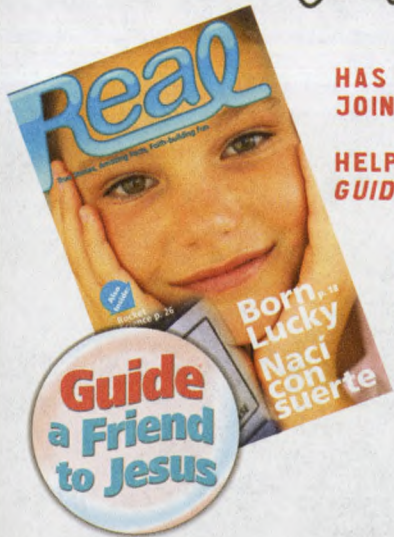


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The inspiring story of
Eva B. Dykes

All for God



Sometimes at recess Eva would line them up in a row and they'd practice songs together. *Well, maybe just one song today*, Eva thought. *The bell might ring any minute now.*

Eva had almost reached the spot she had picked out when an object on the ground grabbed her attention. Something was lying in the dirt, something colored in different shades of tan and brown. It looked soft.

As she knelt down beside the object, Eva saw that it was a bird—a pretty little delicate thing, lying so still.

"Are you hurt, little birdie?" Eva prompted. She poked at it gently with a stick, but the bird did not move. It wasn't even breathing.

Eva stood up. "Miss Barker!" she called, and her teacher came hurrying across the playground.

"What is it?" her teacher asked, but then she saw the tiny form, its soft feathers ruffling in the slight breeze.

"Oh." The teacher knelt and looked closely.

"Is it dead?" Eva breathed.

Her teacher couldn't speak at that moment, but her eyes filled with tears and answered the question for her.

By then the other children had gathered around to find out what was happening. Miss Barker stood up. "Poor little bird," she said. "Let's give him a funeral."

Tearfully teacher and students dug a tiny grave and buried the bird.

Eva was happy to have a teacher who was so kind and so interested in the natural world. Miss Barker often pointed out interesting things about trees and flowers, birds and animals. She always made learning such fun, and Eva began to notice and enjoy nature more and more. She hoped one day she could be as good a teacher as Miss Barker.

One Sunday morning Eva stood in her room studying her reflection in the mirror. "Eva, are you ready?" her mother called. "We don't want to be late. Doctor just cranked up the car!"

In response Eva bit her lip and gave her hair one final polish with the brush. She didn't want to keep her uncle waiting too long. Uncle James, a physician, had taken Eva's family to live at his house after Eva's daddy

Editors' Link

School: Love It or Hate It?

Back to school. It's a phrase that spells dread for some students, who expect to encounter mocking classmates or impossible assignments. It spells relief for others, who have suffered through a dull summer.

Whether you like or loathe school, you probably wonder sometimes, *Why do I have to do all this work?*

Some people might answer: "So you can make a lot of money someday." Others might say: "So you can have a respected position in society" or "So you can get a job you enjoy."

Ellen White gives a God-focused reply: "We should cultivate every [ability] to the highest degree of perfection, that we may do the greatest amount of good of which we are capable" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 330).

Rachel

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Eva sat on the organ bench and played with all of her heart.

had left them. Now Eva and her sisters, Flossie and Anita, along with their mother, lived with "Doctor."

Doctor had been very good to them. He often brought them little gifts. He prayed special prayers just for them, worshipped with them, and often took them to the First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C., where he was a member. Doctor paid for French lessons for Eva and her older sister. He bought a piano for the girls and paid for music lessons with the most excellent teachers he could find. He—like Eva's mother—encouraged them to read as much as possible. Eva could even borrow books from Doctor's library. And she loved reading!

"I'm almost ready, Pum-Pum," Eva called, using her favorite nickname for her mother. Eva was smoothing her church dress once again when her mother quietly opened the door and walked in.

"What's taking you so long, my daughter?"

Eva felt her mother's warm hand on her shoulder. "You're not nervous, are you?"

Eva shrugged and smiled up at her. "Maybe just a little."

Her mother studied Eva's eyes. "You've been playing the organ in churches for half of your life. What are you nervous about?"

