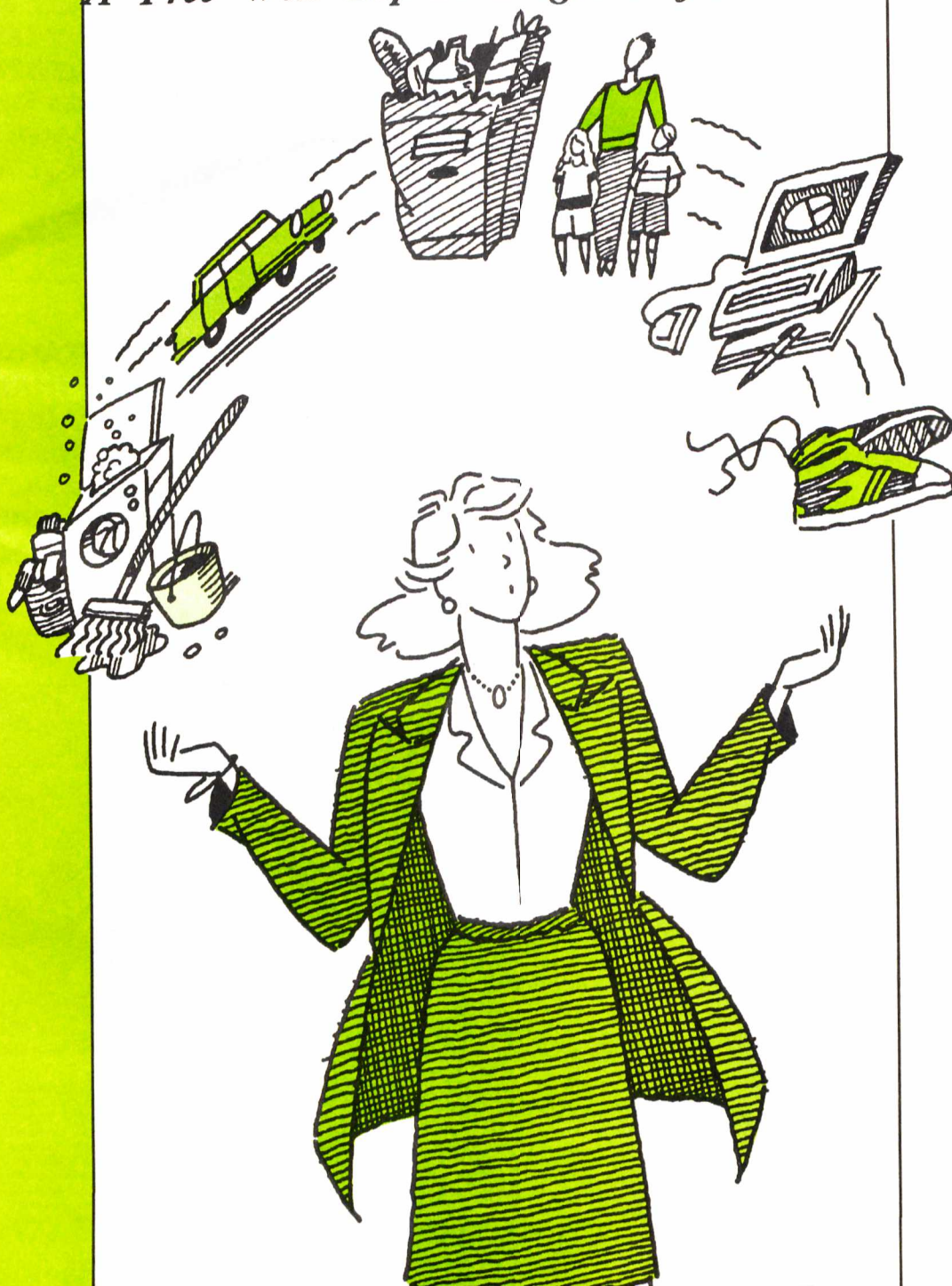


May · June 1994

CoLaborer

A Free Will Baptist Magazine for Women



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HORIZON

MELISSA RIDDLE



PRAYING FOR YOU

The handwriting on the pale blue envelope didn't look familiar, but it was real mail, so I ripped it open excitedly. Inside was a lovely card--"Thinking of You," it read--decorated with little blue and pink flowers. There was a poem of some kind, but I don't remember what it said. What I do remember is this: At the bottom were written these words, in the same unfamiliar handwriting--"You don't know who we are, but we're praying for you just the same."

The cards started coming, one every few months, my sophomore year in college. And they kept coming until I graduated. The inscriptions changed slightly, but always read "We're praying for you."

My curiosity peeked at the postmark--Asheville, North Carolina. I tried to think of who I knew from around there, the people I'd met while on drama tour, but I couldn't come up with anyone.

I analyzed the handwriting--"Looks like an older person's writing." Then "No, it really doesn't. It's got to be a woman's writing, though. Only a woman would pick out these feminine cards."

It was a mystery I never could solve. But those cards brightened even my longest days, as I struggled to pay my way through school and maintain decent grades.

Today, in the far corner of my closet sits a box labeled, "Letters." There are letters from sweethearts past. And cards from family and friends at milestones in my life. But also inside the box is a small stack of pastel envelopes, tied with a string. Yes, I've kept those anonymous cards--not because I know the sender intimately, like the others represented in the box, but because I learned a tremendous lesson from that sender.

I learned there are people who value the act of encouragement and understand it well enough to live it, consistently, without needing or wanting credit for it. These people know what so few do--that the true test of Christianity and character is what we are--and do--when nobody sees. Those of us who experience the results are, of all people, most blessed. ❖

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**USING LYDIA, ABIGAIL,
AND EUNICE AS
EXAMPLES,
LACRECIA MCFADDEN
EXAMINES THE
CHALLENGES OF WOMEN'S
ROLES.**

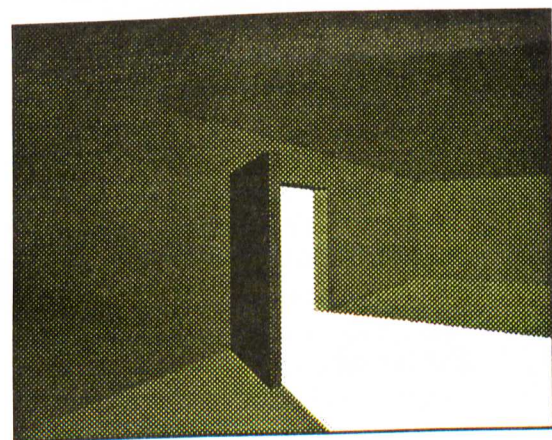
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**AN INHERITANCE
SHOULD BE MORE THAN
WHAT CAN BE PACKED
AWAY IN BOXES.
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WILL WE LEAVE FOR OUR
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**JOANN KING
SHARES THE PAIN OF
LOSING HER LIFE-MATE
AND THE JOY OF
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HURT."**

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I am
Woman,

I am
Wife,

I am
Mother

by LaCrecia McFadden

I Am Woman

"Who can find a virtuous woman?
For her price is far above rubies."
Proverbs 31:10

Her Introduction

I am woman, and I am "fearfully and wonderfully made." I was the last of God's awesome creation, and I'm unique in that God created me from man. I have distinctive features and complex emotions. My needs are simple. My love is strong. I am equipped with the instinct and strength to handle any avenue of life. I can remain single, become one with man, or nurture and protect the tiny ones who come from within. My mind is capable of storing an endless wealth of knowledge. My heart is able to reach great heights of wisdom. I am created and designed by God, and He calls me woman.

Her Example

Through circumstances of life, by choice, or by death, many women are on their own. **Lydia was such a woman.** She was intelligent, enthusiastic, and an exceptional woman of her day. Lydia was a merchant of dyed cloth--a very prosperous business woman. After her conversion, she submitted herself and all she had to Christ.

Lydia was also a successful Christian. Her priorities were "Christ first," and everything else, including her business, after Him. She opened her home to Christians, which identified her as a believer, but she was not ashamed or even afraid to do so. When Paul and Silas were released from prison, Lydia considered it an honor to take care of these wounded servants. The Lord blessed Lydia for her commitment to Him: Her life, her home, and her business flourished with success.

Her Commission

If you are single, divorced, or widowed, the Lord has a special work for you. Meet with Him daily, yield to His power, and He will make you an instrument of service. Be strong, enthusiastic--a woman of purpose. Remember Lydia.

I Am Wife

"Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord." Proverbs 18:22

Her Introduction

I am wife and helpmeet to that special man who whisked my heart into his. We are one: living, working, praying, and worship-

ping together. I am learning daily to share, understand, and enter into his protective care. My love for him engulfs our lives. I purpose in my heart to help him and make earnest efforts to ensure his success. In times of disagreement, I must bury myself to resurrect solutions. I enjoy our chats and walks together. When he is gone, I feel alone and look forward to his homecoming. I need the feeling of comfort I get when he holds me in his arms. I love the ecstasy we share when we are together as husband and wife. I am his life-mate, his companion, his best friend. I am his wife.

Her Example

For one reason or another, a wife may find herself unequally yoked with an evil husband. **Such was the case with Abigail.** Nabal definitely did not deserve the brilliant, beautiful, and loving wife he had in Abigail. Her loyalty and devotion to him proved her sacred attitude toward marriage. She risked her own life to save Nabal and all his household. When Nabal refused to supply the provisions asked of him by King David, Abigail approached the King in humility and kindness, hoping she could change his heart. When she made peace with him, Abigail returned to her husband, which was a true act of devotion to her marriage and commitment to Nabal. She waited till morning to tell a sober husband the sobering news of his deliverance from David's sword. The news caused Nabal's death.

Abigail displayed the qualities of a virtuous wife, and her virtue so impressed King David that, at the news of Nabal's death, he sent for

Abigail to be his wife.

Her Commission

If you are a wife, the Lord has a special work for you. Come into His presence daily with prayer and Bible reading. Keep yourself in close communion with Him, and He will show you how to cultivate the qualities of a virtuous wife. Be a devoted wife, committed to building a strong relationship. Remember Abigail.

I Am Mother

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young."
Isaiah 40:11

Her Introduction

I am mother to my children. They rise up and call me blessed. I feed them with a hand of love, and I'm ever cleaning after busy little hands and feet. I wipe tears from their eyes with a kiss of comfort. I'm ever watchful for harm, and am ready to lay down my life for their safety. My ears are tuned to hear their life-cares and accomplishments. I stand behind them when they are doing what is right and beside them when they make mistakes. I am their spiritual teacher, the missionary of their salvation. The freedoms I surrender to be committed to their lives are an offering of blessing. Even though it hurts, I must bring their wrongdoing to right. I stand in the shadow of their mates, praying for their happiness together. I love them with all my heart. They call me mother.

Her Example

Training a child in the way of the Lord is a large responsibility.

However, **Eunice was alone in her task, for her husband was a Greek.** She committed her life to the spiritual upbringing of her son, Timothy. He knew the "Holy Scriptures" as a child, and it made him wise unto salvation. No doubt Eunice sought the help of her mother, Lois, as a strong Christian example for her son. Paul commends Eunice and Lois for their unfeigned faith. As a result of Eunice's laboring, Timothy became one of the Lord's finest servants.

Her Commission

If you are a mother, you have a special work before you. Set aside precious time each day for guidance from God's Holy Word and prayer. The Lord will direct you in the ways of a godly mother. Be a constant witness before those God has entrusted to your care. Remember Eunice.

