

The Journal



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*Rest is not idleness,
and to lie sometimes on the grass
under the trees on a summer's day,
listening to the murmur of the water,
or watching the clouds float across the sky,
is by no means a waste of time.*

—J. Lubbock

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Editor's Musings

PKs. Pastors' Kids. Privileged kids or persecuted kids? Potential kids or problem kids? Everybody has their own personal notion of what it means to be the offspring of a clergy couple.

My husband, Jim, grew up in a pastor's home, and his childhood was not enviable. Memories of experiencing his father's overly-strong discipline (even in the presence of church members) for minor infractions such as running on the sidewalk after church services negatively colored his perspective of life in the ministry home. It was alright for the other kids to run down the sidewalk after church, but not the PK. Jim's exuberant personality and boundless energy did not match the PK profile. Great expectations led to cruel behaviour.

I want to believe things have changed. I want to believe all PKs are now cherished by both their parents and church members as the little individuals God created. I want to believe this because I have watched my nieces, Jana and Jaci, grow into beautiful mature Christian women, nurtured by their ministry parents, John and Pam. I have observed my nephew, Josiah, grow into a handsome Christian man, faithfully guided by his ministry parents, Mark and Eulita. (And, those who know our family know that we tend to breed strong-willed young-uns! Smile!) Now in her young years, little Meredith continues to command the diligence and patience of her ministry parents, Dave and Lynn. The one thread that seems to run true through all this positive parenting is dependence upon God's guidance and faithfulness to the individual personality of each child. I have never seen any of these clergy couples sacrifice their kids to the expectations of anyone other than God. Kudos to all.

I believe that PK simply means Potential Kid. Gifts from our Father waiting to be valued for their uniqueness. Gifts from our Father to be molded into HIS likeness, not ours.

God bless us every one.



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Reflections on Growing Up a Pastor's Kid

Kristi Rector

If there's one group of kids in church that gets stereotyped, it's the pastor's kids. Whether they're seen as holy terrors or heavenly angels, the expectations put on them by church members, Sunday school teachers, elders, and often their pastor parents, are typically sky-high. And the eyes of the congregation are always watching them.

So what's it really like living day in and day out with the label "pastor's kid"? Here's what 12 of them had to say about life on the inside.

In the Spotlight

No matter what their personality, PKs attract attention. Some enjoy the extra notice given by their extended church family. "Everybody's always glad to see you at church and watches out for you and takes care of you and wants to know what you're doing," says 16-year-old Michael Nevergall.

"I enjoyed getting special attention from church members," says 30-year-old Tim Allmann. "It was like having a little celebrity. I still get that extra attention when I go visit the churches [my dad] has served in since I've left home, even

though people there don't know me all that well. Having that attention made me realize that my dad was very special."

However, he says, "The attention also brought certain expectations. It spoiled me and gave me a bit of a big head, I think. My mother may have grown a number of gray hairs as a result of keeping me in line as a child!"

Yet just like celebrities attract the critical eye of the media along with the glamour of attention, PKs also experience their celebrity as a double-edged sword. "There was absolutely no privacy, no secrecy. Everybody knew who you were, everybody knew who your dad was, and that just hung over your head constantly," says 50-year-old Ruth Allmann. "Plus our parents didn't help much because they reinforced, 'You are the pastor's daughter, and you will act accordingly, and you will do this and you will do that because you must uphold the image of your father.' You constantly had this cloud hanging over your head of what you could and couldn't do, and you felt really restricted about developing your own personality in a lot of ways."

Kristi Rector is assistant editor of Vital Ministry Magazine. Reprinted by permission, Vital Ministry Magazine, ©copyright 1999, Group Publishing, Inc., Box 481, Loveland, CO 80539.

Mirror, Mirror

Unlike many jobs, pastoral duties can turn into family affairs. "We take lots of trips to visit people, missionaries, or someone in the hospital. My dad takes us there and we'll visit people. I like getting to meet people," says 16-year-old Darcy Fisher.

At the same time, PKs can often feel like their life is not their own because of the demands church ministry places on their parents. "I didn't like being the first to arrive and the last to leave every time the church doors were open for a service or special event," says Mavis Sanders.

John David Nevergall says he gets annoyed when his family has to attend the church activities almost every weekend of the month: "That really chews up a lot of time."

Tim Allmann says, "I missed the opportunity to spend a lot of weekend time with my dad. I was always jealous of those other boys who would go camping and fishing for a weekend."

But on the positive side, Jennifer Murray, 29, found comfort in her father's unusual schedule. "Because of my dad's flexible schedule, he was able to make it a priority to be there for us a lot in the mornings before school and to attend all of our activities. I took that for granted until I realized that it wasn't the norm for dads to be around that much."

In addition, participating together in the many aspects of ministry provides pastors with opportunities to shape the character of their children. Bryan Sandmann, 34, says, "The most beneficial part of being a PK is to have been raised in a loving, caring, and Christ-centered home. Having this as a basis for my own life means that I have a different outlook and demeanor, and I've learned how to be supportive of others."

And thankfully, the pastor's family often has a wide support network in

the church. "It was great just to be such a part of something, to have that really good foundation of Christian faith, and to feel like you were part of a family larger than your own," says Ruth Allmann.

A Distant Reflection

The variety and richness of relationships was a common praise of PKs. Amy Simpson, 26, says she enjoyed being exposed to a wide variety of people within the

One of the most difficult aspects of being a PK is the sense of being under constant scrutiny by people in the church and community.

Christian community. "Church functions, missions conferences, pastors' conferences, and other experiences gave me opportunities to interact with different age groups and people with various perspectives. That gave me a rich, well-rounded sense of community as I was growing up," she says.

Teenager John David Nevergall agrees. "You get to meet a whole lot of nice older people. Going to church, they all know who you are.

You don't feel left out when you go to church. Like at baptismal dinners and things like that, you always meet a lot of new people, and that's always interesting."

Despite the fact that her father pastored in rural Iowa, Mavis Sanders says, "Our home was an international crossroads. My mother, gifted in entertaining and the ability to 'make do' with a food budget that had to feed a family of 11, creatively entertained missionaries, denominational leaders, educators, and drop-in acquaintances. We learned that [simple food] was a feast when shared with people from whom we could learn so much."

One reason PKs have so many opportunities to meet people is that they often move many times during their growing-up years as new churches call their families to serve. "We seemed to move every five years, and I always kind of liked that," says Ruth Allmann. "I was really into pen pals, so I never gave up all the friends I had in the old place because I was writing back and forth to them. And I made new friends at the new church, so I always felt like I was luckier than the other children because I had this huge circle of acquaintances and friends that I still kept in touch with."

However, many PKs are resentful of the fact that the pastor's job forces them to tear up their roots several times during their growing-up years. "I blamed the church for all my problems, such as having to move and uprooting me from life as I knew it. My real problem was not learning how to adapt to new people and new situations. I would feed my anger with stubbornness," says Joshua Allen, age 19.

Through a Glass Darkly

One of the most difficult aspects of being a PK is the sense of being under constant scrutiny by people in

the church and community. Like many pastor's kids, Simpson says she grew up under the weight of other people's expectations. "I didn't experience much grace among Christian people. And many non-Christian people would change their behavior around me."

