

COLOR MY WORLD
with love



Carolyn Rathbun Sutton
EDITOR

Cover design by Erika Miike
Cover design resources from
Mimacz | Dreamstime.com (map);
Dreamstime.com (women)
Inside design by Aaron Troia

Copyright © 2020 by General Conference Women's Ministries Department
Printed in the United States of America
All rights reserved

The authors assume full responsibility for the accuracy of all facts and quotations as cited in this book.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from the Amplified® Bible, Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Scriptures quotations marked CEV are from the Contemporary English Version®. Copyright © 1995 American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked GW are from GOD'S WORD. GOD'S WORD is a copyrighted work of God's Word to the Nations. Quotations are used by permission. Copyright © 1995 by God's Word to the Nations. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked GNT are from the Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition) copyright © 1992 American Bible Society. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked ISV are from *The Holy Bible: International Standard Version*. Copyright © 1995–2014 by ISV Foundation. All rights reserved internationally. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are from *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked *The Message* are taken from *The Message*, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.lockman.org

Scripture quotations marked NCV are taken from the New Century Version®. Copyright © 2005 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NET are from the New English Translation (NET Bible®), copyright ©1996–2017 by Biblical Studies Press, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION®. Copyright © 1996, 1998, 2014 Biblica. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of Biblica.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLV are taken from the New Life Version copyright © 1969 and 2003. Used by permission of Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, Ohio, 44683. All rights reserved.

Scripture texts credited to NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked RSV are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

Purchase additional copies of this book by calling toll-free 1-800-765-6955 or by visiting <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com>.

ISBN 978-0-8163-6660-6

May 2020

January 1

I Will Hold Your Right Hand

*“For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand,
Saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you.’ ”*
—Isaiah 41:13, NKJV

Last night, New Year’s Eve, I experienced a spiritually high evening in Zion. Our church family gathered to reflect on the blessings of the old year and welcome and celebrate the new year with a Communion service. My handbell choir played two songs. It was evident from the response that the music blessed the congregation. To God we give all glory!

The pastor shared a profound message before we separated for the ordinance of humility, where we washed one another’s feet and prayed with one another. The retired pastors, along with current pastors and elders, walked down the middle aisle of the beautifully decorated sanctuary holding lit red candles. The atmosphere was heavenly. Surely, the presence of God was in the place. After the Communion service, a visiting choral group, Heaven’s Song, presented an inspiring and heart-warming concert. The music and words deeply ministered to us.

One of the singers shared her personal testimony of God’s healing. She mentioned that two years ago, she had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma. Such heart-shattering news can have a devastating and debilitating effect on a person, but God was with her in her dark valley experience and upheld and restored her body. She stated that people from around the world prayed for her and how the prayers of the saints encouraged and strengthened her during her painful journey. From this awful experience has come a profound testimony that ministered to and touched the hearts of our church family. She encouraged us to trust God and not be afraid, to trust Him because His promises are sure and true. He will hold your right hand and will never leave you nor forsake you. We can count on Him to be with us through every dark valley.

As we begin this new year, we don’t know what the future holds for our families or us. No one is exempt from heartache and pain, sickness or suffering. Yet we pray that whatever comes our way, we will remain unwavering and unmovable as we hold tenaciously to the strong arms of our loving heavenly Father and claim this precious promise: “For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’ ” (Isaiah 41:13, NKJV).

Shirley C. Iheanacho

Maker of Mighty Things

*God thundereth marvellously with his voice;
great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

—Job 37:5, KJV

Fear is a normal part of life for all of us, especially for young children. It tends to start when we try something new, something that we've never experienced before, something that is an unknown. During childhood, we develop a fear of certain things like darkness, strangers, monsters, being alone, and separation.

When I was a kid, I was fearful of thunder. One night, Dad was away from our home, and my mom and I were alone. At midnight, I was startled to hear waves of booming, crashing, cracking, and ground-shaking thunder rumbling overhead. It was a very deafening and frightening experience. With every cracking boom, the lightning's crooked smile became a little wider. The lightning seemed to slice the air as if the very heavens might split apart. I held my mother tightly and started to sob bitterly. I can never forget the prayer she uttered that lonely night. She whispered, "Lord, we are cold and frightened, and the night is encroaching, quickly adding to the gloom. Please stop this oppressive, booming thunder. Please help us. Amen." The moment she said, "Amen," the thunder stopped. We slept peacefully for the rest of that night.

That night, I realized that nature is at God's command. Sometimes nature is predictable and structured. Trees shed their leaves in autumn. Birds migrate at certain times of the year. All of creation functions according to a plan set by God. I was happy that night that I worship a God who is able to still the storms.