Discussion Questions:

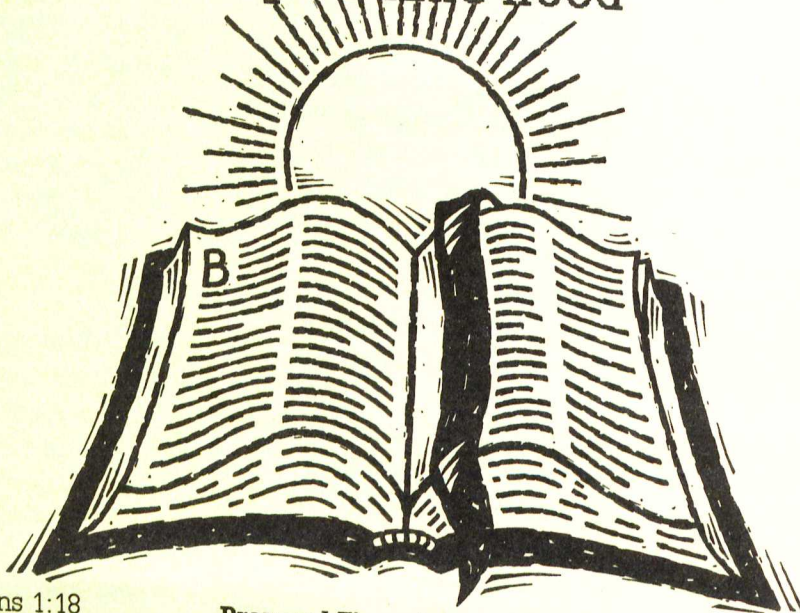
1. If the order is this--woman, wife, mother--why is it so difficult to distinguish these three in our everyday lives?
2. How does each role--woman, wife, mother--influence the other?
3. How can women, wives, and mothers shape boys and girls into godly men and women?
4. How can women help each other? ❖



LaCrecia McFaddin lives in Millport, AL, where her husband, Herman, pastors the Macedonia FWB Church. They have three sons, Luke, Joshua, and Matthew, and one daughter (in-law), Laura. LaCrecia enjoys her 1-year-old grandson, Daniel, most of all.

Back to the Basics

by Nadine Hood



Scripture: Colossians 1:18

Song: "Kneel At the Cross"

Introduction

Today we hear more and more about the need to "get back to the basics" in education. It seems that many of the modern teaching methods are not achieving good results. Kids are not learning to read well, communicate well, and basic math skills are at an all time low.

The same is true of our spiritual lives. We have become so engrossed in living, that we have pushed the basics aside. Spiritually, we are not achieving good results.

How can we stop this trend? We need to return to the basics of Prayer, Praise, and Worship, making them a part of our everyday lives.

Prayer: I Thessalonians 5:17; and I Timothy 2:8

The Secret by Ralph Spaulding Cushing is a poem that describes the importance of prayer. In it, he talks about how when he meets God in the morning, God's presence stays with him throughout the day:

*All day the presence lingered,
All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness,
O'er a very troubled sea.*

The secret Cushing knows is that "You must seek Him in the morning/If you want Him through the day!"

Prayer is the backbone of the Christian life. In times of trouble or sadness, prayer can strengthen us and give us hope. Just as a child should spend time with her father, believers should spend time communicating with their Heav-

enly Father. Without this close relationship, our relationships will not grow. Without a strong prayer-life, a Christian cannot enjoy the fellowship and protection God wants to share with us.

Our prayers should be filled with praise, love, and petition for God's help and guidance in our lives. We should also take care to pray sincerely. John Burton says it well:

*For words without the heart
The Lord will never hear;
Nor will He to those lips attend
Whose prayers are not sincere.*

We all have a secret place in our hearts. A place where no one but God knows. Because He already knows us, and all our secret places, isn't it wonderful to know we can share with Him our most private thoughts and desires.

With God, there is nothing to hide. Prayer should be an important part of our quiet time alone with God everyday. How much we enjoy sharing with Him is a good indication of how well we know Him.

Share with each other your prayer patterns, ways you make prayer an important part of your day, everyday.

Praise: Psalms 42:5, 34:1

Each day when we fellowship with God, we should begin with praise. The Bible tells us that if we don't praise Him, the rocks will cry out because He is worthy to be praised. We often spend our lives seeking the praise of others, the glory of this world, all without realizing that all the honor and glory in our lives belongs to God. For without Him, we would be nothing.

We should reflect on God's wisdom and power in our lives, on the beauty around us and on what He has done for us. A good place to begin is by looking at the beauty of nature--how can we not praise Him when we look at His marvelous creations. Then, focusing on His great love, grace, and mercy toward us, we can praise Him for our salvation and for His Son, Jesus. When we praise Him, we are empowered to serve Him more.

Praise God for three things: one from nature; one from His character; and one personal.

Worship: Psalm 138:1-2

Praise and worship are both essential to a healthy prayer-life. Samuel Miller said, "Worship is

the highest act of which man is capable. It not only stretches him beyond all the limits of his finite self to affirm the divine depth of mystery and holiness in the living and eternal God, but it opens him at the deepest level of his being to an act which unites him realistically with his fellow man." In other words, worship doesn't just define who God is to us, it defines who we are.

How do you worship God?

Discuss ways to incorporate Scripture and spiritual songs into personal worship.

Conclusion: Prayer, Praise, and Worship are the basics of the Christian life. If we really want a close relationship with God, these three are not options. They are also not duties. They are privileges--to communicate with God, sharing out burdens, worshipping, and praising Him are all honors to be treasured everyday. From this time with God, we are strengthened for all the storms of life. ❖

Nadine Hood lives in Northglenn, Colorado, and is active in her local Auxiliary.

OVER MY COFFEE CUP

BY EUNICE EDWARDS



King David sinned in numbering the people (I Chron. 21:1-8). A king listened to the lies of Satan. As a result, he made an extremely poor decision. Can we honestly point a finger at David and fail to acknowledge that we, too, are as guilty?

Satan is a liar--the father of lies (John 8:44). Why then did David listen to him? Why do we listen to him? Could it be because we think we are stronger, wiser, more able to handle him and his lies? Such reasoning is fatal. It brings God's judgment even as it did to the king.

David repented and confessed his sin, and God forgave him, but still, His righteousness demanded that judgment be carried out. He did give David a choice as to the kind of punishment he would send. David chose three days of pestilence. What a price!

Sin still costs.

It costs families tears, sleeplessness, and anguish. However, it is better to bear the cost than deny our responsibilities. Peace is priceless, and peace only comes through repentance and forgiveness from God.

A nation's peace is not without cost. America was bought with the blood of many young people in the armed services.

Freedom of religion costs. The growth of God's church has been paid for by countless lives who sacrificed to keep the church doors open. Our forefathers sacrificed their love, prayers, and dollars to maintain the church in this young nation.

Do we sacrifice anything today? Our apathy, indifference, and cold hearts must break the heart of God. How can we honestly ask God to delay His judgment? Dare we ask the full price of our nation's sins? I think not. We can only plead the blood of His Son in mercy. ❖

From Generation to Generation

by Becky Fry Gwartney



sions. Was this all her mother had left? No! Her inheritance was so much more than what could be packed in those three boxes. Heartherley goes on to describe her inheritance as "a whole warehouse, packed full of treasures."

Like that author, I've had the painful experience of sorting through my mother's things. And I must agree: My mother left me so much more than furniture, jewelry, and clothes. My mother left me a great inheritance--a blessed heritage, a godly example, a wealth of treasures that could not be bought or sold. I could spend hours talking about my mother, Myrtle May Fry, and how she taught me, by her life, about Christ's love and faithfulness. But I'd rather take this opportunity to encourage you to look at the inheritance you are leaving behind.

I'm reminded of a song by Steve Green, entitled "Find Us Faithful." The words are: "Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful. May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave lead them to believe and the lives we live inspire them to obey.

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful." Do our footprints lead others to Christ? Do our lives inspire others to obey Him? Would our devotion to Christ light anything? You see, each of us is leading someone somewhere. What inheritance are we leaving?

In Psalm 145:1-7, David is having

a praise session. Notice verse 4: "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." As parents, we are to praise God and His working in our lives so that our children will see, and their children after them. In verse 7, David says that others will talk about the memory of God's goodness. How will our children have these memories if they don't see us praising Him. Do our children know that we trust God no matter what comes our way? Do they see us spending time in His word? Do they see our lives changing as we grow more like Him.

How sad to be like the children of Israel in Judges 2:7-10. For generations, the people experienced and saw great works done by God. But another generation grew up that did not know the Lord or His works. Whose fault was this? A generation of parents who failed to instill in their children what they knew of God. They didn't talk about God's love, provision, grace, and faithfulness in front of their children. Are we doing the same? Are we keeping these treasures from our children?

Take a few minutes and, on a piece of paper, jot down some things that you want to leave behind to your children. But before you do that, think about these questions: What do you want your children to remember about you? What kind of inheritance are you giving future generations?❖



Becky Fry Gwartney, and husband, Curt, live in Desloge, MO. They have two children and are active members of Fellowship FWB, where Curt is youth pastor.

Shortly after my mother died, I read a book entitled *The Inheritance*. The author, Joyce Landorf Heartherley, told about the painful afternoon she sorted through her mother's things. After several, tear-filled hours, she collapsed on the floor and looked at the cardboard boxes containing her mother's posses-

The power of prayer in the midst of tragedy, and a God Who knows no limits.

The Brush-Fire Miracle

by Joan Filkins



It was the dry season, 1981, a time when brush fires are everywhere around Doropo, Ivory Coast. That is when the land is cleared for new crops to be planted. I was over at the hospital when I saw two boys, ages 10 and 12, who had been severely burned. One had both legs entirely bandaged, and the other had one arm burned from shoulder to hand and half his face was burned.

They had been playing, as boys do, jumping across patches of fire when one turned and accidentally jumped into the path of the second boy, causing both to fall into the fire. As I watched them, my heart was torn because the chances for survival were not good. Burns are easily infected. Even with hospital care, we didn't have what they needed: sterile conditions, facilities for skin grafting, etc.

About four the next morning, I awoke thinking about those boys, and in my spirit I heard God say, "I want you to go pray for them." "But God," I argued, "If I go over and pray for them, and they die, their families will blame you because they are heathen." I lay there wrestling over what to do. Then He replied, "Just go and pray, and leave the results up to me."

The next morning, I told Lynette Morgan what I felt God had asked me to do. She went to the hospital with me and summoned Paul, the African nurse, who could speak the Loron language. He told them what I wanted to do, and they asked me what my price was. Witch doctors demand a price for their services, so the family assumed I did too. We assured them there was no price.

I was shaky. Only one other time had I taken a step like this. Back home in Kirksville, Missouri, a lady had asked our pastor and the deacons and their wives to anoint her with oil and pray for her healing. I didn't have oil with me that day in Africa, but I quietly stood by each boy's bedside and prayed for their healing and for God be glorified.

The next days were like a rollercoaster. Two or three times, the boys were near death with pneumonia. As I passed by, the grandma motioned for me to pray again, and I did. Since the accident, she and the boy's mother had come to Lynette's sewing class and for the first time heard the Gospel.

Elaine Allen, who had worked in a burn unit in Tulsa, was now in Africa, tending to the boys. She oversaw the painful process of removing the dead, burned skin.

The boy with the lesser burn, his arm bandaged, returned to his village because his family could stay no longer. Then three to four weeks later, the second boy's family had to leave, too. We drove them back to their village, 15-20 miles away.

