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# Lhorraine London Polite

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I was born and raised in Panama City, Panama. When I was 8, my family relocated to the United States of America. I have fond memories of life in Panama. During that time, family members who were living in the U.S. reported that greater opportunities were available there. As fate would have it, my father lost the job he'd had for 20 years, so my family packed up their lives and transitioned to the United States.

Starting over was not easy. Upon arriving, we were faced with the difficulties of learning a new language, finding new jobs and acclimating to a new culture. Here, my parents' previous work experience was not recognized, so finding meaningful work was difficult. My sister and I attended school but could not speak the language, could not read the texts, could not understand our teachers and could not interact effectively with classmates. We were outsiders. Resilience was a welcomed friend, while hardship was a constant foe.

After spending a few months in Brooklyn, New York, we moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where I spent the rest of my youth.

The difficulty we experienced as immigrants has fueled my family's passion to serve others; I can't remember a time when my family didn't value humanitarianism.

Today, my sister lives in Nashville, Tennessee, working with an organization that provides care for immigrant children and their families, and to those rescued from sex trafficking. My parents live in San Antonio, Texas, where my mother works for a non-profit organization that provides health services for low-income households, specializing in immigrant families, and my father is a facilities manager for another nonprofit organization. My family have dedicated their lives as champions for the cause of those who have similar stories to ours. We are professionals (I have an MBA and my sister has an MSW) whose life work is to serve "the other."

My mother gave me my name; Lorraine means "laurel-crowned." The laurel crown was a symbol of victory in antiquity, and my mother wanted to immortalize that I was born to accomplish great things and to make sure that when anyone said my name, they were acknowledging my life's calling—to be "victorious" in all that I do.

My family and I have had a dynamic spiritual journey. We were Roman Catholics when I was born; we became Baptists shortly arriving in the U.S.; then, my mother began studying the Bible for herself and noticed the Sabbath commandment. She became convicted of the Sabbath Truth, and after studying the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, she led our family to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

My personal conversion began as a student at Union College attending Allon Chapel Adventist Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, pastored by Furman Fordham II. His sermons were life-changing! The music and praise of the congregation taught me to enjoy worship. When Michael Kelly came, he brought a fresh energy and beautiful perspective on the Bible. During his pastorate, I dedicated my life to Christ. I have subsequently married a pastor, Michael Polite, and have served as a pastor's wife in two congregations.

I did not aspire to be a pastor's wife but it has been an amazing journey! I enjoy watching God move on behalf of our ministry. Michael and I both believe in the Gospel's mandate to take care of the less fortunate while advocating for the oppressed. Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit would continue to manifest himself as we seek to extend the borders of God's kingdom.



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