Twelve-year-old Betsey Rumley also feels the weight of her parents' role at church. She says, "Bible school teachers treat you unfairly because you should have your lessons done even though no one else does them." Sandmann echoed similar thoughts about his experience as a pastor's child. "The one tough thing about being a PK is that sometimes you're held to a higher standard by others who feel that, of all people, you should be setting an example."

Michael Nevergall says, "A lot of people think that you know more than you do. They'll ask questions about what our dad's doing, and that gets kind of annoying because you have to try and tell people stuff that you don't even know. They come to you when it's not even your responsibility."

Despite the constant watching eye, pastor's kids are often put into a personality box before they arrive at a church. "You were either the goody-two-shoes or you were the rebellious devil-type who was wild and crazy because you'd been restricted so long. You just weren't allowed to be a normal, average person," Ruth Allmann says.

A Clear View

So what can you do to make your children's experiences of growing up a PK positive?

- Take advantage of opportunities to show them that they're more valuable to you than your job is. Don't cancel family plans when an unexpected church function could be handled by someone else. Use the flexibility of your schedule to spend time with your family when they're

home. Guard your days off and plans with family, and let them hear you say, "I'm sorry, I can't do that—it's our family time." Be willing to stand up for them against nosy church members.

- Show them that they take priority over the congregation. Occasionally you'll have to break plans with your

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*Respect their
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*Allow them grace
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kids for church members, but do everything in your power to avoid it. For example, if you've promised to take your kids out for pizza after the evening service, and someone accepts Christ during church, schedule a time for follow-up or have a lay leader counsel the new

Christian instead of breaking your date with your kids.

- Share your job with them. Take your kids with you on visitations to new members. Or get involved with a ministry in your church that your whole family can do together.

- Respect their individuality. Help them find a unique place of ministry that fits their personalities—don't force them to sing in the choir if they hate to sing. Gently guide them in discovering their spiritual gifts and general interests, and then encourage them to pursue their talents whether it's through church or an outside avenue. "My parents were a ministry team who encouraged all of us to be involved with them and to use the gifts God gave us," says Sanders.

- Allow them grace to "fail" at home. Don't tell them that their mistakes will reflect poorly on the pastor. Understand that despite the job their parents have, they're normal kids. Don't hold them to a higher standard than others their age, but do give them boundaries for behavior.

- Give them privacy from the church. Always ask for their permission before using them in sermon illustrations, and don't use them too frequently. If you sense your kids are burning out on church life, allow them to take a break from the whirlwind of activities.

- Show them how to have a relationship with God that doesn't revolve around how things are going at church. They're bound to be frustrated at some point with the church organization; help them to separate those conflicts from their spiritual walk.

Pastor's kids have unique growing-up experiences. But with a little extra attention and sensitivity, you can make it a rich and rewarding time for both you and your children.



Dear Mom and Dad . . .

If your kids could tell you how they honestly feel about growing up as a pastor's kids, what do you think they would say? Here's what some PKs would tell their parents.

"I think I would have liked them to know how hard it was to be the 'good kid' in school."

—Tim Allmann, age 30
PyongYaek-shi, Kyonggi-do,
Republic of Korea

"The pressure and expectations are so much more than they can understand if they weren't PKs. Trust that the values you teach will show up as we mature. Show us that a personal relationship with God is more important than going to church, but that going to church is a part of that relationship."

—Kerri Loesche, age 37
Loveland, Colorado

"All of my siblings are committed Christians, involved in various ministries in our local churches, so my parents must have done some things right!"

—Mavis Sanders, age 50-something
Carol Stream, Illinois

"It's not easy, like in school. When you are in school, people expect you to be Little Miss Perfect and do nothing wrong. I don't think my parents know the full thing of it. They should hang out with more teenagers. Like have my dad go to public schools and see how kids who aren't pastors' kids hang out."

—Darcy Fisher, age 16
Hartville, Ohio

"There was a lot of pressure from the congregation and community. It seemed like we had such a lack of privacy in our own lives, and when I or one of my siblings made a mistake, it was scrutinized more because of that fact. It was kind

of double-edged sword, because I also liked the fact that the congregation and community were so close-knit."

—Jennifer Murray, age 29
Fort Collins, Colorado

"Their kids need to know they're more important than the church. In situations where the expectations of others invaded our lives, I wish my parents would have heartily defended our family more often, rather than just explain to me why people behaved that way. Rather than needing me to live up to those expectations for their own well-being, I wish my parents would have been willing to sacrifice a job or two if necessary for the sake of their family."

—Amy Simpson, age 26
Wasilla, Alaska

"It really isn't as bad as I make it sound, because I always give them grief about how I'm supposed to do this and do that; but it really isn't that bad."

—John David Nevergall, age 13
Elmore, Ohio

"All of us were individuals and should've been allowed to be more individual in our development, rather than being molded into 'You are the pastor's kid.' We should've been more free to explore and find out who we were and what we wanted to do with our lives instead of having to wait so long and grow up and be away from home before we were really allowed to start thinking about that."

—Ruth Allmann, age 50
Richmond, Virginia

From the Mouths of PK's

On religion:

- ✿ Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- ✿ Noah built an ark, which the animals came on to in pears.
- ✿ David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar.
- ✿ He fought with the Finklesteins, a race of people who lived in biblical times.
- ✿ The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels.
- ✿ One of the opossums was St. Matthew, who was also a taximan.

On biology:

- ✿ Three kinds of blood vessels are arteries, vanes, and caterpillars.
- ✿ Mushrooms always grow in damp places, and so they look like umbrellas.

On science:

- ✿ Some oxygen molecules help fires burn while others help make water, so sometimes it's brother against brother.
- ✿ Clouds are high-flying fogs.
- ✿ Clouds just keep circling the earth around and around. And around. There is not much else to do.
- ✿ Water vapor gets together in a cloud. When it is big enough to be called a drop, it does.
- ✿ Rain is saved up in cloud banks.
- ✿ A blizzard is when it snows sideways.
- ✿ A hurricane is a breeze of a bigly size.

Lessons From My Mother's Hands

Matthew Gil



I thought it would be another typical, busy Sabbath for the Gil family. Sabbath School was nice; the youth class had been full with friends and visitors. My mom and dad were running to and fro as usual with their regular Sabbath duties. I picked up my little brother and sister from their Sabbath School classes, and we made our way to the sanctuary to sit down at our regular pew, and as always, I saved a seat for my mom.

The intermission song service had started, the music was cheerful and upbeat. My mother sat beside me this time and took a deep breath, probably glad to be off her feet after teaching the cradle roll class but ready to enjoy the praise service. I grabbed her hand and gave it a good squeeze assuring her everything would be all right.

Since we are a very “touchy, hugging, loving” family it’s not unusual for me to hold my mom’s hand during the service. But this time would be different, this time as I held my mother’s hand I felt something I had never felt before ... my emotions

were stirred...I could hardly believe it...my mom had calluses in her hands!

When my dad was called to the ministry over 14 years ago, mom set her career and ambitions aside and decided she would work beside my dad and be available for him and for us kids. As we grew up and started church school it was obvious that two incomes were needed, so mom, as she puts it, “exploits everything her hands know how to do” so she could be her own boss and have the flexible schedule she needs to be available for ministry and her “angels” as she calls us.