When we arrived, the first boy came to meet us, his bandages now covered with some kind of tree sap and leaves. It was not encouraging. Samuel gave him a shot, then we sang a song which the youngest boy, Quavanah, had enjoyed while at the hospital. Samuel shared the Gospel.

As we left I thought, "Only God can keep them alive."

Months passed into a year. One morning, I heard hands clap, and the familiar "co-co" greeting outside the door. I looked out and saw a boy with sunglasses. When I saw his badly scarred hand, I knew immediately it was the oldest boy. The glasses hid the ugly scar that had drawn the skin down from his eye.

Through an interpreter, the boy told me he just wanted to thank us for helping him. I cautiously asked about Quavanah, and he replied that Quavana was well and working in the fields. The burns had left him unable to walk, but he would sit and drag himself along.

A miracle of survival? Yes. And I have a feeling this story will go on. Someday, I pray those boys and many of their people will come to know Jesus. But I must leave the results up to mighty healing God who knows no limits. ❖

MISSIONCALL

In 1994, CoLaborer Magazine is focusing on what is often an overlooked group of Free Will Baptist missionaries: our single women. These women work hard to raise their support singlehandedly, and they face unique challenges on the field. To date, there are 11 single missionaries on 6 foreign fields, all making a difference for Christ's Kingdom.

In this interview, Alice Smith, Jalayn Martens, and Glennnda Leatherbury share with us some of their insights and experiences while serving in Ivory Coast.



Alice Smith

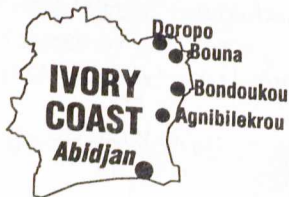


Jalayn Martens



Glennnda Leatherbury

ivory coast



WHEN did you feel God's leading you to the Ivory Coast?

Smith: He knew that I would be able to "fall in love" with the African people, and He knew there would be many avenues of service. For me, it has been primarily among the women, teens, and children.

Martens: When I was nine years old, missionaries came to our church and showed slides of their work in Africa. I can still see those pictures in my mind today. I was not raised Free Will Baptist, but I believe the Lord led me to this denomination because He wanted me to work in the Ivory Coast.

Leatherbury: I had been saved about a year when I first heard the Bryans (Ivory Coast) speak at our church in Kansas. That was the first time God spoke to my heart about the needs of

the world. During my four years at Hillsdale, I felt called to every field there is, but after I completed my nurses training, I felt God especially calling me to the ministry at Doropo.

What has been the most frustrating thing about missionary work?

Smith: I hesitate to say this, but it has been keeping up with correspondence. Writing letters is indeed a part of a missionary's ministry. I love getting letters and enjoy answering them. The problem is finding time to do it.

Martens: The language barrier. That is why I am in France studying again. I want to be able to communicate the Gospel more effectively.

Leatherbury: Seeing so many people die, a lot of whom are children. Sometimes it is because nothing can be done; other times it is because we don't have the supplies needed to help them or because they came for help too late.

Was there anything that surprised you about the African people?

Smith: Basically, Africans are like Americans--they need God. They desire to be loved and needed. They love their children and want good things for them. They want to be happy.

Leatherbury: The African culture is very open. In the villages when we walk through the market or if we're just out taking a walk, it is important to greet those we pass. Greetings are very important.

How do you handle loneliness on the field?

Smith: I've never experienced a serious, long-lasting case of loneliness because I work at not allowing it to happen. I do not have to have people around all the time. The Africans and I exchange visits regularly, and my

fellow missionaries are sensitive to my needs and include me in their families.

Martens: When I am lonely, I give it to the Lord and claim the promises given in the Word. He said He would never leave me nor forsake me.

Leatherbury: On the field, I am a part of a large family--all the missionary kids are my nieces and nephews. But when I do get lonely, I pray a lot and write my family back home and tell them I miss them. There are some special people with whom I share my feelings of loneliness, knowing they will pray with me.

Are you treated differently by the Africans because of your singleness?

Smith: Not that I am aware of.

Martens: For the most part, I am treated with respect. But there are times when the men find it hard to treat me as an equal.

Who encourages you?

Smith: My fellow missionaries, the African Christians (especially my best friend, Yiri), and those who write me from the States. I love receiving cards, church bulletins, newspaper articles, Snoopy cartoons, chewing gum, and grape Kool-Aid. When spiderwebs don't have time to form in my mailbox, then I know I'm not forgotten.

Martens: The Holy Spirit encourages me. So does my family and supporters.

Leatherbury: Several people state-side write me on a regular basis--Gina, Vel, and Rhonda. Their letters are always a source of encouragement. I wish I could stress how important letters are to us missionaries. My family also encourages me, but the greatest source of encouragement is the Lord and His Word. He is always there and ready to be my encourager.

What are some of the most exciting experiences you've had sharing the gospel in the Ivory Coast?

Smith: In late 1992, I led Marie, a teenage girl, to the Lord. Although her parents were professing Christians, they gave Marie to Muslim relatives when she was very young. She was forced to accept their religion, but she knew something was missing. She had no peace in her heart. Surprisingly, she was permitted to visit our church in Agnibilekrou. After hearing the gospel, she accepted Christ. I had the opportunity of discipling Marie for several months before coming home on furlough in June 1993. Bessie Richards recently told me that Marie had died--probably from malaria. I am so thankful that she had been saved and that I will see her in Heaven someday.

Martens: I have had a few opportunities in my essay class to witness to my professor. She gives us a choice about what to write, and I have been able to write about my calling and what Jesus means to me. I pray that the scriptures I used will speak to her.

Leatherbury: Jalayn and I recently invited a Hungarian girl from our class to share a meal with us. I was able to share with her how Christ is the only road to God. She listened and seemed to absorb what I had said. Pray that God will open the door to another conversation with her.

Have you ever been embarrassed struggling with the French language? Give a phrase you use often.

Smith: Mainly my language goof-ups happen when I am home on furlough. I often, unknowingly, switch to French when I should be speaking English. Recently, while at the doctor's office, my doctor asked me a question which required a lengthy answer. He then interrupted me to exclaim, "Wait, Alice, you just said a whole sentence in French!" I asked

him what did I say. And he said, "How should I know? It's been years since I studied French."

Martens: Using the wrong verbs on a test, I told the professor that I was not a cigarette and that I was not a garage. I was supposed to say that I do not have a cigarette and that I do not have a garage.

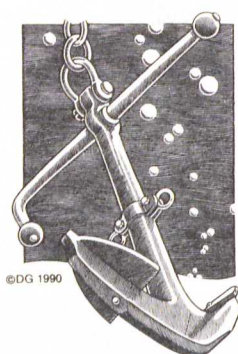
Smith: Instead of asking a waitress if she had coca-cola, I asked her if she wanted a coke. In French, you also never say "I am finished" because that means you are dead. You have to say, "I have finished." That one always gets me.

How can FWB women best pray for you?

Smith: By remembering that my needs are much like their own: I want to be faithful in Bible study and prayer; I want to be in good health; I want to have on the armor of God to withstand the attacks of Satan; I want to be known for my love toward others and be a faithful witness; and I want to have the right priorities.

Martens: Pray that I can learn to speak French correctly so I can be more effective at what God has called me.

Leatherbury: The more specifically they can pray, the better. I would encourage them to write to the missionaries and ask for specific needs. Pray for my communication skills in French, and pray for my health as I work in the hospital at Doropo. ❖



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Surveying Esther:

An Example of Willingness and Commitment

Study Text: The Book of Esther

I. Going Stale

Esther had always been told that this was not her homeland. Her family had been deported into a distant country. Mordecai and other Jews had moved eastward to _____ and other cities in Medo-Persia. They lived in unfriendly ghettos of a foreign empire.

Esther did not understand it all. Why was life so complicated? She was thankful that she still had Mordecai, her older _____. He had raised her after her parents died. He had accepted her as his own daughter. In love, he provided a father, a home, the many necessities of life, and taught her of his faith. She had been brought up in the ways of the Lord.

Esther considered herself an ordinary person, nothing special. But the Lord doesn't always call the most brilliant, prominent one to do His work. Using our upbringing or our lack of talent as excuses is the most convenient thing to do, but if we do, we risk becoming stale.

Consider This:

- [1] What can we do to keep from becoming stale?
- [2] List some verses that describe how God uses "less than perfect" people.

II. Never Giving Up

Esther must have been terrified when she was taken away from her uncle and her home. The king, who was searching for a new wife had all the prospects brought to the palace to go through training and _____ months of beauty treatments. Esther was a young maiden, not at all familiar with the lifestyle of a harem. She must have felt so overwhelmed and so out of place.

However hopeless it looked for her, Esther knew the Lord had not forgotten her. She was put under

the care of _____, keeper of the women. Esther gained favor with him. He showed kindness to her, giving her everything she needed, _____ maids, and the best place in the harem.

Eventually, Esther's turn came to go before the king. Never again would she be sent to the king unless he was so pleased with her that he called her by name.

Consider This:

- [1] When we are put in uncomfortable situations, how do we normally respond?
- [2] Read I Corinthians 10:13, Romans 5:3, and I Peter 5:10. What do these verses have in common?

III. The Response

The search for a queen may have lasted around _____ years. Because the king loved Esther more than the others in the harem, she was made queen.

It was a most unusual position for Esther to find herself in. She still had not revealed her nationality. She continued to follow the word of Mordecai. He had taught her well.

King _____ appointed an evil Prime Minister, _____, who plotted to destroy all Jews living in the Persian empire. Mordecai went into mourning after hearing of the decree of death. He urged Esther to go to the King and plead mercy for her people. To walk into the king's inner court uninvited could bring instant death, unless he held out the golden scepter.

The request of Mordecai was a dangerous one. Could she afford to make excuses? Could she close her eyes and turn her back on her people? Mordecai's words brought reality into focus (4:13-14). If she were silent, God would send deliverance for the Jews from elsewhere. If not, she would not escape the death decree just because she lived in the house of the King.

The question lingered in her mind: had she come into this position for such a time as this?

Consider This:

- [1] Have you ever been in a situation where it was clear that God had put you there for just that moment?
- [2] Look for Psalms that tell of the strength of the Lord. How many can you find in five minutes?
- [3] What are some of the well-worn excuses people give not to do the right thing when their backs are against the wall?

Surrender

After _____ days of fasting, Esther entered the King's inner court uninvited. He was pleased to see her and held out the golden scepter. He asked for her request and offered her up to half the kingdom. Proverbs 21:1 tells us that "The king's _____ is in the _____ of the Lord." But the decree for the massacre could not be reversed. The king ordered the Jews to defend themselves. Esther was used, however, to help save the Jewish race from annihilation. By surrendering to God's plan for her, Esther had the strength and inner peace to do His will.

Consider This:

- [1] What would have happened if Esther had become depressed or rebellious against the Lord after having been taken to the harem?
- [2] How does Romans 8:28 relate to Esther's story?
- [3] What might have happened if Esther had turned her back on her faith once she became queen?

Conclusion

Are we willing, as Esther was, to yield ourselves in faith as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:11-14)? There is unlimited potential in even the most common person, if surrendered to God's will. As we give ourselves to Him completely and willingly, He can use us to accomplish great things. Just as Esther never dreamed she would influence Ezra or Nehemiah's ministries, or the rebuilding of Jerusalem, there is no end to how God can use us to influence future generations for Christ. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will be faithful to complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). ❖



Janero Stokes and her husband, Ed, are active in the Maccabine FWB Church in Macclesfield, NC. She stays busy as a mother of three, a Sunday school teacher, and as Mission Study chair of her Auxiliary.

tender thoughts

by pearl mitchell

Who are you? If someone asked that question, what would be your answer? Would it be, "I am Joe's wife," or "Annie's mother," or "I'm a secretary," or "I'm a tennis player," or "I'm a child of God"?