Eva thought about the church where she'd been invited to play her music. She'd never been there, but she had heard it was huge, with high vaulted ceilings, marble floors, and hundreds and hundreds of people. She pictured herself walking up the aisle, her shoes clicking on the hard floor and echoing off the walls, with all the thousands of eyes watching her. She wasn't at all sure she would like to walk up in front of such a crowd.

"I've never played in that church before. It's a large one, isn't it? With lots of people?"

"I suppose it is, but don't let that scare you," her mother encouraged. "Remember, you're not playing for the people. You're playing for God, no matter where you are. Just do your very best, Eva, and He will take care of everything else. Always do your very best."

Eva knew her mother was right. Pum-Pum, a devout Methodist, read to her girls from the Bible each day and had taught Eva that she could trust God with everything in her life.

Eva stood straighter, determined to try.

"All right, Pum-Pum," she said.

God had given her all of her musical ability. She would use it to honor Him.

A short time later Eva sat on the organ bench in the unfamiliar church, positioned her fingers over the keys, and played with all of her heart. People sat in rapt attention as the stirring music poured forth.

"Amen!" shouted many voices when she had finished, and Eva whispered a prayer of thanks.

All for God

Chapter 2: From Student to Teacher

Look at Eva," someone taunted.
"She must be a midget."

"What are you doing here, little girl?" another said. "You should be in the first grade!"

Eva continued down the hallway in her new middle school and tried to ignore the teasing of the other children. It wasn't her fault that she was smaller and shorter than the others.

Doctor, her fatherly uncle, had told her never to pay attention to the unkind things people might say about her. "Most of the time the cruel things they say aren't even





Eva couldn't hold back a few tears.

true," he had said. Eva decided that was probably the case.

But she wanted to fit in and have friends. Instead of worrying about her social status or trying to get even with her classmates, however, Eva went about her studying as usual. The other students soon noticed that Eva always got the best grades. Maybe she wasn't such a nobody after all!

"Eva, do you think you could help me with this English assignment?" one of her new friends asked. "I don't understand the difference between an adverb and an adjective."

Eva smiled. "I'd be glad to try. Why don't we sit under that tree over there?"

Whenever anyone asked for her help, Eva was glad to assist.

In high school Eva liked all her classes, but she especially loved English and literature. She threw herself into her studies with all of her energy. It was no surprise to her family when she continued studying at Howard University and graduated with high honors in 1914.

After her college graduation, Eva accepted a teaching job at Walden University in Nashville, Tennessee. That

was a long way from her home in Washington, D.C.

"Are you sure you're ready for this, honey?" Eva's mother smoothed the collar on her daughter's woolen coat as Eva prepared to board the train that would take her to her new life.

Eva smiled to reassure her. "I don't want to leave you, Pum-Pum, or Doctor, either. I'll miss you so much." She swallowed the lump in her throat. "But I'm sure. I have to try teaching. That way I'll know if it's what I really want to do with my life."

Her mother held her close once more. "You'll write often, won't you?"

"Oh, yes, Pum-Pum. At least once a week. More often if I have time."

Eva hugged Doctor goodbye, then each of her sisters. She hurried through the farewell to keep herself from crying. She had never been away from her family before, and it was hard to leave them.

Finally Eva climbed into the segregated train car for Black people. It was an open car just behind the train's engine. The ride was miserable. The weather was hot, and Eva felt very uncomfortable in the crowded compartment. Worse yet, billows of gray smoke and coal cinders flew back from the locomotive and got into her eyes.

She tried talking with the other passengers and explained her excitement about her first teaching assignment.

"What are you going to teach?" someone asked.

"English, Latin, and literature."

Another passenger laughed. "People need to learn to take care of their families. What do they need book learning for?"

"What a waste of time!" someone else remarked. They continued to whisper and chuckle among themselves.

Already homesick, Eva couldn't hold back a few tears. Her fellow passengers' attitudes left her feeling very lonely and uncertain. Was it possible she had made a mistake?

All for God

Chapter 3: Back to School

Once Eva had arrived at Walden and settled in, she knew her decision to work at the little college had not been a mistake.

Walden University had been started by Methodist missionaries in the 1860s right after the Emancipation Proclamation, when freed slaves were most eager for education. The former slaves knew it was the fastest way to a better life for themselves and their families.

Now, 50 years later, Eva discovered students who were as





Eva formed a special friendship with a Chinese student.

hungry to learn as she was to teach them. By the time her first year had ended, Eva was sure that she wanted to continue teaching. But first she wanted more education. She wanted to reach higher and be the finest teacher she could possibly become.