Her hands reflected the hard work she had been doing for so long. As I lifted her hand to kiss it for all she sacrifices for us, she looked up at me only to see a tear rolling down my cheek. When she asked me what was wrong, I told her that I had felt the calluses in her hands and that I was so grateful for all she does for us.

Mom, never being one to pass up the opportunity for a good object lesson, used that moment to make me understand my salvation like I never had before. Sure my parents taught me that Jesus loves me, that His Father sent Him to earth to die for my sins so I could live forever. When I was 10, I was baptized as I asked Jesus to be in my heart forever. But the words my mom shared with

me that morning will live forever in my heart and mind.

She said to me that one day soon I would hold the hands of Jesus and feel the scars in **His Hands** and then I would really cry tears of joy and gratitude for the sacrifice He had made for me. She said I would understand how God the Father felt the pain of sending His only Son to die and suffer such a terrible death to save me. She told me how Jesus, in His humanity wrestled with fear and doubt in Gethsemane but heard my voice calling out to Him in time and decided that I was worth any sacrifice. She said **His Hands** are the hands that sacrificed it all because of His love for me, and those hands are the ones I should cherish.

She then looked at me intently and said I should live my life to honor the sacrifice those hands made for me and for anyone else that answers His call. She added, that the choices I make in my life should always bring glory to Jesus, the One who will forever have **His Hands** and feet scarred as a reminder that He gave it all for me because of love.

I can’t remember what my dad preached about that day, what songs were sung or what happened after that. My mind reflected on the lesson my mom had just taught me, another lesson learned from my mother’s hands about my Jesus’ love. 

Matthew is a 17-year-old high school junior. He enjoys computers and science and is a happy PK.

Not So Bad After All

Lessons on Being a Pastor's Kid

Kristin Asimakoupoulos



The football field, wet from a recent spring downpour, was littered with 13-year-olds. A pickup game of ultimate Frisbee with my junior high youth group was in full swing. Panting deeply, I dodged my opponents until I was open. The red plastic disc whizzed through the air. I stretched out my hand to grasp it and was promptly jabbed in the stomach by an intercepting hand. I fell backward onto the soaked grass.

"Hey, watch it!" my youth pastor bellowed from the sidelines. "You'd better not hurt the pastor's daughter; otherwise, we all might get in trouble!" My jaw dropped as I scowled at the man who had just humiliated me. My rival looked at me condescendingly as he extended his hand to help me up. A hundred thoughts raced through my mind. *There goes the pastor's-daughter label again! Why do I always have to be*

singled out as a glass doll that cannot be broken? Can't I just be treated like everyone else? I quietly ambled off the field.

I despised being a pastor's kid growing up. But looking back on it almost several years later, I realize how much I appreciate what my father does and how it helped shape me. There are countless benefits I could tick off, but here are three:

1. *Being a PK caused me to realize that my life as a Christian is viewed by others.* This used to irritate me. Due to my dad's position, I was noticed more than other kids in my church, so I thought my job was to be flawless in the eyes of others. I would get frustrated when I made public mistakes or when my personal character failed to scream perfection. However, as I matured, I realized I had a great witnessing opportunity as a pastor's daughter. I am far from being a perfect Christian, but if I display Christ's love to the members of my church as well as to those outside of it, people will see Jesus in me. And if my faults are evident, too, people will realize that they don't have to be perfect to have a relationship with God.

2. *Being a PK gave me the opportunity to relate to the age spectrum of the church.* I connect well

with older people because they have always been part of my family's life. Every week after the service, my dad would stay behind and chat with various members of the church until no cars were left in the parking lot. My dad's personable nature was contagious, and I soon found myself holding conversations with adults and elders while I waited for my dad. Those talks polished my communication skills, and I gained many wise insights for life.

3. *Being a PK helped me to develop a sense of empathy for others at an early age.* We would often pray around the dinner table for people in the church who were going through difficult times. Not only did I come to realize the power of prayer at that table, but I also learned what it meant to have compassion for others, to put myself in their shoes, and to catch a glimpse of their pain and heartache. In caring for others, I saw God change lives. And that's awesome.

Back when my youth pastor singled me out on the football field, I bristled at being categorized as "special." Now that I'm in college and working with kids at Bible camp, I've come to see that I am—not only because I'm His, but because I was raised in a ministry home. ☺

Kristin is a junior at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. She is a psychology major and hopes to be a guidance counselor some day. She loves the ocean, hanging out with friends, and hearing her dad preach.

Take the Family Along

Your Children and Pastoral Visitation

Chester and Cindy Schurch

Whatever you do, *don't* take your family visiting with you! That is the quickest way to get your church members mad at you!" We winced at these words of advice given to us by a retired pastor. As a young pastoral couple, we valued the advice of older pastors, but something about this advice didn't seem right.

We were looking forward to establishing a "team ministry"—doing everything together, including visiting our church members. But who would watch the children? As we began our ministry in a small three-church district we chose to violate that elderly pastor's advice and discovered one of the greatest blessings of our ministry. We have found that family visitation is a blessing, not only for us, but for the members as well.

Any successful endeavor takes some planning—and visiting with your family is no exception. Here are some steps we found necessary to make this a positive experience.

Know your family's limitations

By trial and error, we discovered the visitation limits of our family. Though at first we tried a zealous schedule of six or more visits per day, we soon discovered that this was too much for us. We finally settled on a schedule which has worked quite well for both us and our children.

One of the first things we learned is that the *time* and the *number* of the visits we make is important. For example, our children became restless during afternoon visits since this was the time of their usual afternoon nap. But mornings and evenings were not a problem. Here is a typical day of visitation with our children.

We begin by making two visits before noon. These visits are usually with the retired or shut-in members of the congregation because there is a better chance that they are home during this time of day. Our general rule is to spend an hour at each visit (unless there is a pressing need which merits a longer stay). After the second morning visit, we go home and eat lunch. We don't schedule visits for the afternoon. This allows the children time to play, take a nap, and relax. It gives us time to do other things such as household chores, write sermons and do administrative items. Our next two visits are scheduled for the evening. These are usually with the younger families who work during the day. We try to conclude our last visit by nine o'clock. We have found these four visits per day sufficient when doing family visitation.

Make appointments

Though it takes extra work, we have found that calling the members several days in advance and letting

Chester and Cindy Schurch have two children, Byron and Angela. They like to sing together, do woodworking, play tennis, and they stress a "team" approach to ministry. They also do counseling and visitation together.

them know that the whole family will be visiting is important and helpful for several reasons. Most members will have a box of toys which they may want to have ready when we visit, and calling them ahead of time allows them to be ready. When some of the members know that our children are coming, they may purchase a little toy or something special that they will give them. Some of the elderly who have no grandchildren tell us that they can fulfill their role as grandparents by doing this. They enjoy it and so do our kids!

Making appointments with the younger families is important since they have a busy schedule with work and school, and need to be able to work our visits into their family activities. The children of these families provide our children with opportunities for fun and interaction. It is not uncommon for our children to ask us as we travel to a member's home, "Do these people have any children?" We notice their positive reaction when the answer is "Yes."