For many years, I meandered along with no real identity of my own, drawing my self-worth from my family and children. I never really considered myself as an individual--a valuable human being with strength and purpose of my own in this world.

Family, friends, and jobs are important, and our identities our often wrapped up in these relationships. But there comes a time when we all need to determine our own personal value, our own self-image. "To thine own self be true," as Shakespeare put it. To be true, we have to understand our own value.

To understand your own value as a person, try this exercise. Sit down and compare yourself to a common everyday item. Be truthful. Here are some I came up with:

I am me--like soft, kid gloves, each finger delicately filled with love, excepting the thumbs, I do admit, they hold some malice, just a bit.

I am me--a fine-tuned car. Very high mileage, but still to go far, with leaks in my oil and transmiss, but really nothing that can't be fixed.

I am me--a pen in hand, trying to bridge a communication span, to touch a heart, a soul, a mind, to pass my feelings through the vine of print and ink and words so plain, the message flows into the vein.

I am me--a towering tree--in the after-growth of years, roots in the ground, but able to bend, and sway with the wind in order to stand, still bearing fruit and offering shade to the oppressed.

I am me--a ship aground--no longer sailing, with the hulk serving a different purpose than that of a ship's cabin, with the sails used for bandages for injured soldiers--no longer tooting my own horn, but still searching for the lighthouse.

I am me--Child of God--loved for myself and nothing else.

Corny, isn't it? And it borders on the universe of pretend, that language of childhood that preserves our youth. But a healthy self-image is important. How do you see yourself? Tell me, "Who are you?" ❖

Pearl Mitchell is an elementary school teacher living in Columbus, GA, and the mother of three grown children.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A 32-year old downhill skier from Germany had prepared most of his life for the 1994 Winter Olympics. He

had competed in the Olympics before, but this would be his last chance for a medal. Poised and positioned, he was ready for the jump. The signal buzzed 5-4-3-2- and on the 1, he lifted himself out of the gate for the downhill run of his life.

But as he jumped out, his right ski flew off behind him, disqualifying him from the race. His career was over. No medal. Not even a chance!

Have you ever worked hard for something only to have no chance at getting it? Hebrews 11 recounts the lives of faithful saints throughout history who, although they never experienced triumph and success, continued to work and live righteously in anticipation of all that had been promised them. The first and last verses of chapter 11 provide great hope for those of us who have had plans that failed:

Hebrews 11: 1, 40

11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

11:40 God had planned something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (NIV) ♦

Poet's Corner

Night Vigil

Effie Gene Stapleton
Danville, Arkansas

The night's dark, Lord.
Everything's quiet except
For the croaking of the frogs,
As they think it's springtime.
In my heart there's a loneliness,
Lord,
Unexplained, yet definitely a
longing.
A longing, Lord, to understand
your works,
And how you made everything so
perfect.

I peek through the window shade,
Oh, what a sight!
Those stars look like windows,
They are windows in heaven,
And that's the light I'm seeing,
Your Brightness.
Is that the family gathered around
you, Lord?
Happy and free from care,
Is Mamma singing
As Daddy watches tenderly.
That gives me consolation,
And a greater determination, Lord,
To join them over there.

It's still awfully quiet, Lord,
Everyone in bed asleep,
Just looking at your Heaven and
listening
Has brought me comfort,
So goodnight, dear Jesus,
I'm ready to go to sleep.

Second Chance

Vicki Turner
Cartersville, Missouri

God gave me a second chance
To make my life worthwhile,
To discard all the worldly treasures
and burdens.
To open my self and my heart up
Deeper than I ever had before.
To become a whole person
Changed and changing
To trust--really trust--
And in the night when I awake
To find no darkness.
I take comfort in knowing
Jesus had been there all along.

A Servant

Nancy Souer
Burnsville, Minnesota

You may not know my name,
but you know what I do
is because of God's grace.

I worked in the desert
caring for the sick
and feeding the poor.

I have served in the wilderness,
teaching the oppressed
and loving the lost.

I do it not for fortune or fame,
but rather so others will know the
Lord's name.

For my work is in
the mission field of life,
joyfully pointing others to Christ. ♦



Springboard:

Innovative Ideas for WNAC Officers

Coordinator

Now that Spring has sprung, FWB women's groups are busy planning for the months' activities: graduations, Mother's Day, Father's Day, weddings, showers, banquets, and other times of fellowship. Your church may have annual celebrations or special emphases to commemorate these special times. Your group can enhance these occasions by getting involved. If your church plans something, find out what you can do to contribute. If the women are usually in charge of these events, go the extra mile this year, planning well in advance, to make the occasions memorable.

Consider the following as ideas to keep your women's meetings on track during the spring and summer months: a Saturday picnic meeting at a park or in someone's backyard; a Church Kitchen cleanup meeting where, after the devotion/program, many hands make light work and great fellowship; a mini-retreat a few miles out of town or a sleep-over at someone's house; a Wednesday night prayer meeting where the group presents its program to the entire church and shares prayer needs of our missionaries. These ideas may seem like too far out of the norm, but a little spice can go a long way in keeping your women interested and active during the "big excuse" months.

Asst. Coordinator

More than likely, there is a banquet in your future. The Mother/Daughter banquet is an annual event that many women's groups sponsor in our churches. *Fresh Air*, Volume 10 of the WNAC playbooks, contains a wonderful mother's day play entitled, "The Very First Time." The cost for the playbook is \$3, which includes six other plays written by FWB women. Write and request one today.

Form a committee to plan and execute the banquet, and send a personal invitation to all the women in your church. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce non-active church members and visitors to your women's group.

DEVOTION OUTLINE

Blessed Assurance

Purpose: To reassure women of God's love

Scripture: Isaiah 32:17

Song: *Blessed Assurance*, written by blind composer Fanny Crosby. It seems Mrs. Joseph Knapp played the melody for Miss Crosby and asked, "What does this tune say?" To which Fanny Crosby replied, "Why, that says 'Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!'" *Blessed Assurance* is just one of over 8,000 songs Fanny Crosby wrote in her lifetime.

Introduction: So few things in this life are certain (Give examples of stresses, problems) But we have these blessed assurances:

- I. Assurance of Christ's Resurrection (Acts 17:31)
- II. Assurance of Hope (Hebrews 6:11)
- III. Assurance of Faith (Hebrews 10:22)
- IV. Assurance of Truth (I John 3:19, 2 Timothy 3:14)

Conclusion: Give the definition of assurance from the dictionary and comment. If time permits, ask women to share how God has given them assurance in the past. Sing "Blessed Assurance" again, asking the group to concentrate on the words. Close in prayer. ♦

Publicize the WNAC Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas to be held July 18-20. Encourage as many as can to go. One hotel room can house four people. Perhaps some can share expenses, providing the opportunity for more to participate. (See the housing form in this issue of *CoLaborer*.) This year's Fellowship Banquet promises to be exciting as Lorene Miley, former missionary to Africa and retired Editor of *CoLaborer* Magazine, will be speaking. The theme is year is "The Bible: Light on the Way." The tickets are \$15 and can be ordered by writing to WNAC, P.O. Box 5002 Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Last year's banquet was a sell-out, so be sure to pre-register for the convention and get your tickets early.

SECRETARY/TREASURER

After discussing it with your Coordinator, consider putting together a quarterly financial newsletter, detailing your group's project goals and how close you are to meeting those goals. It doesn't have to be fancy, but do make it attractive and easy to understand by using simple charts. Keep it simple--one page only--and see if the church will allow you to copy it for free as a service to your group. If you know someone who can draw, ask them to help you with the art. Other items to include: value of gifts given to provision closet; thank-you notes from those who have received gifts from your group; ways to help your women be better stewards; financial needs not included in your group goals that the women may feel led to give toward; and new project ideas up for consideration.

SERVICE CHAIRMAN

Is the Provision Closet on your agenda? If not, consider having a special drive for stocking the closet. Perhaps, in honor of the high school graduates in your church, your women could donate some items specifically for use by FWB missionary kids attending college. Suggestions are: mini-coffee makers, irons, twin sheets, hair-dryers, notebooks, backpacks, etc.

For Graduates: Bibles or devotional guides make excellent gifts for high school graduates. Many women's groups put together gift baskets for those going to college. Any handmade or store bought gift for the home would be appreciated by young adults who are leaving the nest for the first time. Your gifts could be presented during the Sunday service or at a special luncheon or dinner in their honor.

For Father's Day: What about giving *Contact* magazine subscriptions to some of the father's in the church? The pastor? The

Lucy and Marge and the Song

Lucy: I came up with this song the other day, Marge. Wanna hear it?

Marge: [Doubtful] Well, you're not the best singer in the world, but go ahead. First, though, what is it about?

Lucy: Just wait and see. [Starts warming up, going up the scale] La, la, la, la, la, la. La, la, la, la, la ...

Marge: Okay, enough already, just sing the song.

Lucy: [To the tune of Green Acres] Au-xiliary is the place to be
Mission Service is the life for me
Land spreadin' out so far and wide
Let's win Mahattan and all the
countryside

[Marge grabs the sheet and sings the female part, in a snobbish tone]

Marge:

At home is where I'd rather stay
They just gab at meetings anyway
I just got too many things to do
When it comes to missions I just
haven't got a clue

[Unison] Da, dum, da dum dum

Lucy: The Call!

Marge: The Mall!

Lucy: We are God's hands ...

Marge: Goodbye selfish plans ...

[Unison] Auxiliary We Are There!

Marge: Hey, it's kind of catchy.

Lucy: Do you think it'll get their attention?

Marge: Oh, it'll get their attention all right. The question is "Will it get their attendance?" ♦

deacons? The subscription price is \$12 for 12 issues, but there is no better way to keep up with what is going on in our denomination. If your group can't afford to buy several subscriptions, perhaps in honor of all the fathers in your church, you could buy one subscription for your church library. That way, everyone will benefit.

PRAYER CHAIRMAN

Using the prayer calendar on page 18 of Springboard, divide all the names between the women in your group, provide notecards/stationery/birthday cards, air mail envelopes and postage (purchased with auxiliary money), and addresses, and ask your women to write a short, "I'm praying for you" note. Imagine the surprise of these missionaries if each FWB Women's group sent them a note, reminding them of your prayers. That would mean each one on the prayer calendar would get about 1,000 cards for his/her birthday!

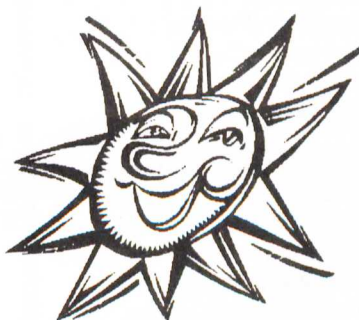
"The Brush Fire Miracle" by Joan Filkins is a tribute to the power and importance of prayer, especially related to missions. Mention it to your women, so they'll be sure to read it.

For the months of May and June, put together a prayer calendar for missions. Include the names of both foreign and home missionaries. Perhaps you'll want to include those most unfamiliar to your group. Use one family/person per week, and then on each day pray for these different needs: Sunday--his/her personal relationship with God, maturity, prayer-life, strength against Satan; Monday--his/her emotional, physical, and financial needs; Tuesday--his/her family, children, and relationships with nationals; Wednesday--his/her ability to communicate effectively, knowledge of the culture; Thursday--his/her witness and opportunities for ministry; Friday--his/her relationships with co-workers; Saturday--his/her country of service, for the political climate, government, and for more open doors.