I am humbled by the thought that if God has a good plan for every plant, bird, and animal, how much more does He have good plans for those who are made in His image? It is enough to know our mighty God has a plan, and He never abandons His children. His eye is on the sparrow, and I am assured of the fact that He watches me.

Dear Father, You are filled with meekness and majesty in perfect harmony, and You are the Lord of eternity. We kneel in humility before You. Help us understand that You are the Alpha and Omega of our lives.

Esther Synthia Murali

January 3

Separation

*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!*
—Revelation 5:12, NKJV

I entered the supermarket with my children. “This is going to be quick, guys. We have fifteen minutes.” I sent my son and daughter down the aisle to get snacks. Two aisles later, they met up with me. They trailed behind as I quickly moved up one aisle and down the next. The children kept up—or so I thought.

Moving into the next aisle, I thought that my son was right behind me. When I realized that he wasn't, I told my daughter to look for him. She came back empty-handed. I thought, *Keep moving; he'll catch up with us.* I arrived at the checkout line—still, no son. I told my daughter to wait with the shopping cart while I went to look for him. Up and down each aisle I went. As I came back up the aisle, I heard over the store's loudspeaker, “Would Dana please come to the front. Your child is waiting for you.” When I reached the front of the store, there my son stood with the floor manager. Guyen held two bags of popcorn. He had been right behind me until he stopped to get the popcorn without telling me. Then he went bravely to the front of the store to tell the manager his mommy's name.

As you can imagine, he was very upset about being separated from his mother. Why wouldn't he be? Of course, what was only a few minutes of confusion to us seemed like a lifetime to my son.

As I thought about this experience, I remembered that God endured separation as well. He was separated from His Son when He sent Him to earth to be born as our Savior. Then God the Father was again separated from His Son when His Only Begotten gave His life for us. The Son experienced the pain of separation as well. Ellen White wrote, “He who had been one with God, felt in His soul the awful separation that sin makes between God and man.”*

There is a happy ending. Our physical separation from God will soon end. He is coming back to take us home with Him forever. No more tears of pain. I can't wait!

Dana M. Bassett Bean

* Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald®, 1956), 13.

Pray for Forgiveness

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

—Matthew 6:12, KJV

Unforgiveness is a disease that can be healed only through our Lord and Savior. Sometimes we allow unforgiveness to manifest itself through our entire being. It festers so rapidly we often fail to recognize the symptoms. Symptoms may begin with depression or a headache. And the longer we hold on to unforgiveness, the more serious the symptoms—even to the point of separating us from God.

The Bible clearly states, “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25, 26, KJV). This means that if my probation closes and I haven’t forgiven those that have hurt me or if I haven’t confessed or repented of my sins, I could be lost eternally.

Yet God also promises that “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NKJV). Unforgiveness is a deadly poison that affects our social, physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. It is often said that a little of something—taken in moderation—will not hurt you. I strongly disagree. A little poison taken in moderation over a period of time can kill you.

It is impossible to forgive on our own. We need God’s help. He is the antidote for unforgiveness. Neither medication nor treatment can heal or alleviate unforgiveness. God is the only one that is able to deliver us. Take your hurt to Him. Confess your sins to your heavenly Father. Repent of them, for He is willing and able to deliver you. He is the greatest Physician in the universe. Nothing is too difficult for Him. He will also ease our pain and make it easier for us to forgive those that have hurt us.

Remember, once we forgive, we can be forgiven. Sin separates us from God. My prayer today is that nothing will come between our souls and our Savior. I pray that we will all spend eternity with Him.

Cora A. Walker

I Want to Know!

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in?
And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?
And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*
—Romans 10:14, 15, NIV

As my husband and I concluded the process for the sale of our home with our real estate agent, we signed the papers and took a deep breath.

“What do you do?” our real estate agent, Lori, asked me out of the blue.

“I’m what our denomination calls a Bible worker,” I said.

“What’s a Bible worker, and what do you do?” she asked.

“Though I’m just about to retire, I study the Bible with people who are interested in knowing more about it, and—”

“I want to know more about the Bible!” she interjected unexpectedly. I blinked. Rarely has an interest just dropped into my lap like that. “I became a Christian as a teenager,” she went on, “but I’ve never understood very much. I didn’t grow up in a Christian home, and I haven’t had anyone to explain things to me. I’ve been praying that someone would appear who could.”

I blinked again. The Lord was present and active in that room at that moment—His presence was obvious.

As I made Bible study arrangements for Lori with my replacement, I thought of the wonderful sequence God put into place. It includes us mere mortals so that others might find Jesus. Someone is positioned to be the conduit; that person acts when the opportunity presents; the provided-for individual hears, believes, and accepts the relationship. And then the riches of the universe are opened to them. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation are all available. The process repeats itself again and again, with each of us privileged to play our part. We can—if we choose (and we must so choose if we wish to remain in a relationship with God ourselves)—play a part in this grand design. It is one of the provisions made for our own salvation.