Define your expectations

Keeping in mind that children are happier when they are given definite guidelines, it is important that you establish the boundaries before visiting in each home. What seems obvious to us as parents may not be to our children. For example, as we turn into the driveway of a member's house, we make it a general rule to remind the children of the proper way to behave. Often we will say, "Byron and Angela, we are visiting Mr. and Mrs. Jones. We want both of you to be respectful to them and be polite as we visit them. Will you help us by doing that?" When we receive their acknowledgement, we proceed to the door. This allows us to have something to remind them of should they begin acting up during a visit. We also make a special

effort to thank them at the conclusion of the visit if they have obeyed our instruction.

During the visit there may come times when a gentle reminder of good behavior is in order, but if it is done firmly and with tact, it will not be a major disturbance. The retired pastor who I quoted at the beginning of this article was convinced that family visitation was a negative thing. This was because he had heard stories of preachers' kids who terrorized church members during

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visits. But it is amazing how rapidly children catch on to appropriate visitation behavior if they are given the proper guidelines.

Make it fun

With a little more effort, visitation can be fun for the entire family. One way to make it fun is by including the children in the conversation. They will learn to appreciate the stories which the members tell and can be encouraged to add to the discussion at the proper times. It is also fun to point out to them the

different paintings, woodworking or craft items, et cetera which the members have made. This can be a very pleasant learning experience for them.

If the children become restless during visits, we have found it helpful to bring along a special coloring book with crayons, picture book, or other items which we use only during visitation. These and other planned activities can serve as incentives for the children's good behavior during visits.

Another way to add fun to visitation is to stop at parks or playgrounds between visits. This time of exercise will give the children the needed release of energy which will make visiting much easier for all of the family. Often a packed picnic lunch can turn a day of visitation into a pleasant family outing.

Family visitation can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your ministry. It provides us as parents an opportunity to teach our children how to relate to people of all ages, backgrounds, and situations. They are able to witness firsthand what it means to minister to the needs of people in their homes.

On more than one occasion, our children have helped to melt the hardened or embittered heart of a backslidden member and have allowed us the opportunity to more effectively reach them. It has also been our experience that church members tend to feel a closer bond with us when they have become acquainted with the entire family during visits.

The final proof that family visitation can be enjoyable for the children came to me the other day when (after finishing a round of visits in 100 homes), our six-year-old son came bounding out of bed and with excitement written all over his face he asked, "Mommy and Daddy, who can we visit today?!" 🗨️

Children Do Have Ears

Frankie Roland

It had happened again! I looked over the heads of our children to my husband. In the dim light I could see he was looking very embarrassed. Glancing at my nodding daughter but still alert son, I said just loud enough for the occupants of the front seat of the car to hear, "Honey, you know we promised never to discuss personalities in front of our children."

My husband, looked relieved, tousled our son's hair and replied, "Yes, I know." Our son immediately feigned sleep and the man in the front seat, looking startled, changed the subject. For the next half hour, conversation was light as we sped home from the zone rally. After checking to see that our son was now really asleep, I leaned forward and apologized for my apparent rudeness.

"I'm very sorry," I started, "but we've dealt with too many PKs (Preacher's Kids) in youth camps who were all mixed up because they had no confidence in anyone. We personally feel it would be detrimental for them to know that any of our church people are anything but the best possible Christians. We can't afford, through careless talk, to let them doubt anyone."

The man, another pastor, apologized profusely, saying he had just forgotten the children were in

the back seat. His wife added, "We've just forgotten about children listening since ours are grown and gone."

After the awkward moment had passed, we talked along this very line the rest of the way home. They told us of problems they had had when their children were small, and we finally came to the conclusion that adults just seem to feel that children have no ears.

We talked of certain problems in rearing children in a parsonage, and they asked just what could be done about the problem we had just "very neatly solved."

We told them that, if a very pointed look at the child and then back at the speaker with raised eyebrows did not work, my husband would then say, "Children, would you mind playing upstairs while Mr. and Mrs. So-and-So talk privately with Mom and Dad?" If the same speaker began this again in the child's presence, I would then remember what Fletcher Spruce, then editor of *Standard*, said some time back—that silence is not always golden; sometimes it's just plain yellow. Then looking straight at the speaker with a kind but determined expression, I would simply say, "Sir, we have a policy in our home not to discuss personalities in front of our children." This has had to be done very few times, usually to a church member but once to an evangelist, and don't think it was easy!

Frankie Roland is a retired pastor's wife living in Kansas. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.



It may seem trivial to some and amusing to others, but I want to keep the fact before me that children do have ears, and they are listening all the time.

Everyone has been wonderful about this, and the only thing I can come up with is that people just think children do not listen. Believe me, they do, and they form opinions quickly.

Once while on a trip we discussed something that had been told to us in confidence, supposing our children to be playing a game in the back seat. The next Sunday our daughter told it in class. Since it was a financial difficulty, my husband and I were very red-faced as we tried to explain to the man who had confided to us in private, how it had gotten out.

We are also careful in our family devotions not to pray for God to help Brother S see his need for tithing or for Sister M to stop smacking her children around. This is done in private prayer when the children are away at school or in bed for the night.

It may seem trivial to some and amusing to others, but I want to keep the fact before me that children do have ears, and they are listening all the time. Jesus said in Mark 9:42 that we are not to "cause one of these little ones to stumble," and He had a child sitting on His lap when He said it. If Jesus had to admonish His disciples, perhaps we had better check up on our own conversation.



Intercessory Prayer for Children



Mary Maxson

Dear Heavenly Father,

I come before Your throne of grace to intercede for my son/daughter. I bring him/her before you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank You that You gave him/her to me to love and train up for You. I ask You to forgive me for all of my failures to guide him/her in the way he/she ought to go. Believing You have forgiven me, I now plead Your mercy and pardon for _____. I ask that You rebuke the spiritual blindness and deafness that keeps him/her from seeing his/her true spiritual condition. I invite You, Holy Spirit, to speak to his/her heart at this moment. In Your own gentle way, teach _____ how much You love him/her. Remind him/her how much You sacrificed to save him/her. Give him/her the strength to admit his/her wrongs and the peace found in Your forgiveness. By faith I now praise You for saving _____. I believe that You will do it and I thank You for it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



Mary Maxson is director for Women's Ministries in North America. She was a volunteer chaplain at a Maryland hospital. She enjoys snorkeling as her hobby but time with her grandson is priority.

Women Married to Pastors

Issues Impacting Ministers' Wives' Morale

Jacquie Z. Randall

Writing about issues affecting the morale of pastors' wives is as difficult as describing all the fragrances available at Bloomingdale's Perfumerie. A just-completed course in research and statistics, however, gave me courage to try tackling the topic. Our professor persuaded most of us in the class that theory and policy do best when based on valid research. And so, resisting the urge to use mere intuition, I decided to search for some objective facts as well, relating to pastors' wives' morale. (I realize that who I am influences what I found!)

The first thing I did was to phone the research arm of our denomination, the Institute of Human Relations and Office of Church and Ministry located at Andrews University. To my inquiry the researcher replied, "No, we have not done research on morale of pastors' wives (or pastors) since 1980, and I would say that particular research is obsolete today due to the changes in mortgage payments and finances during the past nine years."