"You should go to Radcliffe College," her uncle suggested when she got home.

Eva was surprised by his idea. Radcliffe was one of the most respected schools for women in the country. It was not easy to get into that school!

"Are you sure, Doctor? Radcliffe?"

"I don't see why not," her uncle said. "You're a straight-A student, and you're so intelligent. They should be happy to have you study there."

"Won't it be expensive?"

"Oh, Eva, I'll be glad to help you with that. And perhaps you'll even qualify for some scholarships."

"But . . ." Eva hesitated. "Do you think they will accept a Black student?"

"You leave it to me," Doctor said.

A few months later Eva started her studies at Radcliffe. Out of hundreds of students, there were only two other African-Americans.

Eva formed a special friendship with a young Chinese woman.

"Sio-An-Chu, would you like to eat lunch with me?" Eva asked one day.

Her Chinese friend smiled over her mathematics book. "Yes. That would be nice."

The two students often ate lunch together, studied together, and walked across the large campus together. Since they were both minority students, they shared a bond that

most of the other students at Radcliffe might not have understood. It was good to have a close friend who shared some of the same challenges.

As usual, Eva put all of her effort into her studies. She was just adjusting to her new school when she received a telegram from her family. "Flossie very sick," it read. "Come home."

Eva was worried by the message. Her sister had always been healthy and energetic. What could have happened to her?

Talents, Big and Small

Eva excelled in her schoolwork, had outstanding musical ability, and went on to hold a prestigious job. But what if you're not as smart and talented as Eva? You can still be a success in God's eyes. "However small your talent, God has a place for it. That one talent, wisely used, will accomplish its appointed work" (Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 360).

All for God

Chapter 4: A New Faith

Eva hurried back to Washington, D.C. When she got to her uncle's house, the sight of her sister in bed in terrible pain brought tears to her eyes.

"You're hurting really badly, aren't you?" Eva asked as she squeezed her older sister's hand.

Flossie was too sick to even answer her, but Eva could see the agony in her eyes.





“Flossie is terribly ill.”

Eva was frightened. “Pum-Pum, where is Doctor?” she asked her mother.

Pum-Pum looked equally terrified. “He had to leave for a while. I’m not sure when he will be back.”

“Flossie is terribly ill,” Eva said.

“She must have gotten worse since he left. Please send for him.”

However, by the time her physician uncle returned, it was too late. Flossie had died.

Eva was horrified and heartbroken. How could her young, intelligent, beautiful sister, only a few years older than she, be dead? And they didn’t even know what had killed her.

Eva, her mother, and her remaining sister felt crushed. Doctor tried to cheer them, but Eva knew his heart was heavy, too.

At family worship times, however, he began to explain to Eva, Anita, and their mother what the Bible says about what happens when people die. It was different from what they believed as Methodists. But Doctor used Bible verses to back up his words.

“Even our Lord referred to death as a sleep,” he explained. “See here, in John 11, He says, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up’” (verse 11).

Eva liked the verses about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable,

and we will be changed” (verses 51, 52). Sometime in the future Jesus was going to wake up Flossie, and she would never be sick again!

Eva decided her uncle’s way of thinking made a lot of sense. She could see that it came right from the Bible.

She had gone to an Adventist church with her uncle since she was very small, and she believed that the Adventist teachings were true. Her uncle had invited her to join the church. But even though she loved him and wanted to please him, she wasn’t quite ready to make that kind of commitment.

Back at Radcliffe, Eva continued her studies, earning a second bachelor’s degree and then a master’s degree.

“Eva, we would love to have you work here,” the principal of her old high school told her after she graduated. Eva was happy to accept the offer. She had liked her high school and wanted to help the students in the same way her teachers had helped her.

“We’re so proud of you, Eva,” her uncle told her. “You’ve come so far, and you’ve got a good job. But there’s no reason you shouldn’t continue your education.”

Eva agreed with him. And so, while still teaching, Eva began working on her Ph.D. degree at Radcliffe.

One day Doctor invited Eva and her mother to go to some meetings sponsored by his church. God had been working on Eva’s heart, and she decided to go with him. Her mother also attended.

“I want to be baptized,” Eva eventually decided, and she joined the Adventist Church.