So let’s choose to play our part. There are many people like Lori out there. You never know when the Lord might place one in your life. For sure, you’ll want to be ready!

Carolyn K. Karlstrom

Take Courage

*But Jesus immediately said to them:
 “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”
 —Matthew 14:27, NIV*

When we traveled in England back in 1965, we saw several signs that read, “Take Courage.” *How nice, we thought, that must be a saying leftover from World War II.* Later on, we discovered that Courage was a brand of ale. We were no longer so impressed!

But to take courage itself—not the ale—has always been good advice. Courage is mentioned numerous times in the Bible. One of the first uses appears when Moses speaks to Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:6 and repeated in verse 7). As Joshua thought about the task before him and thought of the trials Moses had endured, I am sure he needed some extra courage. And he received it in verse 8: “The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” God kept telling him to be courageous. We find this in Joshua 1:6, 7, 9, and 18. As a result of Joshua’s courageous stand and leadership, when the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings heard how the Lord had been leading, they lost their courage (Joshua 5:1).

Finally, Joshua was also able to tell the people he led to be strong and courageous when they faced their enemies: “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight” (Joshua 10:25, NIV). Later, David showed a different type of courage. He wanted to build a temple to the Lord, but God sent word that he was not to do so. David could have become angry and discouraged. But instead, he prayed. And in this prayer, he said, “You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you” (1 Chronicles 17:25, NIV). Sometimes it takes courage even to pray.

When the woman who had been bleeding twelve years came to Jesus, He said: “Take heart” (Matthew 9:22, ESV). In other translations of Matthew, this appears as “be of good comfort” (KJV), “be encouraged” (NLT), and “be of good cheer” (NKJV).

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on water and thought He was a ghost, He said, “Take courage! It is I” (Matthew 14:27, NIV). He says that to us whether the danger we face is real or imagined.

Take courage—in Jesus!

Ardis Dick Stenbakken

January 7

Homeward Bound

*If I take the wings of the morning . . .
Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*
—Psalm 139:9, 10, KJV

Our grandson, Doug, recently returned home to the United States of America after teaching English in Southeast Asia. The entire family eagerly awaited his return, especially his father, Terry, who gave us periodic reports of our grandson's flight home. These reports were very meaningful and detailed since our son has personal knowledge of aviation.

His reports went something like this: "Doug departed Bangkok for a six-hour flight in a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, one of the most modern airliners flying today. . . . The flight took him over the Pacific, south of China, then up to Japan heading NE over the Pacific at a cruising altitude of 35,000 feet and forward speed of APRX. 600 MPH, flying east of the northern tip of Japan, tracked NE into the North Pacific Ocean. Aircraft passed about 550 miles south of the Kuril Islands (Russia) heading for the Bering Sea. Tracking showed the aircraft flying at 35,000 feet and pushing 596 MPH. . . . Crossing the Bering Sea, it passed 350 miles south of the Aleutian Islands. . . . Made a slow, SE arc toward DFW airport. . . . Speed remains high through 24,000 feet. . . . On final descent for runway 18. . . . His flight has reached the gate!"

With tears sliding down my cheeks, I sensed the heartfelt love and anticipation of Terry as he tracked his homeward-bound son.

Another Father is also tracking the return of His homeward-bound children. Our Father in heaven is watching with anticipation every detail of our lives. Psalm 139 reminds us that He knows of all our comings and goings. Such abundant love! Of this love, my favorite author, Ellen G. White, wrote, "All the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God."*

If I had wings and could fly to the ends of the earth, His love would follow me, and when the flight of the saved ends at the gates of heaven, He will gather us in His arms, rejoicing with joy forevermore. His children have come home!

Dottie Barnett

* Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press®, 1948), 740.

The Working Commitment

*Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;
rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.*

—Romans 12:11, 12, KJV

Picture Jerusalem in 457 B.C. Our hero, Nehemiah, has a burden to rebuild the walls of the city of David. The burden on his heart is so great that it shows on his countenance when he, a Hebrew captive and the Persian king's cupbearer, goes in to serve King Artaxerxes. The king asks the reason for his sadness, and Nehemiah offers a silent prayer and explains his problem. Because he has found favor with the king, Nehemiah is granted leave and given official letters of support and provision to take with him to begin his God-appointed task.

Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem to find a daunting task ahead of him. Not only do neighboring enemies threaten to invade, but internal dissension among the Hebrews also surfaces. Nehemiah could throw his hands up in the air and go back to the palace in Persia. Instead, he prays. With God's help, he begins the task.