"Are you planning any studies touching on Seventh-day Adventist clergy and/or spouse morale, or any related topic in the near future?" I queried, still hopeful.

"No," she answered. "I'm sorry. We work on assignment from conferences, unions, et cetera and they are not requesting research in

that area. There are several dissertations from other seminaries which relate to your topic, however . . ." and she proceeded to point me in the direction of some helpful resources for which I am grateful. The studies I was able to lay my hands on through inter-library loan are as follows:

1. *Methodism's Ministry to the Clergy Family Through Its Housing Policies of the Past, Present, and Future*, by J. W. Sellers, Drew University, 1987.

2. *Stress in Clergy and Clergy Marriages: Implications for Support Systems in Homestead Presbytery, Presbyterian Church, USA*, by Ivan R. Rymes, San Francisco Theological Seminary, 1986.

3. *Clergy Couples in Shared-Call Ministry*, by Carol Shimmim Nortstrom, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, 1987.

(Facts and statements quoted below from these dissertations will have references according to their above-assigned number—D#1, D#2, or D#3.)

Of course, I cannot say for sure that material in these studies apply across the board to women married to Seventh-day Adventist pastors, but I am assuming there are many similarities between them and wives of other denominations' clergy.

Using the above sources, in addition to a few interviews with

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wives of Seventh-day Adventist pastors, I have chosen the following list of issues most affecting the morale of women married to pastors. I will list a few relevant quotations under each issue heading:

Expectations

- “Most church members give lip service for clergy spouses to be free to make choices for themselves; . . . some still remember ‘how it used to be’”—D#2, page 51.

- “Some sociologists may claim ‘that the modern husband and wife are so nearly equal in power that marriage today can be termed ‘democratic,’ ‘equalitarian,’ or ‘egalitarian,’ . . . But few of the interviewed couples (clergy) felt liberated from the traditional views of the professional clergy roles. Most of them felt stress from the expectations projected upon them by their congregations”—D#2, page 101.

- “It would help if the conference would re-educate the church members in regards to the role of the pastor’s wife”—a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s wife.

- “‘Successful woman’ still carries two levels of meaning, while the phrase ‘successful man’ refers only to career success. ‘Successful woman’ describes success in her career, and also ‘implies success in being a woman’”—D#3, page 27.

- “Traditional definitions of ‘feminine’ include being a nurturer and a good housekeeper. Dividing the housekeeping chores or lowering standards call a woman’s femininity into question”—D#3, page 38.

Marriage and Family Time

- “What right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her his wife, and by a voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage

state by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit long to be put asunder? It is neither just nor generous”—D#1, page 9, Bishop Ashbury.

- “One pastor related the following story to demonstrate the results of ‘bringing the office home.’

At dinner one evening our young son asked if he could be a pastor. ‘Of course,’ was the reply from both startled parents. ‘Then I could . . . talk about important things at supper,’ he concluded”—D#3, page 110.

- “The needs of our marriage and the needs of our children seem to be ignored by the conference leadership”—a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s wife.

- “Because of pastors’ over-scheduling, spouses experienced frustration with the seemingly second-rate status of the family. This frustration was leveled not only at the pastor, but at members of the congregation as well”—D#2, page 99.

- “During long evenings after putting the children to bed, seeds of frustration arise in me. The only time my husband and I have to spend together is on Saturday night when we’re too wiped out to be able to enjoy each other”—a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s wife.

Loneliness

- “A thread . . . woven throughout the fabric of one’s contacts with ministers’ wives is that of loneliness. This loneliness is not apparent to the casual observer, for they appear to be busily going about their duties. On every hand they are involved in people’s lives. Could these people be lonely? They not only could be lonely, but are. Their loneliness arises, not out of an absence of people, but out of their lack of deep, meaningful relationships with these people. Loneliness is dispelled when one whole person confronts another

whole person in love”—D#2, page 56, Wallace Denton. (No doubt frequent moving contributes to this loneliness.)

- “It’s important to me to have friends I can really trust, someone to whom I can express how I really feel about my role. When we were in another conference, the conference president’s wife met with all of us pastors’ wives. Someone brought up the issue of loneliness. Immediately the conference president’s wife said, ‘Lonely—who has time to be lonely!’ Inside, I felt I must be the only one who was lonely. We need to talk about these things without feeling threatened. Who can we open up to and tell how we really feel?”—a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s wife.

- “. . . the widespread loneliness in marriage is symptomatic of the loneliness in society. As a society we haven’t learned basic, interpersonal skills—how to nurture each other. In ministers’ marriages, however, the problem often is intensified; the minister and his wife frequently don’t feel free to establish small support groups with fellow ministers and their wives (or with others) that would give them some objectivity and help with their relationship and with the church system . . .”—D#2, page 56 (*The Christian Ministry Magazine*).

Finances

- “Sehnert attributes on-the-job stress to three basic causes: (1) no control of the work situation, (2) low pay scale, and (3) limited job training or guidelines”—D#2, page 29.

- “Mary Bouma takes a special interest in clergy divorces. She cites limited income as a possible contributing factor, and quotes from a pamphlet distributed by the United States Department of Labor which lists occupations from the highest paid on down, as evaluated by Lucille Lavender:

‘Out of 432 occupations listed, clergymen ranked 317 . . . (they) rank with the lowest-paying occupations and with unskilled labor . . . Though they rank next to the bottom economically, educationally they rank with the top-earning occupations—lawyers, college professors, engineers, managers, judges . . . Most of the 107 below their earning rank did not graduate from high school, while many did not go beyond the eighth grade’—D#2, pages 60, 61.

● “The historic motive which is the very foundation of the local churches providing housing for the ministers and their families is to free the ministers for ministry. When a given house in a particular housing allowance program becomes a deterrent to ministry, then the foundation of the clergy housing program has been violated”—D#1, page 85.

Feeling Valued Vs. De-Valued

● “The Presbyterian system does not communicate to pastors the importance of dealing with pastor-spouse problems. Presbyteries tend to say, ‘Congregations and the minister’s jobs come first, with the spouse and family coming second, third, or fourth.’ The Presbytery [conference] should emphasize that ‘the best gift a pastor can give his congregation is a pastor’s family who love and support each other’”—D#3, page 129, an interviewee.

● “When my husband feels insecure, that his job is hanging by a string, intangible, there is a hopeless dip in our morale”—a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s wife.

● “But when I say, equal, I don’t mean ‘same as.’ I mean equal in opportunity, equal in value, equal in personhood. I mean a relationship in which neither dominates or misuses the other, where decisions are made together when it is reasonable to do so. I mean a relationship of equal

persons, not a relationship in which the partners must be carbon copies of each other. A marriage of equal persons is based on the premise that each person is unique. It flourishes on that fact. It allows both husband and wife to contribute to the union from the richness of all they are . . . And it decrees that both decide together, as people with equal say, how their marriage will be and what each will contribute. There is flexibility”—D#2, page 74, Gundry.

● “Sometimes I think it’s hard for my husband to value me—to value contributions on my part to our marriage, to his ministry, to the church, or to our children. Probably only a very secure man can value his wife and her accomplishments without feeling diminished himself. I wonder what would happen if pastors felt secure enough to unite in urging that their wives be valued by the conference as crucial to the continuance of their ministry?”—a Seventh-day Adventist pastor’s wife.