**There is something new
under the Sun.
What's old is new again in
Woman's Auxiliary**

Get back to the basics.

Date:
Time:
Place:



Provision Closet Needs:

Bedspreads, all sizes

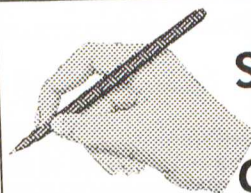
**SHEET SETS, all sizes
(we are almost out of
full sheet sets)**

Food Processors

Coffee Makers

Irons

Mixers



**Sign up
for
Contact**

Be a part of the growing number of Free Will Baptists who want to stay "in the know" on denominational issues and concerns.

\$12/year

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Contact

P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Springboard Illustrated: Stories to Grow By Volume 34/ No. 3
God Always Supplies by Judy Lytle, missionary to Panama

March 3, 1988 was a day to remember here in Panama. Problems between Panama and the U.S. had worsened to the point that the U.S. chose to freeze all Panamanian assets and impose a trade embargo. The results of that measure were quick in reaching everyone in Panama. On March 3rd, all the banks in the country closed. What money we had either in savings accounts or checking accounts was not accessible. The country instituted a "cash only" policy. No checks were accepted anywhere! Charge cards were also a thing of the past.

When the banks closed, I had \$40 in cash. That was going to have to do for groceries, gas, medicine, and emergencies until the embargo was lifted, and who knew when that would be! Could we possibly stretch \$40 for a week or two--maybe even a month?

Everyone was in the same boat as were we. We had to come up with a plan to receive our salary and expense money here in cash. And we had to do it quickly. It just so happened that a friend in business here had the problem of having too much cash around the office because he couldn't make a deposit. We worked out a trade. We gave him a stateside paycheck, and he gave us the cash. It took us two weeks to arrange this plan, but you know, that \$40 fed us, clothed us, and met every need the Lytle family had for those two weeks. We even had a little extra which we were able to share with those who had nothing. ❖



**I Am Woman,
I am Wife,
I am Mother**

Date:
Time:
Place:

MISSIONARY PRAYER CALENDAR

Missionaries supported by both Foreign and Home Missions departments are listed here by birthdays in May and June. Brighten their special days with your cards and prayers. Missionaries on furlough are indicated by *.

May

- 4 Ron Moore [C'I]
- 8 Joe Bevell [SC]
- 10 Delores Burns [GA]
- 11 Elaine Holland [C'I]
- 12 Charlotte Childers [SC]
- 14 Brenda Lewis [CO]
- 16 Dale Bishop [Japan]*
- 16 Elaine Parker [LA]
- 17 Ora Booth [OH]
- 17 Steve Reeves [Spain]
- 21 Earnest Holland [C'I]
- 25 Lynn Midgett [Spain]*
- 26 Kenneth Eagleton [C'I]
- 26 Phyllis Adams [KY]
- 30 Alice Smith [C'I]
- 30 Sue MacMillan [MA]

June

- 2 Jean Deeds [Brazil]
- 2 Levan Hubbard [AR]
- 6 Stan Bunch [Panama]
- 9 Terry VanWinkle [KS]
- 11 Kathy Donoho [IA]
- 13 Vicki Hubbard [AR]
- 14 Steve Lytle [Panama]
- 24 Jim McLain [Japan]
- 28 Ron Parker [LA]
- 29 Steve Riggs [France]

Reminder: If mailing to the Ivory Coast hospital, be sure to send small packages and send them Surface Mail. If you are not sure about a missionary address, check with the Foreign and Home Missions offices.

HID IN MY HEART

Psalm 103:1-5

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his
benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine
iniquities; who healeth all
thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from
destruction; who crowneth
thee with lovingkindness
and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy mouth
with good things; so that thy
youth is renewed like the
eagle's." (KJV)

COMMUNICATOR

BY MARY RUTH WISEHART

Finance

God provided for His work by instructing the people to give what they had. In preparing for the tabernacle, the people gave willingly, freely so that the leaders had to restrain them from giving, for they said, "For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much." Exodus 36:7

Would we could catch that spirit today.

God doesn't ask us to give what we do not have. Most Americans today give out of their abundance. We know very little of sacrifice.

The rich young ruler expresses one attitude toward giving. When Jesus suggested that he give all that he had and follow Him, the man went away sad. (Mark 10:22) The widow, however, gave all she had without a backward glance. (Mark 12:42-44)

What is our attitude toward giving?

WNAC Struggles Financially

Out of their vision and generosity through the years women have given liberally to home missions, foreign missions, Bible colleges, retirement, Master's Men, children's homes and other worthwhile causes.

Somehow, women, in our generous giving to others, we have neglected to provide for our own WNAC.

WNAC has always operated very frugally and channeled most of its monies to other ministries.

Who gives to support WNAC? Only three or four churches include WNAC in their budgets for regular gifts. The national office depends on magazine subscriptions, dues (representation fees), and gifts from women.

Why does WNAC's national office need funds? Below is a typical monthly expense chart.

EXPENSES FOR ONE MONTH	
Salaries	5,956 (3 full time workers)
Payroll Taxes	456
Employees' Retirement	245
Bookkeeping Service	180
Executive Committee Exp.	702 (twice a year)
Health Insurance	800
Magazine Mailing	342
Magazine Postage	404
Magazine Printing	3,800
(magazine expenses occur every other month)	
Rent	2,665
(includes interest expense on building loan, janitorial service, receptionist, mail and banking services, and utilities)	
General Postage	424
Telephone	134
Office Supplies	100
Miscellaneous	100

TOTAL EXPENSE \$16,305

All these figures are rounded off for convenience.

In order to simply cover expenses of the national office, WNAC needs an average of \$15,000 to \$16,000 monthly.

Giving to National Agencies

With The Together Way we have four distinct opportunities to make contributions to national ministries.

1994 Special Offerings National Ministries



APRIL 24	Foreign Missions
SEPTEMBER	Rest of the Family *Executive Office *Retirement *FWB Foundation *Master's Men *WNAC *NYC *Commissions
NOVEMBER 20	Home Missions
DECEMBER	Free Will Baptist Bible College

THE TOGETHER WAY PLAN
P.O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Opportunities for Women

Desktop publishing equipment saved WNAC \$9,000 in printing costs in 1993. But so far women have given only \$1,447 of the \$5,000 cost of the equipment.

Lorene Miley has completed a book of missionary stories. A new "Enlistment Ideas" is ready for publication. Additional funds will speed publication.

Women are requesting materials for teens and for girls 9-13.

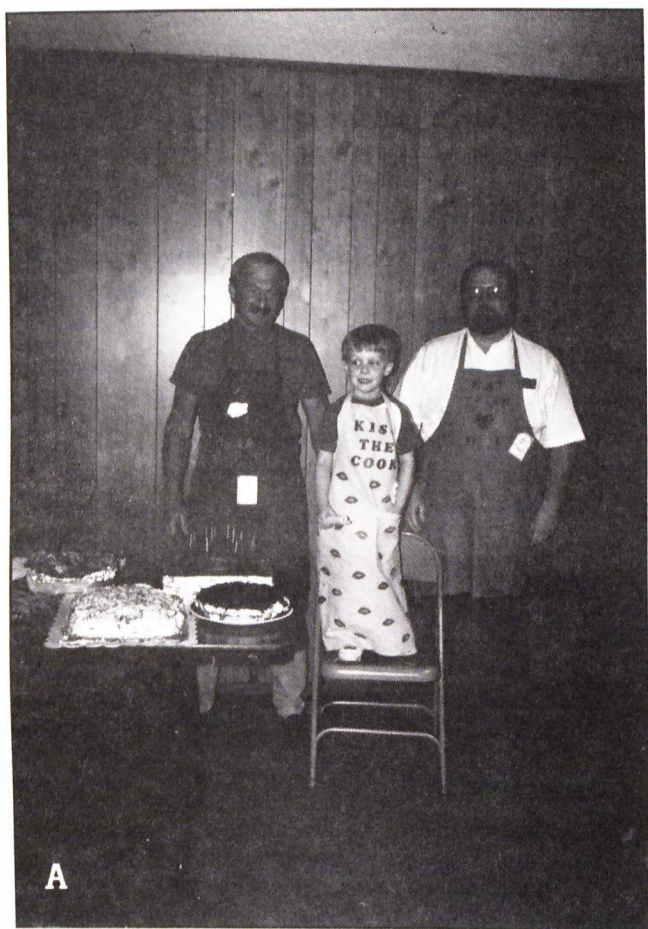
Can we provide these helps? Of course we can. But funds are necessary to cover the cost of writing and printing materials.

Other opportunities are waiting for Free Will Baptist women to seize them for the Lord.

Let's do it, women. Let's show ourselves Women Active for Christ. ❖

For Provision Closet Needs, see Springboard, page 17.

Women In Action



A. Someone's In the Kitchen with. . . Danny?

The Woman's Auxiliary of First FWB in Monticello, AR, recently sponsored a "Moonlight Male Madness" Auction. Several men of the church, including Pastor Tim Campbell, baked goodies and brought them to be auctioned off. Aprons were awarded to the winners: 1st place, Danny Graves; 2nd place, Trey Outlaw; and 3rd place, Larry Hunter. Pictured are the good sports (and fine bakers) of First Church.



B. Cookeville Women Sponsor Auction

Over 125 people attended the Cookeville Auxiliary's bean supper/auction to benefit WNAC, missionary Gerald Fender, and help pay for a new church van. The event was held in the church's gymnasium, and everything from firewood to an exercise bicycle was auctioned off. The supper raised \$617.06, and the auction netted over \$1200. The group has set a goal of \$10,000 for the year for various projects. Pictured is the lovely harvest centerpiece for the event.

Letters to WNAC



C. Wisehart Speaks at Missions Banquet

The Alabama State Missions Banquet was held on November 12th, 1993 at Max's Cafeteria in Forestdale, AL. Dr. Mary Wisehart spoke on "Pearls," along with some help from Mrs. Wanda Powell of Nashville, TN. Pictured are: Nancy Mayhall, state member-at-large; Carolyn Hendrix, Vice-President; Paulette Scott, President; Dr. Wisehart, Executive Secretary of WNAC; Wanda Powell; Elwanda Oakes, Treasurer; and Betty Wade, Secretary of Cahaba River District and President of Forestdale Auxiliary. A \$200 love offering was given to WNAC.

D. Christmas Party/Year-End Review at Blue Bell

The Blue Bell FWB (Sapulpa, OK) Auxiliary's Annual Christmas Party is a wonderful time of fellowship for all involved. Gifts are exchanged, prayer sisters are revealed, and new ones are selected. The Angel Tree benefitted the Alabama Children's Home, and each young person there received a gift. Donna Kinsey and Sandy Tennison are pictured enjoying the party goodies. In addition, this 15-member group collected stamps for WNAC, yarn for France, and set up a mission bulletinboard. Each Sunday evening, they present a missions report to the entire church. ❖

Dear WNAC,

Thank you for opening the Creative Arts Contest to all women who attend a Free Will Baptist Church. I was one who never qualified to enter because our small mission church has not started an Auxiliary group. This year I plan to submit an entry. Thank you for this opportunity.

Melba Hibbard
Pioneer, California

Dear WNAC,

I look forward to getting the *CoLaborer* each time. The articles are inspiring and a great blessing. May the Lord bless and grant wisdom as you labor for Him.