Eva wasn’t sure whether her new religion would cause problems at work. Her coworkers would probably think she had lost her mind. She could handle that, but what would happen when she told her boss she could not attend the required meetings on Friday nights and Sabbaths? Would she lose her job?

Chapter 5: Eva the Trailblazer

Eva decided that even if it meant losing her teaching position, she wasn't going to back down from her beliefs.

She had studied God's Word for herself.

"I know the Sabbath is God's holy day," she said, "or I wouldn't be keeping it."

When she returned to work, Eva went to see her boss. "I'm a Seventh-day Adventist now. I cannot attend meetings on Friday nights or Saturdays any longer," she told him.

"I see," the man said. "Well, then, we'll have to do something about that."

What he did was change the weekly faculty meetings to a different day! And Eva was allowed to meet with parents



Witnessing on the Job

"Good morning, Dr. Dykes. What's the good news for today?" one of Eva's fellow professors at Howard University greeted her one day.

Without thinking, Eva replied, "Saturday is the seventh-day Sabbath. Why don't you keep it?"

Eva never guessed what an impact her offhanded remark would make. Many years later she ran into the man at camp meeting! "That greeting of yours caused me to think," he told her. "Now I'm a Seventh-day Adventist!"

whenever she could schedule it, instead of on Friday nights.

As an Adventist, Eva found a new use for her musical talents. Though she sometimes worked as a professional accompanist for well-known singers and violinists in Washington, D.C., she was just as happy to sit outdoors and play simple Christmas carols on a portable organ to help raise funds in her church's Ingathering program.

In 1921 Eva B. Dykes—a woman whose grandparents had been freed from slavery—became the first African-American woman in the *world* to complete all the requirements to earn a Ph.D. degree. (Two other African-American women completed their Ph.D. work shortly after Eva but actually received their degrees first because their graduations were held earlier.) Now Eva had earned a total of five scholarships while at Radcliffe College, and she graduated with high honors.

Hello, Dr. Dykes!" her family greeted her when she returned home after her graduation. Eva was happy to have earned such a degree, but she knew there was a purpose for it beyond gaining recognition for herself. She must use it all—her education, her knowledge, her expertise—to honor the One who had given her every talent and ability. It was a big responsibility.

Should I teach in a Christian school? Eva wondered. She asked her uncle for advice.

"You can be a witness for God anywhere," he reminded her. "You don't necessarily have to teach in a Christian school. Just let your light shine wherever you are."

An offer came to teach at Howard University, Eva's former school.

"But I cannot work on the Sabbath under any circumstances," she told the president of the university.

"We can't hire her," another faculty member said.

"She's inflexible and difficult to work with."

But the president had a different opinion. "Dr. Dykes is a fine Christian person who stands up for what she believes. And she is an outstanding teacher. I don't think we can do without her." Eva got the job.

Eva taught at Howard University for 15 years. During that time other schools offered her jobs. Oakwood College, an Adventist school in Alabama for Black young people, was one of the schools that invited Eva to come and teach.

"I feel that God is calling me to work at Oakwood," Eva told her boss in 1944.

The Howard University president respected and admired Eva greatly. She was a highly valued professor. "Won't you please change your mind?" he begged, but Eva's decision was already made.

"We can't accept your resignation," he decided. "You'll still be a member of the faculty, Eva, and you'll be on indefinite tenure." That meant that Eva could return to teach at Howard University any time she wished.

Eva packed up her things, and she and the now elderly Pum-Pum rode the train from Washington, D.C., to Huntsville, Alabama.

In those days Oakwood College was small and did not have much money. The buildings were old and needed repairs.

"We can pay you only \$41 a week," Eva had been told. "You'll have to pay rent and other expenses out of that." This was much less money than she had been making at the university. In fact, taking the job was a great financial sacrifice for her, but she wasn't worried. She knew that God would take care of her.



Chapter 6: Tough Teacher

With her usual enthusiasm Eva began her new job. At first it was difficult to know how to begin. So many changes were needed!

The students at Oakwood College were different from the students Eva had taught at Howard University. Many of them came from poor, uneducated families. Some came from inner-city ghettos. Most had never had a chance to learn to speak and write properly.

Eva considered this. She could have made her English classes a little easier, but she knew if she did that, her students would never reach their full potential. Their lack of learning would always be a handicap to them. It would be harder for them to get the best jobs. They would never be





able to get into good universities if they wanted to further their education.