The Bible says that Nehemiah assigned sections of the broken walls to various families and groups to rebuild. When threats came, the people prayed and armed themselves with swords in one hand and tools in the other. Little by little, because "the people had a mind to work," the wall was rebuilt (Nehemiah 4:6, KJV).

Likewise, we are to occupy ourselves with the building up of God's kingdom until He puts us to sleep or comes for us in clouds of glory. It is hard work because sometimes God calls us to do tasks that are, for one reason or another, downright difficult. Sometimes I want to throw my hands up in the air and say, "Enough! There is more to life than teaching people who have no interest in learning—and under less than ideal conditions."

Yet I have a choice—we each have a choice. We have the choice to (1) run away as Jonah did (Jonah 1:3); (2) make excuses as to why we are not qualified as Jeremiah first did (Jeremiah 1:6); or (3) gird our minds with prayer and the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17) to face the task with faithfulness and confidence as Nehemiah did. We can believe, as he did, that God is with us and will strengthen us to fulfill our goals. We can believe that for each task and each willing, imperfect hand, God will equip and perfect. Oh, that the world had more Nehemiahs!

Greta Michelle Joachim-Fox-Dyett

Could You Have Gone There?

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood,
but against principalities, against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this age,
against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*
—Ephesians 6:12, NKJV

Before moving to our new pastorate, certain ladies approached me who had previously resided in the pastorate to which we were relocating. “Tell your husband he should object to moving to that pastorate,” they said. “It is located in an area where the occult is practiced. Wizardry runs rampant! Under those conditions, you would experience much trouble from people who practice magic.” I reflected that those who do not have a personal relationship with the living God have cause to fear witchcraft while those who walk with God need not fear.

Most certainly, I had to inform my husband about the women’s concerns for us. When I told him of the women’s suggestion that he reconsider making the transfer, he adamantly replied, “The Lord, whom I believe in and serve, has a divine power that far surpasses any kind of occult practice. He will protect us from any magical powers!”

During our second year in the new pastorate, a man (reputed to be chief of the wizards) asked my husband a question: “Pastor, if you underwent severe suffering, wouldn’t you look for help from those who practice magic?”

My husband replied, “Should I, or one of my family members, experience great suffering—even to the point of death—I would neither seek help from magic nor abandon my dependence upon the Lord.” That man laughed and asked my husband to confirm his words.

A few days later, our firstborn son, nearly four years old, was suddenly taken ill with a strange sickness. We rushed him to our mission’s hospital that night. For three days, he was treated for chronic malaria, but without any change. On the evening of the third day, our crying child appeared to be suffering to the point of death. My husband prayed, “Lord, You have the power to heal this child. Please heal him if it is Your will.” Immediately our son fell asleep. When our child awoke the next morning, he was completely healed. Today our son is married with a two-year-old son of his own.

Jesus promised that with faith, nothing would be impossible (see Matthew 17:20)!

Naomi N. Otores

Self-Defense

*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long
upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

—Exodus 20:12, KJV

My mother lived with my family for twelve years. She moved to Edmonton when my twins started kindergarten. Mom remained with us during the school year and traveled during the school holidays. She was a tremendous help to me. I did not have to juggle working and running a busy household with four children and other relatives.

It was a blessing for my children to know their grandmother. Grandma tended to sick kids, gave them money, fed them, and helped them grow spiritually. As the children got older, she lovingly corrected them when they did not comply with her expectations. My children often talk about how strong their grandma was—for an old lady. Once my daughter, Cassandra, responded to my mom in a way that she did not appreciate. Mom sat and waited until Cassie was within reach and then let her know a thing or two.

Mom experienced discomfort due to congestive heart failure and fluid retention. It broke my heart to see her struggling to breathe, knowing that there was nothing I could do to ease her pain. Jokingly, I once said, “Mom, how about I just strangle you and put an end to all your struggles?” Mom told me that given the way she felt, she would almost welcome the idea. Then I asked her what I could say to the police when they arrived.

She grinned at me and said, “Just tell them you did it in self-defense.” She was eighty years old at the time. We had a good belly laugh. What a sense of humor even in her last days!

If you are caring for an elderly parent or relative, enjoy them and seize opportunities to share special moments before it is too late. You may feel overwhelmed and frustrated at times, but don’t lose heart. You are doing an honorable thing. I cherish the fond memories and experiences that my mother and I enjoyed for forty-five years. I was born on her thirty-fifth birthday, and we shared many birthdays together. Eight years ago, Mom died at the age of eighty.

I long for the day when Christ will return, and Mom and I will meet again. What a great reunion that will be! I plan to be there by God’s grace. How about you?

Sharon Long