Hilma Marlin
Tupelo, Mississippi

Dear WNAC,

Just a note to say thanks for loaning me the money to finish school. I appreciated it then, but I appreciate it even more now that it is paid off! Thanks again.

Kim Zegelin
Germany

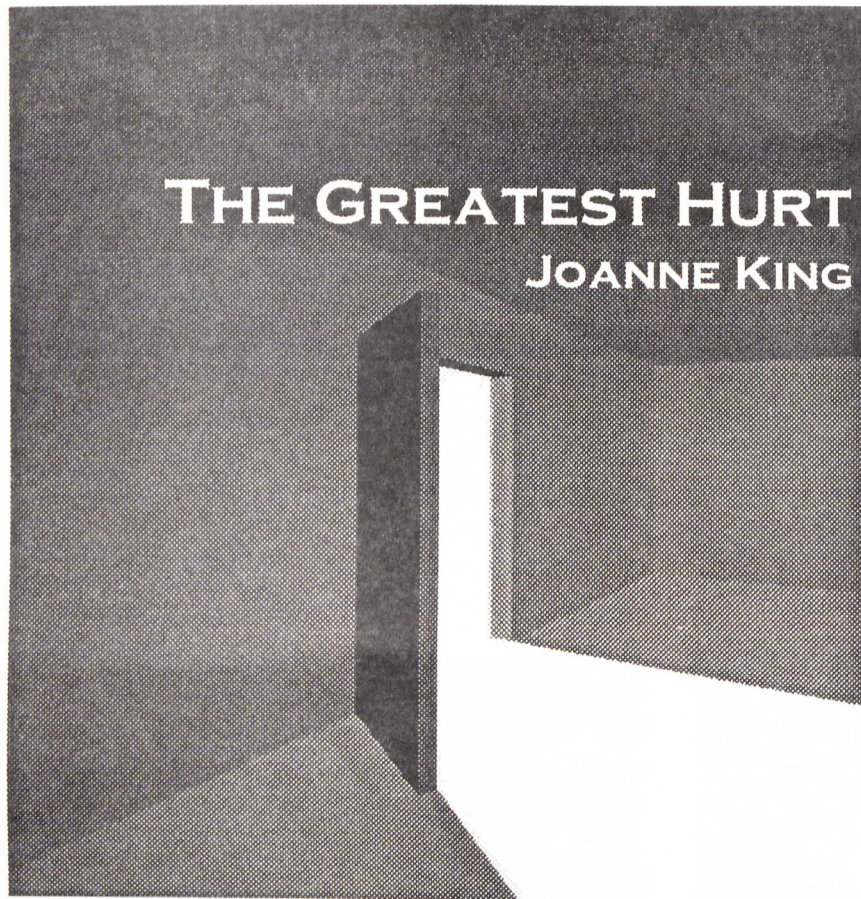
Dear WNAC,

Thank you for all the hard work you exert to publish the *CoLaborer*. I just had to let you know what a blessing it is to me.

Marcia Cope
Canton, North Carolina

THE GREATEST HURT

JOANNE KING



It's struggling to keep my composure at seeing your empty place at the dinner table, especially on your birthday, our anniversary, and holidays . . .

It's not finding comforting arms when I rush home hurt and bruised by a conflict . . .

It's keeping your robe because it's the last piece of normal clothing you were able to wear . . .

But it's also knowing that even if you could come back, you wouldn't—not after being with the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor could I ask you to trade the company of the Altogether Lovely One for that of a very imperfect wife, but oh, how I do miss you.

It does not matter how one tries to prepare for the death of a loved one, and it does not matter how long one has to wait for the moment, it is a terrible shock when the final blow comes. For with the last breath, so very much is lost.

It has been a little over four years since Bob went to heaven, and it is still difficult to think about it. My life has not been and will never be the same again.

I know first-hand that life doesn't always work out the way we'd like it to. If we had our way, it would be easier, consistently fair, and more fun. There'd be no pain and suffering; we wouldn't have to work, and we wouldn't have to die. We'd be happy all the time. Unfortunately, we don't get our way: we get reality instead. But reality is an excellent teacher. It has taught me that if I do not understand and accept life as it is, I will keep wishing for something better and never get it. If I do not accept it as it is, I will keep complaining and whining about the way things should be, used to be, but never can be. It takes time to reach this point of acceptance, for the loss is deep and painful.

[continued on page 27]

Smalley and Trent, in *Home Remedies*, remind us that "something unavoidable occurs in the life of every person or family . . . and it feels a lot like being stuck in day after day of dreary weather." Every family will experience its share of cloudy-day hardships and pain. The book of James admonishes " . . . count it all joy when you fall into divers temptation." It is not a matter of IF trouble will come; it is a matter of WHEN. Dark days and difficult times are unavoidable, and they will come just as surely as day follows night. One of the darkest days and the greatest hurts in life, I believe, is the loss of a marriage partner.

What is it like to be a widow? In *Help Lord, My Whole Life Hurts*, Carole Mayhall expresses the hurt in the poem, "What's It Like to Be Your Widow":

It's being devastated by the seemingly simple act of discarding your toothbrush . . .

It's sorting through your clothing, wrapping the empty sleeves of a sportcoat around me and sobbing into its lifeless shoulder . . .

It's returning to familiar or favorite places that first time without you and feeling so alone . . .

It's missing the lingering smell of your shaving lotion after a goodbye kiss . . .

It's eating alone at the counter of a restaurant on Easter Sunday because no one remembered I was alone . . .

It's losing my champion and cheerleader . . .

It's having to depend on an electric blanket for warmth on cold wintery nights . . .

Only one person per form.
Make additional
copies if needed.

Pre-Registration Form

for
**National Association of Free Will Baptists
Women Nationally Active for Christ
National Youth Conference
Little Rock, AR / July 17 - 21, 1994**

By completing the Pre-Registration Form, you will save **valuable** time at the convention. If you pre-register, proceed to a special registration area where you will receive a packet containing your pre-printed name tag, tickets and materials.

Please Print

Name: _____
First or Name Desired on Badge Last
Address: _____
City: _____
Church: _____
Pastor's Name: _____
Hotel (if known): _____

Phone #: (_____) _____ - _____
Area Code

☐ Male ☐ Female

State: _____ Zip: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Completed form(s) and fees must be mailed to

Convention Registration

P. O. Box 5002

Antioch, TN 37011-5002

and received on or before **June 24, 1994.**

You may register for all three conventions on this form.

I If you want to register for the **National Association**, complete Section I.

District Association: _____

Minister: ☐ Pastor ☐ Ordained ☐ Licensed

(I certify that I am a member in good standing with the above named church and association which belong to the National Association.)

MISSIONARY: ☐ Foreign (Country) _____

☐ Home

DELEGATE: ☐ Ordained Deacon

☐ State

☐ Local Church (\$10.00)

☐ National Board Member

☐ National Officer

VISITOR: ☐

Meal Tickets:

Quantity

Youth Workers Reception _____ x \$6.00 = _____

Music Ministries Breakfast _____ x \$9.50 = _____

Hillsdale FWB College Luncheon _____ x \$15.00 = _____

FWBBC Alumni Luncheon _____ x \$11.00 = _____

Master's Men Dinner _____ x \$18.00 = _____

If Local Church Delegate _____ → \$10.00 = _____

SUBTOTAL _____

II If you want to register for **WNAC**, complete Section II.

(Check only one of the following:)

DELEGATE: ☐ Local (\$5.00)

☐ State

☐ State President or Field Worker

☐ National Officer

VISITOR: ☐

Meal Tickets:

Quantity

WNAC Fellowship Dinner _____ x \$15.00 = _____

If Local WNAC Delegate _____ → \$5.00 = _____

SUBTOTAL _____

III If you want to register for the **National Youth Conference**, complete Section III.

(ALL those in 1st grade through age 24 must register to attend NYC.)

Are you a youth worker? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Grade completed Spring 1994: _____ Age: _____

Birthdate: _____ / _____ / _____

Parent's (or Guardian's) name: _____

Youth Leader's name: _____

Registration Fee

Pre-Registration Fee \$13.00 = _____

On-site registration fee is \$15.00

Adults over 24 do not pay NYC fees.

You MUST register for NYC to purchase meal tickets/attend banquets (unless age 25 and up).

Meal Tickets:

Quantity

Children's Banquet (grades 1-6) _____ x \$7.00 = _____

Youth Banquet (must be in grade 7 to _____ x \$12.50 = _____

age 24 or an accompanying youth worker)

limited - 1 ticket per form)

SUBTOTAL _____

For Office Use Only

Rec _____ CK/MO # _____ AMT \$ _____

CK _____

Make ALL checks payable
to FWB Convention.

**No refunds mailed after
June 24, 1994.**

GRAND TOTAL \$ _____

Check/Money Order **MUST** accompany this form.
Enclose **ONE** check to pay all fees and tickets.

Pre-Register by June 24 and Pick up Your Convention Packet on Saturday!

Early pick-up available at
Statehouse Convention Center
for those who pre-register:

Saturday, July 16
3:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Sunday, July 17
1:00 p.m.

Pre-Registration ends June 24, 1994

Meal Information

Children's Banquet / \$7.00

Monday, July 18 / 5:00 p.m.
Robinson Center / Exhibition Hall

Hillsdale FWB College Luncheon / \$15.00

Tuesday, July 19 / 12:00 noon
Excelsior Hotel / Ballroom / Salon C

Youth Banquet / \$12.50

Tuesday, July 19 / 9:00 p.m.
Robinson Center / Exhibition Hall

Note: Until June 24, Youth Banquet tickets will be sold only to those in grades seven to age 24 and youth workers accompanying their group. Others may purchase available tickets at the convention.

Music Ministries Breakfast / \$9.50

Wednesday, July 20 / 7:00 a.m.
Riverfront Hilton / Silver City III, IV

Youth Workers Reception / \$6.00

Monday, July 18 / 9:00 p.m.
Camelot Hotel / Plaza West

WNAC Fellowship Dinner / \$15.00

Tuesday, July 19 / 5:00 p.m.
Excelsior Hotel / Grand Ballroom

FWBBC Luncheon / \$11.00

Wednesday, July 20 / 12:00 Noon
Excelsior Hotel / Ballroom / Salons A-B

Master's Men Dinner / \$18.00

Wednesday, July 20 / 4:45 p.m.
Excelsior Hotel / Ballroom / Salons A-B

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

a column for young people

... for everyday life

Life!Action.

The Big Wish

Just suppose you were walking along the beach one day, watching the waves melt into the sand, feeling the kiss of the sun on your face, when all of a sudden, you notice something sticking out of the sand a hundred yards ahead. When the sun hits the half-buried object, it casts a golden glow all around.

Running ahead, you fall on your knees and begin digging to unearth this golden object. It's an old brass lantern, unlike any you've ever seen before. As you brush the sand away, a thick smoke fills the air, and POOF!--standing before you is a smiling genie, ready to grant you three wishes.

If you could have anything in the world, what would you ask for?

Would you ask to be rich? Maybe own a seaside mansion, with a swimming pool, tennis court, and bowling alley. A couple of luxury automobiles and a boat in your ten-car garage.

Would you ask to be famous? Your face on a different magazine every month. Reporters clamoring for one statement from you. Any favor you want just a phone call away.

Would you ask to be powerful? To be the boss. To have control over a big company or maybe even be governor of your state.

Would you ask for a problem to go away? A sick family member or friend to be healthy? A new friend to be close to?

It's an interesting thing to think about, isn't it? What we would be, do, or have if there were no limits.