● “... most clergy and their spouses wished presbyteries [conferences] were intentionally more caring, supportive, and nurturing, while rejecting any approach that appeared to invade their private lives or threatened future career possibilities”—D#2, page 2.

● “One thousand one hundred and twenty questionnaires were sent to parish clergy and spouses of the participating denominations. Of the 499 questionnaires returned, 47 were from Presbyterian clergy and 34 were from Presbyterian clergy spouses. “From the total responses, the Inter-church Task Force reported ‘a significant level of unmet needs for counseling services to clergy/clergy families (16-18 percent, or approximately 200 families) at the present . . .’ In their report it was pointed out that ‘the felt need of clergy/clergy families for support/

care is significantly greater (32-64 percent) than for counseling . . .’”—D#2, page 68.

● “The pastors and spouses in this study had several reasons for choosing to avoid an Executive Presbyter as a counselor for personal problems. The principal one is that person’s strategic role when it comes to moving. One spouse articulated another fear hinted at by others: ‘I would have the feeling that the interests of . . . the Executive Presbyter would be for the pastor and not the spouse; I would resent that’”—D#2, page 138.

● “Clergy divorces are reaching an all-time high, according to recent reports from all major denominations. The nature of ministry tends to limit the resources available for pastors or their spouses in seeking counsel or support for clergy marriages undergoing stress”—D#2, page 236.

● “We have Major Missions and 50 Million Funds; and we have ministers and spouses who go through trauma and who may drop out of ministry after they and the church have invested countless dollars in preparing them for ministry. We face the whole question of salvation and wholeness when people (pastors and spouses) are fractured and we don’t do much to heal them! They go on their way and drop out of sight. The whole issue of stewardship, prevention, support, and caring of pastors is crucial because everything else begins to function from there on down”—D#2, page 148, interviewee.

In Conclusion

On a practical level, is there any tangible help forthcoming for pastors’ wives to help them deal with their issues? Lip service is one thing, but real assistance is something quite different.

It is a lonely struggle for many a

woman married to a pastor. She feels alone and wrestles painfully to find answers and solutions. It would be and often is overwhelming—except for the presence of One who walks along beside her on her solitary journey.

Addendum

Additional Reading Sources dealing with some of the above issues:


Life Is Goodbye; Life Is Hello, by Alla Bozarth-Campbell, Ph.D., an Episcopal priest (Comp Care Publishers, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1986). This book is about grieving well through all kinds of loss.

The Dance of Anger, by Harriet Goldhor Lerner, Ph.D., from the Minninger Foundation (Harper & Row Publishers, 1985). A woman's guide to changing the pattern of intimate relationships.

Dual-Career Marriages, Conflict and Treatment, by D. G. Rice (New York: The Free Press, 1979).

Counseling Christian Workers, by Louis McBurney, M.D., with General Editor Gary R. Collins, Ph.D. (Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1986). This is a book about understanding the hurting Christian worker.

Inside Out, by Dr. Larry Crabb (Navpress, P.O. Box 6000, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80934, 1988). A Christian approach to dealing with the pain and disappointments in our lives.

The Addictive Personality: Roots, Rituals, and Recovery by Craig Nakken, (Hazelden Foundation, 1988). This book goes beyond the definition that limits addiction to just that of alcohol and other drugs, and deals with compulsive eaters, workaholics, sex addicts, compulsive spenders, etc., using a compassionate and insightful approach. This book is an excellent companion to the above book, *Inside Out*. 

Well-Adjusted PKs

H. B. London, Jr

A good family requires more than money in the bank, an acceptable neighborhood, or top-notch schools. Unconditional love is the cornerstone for a strong family unit, and parents must intentionally build this love into their family relationships.

Heart-wrenching letters from pastor-parents repeat a recurring theme. To them, many parenting problems seem to revolve around their fishbowl visibility in the church and community. Though ministry sometimes places constraints on families, it also offers benefits not always available to other children. The privilege list may include tight family bonds, opportunities to meet people they otherwise wouldn't, an extended family among the people of God and flexible time with their parents. Underscoring these benefits helps children realize that lack of privacy and other sacrifices will always be part of life.

Help your PKs stay well-adjusted to ministry life by:

- Pleasing the people who matter most—your spouse and kids.
- Getting your family in tune with God.
- Feeding faith to your children by telling them how God is working in the church and your family.
- Refusing to blame problems on the ministry.
- Viewing your family as a gift from God.
- Focusing on the present. When you're home, make that your priority.
- Keeping yourself in parental training for life.
- Involving your kids in ministry; avoid extremes of intense or no involvement.
- Building family into your schedule.



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Find a Need and Let Someone Else Fill It

Linda Riley

I have occasionally talked with church-going women who report that their pastor's wife "does everything." Imagine them saying this brightly, bursting with pride and admiration! Then keep imagining, because you won't see it in real life. The tone of voice and facial expression conveys more of a dejected, resigned sadness, or sometimes angry resentment.

If you are the kind of pastor's wife who does everything around the church, you might be shocked to see this kind of reaction. You're working so hard, it's all for them, they ought to be grateful, and no one volunteers for anything anyway, so who do they expect will do it all if you don't?

Poor dear, you must be tired! Put your feet up awhile and read on about why you might want to make room for more members on your church task force.

Many cooks may spoil the stew, but they make the potluck a triumph of culinary creativity.

Okay, I've never been to such a potluck either, but it *could* happen! It is true, though, that if you let women contribute their best and present it in their own way, it makes the banquet of life far more appetizing.

After all, how interesting can a one-woman show be? (Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler excepted!) I'd

rather go to a variety show. Ed Sullivan was popular for a reason, and the reason was not Ed's vivid personality or amazing abilities. All he did was showcase other people's talents, and was well-loved for his humble, in-the-background efforts. Find each person's unique talents and abilities and bring them out for all to admire.

Being perfect is not all it's cracked up to be.

As a recovering perfectionist (actually, everyone around me is recovering), I can attest to having faced a terrible dilemma. I was always trying to prove myself (with my perfect and tireless performances) to be worthy, wonderful, and most especially, lovable. But people, in general *hate* perfectionists. We make everyone else look bad. What's a perfectionist to do?

Let's get theological for a moment and recall what happened after the Fall of Man. Perfection hit the dust, along with the serpent. Ever since, everyone's been making mistakes. Things don't go right. This is now the natural state of man on earth. So stop being surprised when things don't go right. This is why the sense of humor was invented. It comes in handy. Frequently.

One time, while in my natural habitat, the kitchen, I began to gather ingredients for baking cookies. My

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sweetie-pie, Alex, tilted her little face up hopefully and asked, "Mom, do you think I could help this time?" It pierced my heart when I realized how rare it was that I let her help. I was robbing my children of the gift of experience and the pride of accomplishment. And their future spouses were going to be furious with me if I didn't get with it and teach them more than toaster oven pizza muffins and Jell-O fruity faces! Since then we've thrown away several batches of inedible experiments. Frugal gourmet that I am, I admit it's been painful. But I've trained four junior cooks who know the basics and a few show-off recipes besides. Mistakes should be welcomed as the most valuable learning tools available. Give people the chance to experience them.

