



[Archives](#) [More Info](#)

Home :: Volume 100 :: Issue 6 :: Features

Search

Lake Union Herald



Features

[Never Give Up!](#)
[LUC Schools List](#)
[Working for the Lord](#)
[A Heart for Children](#)
[Teaching by Example](#)
[An Awesome Responsibility](#)

Building Citizens for Heaven

by Gary Burns

Born in the Philippines to humble parents, Prima Glass says, "We were poor, but I consider myself rich because I have parents who are devoted to Jesus. They introduced me to God very early in life. I still remember that my mother always told me that if things get rough, you can always turn things over to Jesus."

It's not just in troubled times that Prima finds comfort. "God and I have a special close bond. That's how close we are. He is like a very, very close friend. He is real to me—very real. I cannot explain to an atheist that there is God, but I know in my heart."

From her earliest recollection, Prima has been fascinated with the human brain. Recognizing her gift during high school, she planned to one day be a doctor—a brain surgeon. Because of her close, intimate relationship with God, she hoped to one day discover how the brain works and how God communicates with us.

As valedictorian and the recipient of a government scholarship, she entered the physical therapy program as a practical entry into medicine and to learn skills she planned to use as a missionary doctor in Africa. "God will support me," she thought.

She was well on her way to realizing her dream. Two-and-a-half years into the program, for some reason, obstacle after obstacle appeared in her path—the biggest one being that some of her classes were scheduled on Sabbath. Determined she must honor the Sabbath that had contributed so much to her close relationship with God, she decided to attend the Adventist college. Since the college offered nursing instead of physical therapy, she chose to transfer to the nursing program.

Early in the morning on the day of registration, she began the long walk from her dorm to the College of Nursing. As she left her dorm she was met by her dean who inquired, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going to the College of Nursing," Prima replied cheerfully. "I'm going to shift from physical therapy to nursing."

To her puzzlement, the dean replied, "I think it's better for you to go to the College of Education. I think you're going to be a wonderful teacher."

"What?" Prima objected. "I don't think so. I don't want to be a teacher."

With that, Prima headed across campus to the College of Nursing. Along the way she met the algebra professor. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going to the College of Nursing. I'm going to take up nursing," Prima responded with a determined voice.

"I don't think so," the professor replied matter-of-factly. "I was in your Sabbath school class last Sabbath. I think you're going to be a wonderful teacher. You have to go to the College of Education. You're going to be a teacher."

"God, are you talking to me?" Prima began a private conversation with God as she kept walking the long distance to the College of Nursing.

She met another person who asked the same question, "Where are you going?" She replied less confidently, "To the College of Nursing."

When she arrived, who should be at the door but her pastor. "Why are you here?" he asked.

"I'm going to enroll. I'm going to take up nursing." And he said, "I don't think you belong here. You have to go to the College of Education," pointing across campus. "You're going to be a wonderful teacher."

She continued her conversation with her ever-present companion, "Okay, God, I finally got your message. You want me to be a teacher."

Prima is now in her ninth year of teaching with no doubt in her mind. "It was very clear that God has called me to teaching ministry," she says confidently. "That's why I enjoy it so very much. I am very happy. The sense of fulfillment is priceless, because I know every day that He is with me and I'm doing His work. I'm doing exactly what He wanted me to do. That's what I feel every day. I feel really close to Jesus."

Prima is still fascinated with the brain and continues to want to learn more. She is still working with minds, not as a surgeon, but as a teacher—molding them in different ways. Working with children whose minds and learning patterns differ is no less challenging than being a brain surgeon. She uses various methods to reach different minds.

Meeting each of the children's needs in a special way creates additional work. "It is easier to just [say], 'Okay, this is what you're going to do today,' and everybody will do the same thing. But I don't think that's going to help the children."

She uses music and art and varies her lesson plans each day to meet the needs of various learning styles. Prima says, "That's the way God relates to us, so that's what I do. It's hard, I'll tell you; it's very hard, but that's the way they learn."

Preparing lesson plans for three grade levels with five or six different reading levels is a challenge, but Prima has been motivated by what happens in the lives of her students. "I see their progress, so that's my reward—they're learning. We don't just teach, the children have to learn."

At the beginning, Prima was working in her classroom nearly every day until seven or eight at night. Now, with a new baby in the home, God has helped her become more efficient and also make her own family a priority. But occasionally there is an exception—like today. Prima is preparing an area on the floor in the back of her classroom where tomorrow the children will make a solar system out of paper maché.

"I know my classroom will be in chaos," she said laughingly, "but I know they are going to learn, and I know they are going to have fun. And that's what makes it all worth [it]. So I'm going to do it."

Probably one of Prima's greatest rewards comes from realizing the transformation that is taking place in the lives of her students that is having an effect in their home. Parents have mentioned how encouraging it is to hear songs, verses from the Bible or little sayings that their children have learned at school. One parent reported that when she was feeling discouraged, her child told her, "Mom, it doesn't matter what is happening in your life if you have Jesus."

"It is the most exciting job you could ever have. I come to school in the morning groggy because I didn't have enough sleep (something to do with having a baby), but once my students come in I feel like the Energizer Bunny. Once I see them I feel like a child again. I play with them, I jump rope with them, I run with them. That's why I like teaching. I feel like a child again."

Prima also has a serious side motivated by a sense of urgency. "We're not just preparing the children here to meet the challenges here on Earth, we are preparing them for eternity. We are helping them to build a relationship with God. Nothing else matters in this world but your relationship with Jesus. I want the parents to see there is an eternal value in sending their children to a Seventh-day Adventist school, because we're not only meeting their needs for this world, we are building citizens for Heaven. I think that's the greatest investment a parent could ever have."

Gary Burns is the communication director of the Lake Union Conference.

Prima Glass teaches grades one and two at Milwaukee Seventh-day Adventist School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

[Watch Video](#)

[Download Podcast](#)

 [Print](#)  [Email to a friend](#)

Website published by [Manage Everything](#). Copyright 2003-2008 [MCM Design Studio, LLC](#). All rights reserved. Patent pending.