Born the son of a carpenter, Jesus certainly wasn't rich. Neither was he famous. Oh, he was infamous--many who never met him, hated him. And even though he was all-powerful, he rarely used it.

Jesus had just one wish, and he was willing to die to make it come true. His only wish was that we--you and I--would be able to live forever with God the Father.

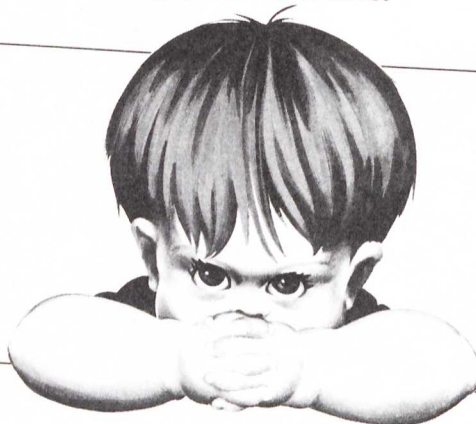
His only wish was for us. ❖



A Note From the Editor: Hey Actionettes (or any teenage readers), this page is for you--to help you grow in Christ and to let readers of *CoLaborer* know about the great ways you serve God. I invite you to send in material or topics you want to see talked about on this page, and pictures--we love seeing your fabulous smiles! Mail your ideas, etc., to *CoLaborer* Magazine, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, Tennessee, 37011-5002 ❖

Notes on Raising Good Preacher's Kids

by Joan Gardner



I was busily washing dishes when the whole house shook. Becky, Matt and Debbie (only 6 and 4 and 5 years old) had combined their strength to ring the church bell stored in our garage.

We have a heart full of wonderful memories of our children growing up in the parsonage. Like the day Debbie set the table with plastic fork and knife at Dr. Johnson's plate. And the Sunday I lifted my eyes from prayer to find Becky and Matt sitting atop stacks of song books that lifted them taller than me. The kids remember playing jail with Brother Raymond Riggs, wishing in the catalogue with Brother Damon Dodd, and having Dr. Ken Riggs for a baby sitter when we had to leave for a trip. He played games with them until after midnight.

Such wonderful memories.

Raising "preacher's kids" involves many things most parents don't have to consider. Here are just a few:

How can you raise normal kids in the pastor's home?

I am convinced that the rules for the parsonage should not be a lot different from those for any Christian home; however, here are a few things I think we need to remember:

Sometimes the pastor's family has financial needs because the church cannot or does not pay an adequate salary.

Pastors need to make an effort to buy at least some "in things" for their children. I'm not talking about fads, but it is important that they feel comfortable with the way they look and dress. Children need to know that poor is a relative word and that compared to many people of this world you are very wealthy.

Having your dad as pastor is not always good.

Most youth have a pastor to take problems to but if their

dad is the pastor they may need someone else they can trust who can lead them in spiritual matters. It is good if your church can hire a youth director but if this is not possible try to find a good Christian layman to be a counselor for your children. Be sure you find someone your children can love and respect.

The problem of preacher's kid's reputations.

Parents, be careful to give your child room to grow. Allow them to make decisions on their own. Some of their decisions may be wrong, but remember, you made some wrong decisions when you were growing up. As much as possible keep your family problems at home and out of the public eye. Impress upon your children the need for a good testimony, not because their Dad is pastor, but because they are Christians. This training must begin as soon as a child accepts Christ.

Moving from one pastorate to another is often very painful and difficult for preacher's kids.

Realize that some things are going to hurt. The teenage years are especially critical, and moving is even more traumatic then. Parents, don't try to make this seem like an ordinary way of life because it isn't. Show sympathy with them and for them, but also use the experience to teach them what it means to sacrifice things you love to serve God. Not all children learn how to sacrifice.

Life is not all bad for the preacher's kid. Take a look at the great advantages others don't always have.

Moving can be a great experience.

Preacher's kids get to experience different cultures and get to know and love people in many areas of the country. This gives you a love for certain parts of our nation, and you have friends from almost everywhere.

National vacations can be fun.

We always looked forward to the National Association and got to go every year. Our family would vacation in a new city and make a special trip every July. Not all children have this advantage.

Living at the parsonage exposes children to people they wouldn't have otherwise met. The church is your extended family.

How good it is to have evangelists, missionaries, and the Bible College groups in our home. We were always excited for the opportunity to introduce our children to great people of God. Remember, if you make these visits sound inconvenient, then your children will see them as such. Also, talk about the good qualities of your church members, and work to build friendships between your children and the church.

These thoughts are from the parent's perspective. But how do preacher's kids feel about their home life? My son, Matt (now an adult), had some interesting things to add:

Pros and Cons from a Preacher's Son

Pros:

1. Secure home-life
2. Moving around
3. Getting to know more people
4. Getting to go to National Association conventions
5. Having the church as an extended family
6. Learning the truth about Santa Clause earlier than most kids
7. Able to be involved in a ministry your whole life.
8. Having great people of God stay in our home.

Cons:

1. Having a jobless Dad (Dad has a *ministry* not a job)
2. Moving around
3. Have to be careful not to offend anyone
4. Could never watch Disney specials on TV--they always came on on Sunday nights (before VCRs were common place). I've never seen 60 minutes.
5. Expected to go to church and Sunday school on vacation
6. Overcoming stigma that all PKs are wild
7. Realizing Dad doesn't get all the money put in the offering plate.
8. Stiffer penalties for acting up in church services
9. As a kid, having more dress clothes than play clothes.❖

Joan Gardner works for the Free Will Baptist Home Missions Department and is married to Bill, pastor of Fellowship FWB in Antioch, TN. They have three grown children.

[The Greatest Hurt, continued]

When Bob died, I felt as though I had been handed a vocabulary list that held words with meanings only for me. Some of these words were: *gone*--never to see him again on this earth; *alone*--no one with me who loved me the most; *handicapped*--I must forever live with a broken heart; *afraid*--no one to protect me; *devastated*--no reason to live; *smile*--never again. These emotions were deep, sharp, painful, and all-consuming.

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His mercies fail not. They are renewed every morning. Great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22,23).

As I look back over these years, I am thankful for the faithfulness of my God. It is because of His mercies that I am where I am today in a healing process I never thought possible.

What has helped in this healing process?

[1] Memories of a marvelous marriage. We were best friends, companions, and lovers. We shared the same philosophy, worked together, and played together. We never considered separation or divorce. I have no regrets.

[2] The support of two loving children who have kept a watchful eye on their mom with much tenderness. They have shared the hurt, and they reflect their dad's strong character, love for God, and they cling to the values he taught them. I see their dad in them. They are my friends.

[3] The support of my church family. The people who loved us as a couple continue to love me on my own. They are the ones who so often say, "I miss Preacher so much"--they cherish his memory. They value my contribution to their fellowship. They give me a place to serve and expect me to work hard--work is like a wonder drug. They manifest a love that cannot be faked.

[4] The ability to reflect and reason. Life is hard, and it is not always fair. But that doesn't mean it isn't good, rewarding, and enjoyable. There are still a lot of reasons to say yes to life.

I alone must make the choice of the person I will be. I decide how to handle the adversity that comes. I can give up and feel sorry for myself, or I can lean on Jesus for the strength to face what life gives me. I must laugh again--even with a handicapped heart beating inside--for "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones" (Prov. 17:22).

I cannot give advice to others who have lost their husbands, but I can tell them what has been a blessing to me. Certainly there is no lonelier word than the "goodbye" caused by death. But there will be no goodbyes in heaven, and I'm longing for that day.❖

Joanne King is an active member of Cramerton FWB church in Cramerton, NC, where her son, Doug, pastors.

Is Worship A Lost Art?

by Dennis Peterson

Today's world is characterized by hustle and bustle. Everyone, it seems, is in a hurry to get somewhere or do something. In this "instant" age, we have become accustomed to having anything we want--immediately. We have instant coffee, instant tea, instant breakfasts, instant potatoes, and instant-start lawnmowers. Personal computers and microwave ovens have been added to our list of "get it quick" time-saving devices.

Now, there's nothing wrong with these modern conveniences. They certainly save us a lot of time and effort. In fact, after having lived in this age, most of us would be hard-pressed to survive in the "good old days" before such devices existed.

But all of this "instantness" has created a problem. Sadly, it has begun to affect us spiritually. Many expect spiritual growth and development to be instantaneous. We want to grow in the Lord, but we are often too impatient to let the Lord achieve that growth in His time.

Instead, we manufacture our own bigger, better, quicker plans and programs for accomplishing "spiritual success." We prefer working to waiting. After all we've been conditioned to judge success and accomplishment by visible and measurable means.

The results are painfully clear: shallowness, frustrations, and dissatisfaction; Christian workers who begin working "gung ho" but soon start to burn out.

Perhaps nowhere is this more obvious than in our practice of worshiping God. Modern Christians have come to equate worship with works. We

"worship" God by serving Him, we reason. Therefore, the more we work (the busier we are in "the work of the Lord") the more spiritual we must be.

Years ago, famed pastor, teacher, and author A.W. Tozer referred to this problem as "the lost art of worship" (*A Treasury of A.W. Tozer*, Christian Publications, 1980). He briefly explained himself by writing, "God wants worshipers before workers: indeed, the only acceptable workers are those who have learned the lost art of worship."

Is worship a lost art? At first this might appear to be a misconception, but a careful analysis of Tozer's thesis reveals that he was on target. The idea deserves our consideration and could revolutionize our Christian lives--if we are willing to take the time without expecting "instant" results.

If worship is not work, what is it?

Webster's Ninth New World Dictionary defines worship as "extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem."

A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine (Beacon Hill, 1986) hones this basic definition a bit: "People worship God through adoration, prayers, thanksgiving, and giving. People also worship God by singing hymns. . . . Public worship prepares people to serve God in the world" (emphasis added).

If acceptable service is preceded by worship, then service without preparation is unacceptable. Rather, it is a mere spinning of wheels. Worship that precedes service, on the other hand, establishes the proper motives, direction, and attitude toward both our service and the assessment of results. It permits our service to become a means of worship.

The best source for what is involved in the art of worship is the Bible. Early in the Book, we are commanded to worship "no other god" than the true God (Ex. 20:3,4; 34:14). We are also told that worship includes some degree of fear as we recognize God's holiness, which is at the core of true worship (II Kings 17:36).

Worshipers in Bible times usually knelt, bowed or lay prostrate in God's presence. This seems to indicate that worship puts one in a position or attitude of humility or subservience.

Perhaps the primary prerequisite of true and acceptable worship is given in John 4:24. Jesus told the woman at the well in Samaria, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Tozer said, "The One who made us to worship Him has decreed how we should worship Him. He accepts only the worship which He Himself has decreed."

Applying this to modern living, what ingredients should we expect in true worship?

Prayer

The first ingredient is communion with God. Prayer is not something we can mix in a glass in the morning and quickly drink for "instant fellowship" with God. It requires time and thoughtfulness. It requires our being still, listening for God to speak to our hearts.

But we are so busy. We just have to rush out and get busy or we'll never get it all done. How can we afford to take the time to pray in worship?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon warned, "He who rushes from his bed to his business and waiteth not to worship, is as foolish as though he had not put on his clothes . . . and as unwise as though he dashed into battle without arms or armor."

When reformer Martin Luther was overwhelmed by daily tasks, he declared, "I have so much to do today, I must spend five hours in prayer."