Follow the leader

Some people sing that little chorus, "Make Me a Servant," and add, "And hurry up, Lord, because I'm getting behind on the ironing!"

Some pastors' wives will gladly designate jobs like nursery worker, kitchen crew, and the like, but anything with the words "director," "chairwoman," or "leader" all go to the pastor's wife.

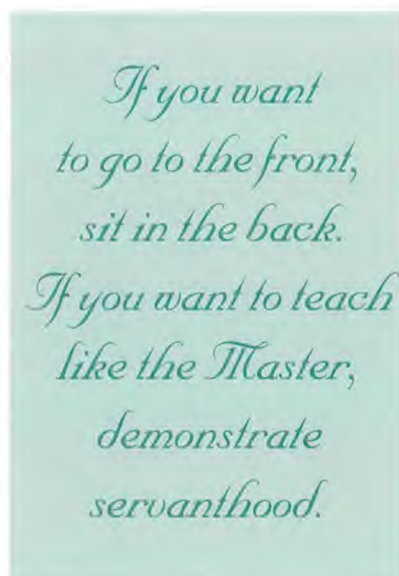
Read the Word, ladies. If you want to go to the front, sit in the back. If you want to teach like the Master, demonstrate servanthood. Sure, if Mabel heads up the women's retreat committee, the retreat won't be as great as when you do it. But everyone will enjoy the change in style, Mabel will enjoy growing, and you might enjoy the retreat instead of running around making it all happen day and night.

Your chore can be someone else's joy

Like all our single parents, Marie received a lot of help and support from the church. She wanted to give

back but found it difficult with small children and little time. We finally hit upon an idea she loved.

Jay and I like to send anniversary and birthday cards to our members, but I was having a hard time keeping up. Marie agreed to be our "card secretary," a task she can do from her own home. I provide boxes of signed cards, stamps, address labels, and occasion lists. Also, some gift enclosures, bookmarks for grown-ups, stickers and "pogs" for kids. Now the cards get mailed every week, but I only have to think about it a few times a year. People love receiving



the cards. Marie smiles more often and holds her head up higher at church.

Be an entrepreneur, not a founding director

Founding directors make a job for themselves and never let go. Entrepreneurs start things off and move on to the next challenge as soon as possible.

There are many annual events or ongoing ministries in our church


that I could rightfully claim as "my idea" if it wouldn't send up howls of protest from other members who now feel the pride of ownership. I know my work is successfully complete when a program endures and the memory of who started it disappears into obscurity.

My method consists of starting with a partner or a team and leading, while watching for my successor to emerge as we establish the work. I gradually invite my coworkers to assume more and more responsibility. The process can take several months (church newsletter editor) to several years (Kids' Church Director), depending on the size and complexity of the task. My role evolves in the following stages:

1. Trainer—"This is how I do it."
2. Encourager—"You'll come up with better ideas."
3. Helper—"I'll work beside you."
4. Supporter—"I'm still available to help you if you need anything."
5. Cheerleader—"You're doing great!"

The people who take over jobs I have started never fail to develop the program or task gloriously beyond my own capabilities.

I know this about myself: I'm better than average at any one thing. I'm not a specialist. But I am a giver and an encourager, and one thing I love to give away is a task wrapped up in a pretty silver vision. On the church volunteer roster, it appears that I do next to nothing. That's the way I like it. I want others to experience the thrill of learning, the pride of accomplishment, the satisfaction of completion, and the warmth of recognition.

I like being an entrepreneur. But don't worry. At CTM, I'm the founding director and I don't want to let go. Not until I find my successor, anyway. 

God Heard My Prayer

Mila Ramos

Mila Ramos has qualifications in a Course of Applied Art, but she never applied as a teacher as she has been working in Export/Import Offices for the past 32 years. She and her husband are active members of the Benoni Church in the vicinity of Johannesburg, South Africa, and they are the proud parents of a young pastor.



I was only 22 and full of the joys of life when I met him for the first time, incidently, at work. Unable to hide my feelings and happiness to be in love, very soon the whole family knew that there was somebody in my heart. My mother, being a very faithful Adventist, immediately visualized the negative implications of her daughter falling in love with a non-Adventist. Counseling in all forms followed, including the pastor's wife, who was my godmother and youth leader. "No," she would say, "that guy is not convenient for you. He is an outsider." (This was said in the best of intentions, based on the fact that he was a "heathen.") Nobody made it easy for me, and against my increasing love for him each day, I found continual adversity either verbal or written. "No . . . no. Just discard him at any cost. You'll find some nice guy in the church." But I knew in my heart this young man was my husband of one day. Bitter tears were cried for many painful days.

Yes, although then he didn't have the faintest idea of this Adventist faith to which I was trying to introduce him, I had a deep feeling all obstacles would be overcome, and how huge they were . . . They came in all forms. Firstly introducing him to the faith with all its richness of

principles and rules. I was particularly terrified to talk to him about the principle of tithe. Then meeting family and church members, who in the majority were skeptical about him, and this didn't escape his perception. He was too much of an honest person to try to show interest in all this just because he loved me very much and wanted to impress me. It was with tears in his eyes that he proposed to go to a faraway country to try to forget me, in case he couldn't absorb the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, as I had made it very clear to him that it was a must that my life companion would be an Adventist in order to raise our children in the same faith. However, how could I impose such a personal choice on him? This wasn't fair! Meanwhile the pressure from family and friends continued. I eventually understood that my only hope was in the Lord, and I put myself to work. I organized several prayer groups; started sending short letters to the youth leaders of different churches, even outside the country; asked all my family and friends to intercede for him; and eventually, I even had the audacity to write to the world youth leader at the General Conference, who very graciously answered me personally in a very positive manner. All of this with the purpose of the Lord touching his


heart to accept the Gospel of Christ. And I could virtually see every day the high obstacles that were before us, falling one after another, until eventually only one impossibility remained—the keeping of the Sabbath. (What? The tithe issue to my amazement, he accepted as clear water, no hiccups.)

Although we worked in the same company, the department where he was a sale controller had to operate on Saturday mornings—no special concessions for him. We saw the possibility of resignation and restarting somewhere else, but there was too much to lose as he was a key employee and the company, a stable one. However, he wanted to get baptized and eventually confirm our love by marriage. But this was taking forever. Why did the Lord help until now and no further? I got double hopes and started praying harder and egotistically, with tears of resentment. I requested the fulfillment of His promises, and the day arrived not too late, when we got the good news that the company had a new structured timetable which would enable the staff to work a few more hours weekly in order to have the Saturday free for their leisure. We both fell on our knees in deep recognition for answered prayers so vividly shown to us, not in our time, but in God's time. Now the way was open, no more obstacles to hinder our great desire to be man and wife in the Adventist faith. His baptism followed soon to seal his belief in the Adventist faith.

A couple of months later, as we very happily exchanged our vows in our festively decorated little church in that month of July, my dear godmother smiled at me with double joy and even winked her eye under the shade of her elegant hat. I knew what she meant. As for my mother, I could almost see her heart jumping out of her chest in a mixture of pride

and gratitude to the Lord. Of course, instead of the possibility of her daughter leaving the church to join a man from the world, here was a former man from the world joining the church and becoming her son-in-law.

