to move forward in faith. It's important to ask ourselves if we've chosen to allow fear to paralyze us. We're in serious trouble if we start believing our first reaction to a frightening situation: *I can't do anything. I can't handle this fear.*

Soon it will be a year since my son became a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy. In that time, I've had to deal with my fears again and again. At times, I imagine future wars and international conflicts, and I'm filled with anxiety over where Jason will be sent as a military officer.

But I'm convinced that the opposite of fear is faith. When I find myself getting anxious, I make a decision to pray. When empty hours tempt me to imagine "worst-case scenarios" for my son's future, I get involved in ministry opportunities to occupy my thoughts and energies instead.

All women face fears, although some women, due to past issues struggle with fear at a much deeper level. However, God created each of us with the ability to choose if we will stay frozen in fear and allow our anxieties to get out of proportion to the actual danger, or if we will move forward. As one person noted, "Though no one can go back and make a new start, anyone can start now and make a brand-new end." It's never too late! ❀

*"The Lord
is my light
and my
salvation;
whom shall
I fear? The
Lord is the
strength of
my life; of
whom shall
I be
afraid?"*

Psalms 27:1, KJV



Shepherdess International News

Asia Pacific Division

Grace Sang Kyu-Choo and her husband, Barnabas, just can't retire. Grace served the Seventh-day Adventist Church for over 40 years as a director of child evangelism, pianist, and conductor of church choirs. Now, in their retirement, the Kyu-Choos are returning to Asia to devote their first year of retirement to the Lord in the 1,000 Missionary Movement.



Grace Sang
Kyu-Choo

North American Division

✿ The *Central California Conference* held their annual Pastors' Wives Retreat in Soquel. The fellowship and seminars were like a fountain in a dry desert. As wives of busy pastors and mothers, the women enjoyed this special time together. In order to keep in touch with each other, they voted to elect Area Shepherdess Coordinators. Their quarterly newsletter is called *Perspectives* and includes prayer lists and items of interest to the local area.

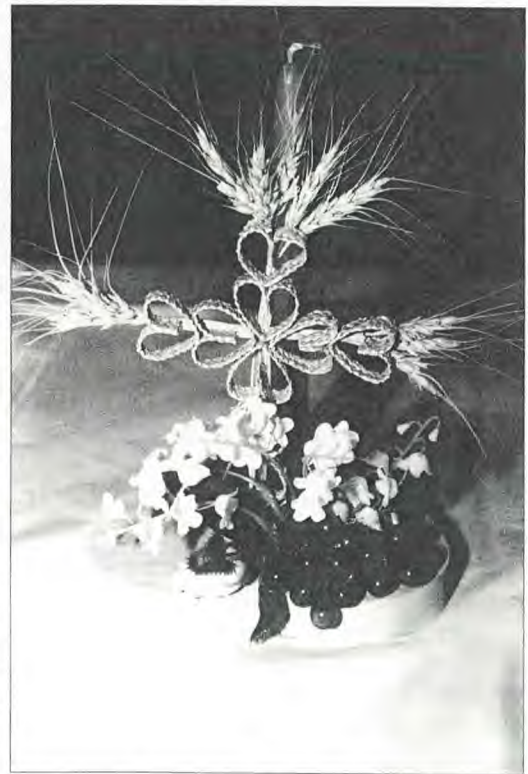
✿ The *Dakota Conference* Shepherdess group planned several special events for their winter Pastors' Retreat. While the husbands took care of the children, the ladies participated in a "slumber party." The women went to the house of the local

pastor's wife where they enjoyed a delicious, leisurely supper free from phone calls or children needing attention. After supper they all changed into warm pajamas and robes for the most "unique pajama" award. Elsie-Rae Davis won with pajamas and slippers with cow motif front and back. Each lady shared how they met and married their husbands, and a sweet, loving spirit grew as thoughts went back to the beginning of married life. Then a bedtime story was read and everyone found a place to sleep on beds, couches, and sleeping bags. One retired pastor's wife remarked, "I enjoyed the party so much. I wish there had been times for special sharing when I was younger."

Later in the week, the group prepared a very unique Communion supper. The tables were arranged in a large rectangle with a large cross at one end. The very special meal included fruit, bread, spreads, and nut breads. The table center piece had a heart-shaped base with a cross wheat weaving, unique to the Dakotas; it also included a candle, grapes, rose of Sharon, and lilies to complete the symbolism of Christ. Each family took home the special table decoration. Twelve of our

pastors took the part of the disciples and discussed among themselves the meaning of the supper with the Lord. Everyone enjoyed this very much as it brought a lot of realism to the service.

✿ *General Conference*. Administrative wives gathered in the Visitor's Theater for three days of seminars and fellowship during the Annual Council Session. Franci McClure, Shepherdess Coordinator for the North American Division, led a "get-acquainted session" the first day. Dorothy Watts, from the



Communion table decoration

British Columbia Conference, spoke practically and inspirationally on the special challenges of being the wife of an administrator. Focusing on coping with criticism, expectations and loneliness, Dorothy truly ministered to each one of us. Another seminar session, devoted to "case studies," opened a lively, real, and humorous discussion on things that have actually occurred in the lives of administrative wives.

✿ *Minnesota Conference.* For several years the pastors' wives in the Minnesota Conference have worked together at camp meeting time to raise funds to buy gifts for their sisters in different parts of the world. A small booth was built for them to use to make and sell sandwiches. Twice a day, the women take turns helping, with two or three women working each shift. In addition to volunteering their time, many of the women bake desserts and donate them to sell along with the sandwiches.

The project first began as a means to raise the postage needed to send clothing and other items to pastors' wives overseas. More recently they have used their funds to purchase items to be taken to places where Minnesota pastors and their wives hold evangelistic meetings. For example, Joyce Milliken has taken gifts to the shepherdesses in Bulgaria and Romania; Erma Larson, to Moldova; and Barbara Huff, to the Ukraine.

"I can't believe that these women are so joyful about adding another chore to their busy days at camp meeting," says Shepherdess sponsor, Barbara Huff. "They love to



The Helpmate officers from Upper Columbia include: Debbie Knott, Helen Cain, Diane Sova, Debby Melnychenko, and Dawn Venn

work together on a project, and they receive satisfaction from brightening an unknown sister's life." Gifts given have included pantyhose, scissors, lotion, nail clippers, book marks, etc.

✿ *Upper Columbia Conference* held their annual Pastors' Wives Retreat at MiVoden. Helpmate officers report that the warmth of fellowship, honesty, and openness of the speakers made the time special. The pastoral wives appreciated having a time just for them to share their special challenges and blessings, and they thanked the conference and their own Helpmate leadership for making this possible.

Southern Asia Division

Valsala Stanly, Shepherdess Coordinator for the North Kerala Section, reports that all of the pastoral wives in this Section are engaged in evangelism. Last year the Division conducted a special Bible Institute for the unemployed pastors' wives, which equipped them for specific church activities. The Section is seeing the results of this valuable training. As always, the investment of funds for training and nurturing pastoral wives is a wise choice!



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