How much of our worship is devoted to prayer? Even the average church "prayer meeting" service includes only a token gesture toward prayer. When public prayer is offered, are we really praying with the one at the podium? How much private praying do we really do? Are we content to pray only before each meal or whenever we get into trouble? When we do pray, do we rush through without waiting for God to speak to us?

Bible Reading

Closely associated with prayer in worship is Bible reading, examining God's Word to find out what He wants us to know, do, and be. And this, too, requires time. We cannot grow in the art of worship--or in any other spiritual area--without feeding on His Word.

Watchman Nee was so profoundly influenced by the realization that we need God's Word that he made his motto "No Bible--no breakfast."

If prayer is our talking to God, the Bible is God's way of speaking to us. Worship is a dialogue, not a monologue. We are to take time not only to communicate to God but also to let Him speak to us.

Singing

Another ingredient of worship is singing, the expression of our joy, praise, and adoration of God. The Psalms are replete with injunctions and examples of singing in worship. In Psalm 100, for example, we are told, "Come before His presence with singing." And Ephesians 5:19 instructs that we should be "Speaking to [ourselves] in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in [our hearts] to the Lord." And for those of us who think we lack the ability to sing, God tells us to "make a joyful noise" (Ps. 100:1). Singing in worship is for God's glory, not for our entertainment.

Giving

Giving is another part of worship. The Old Testament Law commanded the giving of tithes and offerings in the worship ceremonies. Both in the early church and today, giving to meet the needs of others--especially fellow believers--is considered part of worship. In truth, all we have belongs to God, but He desires that we voluntarily present offerings to Him in worship.

Service

Service is an important, although often misunderstood and misapplied, form of worship. Because some people have mistakenly used visible service activities as an indicator of one's inner spirituality is no reason to ignore its importance.

We are not saved by works but by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The measure of our spirituality is not what we do but what we are. But if we truly are believers, we will express our thanks to God by voluntarily serving Him. Both other believers and society at large will benefit from such service.

What are the results of true worship? We will know God's will and obey it. We will love and have genuine fellowship with the brethren. We will serve God with our daily lives. And, ultimately, we will be witnesses, showing others the way to Christ.

True worship is indeed a lost art. But it is not impossible to recultivate that art if we sincerely want it and are willing to slow down and take the time necessary to practice it. It makes sense to do so when we consider who God is and what He has done for us. ♦

Dennis L. Peterson is a freelance writer from Powell, Tennessee. He has served the Lord in Christian ministries for several years.



MISSION ALERT:

Evangelism News from Around the World

FOREIGN MISSIONS

Rochester Hills, MI

Dr. Mark Paschall writes, "Please pray for the remaining \$2,000/month in pledged support necessary for us to leave for language school in August. A shortage in this amount would delay our departure until the next school term. Our thanks go out once again to those of you who have prayed, shared, and supported us during the past year. God has certainly heard your pleas and blessed your efforts. We are amazed to see how He has brought us to this point of readiness." Continue to pray for the Paschalls as they sort, pack, and ship personal belongings and get their physicals and immunizations for overseas travel.

Montevideo, Uruguay

Molly Barker is praising the Lord for several answered prayers: her mother's surgeries went very well--radiation was not necessary; her account was included in several church budgets and was out of the red as of January; she arrived safely back in Uruguay with no customs problems; she was able to assist a Mexican Christian while traveling from New Bern to Charlotte, NC; and she was able to attend the ordination service of Casildo Trindade, a faithful brother who serves one of the Uruguayan churches. Molly also asks that we pray for the new converts in Melo, that they would grow in Christ.

Bouna, Ivory Coast

Mike and Deleen Cousineau report that the work there is going well. Lynette Morgan and Deleen began a new class for Bible Institute student's wives to help them in their future roles as "pastors' wives." Eight married women are attending, along with one soon-to-be married young woman. Deleen asks that we pray for them as they try to communicate with these women, many of whom do not read. As of June 10th, three years of classroom studies will be completed at the Bible Institute. Mike and Clint Morgan have been looking for ten churches to host these student/pastors as interns for twelve months. Pray about this need. Also, continue to pray about the political climate in the Ivory Coast.

HOME MISSIONS

Jacksonville, FL

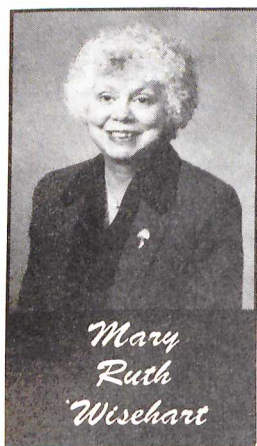
Faith Chapel Mission Church is more excited than ever, according to pastor, Otis Whitehead. On February 1st, the church placed a cash binder on a church building and fellowship hall less than a mile from their current meeting place. The facility offers ample education space and a paved parking area on a two-acre tract. The sanctuary is less than three years old, and the fellowship hall was built about a year ago. The need for permanent facilities has long been a prayer request of the 24-member church in Jacksonville. The purchase of this property will be a giant step in becoming fully self-supporting. Please pray for this church as the details are worked out.

Madison, WI

The Carlie Lloyd family has endured a rough Wisconsin winter with temperatures at 60 below, but their hearts are warmed and encouraged by people like Bryant and Cheryl Register. The Registers, who drive two hours to attend church, are the proud parents of a new son, Ethan Ross. And the Lord is working in hearts: pray for new Christian, John, as he is starting discipleship lessons; and pray for Greg, who is close to receiving Christ. The Lloyd Land Fund has been established and is growing. Pray about this financial need.

Springfield, Illinois

1994 has brought some firsts to Ken Doggett. On January 15th, he conducted his first wedding in Springfield, with 65 attending one of the coldest days of winter. The bride's aunt and uncle attend the mission church there. And, just a week later, Ken preached his first funeral as a home missionary to Illinois. Wade Fagen, a 28-year old husband and father whom Ken had never met, passed away without ever regaining consciousness. This tragedy allowed Ken to share the gospel with 11 adults in Wade's family before and at the funeral. Pray that these hearts will be opened to the message they have heard. Also, pray for new believers, Jim and Sheila. By the time you read this, the Doggetts will have seen another first: their first baptismal service in their new portable baptistry. ❖



Words for Women

PREVIEW Jul/Aug 94

- ◆ Do It Yourself Missions Fair
- ◆ Caring for the Elderly
- ◆ MissionCall: Germany
- ◆ WNAC Emphasis Month

The wind blows cold, the trees are bare, everything seems to be frozen. Will winter never end? We long for the warm breath of spring.

In the hot, dry dust of August, we long for the cool breezes and brilliant colors of autumn.

I love the changing seasons. Each season holds a beauty all its own. Each season has something to offer us, some lesson to teach.

God set the seasons in place. He said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." He assured Noah in Genesis 8:22, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Some seasons are harsher than others, but all have some positive and some negative features.

Our lives sometimes are like the seasons. We are caught in the grip of a tragedy that seems to freeze the heart right out of us.

We're exhausted with the dry, dusty routine of our lives. Tim has left his toys scattered on the floor—again. Kara has forgotten to hang up her dress. Wash the clothes, iron, clean the floors, cook, wash the dishes, wash the clothes, cook, do the dishes, iron, clean up, cook—the routine may seem overwhelming.

But wait! Spring, summer, autumn, winter—God controls them all.

And He also controls the seasons of our lives.

What season are you in at this moment? Spring with all its freshness, new life, vitality and beauty? Enjoy it to the full. Look with expectation toward the summer

season when buds are mature and fruit begins to ripen.

Is it the dry, dusty season of routine when you long for just a breeze of difference?

Does winter grip your heart in a cold terror that you can't even name?

The psalmist said in Psalms 74:17, "Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter."

He has also determined the seasons of our lives. Right where I am just now, this is God's place for me, His season for me.

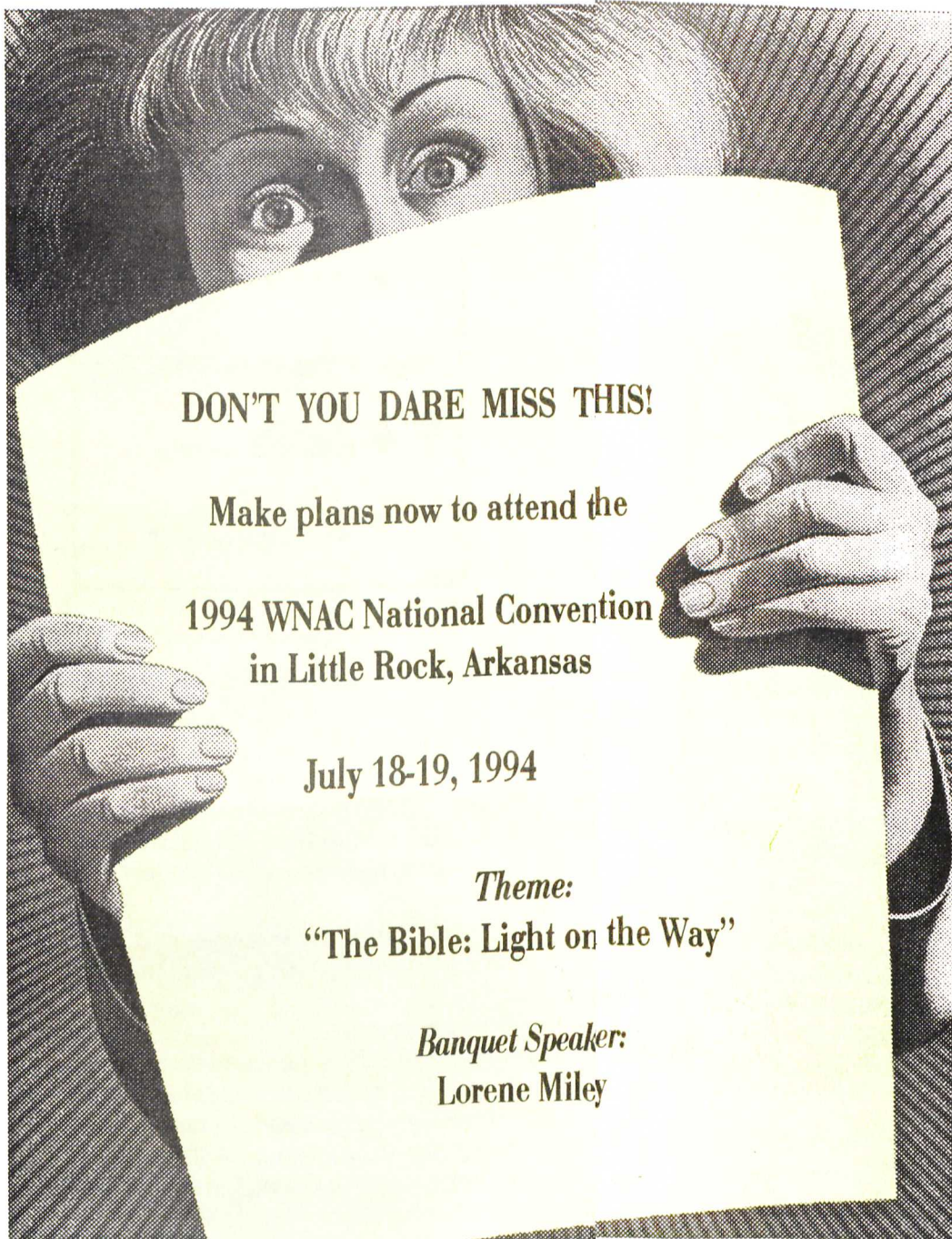
Is this a difficult season?

Remember Isaiah 61:3, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."

All seasons are His times. ❖



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