That happened 30 years ago. We have the great privilege of being the proud parents of a young pastor in the cause of the Master, who is presently going to further his studies in order to get better preparation to put at His service. In this manner we see the last part of our desire to educate our child in the Lord's path, fulfilled to the full. We have no

regrets at all about our choice of making the Lord our continual companion. On the contrary, the challenges and adversities posed to us as life goes on can only make our endurance get a firmer grip on the Rock of our Salvation. Of course, these past 30 years weren't paved with scented rose petals all the way through; there were many bumps and thorns along the way, but then we know that Heaven is not down here yet. It is still a place beyond the galaxies of the immeasurable universe, but with the grace of the Lord, we are walking toward it. 

Innocence Is Bliss . . .

- ✿ A little child in church for the first time watched as the ushers passed the offering plates. When they neared the pew where he sat, the youngster piped up so that everyone could hear: "Don't pay for me, Daddy, I'm under five."
- ✿ A little boy was attending his first wedding. After the service, his cousin asked him, "How many women can a man marry?" "Sixteen," the boy responded. His cousin was amazed that he had an answer so quickly. "How do you know that?" "Easy," the little boy said. "All you have to do is add it up, like the pastor said: 4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer."
- ✿ A six-year-old was overheard reciting the Lord's Prayer at a church service: "And forgive us our trash passes, as we forgive those who passed trash against us."
- ✿ A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked. "Why, God tells me." "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"
- ✿ A little girl became restless as the pastor's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"
- ✿ The Sabbath School teacher asks, "Now, Johnny, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?" "No, sir," little Johnny replies, "I don't have to. My mom is a good cook."
- ✿ One pastor recalls, "After worship service a mother with a fidgety seven-year-old boy told me how she finally got her son to sit still and be quiet. About halfway through the sermon, she leaned over and whispered, 'If you don't be quiet, the pastor is going to lose his place and will have to start his sermon all over again!' It worked."



Shepherdess International News

Euro-Asia Division

✿ Galina Stele, Shepherdess Coordinator for the division, shares pictures of programs held at Zaosky Seminary for the ministry wives.



Zaosky Group



Zaosky Fellowship



Zaosky Meeting

North American Division

✿ Elizabeth Bediako, General Conference Ministerial Association, presented seminars to the pastors'

wives of Michiana Ghanaian at Andrews University in Michigan. This special weekend event featured seminars and fellowship with Mrs. Bediako.



Elizabeth speaking to the ladies in Michigan



Group of Ghanaian ladies

Northern Asia-Pacific Division

✿ Over 200 Shepherdesses met together for a bi-division Shepherdess Convention at the Grand Seasons Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Ellen Missah, outgoing Shepherdess Coordinator for the division, planned the large convention as her last official function. Special guest seminar presenters included Dr. G. T. Ng, Secretary of Southern Asia-Pacific Division; Dr. Sally Phoon, Education and Shepherdess Director; and Mrs. Sharon Cress. Other participants included Dr. Alberto Gulfan, Jr., Southern Asia-Pacific Division President; Dr. John Duroe, Southern

Asia-Pacific Division Ministerial Secretary; Mrs. Ellen Duroe; Dr. Dong Woon Im, Korean Union Ministerial Secretary; and Dr. Jairyong Lee, Northern Asia-Pacific Division Ministerial Secretary. Participants were blessed with a full schedule of seminars, discussion groups, and cultural programming. Special reports on evangelism and gospel work in the local areas was a highlight on Sabbath afternoon. The Saturday night finale featured a cultural program with each Union represented participating. Special devotional speaker Dr. Kenneth Mulzac and his wife, Belynda, a vocalist, brought spiritual food each day to the delegates.



Welcome to the Convention



Shepherdess attending Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Convention



Indonesian Shepherdesses musical group



Dr. Sally Phoon



Dr. John Duroe



The fellowship of music in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

South American Division

✿ Hundreds of Shepherdesses from the South Brazil Union met together for an AFAM Retreat near the city of Curatiba. Mrs. Meibel

Mello Guedes, AFAM Coordinator for the Union, planned the magnificent event for the clergy wives. Friendship, fellowship, nurture and continuing education were all featured as well as a cultural program Saturday night. The food and accommodations were superior and all the women left feeling appreciated and nurtured.



Mrs. Meibel Mello Guedes



South Brazil Union AFAM pastors' wives



Margarida Sarli

Elder Kalbermatter, the union president, spoke to the ladies about his personal appreciation for their mission in the church and the positive influence of his own spouse in his ministry. Mrs. Evelyn Nagel and Mrs. Raquel Arrais from the



Raquel Arrais and Evelyn Nagel

division were special featured speakers. Mrs. Margarida Sarli and Mrs. Sharon Cress from the General Conference Ministerial Association also participated.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division

✿ Dr. Sally Phoon, Shepherdess Coordinator for the Southeast Asia Union Mission planned an evening event for the ministry wives. The ladies met together at the Union office for a seminar, fellowship, and discussion with Sharon Cress, and then several wives were joined by their spouses for a delightful restaurant meal.



✿ Cambodia: Three hundred children gathered in the stadium in Kampong Cham province for a meeting of all Christian youth. The program began with a march around the stadium holding up posters with Bible verses. Then the children sang and played Christian games. Some had invited several of their Buddhist

friends to come. This ingenious Children's Event was planned by Mrs. Horng Sopheap, Shepherdess Coordinator of the Cambodia Mission. She states, "How joyful it will be to see the little children from all nations singing the song of praise to the Lord in heaven! Pray for us in Cambodia."



Mrs. Horng Sopheap



Children's meeting in Cambodia

Trans-European Division

✿ Kveta Ceplova, Shepherdess Coordinator for the Czech Republic, reports pastors' wives celebrated a weekend gathering. They exchanged information about various activities in their churches. Then a casual survey was taken asking pertinent questions about their personal

ministries and sharing ideas. One Shepherdess plays football and invites other women to come, another teaches music, one gives cooking schools, and another teaches the English language to adults. All of these activities give these clergy wives the opportunity to share their faith in Jesus.



Czech pastors' wives

General Conference Shepherdess

✿ Annual Council 2003 brought administrators spouses from several divisions to the meetings for delegate spouses. Dr. Graham Stacey, professor of psychology at Loma Linda University, was the guest speaker. Dr. Stacey presented practical topics relevant to life as the clergy spouse. In the afternoons he graciously scheduled individual counseling sessions. Mrs. Rae Lee Cooper led the



Kari Paulsen shares with the Annual Council delegates' spouses

exercises each day and Mrs. Kari Paulsen, Shepherdess sponsor, presented a closing message.



Graham Stacey



Rae Lee Cooper leads in exercise.

Inter-American Division

✿ Pastors' wives joined in the Continuing Education program in Colombia. They had a good time and it was a blessing to teachers and participants.



Pastors' wives in Colombia, South America



Women's Ministries
and
Shepherdess International



*will be sponsoring special meetings and seminars just for you during the
2005 General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri.*

“Transformed by Grace”
“Transformed by Grace for Personal Growth”
“Transformed by Grace for Daily Living”
“Transformed by Grace for Service”
“Transformed by Grace for His Glory”

*Plan now to attend
July 2005.*

Please watch for details in later issues of The Journal.