No, she thought, I won't lower my standards just to make my students happier for a little while.

She wanted the best for them. They deserved to have the finest education she could give them, even if they didn't appreciate it at first!

"These are the requirements for my classes," she told her new students at the beginning of the semester. "First, you must do excellent work.

Second, you must speak clearly and loudly."

Her students found that it wasn't easy to live up to Dr. Dykes' high standards.

"Look at all the homework she gives us," they complained. "And she's so strict!"

"She keeps saying we're not speaking clearly or loudly enough!"

"She's asking too much. How did we get such a demanding teacher?"

All of Eva's students were getting bad grades. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn't seem to reach the mark.

At the end of the semester, Eva stood in front of the class and handed out the grades. She felt sorry for her students as they looked at their reports.

"An F!" someone hissed and turned to a friend, who also had a bright red "F" on his paper and a worried look on his face. A few tears fell as the students discovered that they had all failed English. Not one of Eva's students had earned a passing grade!

That seemed to be a turning point for them. After that shock they began to put their full effort into their English classes. Little by little Eva coaxed out their

finest work. She was so pleased when she was able to award them passing grades.

Eventually there was a lot of competition to get into Eva's English and literature classes. If students earned an "A" in her class, they knew it was something special; they knew that they had done their best work.

What else can I do to improve this school?" Eva often asked herself. Over the years she directed a choir, helped with school

newspapers, organized an English club, recruited students, sponsored many student groups and activities, and added more English and literature classes.

When she first came to Oakwood College, it was not an accredited school. That meant that the degrees earned by the students might not be accepted by other schools or by businesses where they applied for work after graduation. Eva helped the school to earn the full accreditation that it needed. Eventually, and partly because of her help, Oakwood College became a university.

Eva also helped to start other schools, such as Pine Forge Academy in Pennsylvania. She made a tremendous impact on the Adventist educational system and on the lives of thousands of young people.

Besides teaching, Eva wrote several books and hundreds of articles in scholarly journals and church magazines. She won many awards for her excellence as a student and then as a teacher.

For more than 30 years Eva loved, taught, and guided her students at Oakwood. In 1973 a new library there was dedicated to this little woman with giant abilities.

Because Eva devoted her amazing gifts to God and lived to help others, her life was an awesome and inspiring success. 🌟

Your Hidden Talent

Almost everyone has a talent that can be used to do great things. It's the power of speech! Eva helped her students cultivate this talent. Here are some tips to develop your ability:

- Practice speaking and reading clearly, in a pleasing tone of voice.
- Use kind and courteous words with your family and others.
- When you're around people who are complaining or talking about inappropriate subjects, try to change the topic.
- Watch for opportunities to talk to people about Jesus.

Want to discover more hidden talents? Read the chapter called "Talents" in Ellen White's book *Christ's Object Lessons*. Find it at www.guidemagazine.org.

Answers: A Compliment From God, p. 29; 1. Flossie. 2. Anita. 3. Bible. 4. Doctor. 5. Siu-An-Chu. 6. ft in. 7. Pum-Pum. 8. laughed. 9. family worship. 10. homework. 11. resurrection. 12. university. 13. Oakwood. 14. English. 15. giant.

A Compliment From God

BY ELLEN BAILEY

Eva B. Dykes was blessed with many talents, and she used them to bless others. Fill in the answers to the clues about Eva's life, and the letters on the shaded blanks will spell out God's description of those who use their gifts to serve Him selflessly. This description is such an honor that Jesus uses it twice, in Matthew 25:21 and 25:23. All of us who use God's gifts wisely will hear this compliment from Jesus!

Clues:

1. Eva's older sister
2. Eva's other sister
3. Her mother read from it every day.
4. The family nickname for Eva's Uncle James
5. The name of Eva's Chinese friend
6. What Eva wanted to do at her new middle school
7. Eva's nickname for her mother
8. The people on the train did this when Eva told them what subjects she taught.
9. During these times Uncle James explained what happens when people die.
10. Eva gave her students a lot of this.
11. After her sister died, Eva looked forward to this.
12. The college in Number 13 eventually became a _____.
13. The school where Eva spent more than 30 years
14. The main subject Eva taught at Number 13
15. How the story describes Eva's abilities

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____



Answers on p. 27